

**SENSE RELATIONS IN DHOLUO: A LEXICAL PRAGMATIC
APPROACH**

BY

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other University.



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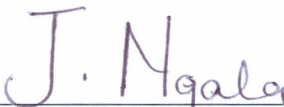
This dissertation has been submitted for examination with our approval as university Supervisors.



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DEDICATION

To my dear father

Charles Anyim Oyieyo

who treasures education and whose
achievement this really is

To my loving mother

Margaret Theresa Anyim

who taught me value of hard work,
prayer and determination

To my husband and friend

Kizito

For his love and patience

And to our children

Joy and Inuchi

Your inspiration keeps the wick burning.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

ADJ	-	Adjective
ADV	-	Adverb
I	-	Principle of minimisation
N	-	Noun
Q	-	Principle of quantity
R	-	Principle of relation
V	-	Verb

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ABSTRACT

This study is an investigation of sense relations in the lexicon of Dholuo using lexical pragmatic theory. It focuses on the distinctive characteristics and sources of sense relations in Dholuo. The study investigated the role of context in understanding sense relations and the extent to which meaning is measured through lexical pragmatic processes.

The lexical pragmatic theory as propounded by Blutner (1990) and later developed by Wilson (2003) is used as a model for representing concepts. This model analyses meaning through context and hence is an effective tool for concept representation.

In chapter one, the background to the study is given and the statement of the problem, objectives and hypothesis of the study stated. The theoretical framework on which the study is based is illustrated, the rationale, scope and limitation, the literature review, research methodology and the significance of the study.

Chapter two focuses on the analysis of synonyms in Dholuo. There is a description of synonymy in relation to formality, dialectal variations, attitude and borrowing. The degrees of synonymy in the language are also shown.

Chapter three describes the homonyms in Dholuo. The chapter discusses homonyms and grammatical categories. It also explores the absence of homophones in the language.

In chapter four, an analysis of polysemy is done. A description is given of polysemy arising due to shift in application, metaphorical extension, and register.

Chapter five discusses the interpretation of the lexical pragmatics theory. Narrowing and broadening processes are used in the analysis of the various sense relations in the preceding chapters.

Chapter six gives a summary of the findings of the study and draws conclusions from the research findings. The chapter ends by indicating aspects of this study which require further investigation.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives a general background of the study. The issues discussed here include background of the language of study, background to the study, statement of the research problem, rationale of the study, objectives, research hypotheses, scope and limitation. It also looks at the theoretical framework on which the study is based, literature review, the research methodology adopted, and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background to the Language

Dholuo is a Western Nilotic language spoken by the Luo people who live in Western Kenya and in the Northern part of Tanzania. In the same group are languages such as Acholi, Alur, Duk, Lango and Shilluk in Sudan.

The majority of Dholuo speakers live in Kenya and are found in the following districts: Kisumu, Nyando, Rachuonyo, Homabay, Migori, Bondo and Siaya. These districts form part of the Nyanza province.

Stafford (1967) identifies two mutually intelligible dialects of Dholuo based on vocabulary and pronunciation, i.e. 'South Nyanza' and 'Trans – Yala'. However, another study by Oduol (1990) has identified the Kisumu – South Nyanza (KSN) and the Boro Ukwala (BU) dialects.

The Kisumu – South Nyanza dialect is spoken in Kisumu, Nyando, Nyakach, Rachuonyo, Homabay and Migori. The Boro – Ukwala dialect is spoken in Boro and Ukwala division; Imbo and parts of Yala division; all of Siaya and the Bondo districts.

The Kisumu – South Nyanza dialect is spoken in a wider geographical area and is therefore regarded as the standard form. It is the one used both in print and as a medium of instruction. The Boro – Ukwala dialect, on the other hand, is spoken in a smaller region and is also considered less prestigious.

Speakers of BU use KSN features as a result of exposure to it and also due to mutual intelligibility most speakers of Dholuo flexibly choose from the two dialects. This study will focus on the Kisumu – South Nyanza dialect.

1.2 Background to the Study

This study focuses on the analysis of sense relations in Dholuo based on the lexical pragmatic theory.

Sense relates to the system of relationships that holds between the linguistic elements themselves mostly the words (Palmer 1976:30).

Lyons (1968:427) defines sense of a word as the system of relationship which it contracts with other words in the vocabulary. According to Lyon (1968:443):

As far as the empirical investigation of the structure is concerned the sense of a lexical item may be defined to be not only dependent upon but, identical with the set of relations which could be between the item in question and the other items in the same lexical system.

Some vocabulary items fall into lexical systems and the semantic structure of these systems is to be described in terms of the sense relations holding between the lexical items (Murphy 2003:8). Crystal (1997:105) asserts that several kinds of sense relations result from the way lexemes occur in sequences and how they substitute for each other.

Lyon (1981:144) identifies two types of relations; paradigmatic and syntagmatic. Paradigmatic relations are those into which a linguistic unit enters through being contrasted or substitutable in a particular environment with other similar units. Syntagmatic relations are those that a unit contracts by virtue of its occurrence with similar units.

The study aims to show how paradigmatic relations recognize different kinds of sense relations in Dholuo. The study will explore the ways in which synonyms differ in terms of dialectal differences, collocation, style and speaker's evaluative meaning. Under homonymy and polysemy, the study will explore the role of context in their interpretation. The pragmatic approach ignores the formal or descriptive accounts of semantic relations, in which words are considered only with reference to their denotative meaning, but explores the context of usage for interpretation.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Studies have been done on Dholuo to analyse meaning relations. Atoh (2001) looks at nouns in relation to the semantic field and their componential properties. In this case nouns belong to a specific domain by virtue of their shared sense relations. Oduol (1990) is concerned with semantic aspects in relation to dialectical variation. We therefore hope to establish some interesting and important facts about semantic relations which are ignored by other approaches.

A particular lexeme can have different sense relation with other lexemes at the same time. A native speaker of Dholuo should understand these relations well enough to determine the interpretation of meaning. This study seeks to give an analysis of the logical relations in Dholuo lexicon and find out to what extent meaning depends on context and the extent to which semantic relations is measured through lexical pragmatic processes.

Speakers of a language will often use a particular lexeme with different meanings. To prevent misunderstanding in the majority of instances this study will show that meaning is sometimes dependent on context.

No study has been done to analyse sense relations using the lexical pragmatic approach and this study, looks at which lexical processes are applicable in the analysis.

In relation to the above problem statement the study seeks to answer the following questions;

1. What are the identifiable sense relations in the Dholuo lexicon?
2. What are the semantic characteristics of the sense relations in Dholuo?
3. What is the role of context in the interpretation of certain lexemes?
4. Can lexical pragmatic processes of broadening and narrowing analyse sense relations in Dholuo?

1.4 Objectives of the study

In order to answer the above questions the study was be guided by the following objectives:-

1. To identify the various sense relations in Dholuo.
2. To determine the semantic characteristics of synonyms in Dholuo.
3. To find out the role of context in the interpretation of homonyms and polysemous words.
4. To find out whether the lexical pragmatic processes of broadening and narrowing analyse sense relations in Dholuo.

1.5 Hypotheses

The hypotheses to be tested in the study are as follows:

1. In the Dholuo lexicon, various sense relations exist e.g. synonyms, homonyms, polysemy, hyponyms and antonyms.
2. There are specific semantic characteristics of sense relations in Dholuo, for example synonyms which are a result of attitude, formality, dialectal variation, collocation and borrowing.

3. Lexical relations among words depend on more than just semantic qualities of a word and are highly context dependent.
4. Lexical pragmatic processes of broadening and narrowing can adequately interpret sense relationships.

1.6 Justification of the study

Studies have been done to analyse the network of relationship within and across semantic domains in the Dholuo lexicon mainly using the componential analysis method. Consequently, this study adopts a lexical pragmatic approach to give new insights on meaning and concepts encoded. This study also provides valuable information to Dholuo linguistics by showing the lexical variation within dialects and characteristics of sense relations.

1.7 Scope and Limitation

This is a lexical pragmatic study of sense relations in Dholuo. In this study we look into the different sense relations realized in Dholuo. In our analysis we look at the semantic characteristics acquired by these relations in Dholuo and how reference goes beyond denotative meaning. We use nouns, and verbs and adjectives as relevant grammatical categories. Only simple sentences are used where necessary to show contextual meaning. This study avoids syntax and morphology. This study does not analyse antonyms.

Words and sentences of KSN dialect which is regarded as the standard dialect are used in this study except for cases of dialectal variations where we need the BU dialect.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

Lexical pragmatic theory

This study adopts lexical pragmatics as its theoretical framework. This is a recent development in the field of pragmatics which was proposed and developed by Blumstein in 1990. It is composed of two theories in one, that is, lexical semantics and conversational implicatures.

The theory was further developed by Scholars namely Carston 2002; Blumstein 1998, 2002 and Wilson 2003 who tackled the problems and inadequacies that arose in the theory.

