A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF ANTONYMOUS SEMANTIC RELATIONS IN ADAMAWA FULFULDE

Dr. ABDULHAMID, Baba Mustapha
Email: abdulhamidgirei8@gmail.com
English Language Education Department,
Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola
&
SAUDATU, Abba
Email: saudatahmad57@gmail.com
English Language Education Department,
Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola

Abstract
This study is a descriptive analysis of antonymous semantic relations in Adamawa Fulfulde. It aims to highlight the concept of antonyms and its different kinds and then, investigate the existence of the concept in the Adamawa Fulfulde. Data were collected through unstructured oral interview, native introspection of the researcher as a native speaker and researcher observation of native speakers' natural speech events. The descriptive method of data analysis was used in analyzing the data using the Lexical Pragmatic Approach (LPA) as the descriptive tool for the analysis. The findings reveal that Adamawa Fulfulde has different kinds of antonyms such as gradable, relational and complementary antonyms. Hence, the study concludes that antonyms manifest in Adamawa Fulfulde as a semantic relation and knowledge of antonyms are essential for expressing contrasts and nuances in discourse; while the understanding of antonyms enables users of the language to use language effectively for various forms of communication. The study, however, suggests that further studies should investigate semantic variations across different Fulfulde dialects; creation of digital databases and corpora that capture the semantic richness of Fulfulde and continuous research into semantic networks in the language and their role in conveying intricate meanings which can enhance our appreciation of Fulfulde's linguistic richness.

Keywords: Semantics, Lexical Semantics, Semantic Relation, Antonymy, Adamawa Fulfulde.

Introduction

Antonyms is a lexical semantic relation that focuses on opposite in meaning of lexical items. It is a concept in lexical semantics used in describing oppositeness of meaning, and words that are opposite in their meanings are called antonyms. In other words, an antonym is a word that has a meaning opposite to that of another word. Antonymy is one of the regular features of natural languages. It is a phenomenon of Universal Grammar because it is obvious in all natural languages (Udemmadu & Ogwudile, 2017). Antonymy etymologically is a Greek word meaning "counter name". According to Finegan (2004), the word antonymy derives from the Greek root anti- (opposite) and denotes opposite in meaning. Antonymy entails a binary relationship that characterizes a relationship between only two words at a time. Terms 'A' and 'B' are antonyms, if when 'A' describes a referent, 'B' cannot describe the same referent, and vice versa. Palmer (1981) states that the term antonymy is used for 'oppositeness of meaning' as words that are opposite are antonyms. Crystal (1987:105) writes that "antonymy is the oppositeness of meaning". Bussman (1996) says that antonymy is a relation of semantic opposite. However, in contrast to the general relation of incompatibility, antonymy is not restricted to gradable expressions that usually correlate with opposite members of a scale; for example, good versus bad; as the various positions on the scale cannot be determined absolutely but rather depend upon the context (Udemmadu & Ogwudile, 2017). Hence, Saeed (2009) noted that in traditional terminology, antonyms are words which are opposite in meaning; but there are a number of relations which seem to involve words which are at the same time related in meaning yet incompatible or contrasting.

Udemmadu and Ogwudile (2017) state that antonymy holds a place in society which other semantic relations simply do not occupy, whether there exists a general human tendency to categorize experience in terms of dichotomous contrast. Thus, Lyons (1977) avers that antonymy is not easily gauged, but, either way, our exposure to antonymy is immeasurable as we memorize 'opposites' in childhood, encounter them throughout our daily lives, and possibly and even use antonymy as a cognitive device to organize human experience. Udemmadu and Ogwudile (2017) point out that oppositeness has an important role in structuring the vocabulary of language. This is especially so in English adjective word class, where a good many words occur in antonymous pairs; for example: long-short, wide-narrow, old-new, rough-smooth, light-dark, straight-crooked, deep-shallow, fast-slow. They noted that while antonymy is typically found among adjectives, it is not restricted to this word class; for example: bring-take (verbs), death-life (nouns), noisily-quietly (adverbs), above-below (prepositions), after-before (conjunctions or prepositions). In

