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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE USE OF LEXICAL RELATIONS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

Dr. Mukhalad Malik.
Department of English, Cihan University, Sulaimaniya.

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Manuscript Info	*Abstract*
……………………. *Manuscript History* 	………………………………………………………………………… Lexical relations are one of the most important semantic relations in exploring the meanings of words in English language. They are mainly used to analysis the meanings of words in terms of their relations to each other within sentences. Those relations vary according to the kind of the relation that a word may have with another word or words. The current study aims at investigating this level of language by illustrating what lexical relations are and how they are manifested in language. In addition, the paper surveys the most important and the most basic kinds of lexical relations. Finally, it discusses in detail the importance of lexical relations in language use being an important linguistic source in the analysis, understanding and use of language.

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Introduction:-

Lexical relations are one of the most important subfields of semantics which are entirely concerned with approaching the meanings of words through relating them to other words within English sentences. Such relations are manifested according to the type of the relation that a word may have with another word or words as when having two words with close meanings, two words with opposite ones and so on. They play major role in explaining the exact meaning of words in relation to other words and not in relation to the meaning of the word itself. The paper aims at exploring such types of semantic relations by showing the main features of lexical relations in addition to surveying their main types that are widely used in the explanation and analysis of the meanings of words. The study focuses in particular on synonyms, antonyms and hyponyms with various instances. Finally, it aims at showing the importance of lexical semantics in the use of language as well as the analysis of meanings.

The Scope of Lexical Relations:-

To start with exploring lexical relations first, it is a requirement to define semantics since lexical relations fall within this domain of language study and to have a better and more comprehensive view of what lexical relations mean precisely. In a more general sense, semantics is 'the study of the meanings of words, phrases and sentences. In semantic analysis, there is always an attempt to focus on what the words conventionally mean, rather than on what an individual speaker might want them to mean on a particular occasion (Yule, 2006). So semantics deal with the meanings of words as exactly what they mean. One of the subfields of semantics is called lexical semantics which is entirely concerned with the study of the meanings of the words in terms of their relationships with other words .In other words, semantics is the technical term used to refer to the study of meaning (ibid). Theories of language state that language users must have some sort of lexicon stored in memory. When they hear or read, they can recognize the patterns of sounds or letters that correspond to the lexical items in their lexicon. Each word or lexical item contains meaning. Kenworthy(1991) states that the description of the meaning of a word is complex and this description constitutes the area of study in modern linguistics called lexical semantics . He further shows some

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Corresponding Author:- Mukhalad Malik.
Address:- Department of English, Cihan University, Sulaimaniya.

principles which are to be considered when examining the lexical relations and which are deemed attributes of word properties and features: 1. The referential relation between the word and an entity in the world – in linguistics this is termed its denotation. 2. The relation between the word and other words in the language - its sense relations. 3. The other words which co-occur with it in the language - the technical term used is its collocations. 4. The use of the word in the language in terms of restrictions – its communicative value. Therefore, it is not an easy task to learn the connections between words and their meanings. Some words are relatively easy to define by pointing to an object or a picture, but some are not because we have to consider the context (ibid). In simple semantic situations, there is only one relation between symbol (signifier) and reference or sense (signified). Proper names like *Peter, the Eiffel Tower, the Himalayas* have direct reference. They denote a specific object, person, place, etc. in the world. Proper names have no resemblance or other link to the objects they denote. A *rose* denotes a sweet smelling flower everyone calls a 'rose'. If we change its name, it is still the same flower. *Peter* can change his name to *Romeo* but he is not changed physically. So the meanings of words are not only to be understood from what they mean but also from their relationships with each other (ibid).

Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Relations:-
Cruse (1986) carefully details the important types of lexical relations that occur with stressing on paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations. Paradigmatic relations hold between elements that can be substituted for one another in the same context, whereas syntagmatic relations hold between elements that can occur together in the same context. Syntagmatic lexical relations should first of all be seen in contrast to their paradigmatic counterparts, meaning relations such as synonymy, antonymy and hyponymy. Both types of lexical relation have their place in a theory of lexical semantics, reflecting different kinds of relationships within a lexical field. For that very reason they also have a very definite importance for lexicographers, for they have to draw on his knowledge of these relations when defining lexical item (ibid). For instance, the word bark, even though it could apply to a number of different animal types, is prototypically associated with dog. This prototypicality in the relationship reaches a degree where it becomes part of the meaning of the verb bark. In a sense then one could say that a dog is the prototypical barker and that an essential meaning relation develops between the two lexical items. Eventually it boils down to the fact that the meaning of one lexical item is encapsulated in the meaning of another (Lyons, 1995). On the other hand, Paradigmatic (*vertical*) relations are those that bind the elements of a group or a class of lexemes from paradigm of a single world to whole lexical fields.

The Major Lexical Relations:-
The major kinds that fall within the lexical relations are various all of which refer to the fact that the meanings of words can be studied, explained and analysed in terms of their relations with other words in various ways. This section is entirely devoted to survey such lexical relations including synonyms, antonyms and hyponyms.