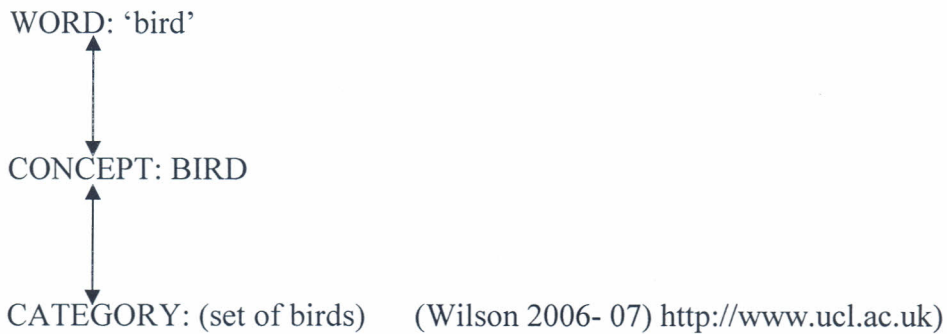
The theory of lexical pragmatic raises wider issues on notion about the lexical semantic nature of concepts and their role in communication and cognition, acquisition of words, innateness and how word meanings are processed.

1.8.1 Lexical Pragmatics

The goal of lexical semantics is to study the relation between words and the mentally represented concepts they encode. The claim is that word meanings are concepts and that concepts represent categories of objects, events, or properties in the world or other possible worlds and they are interpreted in context.

From the model below the concept (BIRD) which is encoded by the word (bird) denotes the category of bird and activates encyclopaedic knowledge which can be added to the context and used in comprehending utterances concerning bird.

Model of lexical semantics



The claim considered here is that the word 'bird' which encodes the concept BIRD may communicate a slightly different concept (e.g. BIRD* or BIRD** often referred to in the literature as an Adhoc concept).

Lexical semantic approaches the study of concepts from a linguistic perspective and investigates what properties concepts would have to function adequately as word meanings.

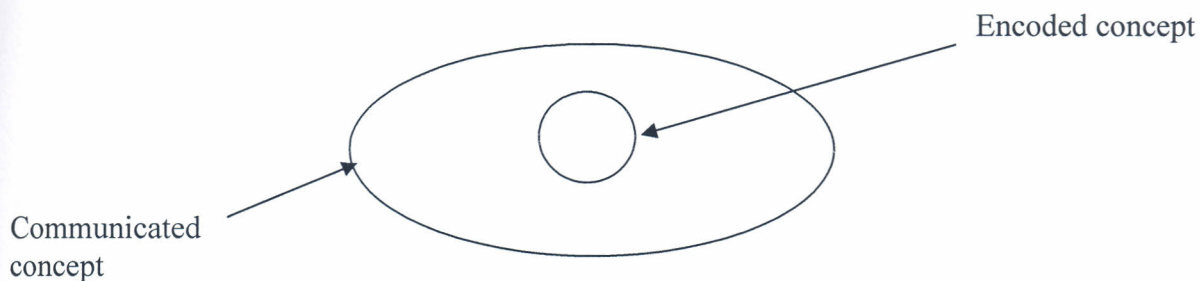
Lexical pragmatic however goes beyond the mere meaning of the word but analyses the meaning in the context the word occurs. The theory distinguishes two main types of lexical pragmatic processes in which the concept communicated by use of a word may differ from the concept encoded.

These are

- Narrowing
- Broadening

1.8.2 Lexical Narrowing

Lexical narrowing is a case where a word is used in a more specific sense than the encoded one resulting in a narrowing of the linguistically encoded concept. (Wilson D. (2006-2007:2).



(Wilson 2006-07) <http://www.ucl.ac.uk>

The effect of narrowing is to highlight a particular subpart of the linguistically encoded concept.

Here are some illustrations

(1a) All men *drink* (*drink* liquid, drink alcohol, drink a lot of alcohol).

(1b) Red face, red eyes, red hair, red apple, red watermelon.

In (1a) *drink* might convey not the encoded sense *drink liquid* but, more specifically, drink alcohol or drink significant alcohol. In (1b) each use of the word *red* would pick out a slightly different colour shade, from the appearance of the object (e.g. a red apple has red peel, a red watermelon has red flesh, etc.). As illustrated by these examples, lexical narrowing is quite a flexible process that is the encoded meaning may be narrowed to different degrees and in different directions depending on the occasion of use. The central task for lexical pragmatics is to explain what triggers the narrowing process in the mind, what direction it takes, and when it stops.

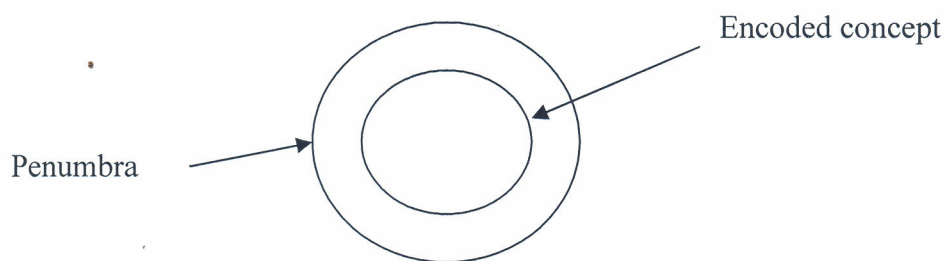
1.8.3 Lexical Broadening

Lexical broadening is a case where a word is used to convey a more general sense than the encoded one with consequent widening of the linguistically specified denotation.

There are different varieties of lexical broadening but this study will focus on metaphorical extension. Lexical broadening processes include;

a. Approximation

This is a variety of broadening where a word with a relatively strict sense is extended to penumbra of cases that strictly speaking fall outside its linguistically specified denotation.



(Wilson 2006-07) <http://www.ucl.ac.uk>

Here are illustrations

(2a) This coat cost 1,000 dollars (about 1,000 dollars).

(2b) The stones form a circle (approximately circle).

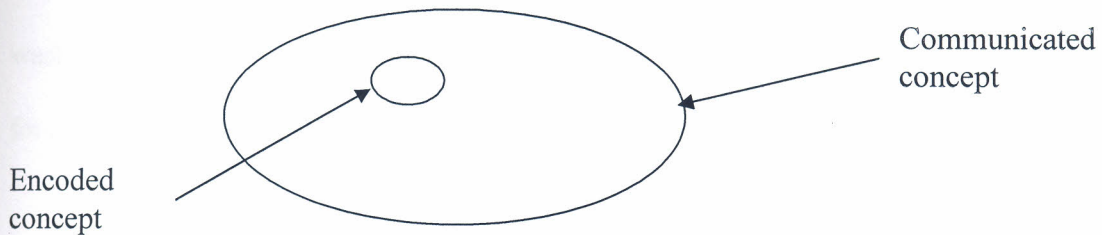
(2c) The room was silent (almost silent).

(2d) The water is boiling (almost boiling).

The above examples would be acceptable approximations when applied to objects that almost satisfy the strict definition. In the above examples one is not talking about the exact situation, given (2a) the stones do not actually form a circle but something similar to a circle.

b. Metaphorical extension

In metaphorical extension the communicated concept departs much further from the encoded concept.



(Wilson 2006-07) <http://www.ucl.ac.uk>

(3a) Mary is a rose, a lily, a daisy, a violet, a jewel, a diamond,

(3b) *That book puts me to sleep.

The word *violet* encodes the concept VIOLET and our encyclopaedic knowledge of *violet* includes not only the information that they are flowers, but they are thought of as things that are delicate, unflambouyant. In interpreting the utterance in (3a), the hearer uses this concept, with its associated encyclopaedic knowledge as a starting point for constructing a hypothesis about the concept the speaker wants to express, and the implications the speaker intends to convey. In (3b) there are three possible interpretations: as an approximation (the book puts me almost to sleep), a hyperbole (the book puts me in a state not too far removed from sleep) and a metaphor (the book puts me in a state that has properties in common with sleep).

There is a distance between concept encoded and the one communicated.

c. Category Extension

It's often been noticed that words like *Hoover* which start out as names for particular brand items (e.g. vacuum cleaners) may end up being used to apply to the whole broader category. Thus (4a) might be understood as asking not specifically for *Omo* but for any washing detergent and (4b) might be understood as asking not specifically for *Kimbo* but for any brand of cooking oil.

(4a) This shirt needs some Omo. (Washing detergent)

(4b) Have you any kimbo. (Cooking oil)

This is called category extension because the name of a salient category member is extended to apply to the whole broader category to which it belongs. It would be interesting to investigate what linguistic factors are involved in this process. For example, does it only take place when there is a single highly salient and easily processable brand name?

d. Neologism

Newly – coined verbs derived from nouns are no harder to understand than regular verbs.

(5a) He *smsed* the information.

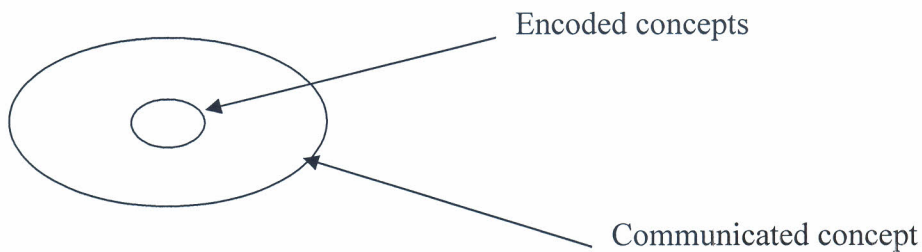
(5b) Can you *google* that website.