concurring with the above, Finegan (2004) posits that the prototypical antonyms are pairs of adjectives that describe opposite notions: large and small, wide and narrow, hot and cold, married and single, alive and dead. Antonymy is not restricted to adjectives; however, the nouns 'man' and 'woman' are also antonyms because an individual cannot be described by both terms at once. 'Always' and 'never' form an antonymous pair of adverbs: they have mutually exclusive referents. The verbs 'love' and 'hate' can also be viewed as antonyms because they refer to mutually exclusive emotions. Thus, Antonymy is also a binary relationship between terms with complementary meanings.
In a nutshell, antonymy is a semantic phenomenon that discusses opposite in meaning of words showing that if a word does not connote one thing it must connote the other. This does not concern only adjectival words but cuts across words in other word classes. Different scholars have embarked on studies on antonymy in different languages but much has not been done on antonymy in Adamawa Fulfulde; hence, the motivation for this study. This study therefore, highlights the concept of antonymy and its different kinds and then, investigates the existence of the concept in the Adamawa Fulfulde.

Adamawa Fulfulde

The ethnic group that speaks the Fulfulde language are called various names depending on the region. They are called Fula or Fulani or Fulaani in Nigeria, Fula and Pulaar in Senegal and Mauritania, Fulaa and Pulaa in Sierra Leone, Fulah and Pula in Gambia, Fulaasi and Fulɓe in Cameroon, Peul or Peulh in Burkina Faso and Fulfulde in Chad (Bauer, 2007). The language of these people is either called Fulfulde or Pulaar/Pular; but the name of the language as Fulfulde appears to enjoy the most mention in the literature and between the speakers. Fulfulde is classified as a member of the West Atlantic branch of the Niger-Congo language family (Greenberg, 1970). It is the most well-known West Atlantic language of the Niger-Congo language family (Pulleyblank, 2009:858). Fulfulde has several dialects; and in Nigeria, there are dialects such as Adamawa dialect, Mambilla dialect, Southern Zaria dialect, Sokoto dialect and Gombe dialect. In the diaspora, there are dialects like the Fuota Diallon in Guinea, the Sene-Gambian dialects, Maasina in Mali and Burkina Faso, and the Niger dialect. There are also several other dialects in Cameroon. However, Adamawa Fulfulde is one of the dialects of the Fulfulde language, whose native speakers are found in Adamawa state, Nigeria. With respect to only the Adamawa dialect, it is used at home, in the markets, in mosques, churches, in some Primary and Junior Secondary schools (but not in tertiary institutions) and in some hospitals. It is also used in the mass media to broadcast news and execute several radio programs. It is used as a language of business in markets, but not as an official language of transaction in the state.

Literature Review

Semantics

Semantics is the linguistic and philosophical study of meaning in language. It is concerned with the relationship between signifiers like words, phrases, signs, and symbols and what they stand for in reality. In linguistics, semantics is the meaning and interpretation of words, signs, and sentence structure. Hence, semantics is an area of linguistics which studies the meaning of words and sentences in language. Baal (1900) explains semantics as the aspect of linguistics which deals with the relations between references (names) and referent (things), that is, linguistic levels, (word expressions, and phrases) and the objects, concepts or ideas to which they refer. For this reason, semantics is the science of meaning. It studies word meaning in existing languages to promote mutual understanding through the critical use of words. It, therefore, explicates the way in which words and sentences of various grammatical constructions are used and understood by the speakers of a given language.

Morris (1946:67) defines semantics as the study of "…the relation of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable". Ullman (1951:1), defines semantics as "the study of meaning". Therefore, semantics is a technical term used to refer to the study of meaning; and it is an area of linguistics which studies the meaning of words and sentences in a language. However, semantics as the study of meaning in language, encompasses three key areas: lexical semantics (examining word meanings and relationships), formal semantics (analyzing meaning through logical and mathematical models), and conceptual semantics (investigating the cognitive structure and underlying concepts of meaning). The next section examines lexical semantics since the focus of this study is on antonymy which relates to word meanings and relationship.

