



A Semantic Analysis Of Lexical Relations In The Iraqi Economic Discourse : The Case Of Business Landscape Magazine

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Abstract

Economic Discourse occupies a crucial place in linguistic studies to be discussed and examined. Thus, this paper deals with Iraqi economic discourse from a semantic perspective. The study aims at: identifying the semantic relations among words, such as synonyms, hyponyms and antonyms to find out the most dominant relations by calculating the frequency of these relations within the selected texts. Two articles of the Iraqi magazine "business landscape" are selected to be under scrutiny. The data are based on qualitative-quantitative method of analysis. The findings show that hyponymy is the most frequent relation in the texts with the frequency of 44%, synonymy with a rate of 33% and antonymy of 23% to be the least frequent relation in the texts.

Keywords: economic discourse, semantic relations, synonymy, hyponymy, antonymy

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Yule (2010, p.100) indicated that 'linguistic semantics deals with the conventional meaning conveyed by the use words, phrases, and sentences of a language". A fact discussed in this definition that semantics is part of language to convey meaning. Lexical items or lexemes are terms used to describe words. It is possible to determine meaning not just by its fundamental elements, but also by its relationship to other words. This method is known as lexical relation (Yule, 2010, p.104).

Lexical relations, according to (Saeed, 2003,p. 63), characterize the relationship between the meanings of words. It is the study of how lexicon is organized and how lexical concepts are related to one another. According to Saeed's beliefs, there are distinctive kinds of lexical relations, including homonymy, polysemy, synonymy, opposites (antonymy), hyponymy, and meronymy.

Investigating these distinctive relations are specifically the core of this paper in order to observe their account and purpose in in the selected data. From another boat, two articles from the well-known Iraqi magazine "business landscape" are selected to be examples under scrutiny.

In this study, the researcher attempts to present a clear description of the lexical relations, the most dominant ones and the goal of employing in the selected data.

2. Literature Review

Lyons (1995) describes semantics as the study of meaning, whereas linguistic semantics is regarded as the study of meaning as it is systematically encoded in natural language vocabulary and grammar. Cruse divides semantics into three subfields: lexical semantics, grammatical semantics, and logical semantics, to put it another way.

The lexical semantics of Cruse (2000,p.15) focuses on 'content' words (tiger, daffodil, inconsiderate) rather than 'grammatical' terms (the, of , and). Most people believe that meaning is inextricably linked to specific words, and that this is what words are for.

Although each language has a large number of lexical relations, a single lexeme can be in several of them at the same time. As a result, rather than seeing the lexicon as a list of words in a dictionary, as Saeed suggests, it is more realistic to think of it as a network. Synonyms are phonologically different words with the same or very similar meanings. For instance, couch/sofa, boy/lad, lawyer/attorney, toilet/lavatory, large/large, etc. Perfect synonyms are uncommon; most synonyms have varying distribution ranges depending on a variety of factors.

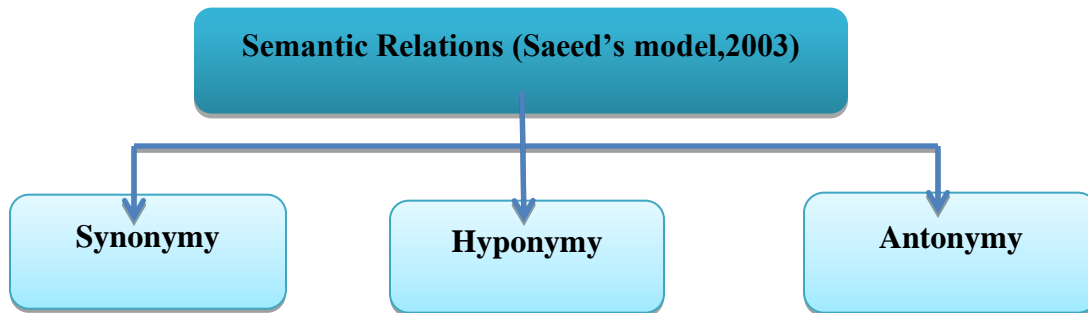
In addition, hyponymy is a type of inclusion connection that occurs between groupings of words. A hyponym is a word that has the meaning of another word. Hypernym, or superordinate, is a more broad name for this and finally antonyms which are words that have the exact opposite meaning. However, there are various

ways in which one word is opposed to another; that is, numerous types of interactions can be identified under the overall name of opposition (Rambaud, 2012)