This suggests that lexical – pragmatic processes apply on – line in a flexible, context-dependent way, creating novel verb senses from existing nouns (*google*, *sms*).

Indeed, the borderline between familiar and unfamiliar words is likely to be drawn in the same place for all speakers of a language or for the same speaker at different times: while some hearers maybe able to retrieve a ready – made word sense, others may have to construct it on – line. Pragmatic inference continually makes up for gaps in the vocabulary, and this should be taken into account in an adequate theory of lexical pragmatics.

e. Hyperbole

Hyperbole may be seen as a type of broadening which allows the communicated concept to depart much further from the encoded concepts.



(Wilson 2006 – 07) <http://www.ucl.ac.uk>)

For example (6a), would be an approximation if the water were almost boiling and hyperbole if the water was merely hotter than expected or uncomfortably hot. Similarly, (6b) would be an approximation if the speaker were on the point of fainting and hyperbole if she were simple very hungry.

(6a) This water is boiling. (hotter than expected / uncomfortably hot)

(6b) I'm fainting from hunger. (very hungry)

1.8.4 Concepts representation

Concepts are mental representations which can be acquired and lost and which act as the input to mentally represented inference.

Thinking about words is a metalinguistic endeavour since we do not have direct, conscious access to the structure in the lexicon. Thus, the objects we reflect upon when reading a word are our perception of the words and the objects with which we are doing this reflection are the concepts we have of the word (Murphy 2003:23).

Corpus studies often reveal that the ways we use words are quite different from our beliefs about how the words are used (Murphy2003:23). For example, the most common meaning of *run* involves movement by foot but another use of *run* is 'manage'. This is an indication that the conceptual representation of *run* and the prototype for that concept is the version that indicates movement.

According to Fodor (1981) concepts are innate and are triggered by experience rather than learned.

In his critique of the classical view of word meaning he states that 'word meanings are in general simple unanalysable concepts which do not decompose into clusters of simpler concepts and are therefore innate.'

Fodor's original argument is that most words are atomic concepts which can not be learned by hypothesis formation and confirmation and must therefore be innate.

In recent developmental literature he suggests that what is innate is not individual concepts but the formats and mechanisms for constructing concepts in different domains.

This preserves the idea that concepts are not learned by hypothesis formation and confirmation but by proposing this he does not commit to radical concept nativism (the assumption that all our individual concepts are preformed and innate).

Fodor's original argument on innateness only took one step: concepts are not learned therefore concepts are innate.

The above claim that concepts are not learned is compatible with two rather different pictures of how they are acquired (a) innate mechanism for concept construction are not inductive learning mechanisms (b) concepts themselves are innate.

Concepts both learned and innate are not acquired independently of experience.

For Fodor the crucial difference between learned and innate concepts is the role that experience plays. Fodor states that learning is a rational process of hypothesis formation and confirmation in which experience provides evidence for the hypothesis that is learned. By contrast he claims that innate concepts are triggered by experience and that triggering is not a rational process: the triggering experience does not provide evidence for the resulting hypothesis.

According to Fodor (1981) innate meant that the concept itself was fully formed and merely awaiting activation by experience and triggering was simply the activation of a pre-formed concept.

Empiricists claim we have a small stock of innate sensory concepts which once 'triggered' or activated by exposure to appropriate experiences may be combined to form more complex concepts.

Rationalists claim that our stock of innate concepts is much greater and goes well beyond those delivered to us by the senses. Fodor takes an extreme rationalist position which commits him to the claim that there are a vast number of innate concepts.

1.9 Literature Review

This section is divided into two parts. The first part consists of literature based on Dholuo studies and other related literature while the second part discusses literature on the theory.

1.9.1 Literature Based on Dholuo Grammar and other Related Literature

There exists works on basic Dholuo grammar which are intended for non-native speakers who want to acquire a working knowledge of the language.

These include titles like: *An Elementary Luo Grammar* (Stafford 1967), *Elementary Lessons in Dholuo* (Huntingford 1959) and *A Grammar of Kenyan Luo* (Tucker 1994).

These helped in the generation of data.

Oduol (1990) identifies the phonological, grammatical and lexical features which manifests each dialect. Oduol's work will give accurate words for KSN that are used in this study. A lot of literature in Dholuo exists today. Most of the works include studies in phonology, syntax and morphology by various scholars. Included here are Oduol (1990), Okombo (1982), on morphology processes in Dholuo and Omondi (1982) who discussed

major syntactic structures in Dholuo and Oduor (2002) on syllable weight and its effects in Dholuo Phonology.

A more related source to this study is Atoh (2001) who analyses the meanings of Dholuo nouns using a semantic field approach to find out whether Dholuo nouns are chosen on the basis of their field relations. His work gives this study clues on the network of relationship that exists within Dholuo lexicon.

Mwebia (2006) explores the sense relations in Kimeru using lexical pragmatics theory. She tries to find out the difference and similarities in sense relations involving corresponding lexical items in English and Kimeru. Her work clarifies the feature of universality in sense relations.

Munga (2009) discusses the sense relations in Gĩkũyũ using the lexical pragmatic theory. She seeks to investigate the interface between semantics and pragmatics. Her work gives us more insight on the role of context in analyzing sense relations.

1.9.2 Theoretical Literature

The basic idea of lexical pragmatics was invented by Blutner (1998). Discussing several examples, he argued that a lexical item and a syntactically complex equivalent of it may make different contributions to the interpretation of a sentence without making different contributions to its semantic structure.

Referring back to Grice's maxims of conversation, he demonstrated that the difference between linguistically encoded semantic structure and the suggested meaning is a consequence of general principles of cooperative behavior.

Lexical pragmatics is a research field that tries to give a systematic and explanatory account of pragmatic phenomena that are connected with semantic underspecification of lexical items. The conceptual core of lexical pragmatics demands a formulation of conversational implicature paired with the idea of semantic underspecification in the lexicon and appropriate representation of contextual and encyclopedic knowledge.

For Gricean's, conversational implicatures are those non-truth functional aspects of utterances which are conveyed by virtue of the assumption that the speaker and the hearer are obeying the co-operative principle of conversation and more specifically various conversation maxims.

Since it has proven difficult to define conversational implicature precisely an important step in explicating the Gricean Framework has been made by Atlas and Levinson (1981). According to Grice in Horn and Ward (2004), conversational implicatures are inferences that arise during conversation, on the basis of some maxim underlying interaction that interlocutors seem to observe or violate, while co-operatively communicating with each other. Hence they are pragmatic inference. Of all the inferences that may be associated with an utterance the intended ones are those that constitute what Grice called implicatures.

Grice formalized an assumption that when engaged in conversation human beings behave rationally and co-operatively in what he called co-operative principle. On the assumption that such a principle is at work in communication, Grice proceeds to distinguish four categories of special application of this principle, under which more specific maxims and submaxims fall. These categories are borrowed from Kant, and they are quantity, quality relation and manner.

Grice's work has been inherited in what is known as a neo-Gricean theory. Horn (1984) proposes that conversational co-operation involves two principles namely the quantity principle and the relation principle hence Q and R principles. The former specifies that we must say as much as we can, whereas the latter that we should say no more than we must.

Also working within the neo-Gricean tradition, Levinson (1981) discuss an apparent clash between Horn's Q and R principles and proposes a distinction between what a conversational principle enjoins the speaker to do versus what it licences the addressee to think. On this bases he introduced Q principle and I principle which is a reformulation of Atlas and Levinson (1981). According to the Q principle, the speaker does not make a statement that is weak than the knowledge the world allows, while I principle is stated as a principle of minimization.

Wilson and Sperber (1998) attempted to work out in detail Grice's central claims: that an utterance automatically creates expectation which guide the hearer towards speaker's

meaning through the relevance theory. The central claim of relevance theory is that the expectation of relevance raised by an utterance is precise and predictable enough to guide the hearer towards the speaker's meaning. Utterance raises expectation of relevance not because speakers are expected to obey a co-operative principle and maxims but because the search for relevance is a basic feature of human cognition.

1.10 Research Methodology

This section deals mainly with the methods of data collection and analysis.

1.10.1 Data Collection

Being a native speaker of Dholuo the researcher took advantage of her native competence to generate relevant data. Such data helped in gauging pertinent issues of the research problem. The data obtained in this manner was subjected to cross checking with other twenty speakers through a questionnaire.

Using the elicitation method, the researcher carried out interviews with other speakers of both BU and KSN. The informants were picked from Siaya, Rachuonyo and Kisumu districts and they were between the ages of 32 – 58 years. To ensure competency the informants were not from border districts to avoid interference from other languages. The researcher was also interested in specific meanings of certain lexemes and different attitudes portrayed by speakers towards different words. This information was recorded and transcribed in note books. The data used included nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs euphemisms and sentences where clarification was required. The informants were asked about the synonyms of particular words in their dialect, their usage and the attitude they

expressed. Different meanings of particular words were given by interviewees to differentiate homonyms from polysemous words and they were analysed in terms of their grammatical categories and metaphoric usage.

In view of researcher's knowledge of the two dialects and study area, sampling method was used. The basic requirements for the informants were that they should be native speakers of either KSN or BU.