Lexical Semantics

Lexical semantics (also known as lexico-semantics), is the sub-field of semantics that studies word meaning (Geeraerts, 2017). It is only concerned with the study of word meanings in terms of their relationship with other words. It examines semantic aspects of individual words and the vocabulary. This includes the study of lexical relations between words, such as whether two terms are synonyms or antonyms, and so on (Pustejovsky, 2009). Lexical semantics categorizes words based on semantic features they share and groups them into semantic fields unified by a common subject (Geeraerts, 2017). Thus, lexical semantics deconstructs words and phrases within a line of text to understand the meanings in terms of context. This can include a study of individual nouns, verbs, adjectives, prefixes, root words, suffixes, or longer phrases or idioms. This information is used to create taxonomies to organize lexical knowledge, for example, by distinguishing between physical and abstract entities and subdividing

physical entities into stuff and individuated entities (Pustejovsky, 2009; Taylor, 2017). Other areas of interest in lexical semantics are polysemy, ambiguity, and vagueness (Geeraerts, 2017). However, lexical semantics examines the meaning of individual words and the relationships between them. It investigates how words acquire meaning, how they are organized into semantic networks, and how they contribute to the interpretation of larger linguistic units. Lexical semantics explores various aspects of word meaning, including sense distinctions, connotations, collocations, and semantic features. It aims to establish a comprehensive understanding of how words encode meaning and how they interact within a language system.

Semantic Relations

Semantic relations are the associations that exist between the meanings of words, between the meanings of phrases, or between the meanings of sentences. Semantic relations appear to reflect a logical structure in the fundamental nature of thought (Caplan and Herrmann, 1993:34). Green, Bean and Myaeng (2002) note that semantic relations play a critical role in how we represent knowledge psychologically, linguistically and computationally, and that many systems of knowledge representation start with a basic distinction between entities and relations. Green (2001:86) argues that "relationships are involved as we combine simple entities to form more complex entities, as we compare entities, as we group entities, as one entity performs a process on another entity, and so forth. According to Murphy (2003:7), as for any other phenomenon in the world, the existence of paradigmatic relations among words calls for some kind of explanation or perhaps several kinds of explanations. Most scholars, such as Katz (1972:211), Pustejovskey (1995:175) and Kempson (1996:201) after accounting for such relations agree that the paradigmatic relations amongst words, such as synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, homonymy and their likes are somehow relevant to the structure of lexical and conceptual information; hence, the analysis of antonymous semantic relation in this study.

Antonymy

Antonymy, according to Ulman (1977) and Saeed (2009) in Atadoga (2013:12), deals with the semantic relationships that exist between two or more words that have opposite meanings. The pair of items which contrast in meanings are termed antonyms. These pairs, according to Zapata (2000) belong to the same grammatical category – both elements may be nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc. Besides, according to Fromkin and Rodman (1998), antonyms are said to share almost all their semantic features except one. Atadoga (2013) also avers that the semantic feature that antonyms do not share is present in one member of the pair and absent in the other. Fromkin and Rodman (1998) observe that there are three types of antonyms: gradable antonyms, relational antonyms and complimentary or contradictory antonyms.

Gradable Antonyms

Gradable antonyms are pairs of words that are contrasted with respect to their degree of possession of certain semantic property. Each term stands for an end- point on a scale. For example, temperature, size, height, beauty, and so on. Between those end-points, according to Lyons (1977), are other intermediate end-points, such as hot/cold, big/small, tall/short, good/bad'.

Relational Antonyms

These are pairs of words in which the presence of certain semantic property in a member implies the presence of another semantic property in the other member (Mbapuun, 2016:9). The implication of this is that the existence or presence of one of the terms implies the presence or existence of the other term. Example, (Mbapuun, 2016:9) gives the data below to illustrate this point:

1.