3. Methodology

This section is devoted to the methodology the researcher selects to investigate the selected data. Concerning the semantic relations, there are several different forms of relationships. Because a single lexeme might be in multiple of these relationships at the same time, it's more accurate to think of the lexicon as a network rather than a list of words like in a published dictionary (Saeed, 2003). The following figure shows Saeed's classifications of lexical relations that are selected as the proposed model for this study:

Figure 1 The Proposed Model of Data Analysis Based on Saeed's Classifications on Semantic Relations



4. Data Analysis

4.1 Semantic Relations of the First Article:

1. Synonymy

Synonym occurs when two words have senses with identical feature specifications. Two words would be completely synonymous if both words had the same number of senses, and there were a one to one correspondence of identical sense between the two words (Murphy, 2003:86).

Synonyms in general are adjectives, nouns or adverbs. Nouns, such as improvement and growth and completion and requirements are inserted as synonyms to indicate the opposite so that it gives us a glimpse of the absence of these factors, as in the following example:

1. "This led to the lack of improvement and growth of this sector as there was no competition or requirement to improve the services" (Al-Ansari, 2021,p. 25).

Words like open up and free market are chosen by the writer to point out the country's opinion to international trade, as the following example:

2. "After 2003, the Iraqi economy was about to open up to become a free market, hence we have seen a sharp increase in imported goods floating the Iraqi market from many parts of the world " (Al-Ansari, 2021,p. 25).

Moreover, the writer by employing synonyms, such as availability and accessibility asserted the presence of banking services, as the next example illustrates:

3. "Furthermore, we have seen an increase in the number of international companies entering the Iraqi market and an increase in the number of SMEs and startups, which requires the availability and accessibility of banking services" (Al-Ansari, 2021p.25).

Some of the payment solutions suggested by the author are standing orders and direct debit to facilitate the business of the country as we can notice in the following example:

4. "Payment solutions: Some of the payment solutions are available to SMEs in Iraq but others such as standing orders and direct debit are not available to date(Al-Ansari, 2021,p. 26).

As such, the author applies more synonyms to emphasize his goal when he talks about the power of customers in terms, such as saving, investment and borrow funds from one hand and mentions terms like long life memory and expertise to explain the professional relationship between the customers and the bank states, as we shown beneath:

5. "The buyers in the banking industry are the customers who in simple terms would like to use saving and investment facilities or borrow funds" (Al-Ansari, 2021p. 28)

6. "The customers seem to have a long life memory and experience with the state-owned banks" (Al-Ansari, 2021p. 28).

One more time, the author indicates the relationship between the customer and banks as a factor in the development of the country economy as the next example elucidates:

7. "That would attract new customers, increase their trust in the banking sector, and enable them to build a strong and sustainable relationship with banks" (Al-Ansari, 2021, p. 28).

Gerunds with -ing endings (improving and enhancing) are employed by the author referring to the importance of increasing the bank services as an attraction factor for new investors, as exposed in the following example:

8. "As for the banks, they should look into improving and enhancing their products and services to raise the bar for the new entries" (Al-Ansari, 2021, p. 28).

2. Hyponymy

Hyponym is defined in terms of the inclusion of the sense of one item in the sense of another (Hurford & Heasley, 1986, p. 106). In this respect, the author presents a set of hyponyms as follows:

9. "Making and Receiving Payments includes "Bank Transfer, International Transfer, cheque, cash, Card Processing/ Debit and Credit, Standing Orders and direct debit" (Al-Ansari, 2021, p. 26).
10. "Cash Flow includes " trade facilitates, Invoice Finance, overdraft, credit card and Corporate Card" (Al-Ansari, 2021, p. 26).
11. "Loans for Growth includes "Commercial Mortgage, Business Loan and Asset Finance" (Al-Ansari, 2021, p. 26).
12. "FX Services include "Spot Rate, Forward Booking, Currency Payments and Currencies Accounts" (Al-Ansari, 2021, p. 26).
13. "Services includes "Branch Services, Advisor Service, Telephone Banking, Internet Banking, Mobile Application, Support Team" (Al-Ansari, 2021, p. 26).