Library research was conducted to find out any information related to the subject under discussion and the internet was used specifically to acquire current information regarding the theoretical framework.

1.10.2 Data Analysis

The collected data of semantic paradigms was analysed within the framework of lexical pragmatic processes of broadening and narrowing.

1.11 Significance of the study

The study is a confirmation that lexical relations are relevant in the description of any language. This study was motivated by the realization that speaker's intended meaning varies according to the same sense of the word used and the context in which it is used.

Therefore this study sheds lights on the interpretation of meaning of words in Dholuo and verifies the lexical pragmatic theory.

1.2 Conclusion

This chapter has among other things, introduced the study, its objectives and hypotheses it aims to test. It has also stated the research problem that this study is set to answer. A brief historical background of Dholuo, the language under study has been looked at. The scope of the study has also been set.

The lexical pragmatics has been chosen for the study because of its ability to analyse relations between lexemes. Also done in this chapter is a review of the literature relevant to this study. A two-fold review has been done-review of literature on Dholuo and other related literature. Included are the theory of the study and an illustration of the methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER TWO

SYNONYMS

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the various manifestations of synonyms in Dholuo. The study explores the different ways in which synonyms differ in terms of dialectal differences, formality, collocations, borrowing and speaker's attitude.

Cruse (2000:156) says that:

if we interpret synonymy simply as sameness of meaning, then it would appear to be rather uninteresting relation; if however we say that synonyms are words whose semantic similarities are more salient than their differences then a potential area of interest opens up.

Ullmann (1996:142) notes that very few words are completely synonymous in the sense of being interchangeable in any context without slightest alleviation in objective meaning feeling-tone or evocative value.

Palmer (1981:89) in support of the same idea says that 'there are no real synonyms, that no two words have exactly the same meaning'. Crystal (1995:164) adds that 'it's usually possible to find some nuance which separates them or a context in one of them can appear but the others cannot'.

2.1 Synonyms and Formality

English has words such as *mum*, *mummy*, and *mother* which are synonymous but vary in degree of formality. *Mum* and *mummy* are less formal while *mother* is used in formal situations.

In Dholuo there are different lexical items which have the same meaning but show different variations in formality. Consider the examples below which mean *to die*.

Word	Gloss
(7a) tho	to die
(7b) ng'ielo orengo	to die
(7c) nindo e bat	to die
(7d) gwe tao	to die
(7e) leng'o lep	to die

In Dholuo these words are used to convey the idea of 'to die' but these vary in degree of formality. In the above examples, (7a) is used in formal situations and is applicable for both human beings and animals while (7b, c, d, e) are used when referring to human beings only. Consider the examples below.

(8a) Gweno otho.

A hen is dead.

(8b) Jakwath otho.

A herdsboy is dead.

(8c) Otieno nyoro onindo e bade.

Otieno died yesterday.

(8d) Japuonjwa ogwe tao.

Our teacher is dead.

(8e) Ruoth ose leng'o lewe.

A chief has died.

)

There are lexemes which are euphemisms of *to die* but which have another different meaning. A euphemism is a word or expression used for talking unpleasant or embarrassing subjects without mentioning the things themselves. (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Consider the following examples.

Word	Gloss
(9a) Yweyo	to rest
(9b) Nindo	to sleep
(9c) Luongo	to call
(9d) Weyo	to leave
(9e) Kao Chuny	to take ones soul
(9f) lal	lost

In the example (7b, 7c, 7d and 7e) are used in polite and informal settings while (7a) is used in formal setting to show that one has passed away. Consider the following constructions;

(10a) Chunye mondo oywe mayom.

Let his soul rest in peace.

(10b) Jonyuolne ne osenindo.

His/her parents had died.

(10c) Jaduong' ong'ielo orengo.

An old man is dead.

The euphemisms (10a, b, and c) are expressions of *to die* also used in religious context such as in church or funerals. Consider the following constructions as well:

(11a) Nyasaye ose kao chunye.

God has taken his soul.

(11b) Nose luonge.

He had been called.

(11c) Owadwa oweyowa.

Our brother has left us.

(11d) Mosenindo en nera.

The one who has slept is my uncle.

(11e) Ma en nyamin Amondi mane oselal.

This is a sister to Amondi whom we had already lost.

The terms below are used to refer to the action of giving birth. The lexical item in (12a) is used in formal situations and is used for animals and human beings. In (12b) *pogore* is used in informal settings to refer to human beings only. Consider the following

Word	Gloss
(12a) Nyuol	to give birth
(12b) Pogore	to give birth

(13a) Dhiang' onyuol dala.

A cow has given birth at home.

(13b) Onyuolo nyathi ma nyako.

She has given birth to a baby girl.

Lexical item (12b) is seen as the euphemism to the form (12a) and hence used in less formal situations as shown in the following example:

(14a) Miyono ne pogore saa auchiel.

That woman gave birth at noon.

Though degree of formality determines the context of use of synonyms, there are lexical items in Dholuo which are considered to be used in formal settings but are occasionally used in informal settings. Below are examples of such lexemes.

A	B	Gloss
(15a) Layo	olo pi, losruok	to go for short call
(15b) Pielo	dhi oko, losruok	to go for long call

In the above examples, forms in category A are formal but are rarely used in public speaking while those in category B are informal and acceptable in all contexts.

The forms in A are not polite, socially unacceptable and speakers of the language though aware of them refrain from using them.

2.2 Synonyms and Dialectal Variations

In Dholuo, dialectal variations also account for the differences in synonyms where according to Palmer (1981:89) one member of the pair belongs to another dialect.

According to Crystal, (1995:164) one is standard and the other is regional.

Table 1: An inventory of dialectal synonyms in Dholuo

KSN	BU	Gloss
Nyathi	Mihia	Baby
Puodho	Ndalo	Garden
Kor ot	Sisi	Wall
Oliktiga	Hanyinya	Bat
Chiko	Huaro	To instruct
Lwedo	Ching	Hand
Dayo	Wuon ot	Mother-in-law
Chieth gweno	Osirgoho	Chicken droppings
Oluth kuon	Oliho	Cooking stick
Kogwen	Osirawende	Dawn
Ran	Dhero	Thin
Chiek	Nyadundo	Short
Miriambo	Miriasia	A lie
Kawuono	Gonyo	Today
Mariwa	Omuogo	Cassava
Jogo	Sino	Disgust

Pidho	Gago	Feed
Tero	Lago	Inherit
Kwoyo	Twang'o	Sew
Chich	Tang'	Cautious
Gwom	Nyuongo	Squat
Ndara/Apaya/	Yoo	Road
Olando	Kedi	Cane
Lilo	Chido	Make dirty
Laro	Dipo	Lawn
Ong\ongruok	Haniaf	Chameleon
Chiego	Geng'o	To shut
Ooyo	Dawe	No
Dhoot	Thigo	Door
Sayo	Hombo	To plead
Kor mach	Kor nindo	Bedroom
Abila	Duol	Oldman's house
Bando	Oduma	Maize
Ruowo	Chano	To accompany each other
Bugo	Bur	Hole
Thuolo	Huyanga	Spacious

Even though each dialect has a particular term, speakers of both dialects use either of the items to communicate. In some cases some synonyms can not be substituted in all

contexts, for example *pidho* in BU means to plant and in KSN it means to feed as well as plant therefore, they are not total synonyms. The KSN version would be considered because it is the standard dialect.

2.3 Synonyms and Borrowing

Borrowing has led to the introduction of synonyms into the Dholuo lexicon. Borrowing refers to linguistic items being taken over by one language or dialect from another (Crystal 1995:46).

Once borrowed, the words are modified either phonologically or morphologically so that they are accommodated in the language. In the table below are words that have been borrowed from different languages. Some of these words have native counter parts and so the borrowed item and its native form have the same meaning.

Table 2: An inventory of borrowed lexical items in Dholuo

Borrowed words	Borrowed item	Source language	Dholuo word	Gloss
Motor car	Mtoka	English	Nyamburko	Car
Hospital	Osiptal	English	Od thieth	Hospital
Pesa	Pesa	Kiswahili	Omuom	Money
Doctor	Laktar	English	Ajuoga	Doctor
Police	Polis	English	Obila	Police
Satan	Satan	English	Jachien	Satan
Prostitute	Malaya	Kiswahili	Jachode	Prostitute
Kalamu	Kalam	Kiswahili	None	Pen/Pencil
Sahani	San	Kiswahili	Tao	Plate
Paka	Paka	Kiswahili	Nyambura	Cat
Simba	Simba	Kiswahili	Sibuor	Lion
Jumapili	Jumapil	Kiswahili	Odira	Sunday
Blanket	Onget	English	None	Blanket
Office	Opis	English	None	Office
Bus	Bas	English	None	Bus

The borrowed lexical items and their native counter parts can sometimes be used interchangeably in all contexts hence complete synonyms and other times can give rise to partial synonyms. Consider the example below.

(16a) Polis nomake.

(16b) Obila nomake.

The police arrested him/her.

In the following examples *simba* and *sibuor* are interchangeable.

(17a) Simba lawo muok.

(17b) Sibuor lawo muok.

A lion is chasing an ant-bear.