- **i.** over-under
- **ii.** buy-sell
- **iii.** doctor-patient
- **iv.** go-stop

Complementary or Contradictory Antonyms

They are pairs of words in which one member has a certain semantic property that the other member does not have (Tiav, 2011:8). He cites the following:

2.

- **i.** male – female
- **ii.** married – unmarried
- **iii.** complete – incomplete
- **iv.** alive – dead
- **v.** present – absent
- **vi.** awake – asleep

It is said that these pairs of antonyms exhibit a kind of contrast in which there is no middle ground. Therefore, in the context in which one member is true, the other member cannot be true. Mbapuun (2016:7) also gives the following example:

3.

i. male-female
ii. life-death
iii. tall-short
iv. up-down
v. young lady-young man
vi. teacher-learner

However, antonymy is the semantic relationship that exists between two or more words that have opposite meanings. The pairs of words which have opposite meanings are called antonyms. These are pairs of words in which one member has certain semantic property that the other does not have. Antonymous pairs of words usually belong to the same grammatical category (that is, both elements are nouns, or both are adjectives, or both are verbs, and so on). They are said to share almost all their semantic features. Antonyms may be (a) morphologically unrelated (that is, one of the elements of the pair does not derive from the other), example, good - bad, high - low; or (b) morphologically related (i.e., one of the members of a pair of antonyms is derived from the other member by the addition of a negative word or an affix). Morphologically related antonyms can be formed in the following ways:

i. By using the word *not* - alive - *not* alive, happy - not happy, beautiful - not beautiful.
ii. By adding negative prefixes, such as '*un*-', 'im-', 'in-', 'il-', 'ir-', 'non-', 'mis-', 'dis-', 'a-'. in words, such as happy - unhappy, do - undo, lock - unlock, entity - nonentity, conformist - nonconformist, tolerant - intolerant, decent - indecent, please - displease, like - dislike, behave - misbehave, hear - mishear, moral - amoral, political - apolitical, legal - illegal, logical - illogical, probable - improbable, relevant - irrelevant.
iii. By adding negative suffixes such as '–less'. Example: careful - careless, joyful - joyless.

Empirical Review

Several empirical studies have been carried out on various types or categories of semantic relations in languages. Some of these studies shall be reviewed as it relates to antonymy as a category of semantic relation, to expose the research and literature gap which this study intends to fill. Udemmadu and Ogwudile (2017) conducted "**a descriptive analysis of antonymy in the Igbo language"**. The study points out that; antonymy is a lexical sense relation that focuses on opposite in meaning of lexical items. Antonymy is a phenomenon of Universal Grammar because it is obvious in all natural languages, Different scholars have embarked on research on antonymy in different languages, but much had not been done on the Igbo language. Data were collected through unstructured observation of native speakers' natural speech events, and the descriptive method of data analysis was used in analyzing the data. The findings show that the Igbo language has different kinds of antonyms such as gradable and non-gradable antonyms, reverse and converse terms, then taxonomy sisters. The study concludes that antonymy manifests in the Igbo language like in every other natural language. Antonymy can be said to be a language universal since no language is devoid of it. Onyeocha (2020) examined **"Antonymy in Mbaise Dialect of Igbo"**. This study adds to what has been done concerning antonymy as a meaning relation in Igbo. It particularly focuses on the relation as it applies to the Mbaise dialect of Igbo with the objective of determining any dialectal facts that could provide much more description of meaning relation. The data for the study were obtained from the native speaker intuition of the researcher. However, data available were verified by consultation with older native speakers of the dialect, followed by a descriptive analysis. The findings show that the following types of antonymies are displayed in the dialect: Simple antonyms, Gradable antonyms, non-gradable antonyms, Reverses, Converses or Relational antonyms and Taxonomy antonyms. Overall, there is no radical difference between examples of antonymy in Mbaise and other dialects of Igbo except for lexical forms. Hence, the study concludes that antonyms abound in the Mbaise dialect of Igbo and antonyms in the dialect are not restricted to any word class as all word classes in the dialect can be antonymous.