Synonyms:-
Of course, the notion of synonymy has been largely examined in lexical semantics by several scholars. In general, synonyms are defined as the "sameness of meaning, which can be identified by the use of substitution. However, there are no real synonyms, that is, words having exactly the same meaning, but rather partial and near-synonyms, "expressions that are more or less similar, but not identical in meaning" (Lyons 1995: 60). Cruse (1986: 265) considers synonymy as "certain pairs or groups of lexical items which bear a special sort of semantic resemblance to one another". Cruse focused his attention on the fact that some pairs of items are more synonymous than others because of the differences of overlap of their semantic traits and tried to identify absolute synonymy: he suggested a test for revealing the extent to which two words can be considered synonymous. This consisted in inserting them into sentential contexts and looking at possible semantic and syntactic similarities and differences; he found that the terms not always had the same collocational patterns and acceptability and thus, he assumed that absolute synonymy was not always possible (ibid). In the most general sense, he defined synonyms as lexical terms with a high degree of semantic overlap and a low degree of implicit contrastiveness adding that they share identical central semantic traits, namely those that determine the meaning of given lexical items.

Antonyms:-
The term "antonymy" is used in semantics as part of the study of oppositeness of meaning. (Crystal , 2003) . Antonymy concerns exclusion rather than inclusion and this means that two forms with opposite meanings are called antonyms .Parker and Riley (2005) indicate that two words are antonyms if their meanings differ only in the value for a single semantic feature , for example dead and alive , hot and cold , above and below . The meanings of members of each pair are presumably identical, except for opposite value of some semantic features. The meanings

of dead and alive, for instance, are identical except that dead is marked   [-living] and alive is marked [+living]. Different terms are used in the distinction of the different types of antonymy. Finch (2005) , for example , distinguishes three types of antonymy termed : gradable , complementary and relational antonymy . Gradable antonyms are terms in which the degree of opposition is said to be gradable, for example wide and narrow, old and young, tall and short. In each of these pairs the opposition is not absolute. There are degrees of width, age and height, so that to say a road is not narrow does not mean it is wide and vice versa. Also the definition of wide, old and tall will vary according to the referent. A tall man is shorter than a tall building and the second type is complementary antonyms.

Hyponyms:-
Hyponymy refers to a word that contains the meaning of a more general word, known as the , 'superordinate' . For example oak is a 'hyponym' of the superordinate tree. In other words a hyponym is a word whose meaning contains all the same feature values of another word, plus some additional feature values. For example the meaning of the word sow has exactly the same feature values as the word pig (e.g. [-human] plus some additional ones (e.g. [+adult] [-male]) (Parker and Riley, 2005). This relation is a relation between words that results from a relation between their meaning and leads to a relation between their denotations: the meaning of the hyponym contains "the meaning of the hyponym , and the denotation of the hyponym is a sub-category of the denotation of the hyperonym'' (Lobner : 2002) . Finch (2005) states that much of English vocabulary is linked by a system of an inclusion. This relation is a vertical relationship that is fundamental to the way in which we classify things. For example, red is a hyponym of colour, flute of musical instrument and hammer of tool. Crystal (2003) considers hyponymy as a relationship between specific and general lexical items. Crystal maintains that hyponymy is a sense relation which obtains between specific and general lexical items, such that the former includes the latter , or a hyponym of the latter . He provides examples: cat is a hyponymy of animal and chair is a hyponymy of furniture.

The Significance of Lexical Relations:-
Mainly, the importance of lexical relations can be clearly seen in various communicative events and situations especially when the meaning of a word is unclear or it is to be explained thoroughly. Sometimes, when using words in everyday conversation or in any other situation, speakers may explain them according to their relationships. For instance, when speakers are required to explain the meaning of the word 'conceal', they may simply say 'it means hide'. Another instance could be considered when explaining the meaning of the word 'shallow' as being the opposite of 'deep' and so on. In doing so, the explanations of the meanings of words are understood not according to what they mean (their features) but in terms of their relationships with other words. This way of describing the meanings of words is used in semantics and is called the analysis of lexical relations (Yule, 2006). Knowledge of vocabulary items is not enough for the development of learners' lexical competence. It also requires understanding of the different relations between words. Trask (1999) likewise puts a general statement that the meaning of a word is related to the meaning of other word in ways that may be simple or complex. The word young, for example is more closely related to old than it is to lazy. Also rose is related in one way to flower, in another way to lilac, and in a third way to red. The meaning of a word could be characterized not in terms of its component features , but in terms of its relationship to other words , in other words according to its lexical relations. Thus, the importance of such relations arise from the fact that they explain the meanings of words in terms of their relations to others at various levels and by doing so, there would be much exposure to language and much augmentation as far as the knowledge of the vocabulary used in language is concerned.

Conclusion:-
Lexical relations are a type of semantic relations which have a significant role in the explanation, analysis and use of the meanings of words within sentences. They approach the meanings of words on the basis of their relation with each other as far as similarity, differences and inclusion are concerned. The way a word might be related to the other word or words is a matter of the specific nature of the relation of this word as having the same or different meaning. In fact, lexical relations might be considered an efficient way in understanding the exact meaning of the word and how it is related to other words within the English sentences. In communication, lexical relations are considered an effective way of explaining the meanings of words in various ways and thus, a better communication might be achieved.

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