In the above examples the lexical items *polis* and *obila*, *simba* and *sibuor* are complete synonyms and can be used interchangeably in all contexts.

Borrowing can lead to partial synonyms in the use of *motorcar* and the native word *nyamburko*. *Motor car* is a type of vehicle in English. *Nyamburko* and *mtoka* refers to all types of vehicles in general and therefore meaning has been broadened. Meaning can be made specific by use terms such as *matatu*, *bas*, (bus) *opuk*, (Volkswagen) *e.t.c*

There are lexemes that are not interchangeable in all contexts. The term *laktar* refers to a medical doctor where as *ajuoga* not only refers to a medical doctor but also a witch doctor. See the following examples.

(18a) Laktar nomiye yiend amuonya.

The doctor gave him tablets.

(18b) Ajuoga nokelo yath marito dala.

A witch doctor brought charms to protect the home.

2.4 Synonyms and Emotive Meaning

Synonyms in Dholuo also differ in terms of emotions associated with one member of the pair. A word can be viewed as portraying positive or negative attitude as seen in Table 3

Table 3: An inventory of lexical items with emotive meaning

A		B	
Positive	Negative	Gloss	
Miyo	Dhako	Woman	
Mamani	Meru	Your mother	
Puot	Kodore	Thin	
Chwe	Odhurre	Fat	
Bayo	Fuong'opiny	Stroll	
Duong'	Ti	Old	
Tegno	Opong'	Mature	
Chiek	Thirno	Short	
Tin	Nyathi	Young	
Pek	Yach	Pregnant	
Wuoro	Dichwo	Man	
Jaoda	Chwora	My husband	
Jaoda	Chiega	My wife	

In the above examples, the lexical items in B column are used to depict negative attitude, while those in A depict positive attitude when used by a speaker.

The terms *dhako* and *miyo* which both denotes a woman depicts different attitudes of the speaker.

(19a) *Miyo moro obiro dala.*

(19b) *Dhako moro obiro dala.*

In the above example *dhako* is derogatory and portrays a woman who is not respectable and is usually used when a person wants to demean a woman. *Miyo*, on the otherhand, refers to a respectable woman. See another example

(20a) *Atieno en nyako ma okodore.*

(20b) *Atieno en nyako ma puot.*

Atieno is a thin girl.

On the one hand, (20a) shows that Atieno is not only thin but also weak, (20b), on the other hand, is an indication that Atieno is thin but strong.

The following examples further illustrate different attitudes expressed by synonymous words.

(21a) *Ohero bayo.*

He/She likes strolling.

(21b) *Ohero fuong'o piny.*

She/He likes roaming about.

(21c) *Wuoyi ma nyadundo.*

A short boy.

(21d) Wuoyi ma o thirno.

A boy with stunted growth.

(21e) Ng'atno chwe.

That person is fat.

(21f) Ng'atno odhurre.

That person has an unproportional body.

(21g) Nyako maduong' moromo.

A girl who is old enough.

(21h) Mama ma oti.

An old woman.

(21i) Omollo otegno ne chiege.

Omollo is older than his wife.

(21j) Omollo opong'.

Omollo is mature.

(21k) Akinyi yach/pek.

Akinyi is pregnant.

(21l) Ma chwora/jaoda.

This is my husband.

In (21b) *fuong'opiny* implies walking aimlessly this captures a negative attitude, *bayo* refers to strolling to relax though depending on the context the same lexeme can refer to prostituting. In (21d) *thirno* implies stunted growth and it portrays negative attitude as

compared to *nyadundo*. In (21f) *odhurre* is a situation where one's body is not presentable. In (21g) *duong'* refers to one being old enough while *ti* is too old. In (21i) *otegno* is more inclined to age in a negative way while *opong'* which is positive can be negative depending on context. In (21k) *pek* is a euphemism of *yach*.

2.5 Synonyms and Collocation

According to Palmer (1981) some words occur only in conjunction with others. The occurrence of a word alongside another is largely determined by meaning but sometimes cannot easily be predicted in terms of meanings of the associated words. The lexemes *Lando*, *silwal* and *rabuor* are used to express brown. *Lando* is used when referring to people or things of the female gender. *Silwal* is restricted to male gender while *rabuor* is neutral. Consider the following examples.

(22a) Nyako malando.

Brown girl.

(22b) Dhoot ma rabuor.

Brown door.

(22c) Wuowi ma silwal

Brown boy.

We cannot talk about *dhoot ma lando* or *Nyako ma rabuor* even if the colour is brown.

This collocation does not fit the gender. Murphy (2003:156) adds that words can be

synonyms in spite of having collocational pattern and sharing the same sense and this does not necessarily make the two words substitutable.

See other examples.

Dichol and *rateng* refer to black; *dichol* is used when referring to female while *rateng* is used with reference to men. *Rapudo* and *randere* are synonyms of slender determined by gender. We cannot say *ma nyako ma randere* (slender girl) but we say *nyako ma rapudo*.

Murphy (2003) refers to these patterns of collocation as **selectional** restrictions. The words *bara*, *kaya*, and *rama* are synonyms which give evidence of selectional restrictions in Dholuo.

(23a) Wiya bara.

I have headache.

(23b) Iya kaya.

I have stomachache

(23c) Denda rama.

I have bodyache

Kaya, *bara* and *rama* are synonyms for pain in different contexts like *wiya bara* (pain in the head) and *iya kaya* (pain in the stomachache). Selectional restriction on *kaya* prevents its substitution in *bara*.

2.6 Degrees of Synonyms

Lyons (1968:447) notes that synonymy is a matter of degree that any set of lexical items can be on a scale of similarity and differences in sense. This study shows that synonyms in Dholuo can be graded as total and partial. Total synonyms are those that are interchangeable in all contexts.

Near synonyms are those that are less similar and are not interchangeable. In Dholuo synonyms realized as a result of borrowing are total while those based on formality, dialectal variations, attitude and collocation are near synonyms.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has identified different manifestations of synonyms in Dholuo. As noted in our analysis, synonyms in Dholuo differ in terms of formality, dialectal difference, borrowing, attitude and collocation. Synonyms that are formal refer to both human beings and animals while those that are informal refer to only human beings. Synonyms that are used as euphemisms are both formal and informal. Some lexemes in the two dialects cannot be interchanged because they have a different meaning in the two dialects. Meanings of the borrowed lexemes are modified to suit the native word. There are degrees of synonymy in Dholuo. Some are total synonyms while others are near synonyms.

CHAPTER THREE

HOMONYMY

3.1 Introduction

In chapter two we dealt with synonymy in Dholuo. We identified and analyzed synonyms arising due to borrowing, dialectal variations attitude, formality, and collocations

This chapter concerns itself with the analysis of homonyms in Dholuo. It discusses lexical realization of homonyms from either same or different grammatical categories of words. We also try to explore if the concepts of homographs and homophones exist in the language.

A lexeme constitutes a case of homonymy if it shares distinctive properties (grammatical category and grammatical properties, sound form and spelling), yet have unrelated different meanings (Lobner 2002:44).

Saeed (2003:63) defines homonyms as unrelated senses of the same phonological word.

Ideally homonyms agree in all points that make up a lexeme except in meaning.

Homonyms can give rise to lexical ambiguity: same lexical form has different lexical meanings (Lobner 2002:44).

In Dholuo there are various lexemes in which a word conveys two or more unrelated meanings. The context in which the word occurs helps in determining the implied

meaning, since words with unrelated meanings may create ambiguity. Consider the following lexemes which are seen as homonyms in Dholuo.

(24a) Yie – N faith

(24b) Yie – N ship

(24c) Yie – V answer back

The meanings of these are different and refer to separate lexemes in the language.

(25a) An gi yie kuom Nyasaye.

I have faith in God.

(25b) Abiro gi yie .

I am coming by ship

(25c) Yie ka oluongi.

Answer back when you are called.

In the sentences above the lexeme *yie* is used both as a noun and as a verb. The context in which the word is used helps one to realize the intended meaning. Ullmann (1970:158) notes that most ambiguities of this kind will be clarified by the context and, in the spoken language, by intonation. For example

(26a) Kich – Orphan (low tone)

(26b) Kich – Bees (high tone)

The above do not qualify to be homonyms because they have different phonological forms. Homonymy is accompanied by syntactical differences and so when a word belongs to several parts of speech - as for instance *yie* which can be a noun and verb- these uses will differ not only in meaning but also in grammatical function (Ullmann 1970).

Dholuo does not have homographs i.e. words which have same spelling but different pronunciation such as lead (metal) and lead (dog's lead). It also lacks homophones which are spelt differently but pronounced in the same way such as *right* and *write*.

3.2 Homonyms and Grammatical Categories

In Dholuo, we have cases of homonyms based on the same grammatical category. These lexemes have the same phonological form, the same syntactic properties, but different meanings (Murphy 2003:170).

Homonyms such as *port* arise from the same grammatical category of nouns.

(27a) Port – harbour

(27b) Port – wine

There are cases where homonyms are basically verbs.

(28a) Lie – to say something untrue

(28b) Lie – to be in horizontal position

3.2.1 Homonyms and Nouns

Some homonyms in Dholuo are realized where the grammatical category of the lexemes are nouns.