Gwammaja (2022) analyzed "**Antonymy in Hausa Deaf Language**." The study emphasized that antonymy is concerned with oppositeness of meanings. The study used the theoretical and descriptive method of data analysis and observed how gradable antonyms are identified in Hausa sign language which denotes degree of variable property with intermediate and middle ground scale. The work identified and discussed lexical antonyms in the Hausa deaf language, and it showed the extreme function of parameters within their formation. The study also investigated how the gradable complementary and relational antonyms are identified in the Hausa language. However, it can be observed from the reviews that literature is ripple with previous studies on antonymy as a category or type of semantic relations in different languages; but none has been conducted in Fulfulde language. Hence, the present study fills the literature gap in this regard as it examines antonymous semantic relation in Adamawa Fulfulde.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on Lexical Pragmatics Theory. Thus, the study is guided by the Lexical Pragmatic Approach (LPA) as a tool for analysis. The Lexical Pragmatics Theory was proposed by Dreidre (2003). This theory has two components; that is, lexical semantics and lexical Pragmatics. The lexical semantic model has words treated as encoding concepts which denote categories of objects, events or properties in the world. On the other hand, the lexical pragmatic component of the theory explains how a hearer bridges the gap between the concept encoded by a word and the concept communicated by use of that word on a particular occasion. The theory therefore argues in favor of divisions of labor between lexical semantics and pragmatics; hence it combines the idea of semantics under specification in the lexicon, with a theory of pragmatics, that is, context. This invariably implies that a single lexical item or word once contextualized, on its own produces or gives rise to several different but related meanings. More so, in Lexical Pragmatics Theory, when words are put into context, they give rise to both grammatical forms and semantic (meaning) realizations, which exposed the meaning or sense relations. This makes the theory a better option for this study. The theory of lexical pragmatics tackles issues on notions such as lexical semantics, nature of concepts and their role in communication and cognition, acquisition of word meanings, word meanings and how they are processed, and about the development of lexical-pragmatics abilities. Thus, the theory has the relevant concepts and descriptive tools appropriate in the analysis of the data relevant for the study.

Research Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive and qualitative design for the analysis of data. Data were collected and collated for the analysis from primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include oral interview of the native speakers of Adamawa Fulfulde and the native introspection of the researcher as a native speaker as well as the researcher's observations; while the secondary sources on the other hand, include internet, textbooks, and journals on antonymous semantic relation in language as well as some published and unpublished materials on the Fulfulde language. The Adamawa dialect of Fulfulde is spoken in Adamawa State, specifically in Yola, the state capital and many surrounding villages. In that regard, the population of the study is native speakers of Adamawa Fulfulde in Yola South Local Government Area (LGA). Yola South Local Government Area has a population of over 200,000 people based on the 2006 National Population Census (NPC). The specific areas for the study are: Njomboli Fulani, Ribadu, Yolde Pate, Sebore and Daware. The reason for the choice of these areas is since the areas are predominantly unadulterated Adamawa Fulfulde-speaking areas. However, the data used in this study cuts across different socio-cultural backgrounds and sociolinguistic relations in the selected Adamawa Fulfulde speaking areas of Adamawa state; and the Lexical Pragmatic Theory was used as the tool for analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The two levels of analysis will help show the relationships between anonymous words and sentences in Adamawa Fulfulde. The lexical items and their various meanings are analyzed based on their lexical pragmatic contexts to show the semantic relations of the lexical items in Adamawa Fulfulde.