(29a) Yien – firewood

– charms

– medicine

– trees

(29b) Tado – roof

– saucer

(29c) Msumba – bachelor

– slave

In the above examples, the meanings of the homonyms are quite distinct all referring to different items.

(30a) Isekelo yien.

Have you brought firewood / trees / charms / medicine?

The sentence above is ambiguous thus to disambiguate it an additional information is required.

(31a) Isekelo yiend chweko – firewood

(31b) Isekelo yiend amuonya – medicine (tablets)

(31c) Isekelo yien ma ipidho – trees (seedling)

(31d) Isekelo yiend ajuoga – charms

Having background information or contextual knowledge of what one is talking about will also disambiguate. If the topic under discussion is that of a sick person then the hearer will choose the right context. See the following.

Tado will be ambiguous in the following instance.

(32a) Ere tado?

Where is the roof /saucer?

(32b) *Tado* nitie e mesa.

The saucer is on the table.

It's difficult to tell whether *tado* is referring to a saucer or a roof in example (32a) but in (32b), the context implied is clear because a roof cannot be on the table.

3.2.2 Homonyms and Verbs

Some homonyms in Dholuo appear as verbs. There are cases where one lexical item takes a direct object (transitive) while the other doesn't take any object.

(33a) Nego – kill

– put off

(33b) Riembo – dismiss

– ride

– drive

The above homonyms require an object to avoid ambiguity. Thus we can say:

(34a) Onyango onego suna.

Onyango has killed a mosquito.

(34b) Awino onego taya.

Awino has put off the lights.

(34c) Japuonj riembo ndiga

A teacher is riding a bicycle.

(34d) Oriembo nyakware.

He has dismissed his grandchild.

(34e) Ariembo mtoka.

I am driving a car.

In a case where there is no object, information will be incomplete, for example (34a) and the meaning will be derived from context of use. In (34c) without the object *ndiga* one would imagine driving a vehicle or riding a motorbike.

Some homonyms do not take any object and the subject disambiguates the ambiguity.

(35a) Guok gweyo.

A dog is barking.

(35b) Mach omuoch.

Fire has exploded.

The above examples are homonymous verbs which are intransitive therefore the subject leads us in the interpretation.

3.2.3 Homonyms and Adjectives

Other homonyms are realized when the lexemes are adjectives.

(36a) Yot – light

– cheap

(36b) Tegno – mature

– strong

(36c) Kwar – red

– newborn

Since adjectives describe nouns, complete constructions must have a noun phrase. Even in the presence of a noun phrase, the homonym is still ambiguous. In this case meaning depends on context. Consider the following examples.

(37a) Nyathino kwar.

That baby is a newborn.

(37b) Wuowi ma otegnō.

A strong / mature boy.

(37c) Atonga ma yot.

A cheap / light basket.

In the above examples one requires context for interpretation in (36a) *kwar* which refers to red is sometimes used as an exaggeration to refer to a very brown person. It becomes difficult to tell whether it is a newborn or a brown baby.

3.3 Homonyms and Different Grammatical Categories

There are homonyms which survive as both a noun and verb, adjective and noun or adverb and noun.

3.3.1 Homonyms Related To Both Nouns and Verbs

The grammatical category of the lexemes involved in the relationship is a noun and a verb.

(38a) Tho – death N

– break V

– failure of crops V

– lights going off V

(38b) Liel – light V

– grave N

– funeral N

(38c) Leny – melt V

– heartburn N

Homonyms of such nature are not threatened by ambiguity this is because as verbs they take objects and this will differentiate them from nouns.

(39a) Leny mo.

Melt the oil.

(39b) An gi leny.

I have heartburn.

The above sentences are easy to interpret because the object in (41a) differentiates them from each other and directs context.

3.3.2 Homonyms Related to Adjectives and Nouns

Homonyms realized as both an adjective and a noun can only be disambiguated through context since in both cases a noun phrase is present.

(40a) Thuon – bold ADJ

– male species N

– cock N

(40b) En thuon.

He/she is bold.

It is a male species.

(40c) Gini ngima.

This is life.

This is healthy.

This as a whole.

The above can be disambiguated by context.

3.3.3 Homonyms Related to Both Adverbs and Nouns

Homonyms realized as adverbs and nouns are ambiguous and require context for interpretation.

(41a) Oko – out ADJ

– long call N

See the following example in context.

(41b) Odhi oko.

He/She/It has gone out.

He/She/It has gone for long call.

Only context disambiguates the above examples.

3.4 Degrees of Homonyms

Lyon (1981) identifies two degrees of homonymy; absolute and partial homonymy.

According to Lyon (1995:55) absolute homonymy occurs when homonyms satisfy three conditions;

- they must have unrelated meaning
- their forms must be identical
- the identical forms must be grammatically equivalent

Lobner (2002:43) notes that ‘if two lexemes with different unrelated meanings coincide in some but not all of their grammatical forms then one would talk of partial homonymy’. Lexemes that have the same grammatical category sometimes do not qualify as absolute homonyms because they differ syntactically a casing example are the transitive and intransitive verbs. In Dholuo there exists absolute homonyms especially those of the same category as nouns, adjectives and verbs. Homonyms of different grammatical categories are partial this is because they do not coincide in their grammatical forms.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed homonymy in Dholuo. It identified two types of homonyms depending on their syntactic behaviour i.e. homonyms based on lexeme of the same syntactic category and those based on different syntactic categories such as verbs and nouns, nouns and adjectives, and adverbs and nouns.

CHAPTER FOUR

POLYSEMY

4.1 Introduction

Chapter three investigated the concept of homonymy in Dholuo. We discussed the realization of homonymy on different grammatical categories. This chapter will discuss the concept of polysemy in the Dholuo language by examining sources such as shift in applications, metaphorical extension, borrowing and register as reasons for the development of polysemy.

4.2 Polysemy in Dholuo

Polysemy can be defined as ‘one form written or spoken having multiple meanings which are all related by extension’ (Yule 1997:121).

(Lobner 2002:43) notes that ‘a lexeme constitutes polysemy if it has two or more interrelated meanings or meaning variants.’ According to Lobner (2002) homonymy refers to lexemes with different meanings that happen to have the same sound form or spelling. In contrast polysemy is a matter of one lexeme having several interrelated meanings.

According to Lobner the phenomenon of polysemy is independent of homonymy: of two homonyms, each can be polysemous. This is to say that a lexeme does not become polysemous by the fact that it has more than one meaning. Consider this example:

(42a) Light A – certain sort of visible radiation

– electric lamps

– traffic lights

– illuminated areas

(42b) Light B – not heavy

– not difficult

In the above example (42a) has related meanings likewise the different readings of (42b) are somehow interrelated although the relation is harder to define.

However, *light A* and *light B* have not always had the same form; *light A* derived from a historical source which German developed into the present-day adjective *licht* while *light B* is a cognate a different German word, the adjective *leicht* meaning *easy* (Lobner 2002:43).

Sometimes difficulties arise in distinguishing between polysemy and homonymy. Dictionaries recognize the distinction between polysemy and homonymy by making polysemic lexeme a single dictionary entry and homophonous lexemes two or more separate entries.

According Lyon (1995) one reliable criterion is a word's historical origin. Homonyms are etymologically unrelated words that happen to be represented by the same string of letters in a language. Conversely polysemic lexemes are etymologically related and typically originate from metaphoric usage. For example *line* in *a line of people* and *a line drawn on a piece of paper* are etymologically related therefore this is a case of polysemy.

There is metaphorical mapping between the *basic line* and the arrangement of people. We do not imagine people forming exact line but the meaning of *line* has been transferred to people.

This distinction is not always straight forward since words that are etymologically related can over time drift so far apart that the original semantic relation is no longer recognizable. For example *sole of a shoe* and *sole of fish* have come from the same source yet speakers view them as semantically unrelated.

Polysemy can also be differentiated from homonymy by looking for central meaning which is difficult to detect unless there is transferred meaning like in the case of metaphors.

In Dholuo there are lexemes with different meanings but which are related. These lexemes occur in various contexts and differ from each other in a number of ways.

Consider the example below.

(43) Med – accelerate

- add
- include
- supplement
- increase
- continue

The above examples are polysemous because the meanings are related and the lexeme *med* has a general meaning of add, other meanings have metaphoric usage. When the lexeme *med* is used in a sentence, ambiguity is realized and only context will help in the interpretation of meaning. See the following examples.

(44a) Inyalo medo ng'wech saa olewo.

Can you accelerate it is late.

(44b) Med ji moko ariyo.

Add two more people.

(44c) Med nyinga.

Include my name.

(44d) Med winjo thum.

Continue listening to music.

(44e) Med ng'or e oganda.

Add green grams to supplement the beans.

(44f) Med volium.

Increase the volume.

In the above examples the verb *med* requires an object and this object is imperative in disambiguation. In cases where an object is not required the subject will disambiguate meaning. Consider the lexeme *kwang'*, which has a basic meaning *to float*. It has a related meaning *to swim* and without an object, a subject such as *oboke* or *nyithindo* directs its interpretation. This is gotten from our encyclopedic knowledge that a leaf cannot swim but can only float. Consider the following examples.

(45a) Oboke kwang' e i pi.

A leaf is floating in water.