Antonymy in Adamawa Fulfulde

Antonymy is regarded as semantic opposition. This means that the lexical relationship of antonymy exists between words that are opposite. Thus, antonyms are words that have opposite meanings. Antonymy is a semantic relationship between two units of speech whose meaning is diametrically opposed or contrast. Hence, antonyms in Adamawa Fulfulde can be gradable, relational or complementary opposites.

Gradable Antonyms

As one of the types of antonyms, gradable antonyms seek to show oppositeness in terms of comparison. It characterized by gradability; that is, the items are gradable in a sense that they can hold varying degrees, and the relation between the items is contrary. This implies that there are intermediate terms between the terms; hence, the positive of one does not necessarily imply the negative of the other. Below are some examples of this semantic feature in Adamawa fulfulde:

4. *derekejo* 'young' - *nayejo* 'old'
goɗɗo ɗo o derekejo - *goɗɗodo o nayejo*
Man **DEM 3SG be+ PRS** young man **DEM 3SG be+ PRS** old
'He is a young man' 'He is an old man'

5. *juɗɗum* 'tall' - *dammuɗum* 'short'
Aliyu ɗo juɗɗum - sarla *Aliyu ɗo dammuɗum*
Aliyu **be+PRS** tall trouser Aliyu **POSS be+ PRS** short
'Aliyu is tall' 'Aliyu trouser is short'

6. *boɗɗom* 'good' - *woɗay* 'bad'
wakkati boɗɗum wadi - *wakkati woɗay wadi*
Time good **be+ PFV** it is time bad **be+ PFV** it is
'It is a good time' 'It is a bad time'

7. *guldum* 'hot' - *pewdum* 'cold'
jamfaaji wadi guldum - *jamfaaji wadi pewdum*
Weather **be+ PFV** hot weather **be+PFV** cold
'The weather is hot' 'The weather is cold'

The examples above demonstrate that antonyms occur in pairs. For each pair, there is what sharply distinguishes a word from its counterpart. In data 1 above, the distinguishing semantic feature is that of age; while data 5 illustrates oppositeness in terms of length. In the same manner, each of the examples from data 6 – 7 has one semantic feature that distinguishes it from its counterpart. However, from the data 4 - 7 above, it is shown that the majority of the gradable antonyms in Fulfulde are adjectives, even though gradable antonyms can also be noun.

Relational Antonyms

In this type of semantic oppositeness, a pair of words shows how they are related. It describes a relation between pairs of lexical items or words that exhibit the converse or reverse of a relationship between the items. Such relationship can be seen in the following examples:

8. *daada* 'mother' - *nyako* 'father'
ɗoo daada am - *ɗoo nyako am*
DEM mother **1SG+ POSS** **DEM** father **1SG+POSS**
'This is my mother' 'This is my father'

9. *saaroo* 'parent' - *ɓingel* 'child'
ɗoo saaroo am - *ɗoo ɓingel am*
DEM parent **1SG+POSS** **DEM** child **1SG+POSS**
'This is my parent' 'This is my child'

10. *yâmol* 'question' - *jabuye* 'answer'
o yâmi am yâmol - *o jabuye am*
3SG ask.**PFV 1SG** **3SG** answer. **PFV 1SG**
'He asked me a question' 'He answered me'

11. *soobajo* 'friend' - *ganyo* 'enemy'
o soobajo am - *o ganyô am*
3SG friend **1SG+POSS** **3SG** enemy **1SG+POSS**
'He is my friend' 'He is my enemy'

From the above examples, each pair clearly demonstrates the oppositeness in terms of the converse or reverse relationship. For example, although *nyako* 'father' and *daada* 'mother' as in data 5, share vastly similar qualities, especially as both are humans; they differ semantically with respect to type of gender. It is always ideal that every child has a parent, and vice versa. Thus, parent-child oppositeness in data 9 illustrates such relational antonymy. In data 10, it can be noticed that one exists because of the other, as there may not be an answer without a question and a question without an answer. The same semantic relation applies to other examples as in data 8. Therefore, it may be said that in most cases, relational antonyms, have the tendency of interdependence, such that the existence of one may depend on the existence of its counterpart.

Complementary Antonyms

The feature of this semantic oppositeness is that there are no intermediate terms between the two opposing pairs; that is, they express discrete values with no intermediate possibilities. Examples of this semantic opposition in Adamawa Fulfulde are as follows:

12. Mama daada 'grandmother' - Mama nyaako 'garnadfather'
ɗo mama daada am - *ɗo mama nyako am*
]3SG grandmother **1SG.POSS** **3SG** grandfather **1SG.POSS**
'This is my grandmother' 'this is grangather'

13. *kaawo* 'uncle' *yapendo* 'aunty'
mi yidi kaawo am - mi yidi yapendo am
1SG like uncle **1SG.POSS** **1SG** like aunty **1SG.POSS**
'I love my uncle' 'I love my aunty'

14. *fuɗɗiki* 'bigining' *timmuki* 'ending'
ɓe fuɗɗi summay - ɓe timmini suumay
3PL begin fasting **3PL** end fasting
'Fasting has begun' 'fasting has ended'

15. *geeto*	*'live'*		*maayde* *'dead'*
o geeto	'live'	-	o maayde ' dead'
3SG alive			**3SG** dead
'He is alive'			'He is dead'

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of the study was hinged on anonymous semantic relations in Adamawa Fulfulde. From the data collected from native speakers of Adamawa Fulfulde in Yola South Local Government Area (LGA) of Adamawa State, the findings reveal that the Adamawa Fulfulde exhibits antonymy as a semantic relation. It was discovered that antonyms are usually in pairs, and just as many languages, they are categorized into gradable, complimentary and relational antonyms. It was further discovered that most gradable antonyms in Fulfulde are adjectives. But there are a few that are nouns. In Adamawa Fulfulde, relational antonyms, just as in other languages, rely on interdependence of the variables involved (words involved). As for complementary antonyms in Adamawa Fulfulde, there is total mutual exclusiveness of the variables (words). Thus, in each of the data illustrated above, there is semantic relation of oppositeness in meaning. The data shows that words that are opposite in meaning share all but one of their semantic properties; that is, they share almost all their semantic properties except for the one defining characteristic that creates the opposition between them. Also, the meaning of a word can sometimes be defined in terms of what the word is not; for example, male means an entity which is not female. Hence, words which present this kind of contrast in their respective meanings are referred to as opposite. The basic characteristics of words which are opposites is that they share all but one of these semantic' properties. This shows that words can only be opposites of each other if they are semantically closely related. Words which are opposites can contract in more than one dimension. For example, 'man' contracts with 'woman' along the gender dimension. Similarly, the word 'poor' contrast with 'rich' in one dimension, the same way 'good' contrasts with 'bad'. However, it is pointed out that, if a word can contrast with other words in more than one dimension, its use may sometimes result in ambiguity, as in "Ladi is a poor student" in which, 'poor' may be interpreted as not wealthy or academically weak'. Therefore, knowledge of antonyms is essential for expressing contrasts and nuances in discourse; and the understanding of antonyms enables users of the language to effectively use language for various forms of communication.

Conclusion

It is confirmed that antonymy magnifests in Adamawa Fulfulde like in every other natural language. Antonymy can be said to be a language universal since no language is devoid of it. Antonyms in Adamawa Fulfulde can be categorized into gradable, relational and complementary antonyms. However, based on the findings, the study concludes with these words as expressed by Udemmadu and Ogwudile (2017) that, antonymy is a key feature of everyday life; and should further evidence be required, one can try visiting a public lavatory without checking which is the 'gents' and which is the 'ladies'. Also, on the way out, one should ignore the instructions which tell you whether to 'push or pull' the door; or while outside, one should pay no attention to whether the traffic lights are telling you to 'stop' or to 'go'; at best , one will end up looking very foolish; or at worst one will end up dead. This is to buttress the point that, knowledge and understanding of antonymous semantic relations enable users of the language to use language effectively for various forms of communication.