(45b) Nyithindo kwang' e nam.

The children are swimming in the lake.

(45c) Adala kwang' nikech omer

Adala is staggering because he is drunk.

In (45c) the aspect of movement in uncontrolled way is metaphorically linked to a floating object.

4.3 Polysemy and Shifts in Application

(Ullmann 1970:160) notes that words have a number of different aspects of meaning according to the contexts in which they are used. Some of these aspects are purely ephemeral; others may develop into permanent shades of meaning and as the gap between them widens, we may eventually come to regard them as different senses of the same term.

Shifts in application are particularly noticeable in the use of adjectives since these are apt to change their meaning according to the noun they qualify.

For example the adjective *handsome* brings out different meanings depending on the nouns: person, conduct and sizes as shown below

(46a) Handsome person – beautiful

(46b) Handsome conduct – generous

(46c) Handsome size – ample

(Ullmann 1962:160)

In Dholuo the adjective *ng'ich* will be used in the following senses.

(47) Ng'ich

- new / sleek (of car)
- smart (of office)
- damp (of clothes)

These can be shown in the following context.

(48a) En gi mtokaa mang'ich.

He has a new / sleek vehicle.

(48b) En gi opis mang'ich.

He has a smart office.

In the above examples *ng'ich* is polysemous because it changes meaning slightly due to the noun it is attached to. Ambiguity is not experienced because the nouns which the adjectives qualify disambiguate the context.

Ullman (1970:161) notes that 'It must not be thought, however, that other word classes are not exposed to such shifts'. Consider the verb *winjo* which is polysemic due to shifts in its application and its transitive uses.

(49) Winjo

- Hear
- Feel
- Listen
- Understand

It is used in various contexts as follows:

(50a) Winjo koyo – to feel cold

(50b) Winjo koko – to hear noise

(50c) Winjo thum – to listen to music

(50d) Winjo wach – to understand what is said

The verb '*winjo*' has been used transitively and therefore the object is vital disambiguation. This is polysemous because it refers to an inner feeling but which varies

4.4 Polysemy and Metaphor

A typical dictionary definition of a metaphor is: 'The use of a word or phrase to mean something different from the literal meaning' (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). According to (Cruse 2000:205), metaphors are an essential component of human cognition which is conceptual in nature and is a means whereby the abstract and intangible areas of experience can be conceptualized in terms of the familiar and concrete (Cruse 2000:205).

Many polysemous senses are clearly related metaphorically (Cruse 2000:112). He adds that polysemous meanings that a word develops begin as metaphorical extensions of a primary meaning of that word. For example *head* in the sense of *head of a person*, (which is the central sense) *head of a company*, and *head of a table* presumably originated as metaphorical extension of *head* in its primary sense of the upper part of the body.

Ullmann (1970:162) adds that a word can be given one or more figurative senses without losing its original meaning: old and new meaning will live one side by side as long as there is no possibility of confusion between them. For example the word *rombe* refers to *sheep* but is also used metaphorically to refer to *followers in a church*.

There must be some essential connection between the lexeme used metaphorically and its metaphorical meaning. Consider the following example.

(51) Eye

- Two organs on the face that one sees with.
- A hole or an aperture in a needle or tool.
- The opening through which the water of a fountain wells up.
- The centre of a flower, leaf bud of a potato.

In the above example *eye* is used metaphorically in *eye of a needle*, *eye of a fountain*, *eye of a flower*, to mean *a round opening of something* and the basis for metaphorical extension is the shape of the eye relative to the rest of the human body and the round opening of the needle, fountain and flower.

In Dholuo the lexeme *ich* acquires another sense which resembles the first one but which is used figuratively. Consider the example below.

(52) *Ich* – stomach (central sense)

– pregnancy

Consider how it is used metaphorically in the sentence below.

(53) *Ich kao dweye ochiko.*

A pregnancy takes nine months.

In the above example ‘stomach’ is the original sense of the word ‘*ich*’. It is used metaphorically to refer to *pregnancy*. There is connection between *stomach* and *pregnancy* which triggers metaphorical extension. In the mind, there is linkage between the stomach and pregnancy, owing to the fact that evidence of a pregnancy is seen in the stomach. Without such connection, processing of the information will not be worthwhile due to lack of contextual effect, yet the more the contextual effect the greater the relevance. The greater the relevance the less effort it takes to discover that *ich* meant *pregnancy* in that context thus disambiguation in this case is relevance driven.

Another example to show metaphorical extension as a source of polysemy is the lexeme *jakwath*.

(54) *Jakwath* – shepherd (original sense)

– pastor

In (54) there is resemblance between *shepherd* and *pastor*. A shepherd leads, looks after and watches over the flock. These characteristics of a shepherd are transferred to the pastor and he is expected to have them. The right context will yield adequate contextual effect which makes the information communicated to be relevant.

4.5 Polysemy and Register

In Dholuo, polysemy in words may also occur due to the word's usage in a particular profession or field. Breal quoted in Ullmann (1970:163) notes that:

In every trade or profession, there is a certain idea which is so much present to ones mind, so dearly implied, that it seems unnecessary to state it when speaking

In English language for example, the lexical item *paper* cannot only refer to the material in general but also to a variety of other things according to different fields.

(55) Paper

Law – Legal or official documents

Journalism – A newspaper

Teaching – A set of examination questions

Research – A document presented in a conference

In the above examples *paper* is seen in different senses as a result of the background knowledge that one has.

The term *action* also can have different meanings depending on different profession. For example:

(56) Action

Lawyer – Legal action

Soldier – Military action

Teacher – Disciplinary action

In the examples above, a word acquires a number of specialized senses only one of which is applicable in a given field this is to say that action in a teacher's context is different from a lawyer's. In this case the context of the profession forces the word to come out with a different meaning.

In Dholuo '*waro*' has a general meaning in language and specialized senses in a restricted field.

(57) Waro – relieve (general)

Courts – bail out

Religion – save / redeem

When used in unspecific context the lexeme *waro* can cause ambiguity as seen in the following examples

(58) Owara.

(59a) He has saved me.

(59b) He has bailed me out.

(59c) I am saved.

To disambiguate the above sentences, a relevant context is required, i.e. religion or courts. If *waro* is used in a religious setting then meaning in (59b), does not apply.

Disambiguation is also possible by mentioning the specific doer of the action.

(60) Yesu nowara.

Jesus saved me.

In the above sentence the meaning ‘bail out’ cannot fit because once the subject is mentioned then the context is revealed irrespective of whether the speaker is in a church or not. Consider the next example.

(60a) Omollo nowara higa mokala.

(60b) Omollo bailed me out last year.

In the construction above the meaning becomes obvious because of the subject *Omollo* for it is believed that only ‘Jesus saves’ and not fellow human being. Note another example below: ‘chik’ is a polysemous lexeme depending on the field of restriction.

(61) Chik

Religion– commandments

Legal – laws

This lexeme can be ambiguous in the following sentence.

(62) Chik mokwongo wacho ang’o?

What does the first commandment / law state?

This will be disambiguated by the context of speech; if the context is spiritual then it acquires the meaning of commandments. This can also be disambiguation through a genitive construction. When it is clear who possesses ‘chik’, then the setting does not matter because meaning will be conveyed.

(63a) Chike mag Nyasaye .

God's commandments.

(63b) Chike mag piny.

Laws of a country.

4.6 Polysemy and Borrowing

When a language borrows a concept which is similar to one existing in the language, the lexeme adds additional senses to the existing ones.

The lexeme *dwe* is polysemous due to semantic borrowing from English language. *Dwe* refers to *moon* in English which means month, terrestrial body. This has been borrowed in to Dholuo and other senses are added as shown in the next example.

(64) Dwe

– Moon

– Month

– Periods

These are ambiguous in the following constructions.

(65) Antie e dwe.

I am in the moon.

I have monthly periods.

Dwe generally means *moon* but in the mind of a speaker, this can be narrowed depending on context.

In (65) disambiguation occurs through social context in that a man making such an utterance cannot imply ‘to have periods,’ but in the case of a woman the two meanings are possible.

Borrowing of a polysemous term also contributes to polysemous words in the language. The polysemous lexeme *opande* is borrowed from Kiswahili language. It is polysemous in Kiswahili and has retained the meanings in Dholuo. Consider example (66)

(66) *Opande*

– identity card

– bar soap

This can be ambiguous in the following construction;

(67) Ng’a ma okao *opande* kae?

Who has taken an identity card/ bar soap from here.

This sentence can be disambiguated when the lexeme *opande* is used together with the word soap. Look at the example below.

(68) Ng’a ma okao sabun mar *opande* kae?

Who has taken a bar soap from here?

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter we have dealt with polysemy in Dholuo. In our data analysis we have polysemy in Dholuo developed due to shift application of words, metaphorical extension, register and semantic borrowing. Context as seen is a determining factor of meaning and this can be social context or discourse.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we discussed polysemy and its sources. This included polysemy arising from metaphorical extension, shift in application, register and borrowing.

This chapter embarks on interpreting sense relations using the theory of lexical pragmatics. The processes of the theory; narrowing and broadening, are analysed to assess how well these processes manifest sense relations in Dholuo.