REFERENCES

Atadoga, F. (2013). "Semantic analysis of Igala Idioms." In G.S. Omachonu (ed.)

Baal, J.A.M. (1990). *Semantics*. Utrecht: Boekencentrum B.V.

Bauer, L. (2007). *The Linguistics Student's Handbook*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Bussman, H. (1996). *Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics.* London: Routledge.

Caplan, L. J., & Herrmann, D. J. (1993). Semantic relations as graded concepts. Zeitschrift fur Psychologie, 201, 85-97.

Crystal, D. (1987). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Deirdre, W. (2003). "Relevance and Lexical Pragmatics." *Italian Journal of* Linguistics, 15(2): 273-291.

Finegan, E. (2004). *Language: Its Structure and Use (4th ed.)*. Boston: Thomson Wadsworth.

Fromkin, V., & Rodman, R. (1998). *An introduction to language (6th ed.)*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace.

Geeraerts, D. (2017). "Lexical Semantics". In Aronoff, M. (ed.) *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Linguistics*. London: Oxford University Press.

Green, R. (2001). Relationships in the organization of knowledge: An overview. In C.A. Bean & R. Green (Eds.), Relationships in the organization of knowledge (pp. 3-18). Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Green, R., Bean, C., & Myaeng, S.H. (2002). The semantics of relationships: An interdisciplinary perspective. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Greenberg, J.H. (1970). *The languages of Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Gwammaja, I. (2022). "Antonymy in Hausa Deaf Language." *Journal of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria*, 25: 93–108.

Katz, J.J (1972). *Semantic Theory*. New York: Harper & Row.

Kempson, R.M. (1996). "Semantics, Pragmatics, and Natural-Language Interpretation." In Shalom Lappin (eds.), *The handbook of contemporary semantic theory (pp. 561—598)*. Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell Reference.

Lyons, J. (1977). *Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mbapuun, T.F (2016). "Lexical Semantic Relations in the Tiv Language." Ph.D Seminar submitted to the Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies, University of Port Harcourt.

Morris, C. (1946). *Signs, Language, and Behavior*. New York: Prentice-Hall.

Murphy, M.L. (2003). *Semantic Relations and the Lexicon: Antonymy, Synonymy and Other Paradigms.* New York: Cambridge Univeristy Press.

Onyeocha, I.J (2020). "Antonymy in Mbaise Dialect of Igbo." *International Journal of Religion & Human Relations*, 12 (1): 34 – 47.

Palmer, F.R (1981). *Semantics (2nded.)*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Pulleyblank, D. (2009). "Niger Kordofanian (Niger Congo Languages)." In Comrie, B. (ed.) *The. World's Major Languages*. New York: Routledge.

Pustejovsky, J. (1995). *The generative lexicon*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Pustejovsky, J. (2009). "Lexical Semantics". In Allan, Keith (ed.). *Concise Encyclopedia of Semantics*. New York: Elsevier.

Saeed. J.I. (2009). *Semantics*. UK: Blackwell Publishing.

Taylor, J.R. (2017). "Lexical Semantics". In Dancygier, B, (ed.). *The Cambridge Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tiav, T.A (2011). "Sense and meaning relations". In G.S. Omachonu (ed.) *NSUK texts in general linguistics, 1(1)*. Enugu: Rossen Publication Ltd.

Udemmadu, T.U. & Ogwudile, C.E (2017). "A Descriptive Analysis of Antonymy in the Igbo Language." *Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies (JHUCS)*, 2: 138 – 158.

Ullman, S. (1951). *The Principles of Semantics*. Michigan: Jackson Publishing Company.

Ullman, S. (1977). *The structure of meaning: Studies in the theory of semantics*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Zapata, A.A. (2000). *A handbook of general and applied linguistics*. Mérida: Trabajo de Ascenso sin publicar, Escuela de Idiomas Modernos, Universidad de Los Andes.