5.2 Lexical Narrowing

Lexical narrowing is the case where a word is used in a more specific sense than the encoded one, resulting in a narrowing of the linguistically specified denotation. Narrowing highlights a particular subpart of the linguistically specified denotation and this is useful in selecting the appropriate sense of the word from among the various available options.

Polysemy arising due to register and shifts in application is realized through the process of narrowing. For example, the lexeme *ng'ich* which is polysemous as a result of shifts in its application acquires different meanings depending on the noun it qualifies as shown in the next example.

(69) Ng'ich

– New (vehicle)

– Smart (office)

In the lexeme *ng'ich* which is used in reference to a new / sleek vehicle and smart office, the concept that immediately comes to the mind of the hearer is *wetness* in relation to such existing concepts. Using contextual assumptions based on encyclopaedic entries of the concept *ng'ich* the hearer will derive cognitive effects through a process of eliminating the other sense to arrive at the adhoc concept *new*. For example

(70a) Mtoka ma ng'ich.

A new vehicle.

(70b) Opis ma ng'ich.

A smart office.

In uttering (70a) and (70b) one might as well refer to a *wet vehicle* or office because of ambiguity and in this case the hearer's choice of context affects interpretation depending on whether the lexeme is taken to mean *wet*, *new* or *smart*. As meaning is narrowed cognitive effect becomes greater and the hearer uses lesser processing efforts leading to relevance. In this case the context of *new* directs the interpretation to the relevant conclusion. In the mind of the hearer narrowing is triggered by search of relevance and stops when expectations of relevance are achieved.

Polysemy arising from register can also be described by the narrowing process. Consider the following example:

(71) Waro – relieve

Court – to bail out

Religion – save / redeem

The lexeme *waro* acquires different meanings when used in separate fields such as its use in a court of law

For example:

(72a) Bi iwara etich.

Come relieve me from work.

(72b) Ok anyal waro jakuo.

I cannot bail out a thief.

(72c) Nene oware e kanisa.

She/He was saved in church.

The lexeme *waro* has a general meaning ‘to relieve’. *Waro* in a church setting narrows down meaning to *redeem/save*. Register which is the profession context, forces the narrowed meaning in that the register is the context in the mind which is based on the encyclopaedic entry of an existing concept *waro*. The process of selecting the right register creates greater cognitive effect if less effort is used and stops when relevance is achieved resulting to an adhoc concept *waro*.

5.3 Lexical Broadening

Lexical broadening is a case where a word is used to convey a more general sense than the encoded one with consequent widening of the linguistically – specified denotation.

Polysemy based on metaphorical extension can be analysed under broadening.

5.3.1 Metaphorical Extension

This is a case where the communicated concept departs much further from the encoded (literal) concept. Polysemy based on metaphorical extension can be analyzed metaphorically.

An example of broadening through metaphorical extension is seen in the lexeme *Jakwath*.

(75) *Jakwath*

– shepherd

– pastor

Pastoring is an extension of the work carried out by a shepherd. A shepherd guides, looks after, watches over and leads a flock and this is transferred to the abstract idea of pastoring. In the mind of the hearer the concept *jakwath* will ignite different contextual assumptions based on encyclopaedic entries which the hearer chooses in adjusting context. In the adjustment of context greater cognitive effect is achieved if he uses less effort in arriving at broadened adhoc concept *pastor*.

Broadening can also be seen in a case of borrowing of lexical items from another language. The concept *motorcar* refers to a type of a vehicle in English language. In Dholuo *mtoka* refers to all types of vehicles. In the mind of the hearer, the concept *motorcar* activates the contextual assumptions according to the hearer's encyclopaedic entries, which he chooses from while adjusting the context. Appropriate context is

attained through relevance when he uses less effort to arrive at the broadened adhoc concept *mtoka*.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has put into test the adequacy of the lexical pragmatic theory in analyzing the sense relations in Dholuo. It has emerged from the analysis that lexical pragmatic theory can adequately analyse polysemy using either narrowing or broadening process. In the case of synonyms, the theory cannot sufficiently handle their analysis. The synonyms based on formality, attitude, borrowing and dialectal variation appear in pairs thus posing difficulty in determining the central sense. The homonyms can not be analysed by either of the processes, because of the several meanings that are not related in any way hence difficulty in identifying the central meaning.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the findings of the study which was to determine whether lexical relations in Dholuo depend on context for their interpretation. The study was carried out using the tools of lexical pragmatic theory developed by Blutner and expounded by Carston and Wilson. The study geared at establishing whether the lexical pragmatic processes of broadening and narrowing can adequately interpret sense relations.

6.2 Conclusions

In the study of synonyms it emerged that synonyms in Dholuo differ in terms of; dialectal variations, formality, borrowing and speaker's attitude.

There are certain synonyms that are applicable to both human beings and animals while others are strictly applicable to human beings. We observed that those that are applicable to both human beings and animals are formal and those that are applicable to only human beings are informal.

In our analysis we came across lexemes which are synonymous but have other different meanings. In such cases, we realized that these lexemes are synonyms as a result of euphemism. It was revealed that these euphemisms are used in both informal and formal setting.

Synonyms on dialectal differences had one peculiar occurrence in that the two dialects use different lexemes to refer to a particular item, in some cases one of the lexemes was also present in the other dialect but referred to totally different concepts.

It was evident that borrowed lexical items were from either Kiswahili or English and these lexemes co-occur with the native word, but there was a restriction in usage as most of the time the borrowed word is used.

The analysis showed that in Dholuo, collocation of synonyms in human beings and animals depends on the gender. It emerged that the theory is inadequate in the analysis of synonyms this is because synonyms are not lexical adjustments in the mind and do not apply either narrowing or broadening.

In the study of homonyms, the study dwelt on homonyms based on the same grammatical category and those based on different grammatical categories. The study discovered that there are no homophones in Dholuo this is because there is a relationship between pronunciation and spelling system.

In the analysis of homonyms there are no absolute homonyms in Dholuo. Homonyms which are nouns require additional information which elaborates their context while those which are verbs rely on an object if the verb is transitive or a subject if the verb is intransitive. The lexical pragmatic processes of narrowing and broadening are not realized in homonyms.

Homonyms which are descriptive on the other hand rely on a noun phrase for disambiguation. In homonyms of mixed categories such as nouns and verbs, the verbs are transitive therefore they are not threatened by ambiguity.

Homonyms of nouns and adjectives, adverbs and nouns rely only on context; presence of a subject does not disambiguate.

In the study, sources of polysemy in Dholuo are metaphorical extension, shift in application of a word, register and semantic borrowing. In the interpretation of polysemic words, in the absence of background knowledge, the subject or object play the role in disambiguation.

The analysis also revealed that, lexical pragmatic theory can adequately handle the analysis of polysemy using the narrowing and broadening process. From the study, we can note that context, whether discourse, social or background knowledge is indispensable in understanding of certain sense relations in Dholuo. It is also evident that the common type of broadening in sense relations in Dholuo is metaphorical extension which only occurs in polysemy.

6.3 Recommendations

In this study we realized that the lexical pragmatic framework could not analyze particularly synonyms and homonyms through processes of narrowing and broadening. It would be important to find out what threatens the analysis of these sense relations.

Since the study did not focus on antonyms, we therefore recommend that a linguistic study should be carried out in the future and especially the converse antonyms, which in certain lexemes indicate relation ambiguously.

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APPENDIX

1. Which area do you come from? (√) (Tick as appropriate)

Kisumu (specify which part) []

Siaya (specify which part) []

Other (please specify) _____

2. How do you rate yourself as a Dholuo speaker?

Very good []

Good []

Fair []

Poor []

3. Which of the following terms do you use? If [] other please specify

Aora	[]	Kulo	[]	Other	[]
Kendo	[]	nyuomo	[]	other	[]
Ndara	[]	yoo	[]	other	[]
Dayo	[]	Maro	[]	Wuon ot	other []
Gago	[]	pidho	[]	other	[]
Lago	[]	tero	[]	other	[]
Odunga	[]	luth	[]	osuto	other []
Nanga	[]	law	[]	other	other []
Omuogo	[]	Mariwa	[]	other	[]
Oliktiga	[]	Hanyinya	[]	Opien	other []
Kwoyo	[]	twang'o	[]	other	[]
Mamani	[]	Minu	[]	other	[]
Kalam	[]	Kalama	[]	other	[]

4. Which other terms are used in reference to the following concepts?

a) To die

Which one would you use in church?

b) To give birth

Which one would you use while telling a story?

c) To go for long call

To go for short call

Which one would you use in a gathering?

d) To be pregnant

e) Fatness

5. Which of the following terms do you feel comfortable / prefer using?

a) Miyo []

Dhako []

Why _____

Fuong'o piny []

Bayo []

Why _____

b) Tegno []

Opong' []

Why _____

Dhero []

Puot []

Kodore []

Why _____

c) Duong' []

Ti []

Why _____

6. What terms would you use to refer to a

a)

Dark boy _____

Dark girl _____

Black cow _____

b)

Slim boy _____

Slim girl _____

c)

Black and white cow _____

Black and White Bag _____

7. Write down different meanings of the following:

a) Chier

b) Tho

c) Kwan'g

d) Jakwath

e) Ohala

f) Sudo

g) Kwar