Through hyponym terms, The author shows a table of the services and products available in the UK by the major banks to examine the products and facilities available in the Iraqi banking sector. Moreover, many hyponyms are inserted to represent the technical development that help the customers to achieve their needs nearly in a short time as in the following two examples:

14. "Front-office technology: full on-line banking, telephone banking, investments risk advisory, money transfer, and other enabling technology" (Al-Ansari, 2021, p. 26).
15. "Back-office technology: such as account opening, monitoring and screening technology, annual account analysis, risk rating, and many others" (Al-Ansari, 2021, p. 27) .

By hyponymy, he author touches on the difficulties facing banking offers within the country, such as:

16. "The main issue is the law enforcement regarding companies registration requirements, accounts reporting law, tax reporting, and VAT collections" (Al-Ansari, 2021, p. 28).

The author uses the term "Other suppliers" as a subordinate term and international payments, international referencing agency for anti-money laundering as hyponyms to indicate the restrictions that obstacle the financial and banking development, as we can see below:

17. "Other suppliers have strong powers, such as corresponding banks for international payments, international referencing agency for anti-money laundering (AML), and name screening" (Al-Ansari, 2021, p. 28).

In the same milieu, the author continues to describe Iraqi banking sector by weakness and how it should be through various components, such as:

18. "The banking sector in Iraq is weak and requires further enhancement and to move from reporting activities solely to providing consultancy for SMEs such as business planning cash flow, forecasting, and tax planning" (Al-Ansari, 2021, p. 29).

All the examples given in the following statements represent a subordinate term, which includes "The solution" to all the flaws have emerged in the Iraqi banking system, as shown in the extract beneath:

19. "The solution to this would be by establishing training facilities which would be in charge of providing training in commercial banking, investments, advisory services, customer service, and so forth" (Al-Ansari, 2021, p. 29).

3. Antonymy

Antonymy is often thought of as the opposite of synonymy, but the statutes of the two are very different (Palmer, 1981, p.84). In the meaning of polarity, the author presents the factors that hinder the banking sector like "micro" and "macro" as revealed in the following extract:

20. "This article aims to look into the factors that impede the banking sector from providing SMEs with the services they need at a macro level..., and micro-level at an unnamed bank..."(Al-Ansari, 2021, p. 27).

In order to elevate the technical progress in the banking sector, the author mentions two contracted adjectives, such as "front" and "back" technologies that Iraqi banks can need to be advanced:

21. "Front-office technology: full on-line banking, telephone banking, investments risk advisory Back-office technology: such as account opening, monitoring and screening technology, annual account analysis, risk rating, and many others" (Al-Ansari, 2021, p. 27).

By antonyms, such as "challenges" and "solutions", the author attempts to highlight these terms as the plural nouns to reflect the solutions the Iraqi banking sector can achieve to overcome the big challenges it faces, such as:

22. "Moreover, with each element of Porter's Five Forces, this article highlights the challenges and what could be considered as solutions to overcome these issues or threats" (Al-Ansari, 2021, p. 28).

Furthermore, the author makes a hint to the "known" and "unknown" agencies working in Iraq without tangible interest, as we can notice below:

23. "These agencies have the power of knowledge and information but for known and unknown reasons they do not supply or work with Iraq" (Al-Ansari, 2021, p. 28).

With employing the contradicted terms “buyer” and supplier”, the author refers to the fact that Iraqi government relies only on state-owned banks, like:

24. “In addition, the government which is the main buyer and supplier only relies on state-owned banks” (Al-Ansari, 2021, p. 29).

Through the opposites terms “personal” and “commercial”, the author fully explains the challenges facing the banking sector, as exemplified in the following quote:

25. “There are no differences in the basic banking services between the personal and commercial facilities and the challenges that both departments face” (Al-Ansari, 2021, p. 29).

1. Synonymy

By inserting three nouns “conflict”, “war” and “sanctions”, the author reveal the depth of the gap that youth suffer from that obstacles their progress, such as;

26. “Unfortunately, due to years of conflict, war, and sanctions, the English language programs in public universities and schools have been decimated” (van den Toorn, 2020, p. 31).

From another point of view and in order to fill those gaps, the author puts forward some solutions by employing synonymous adjectives “academic” and “professional”, as we can notice below:

27. “The curriculum is both academic and professional, uniquely tailored to Iraq, and will focus on developing essential skills as well as critical thinking” (van den Toorn, 2020, p. 31).

2. Hyponymy

The author draws the reader's attention with a set of hyponyms to reflect the traditional ways of acquiring knowledge for the Iraqi youth by mentioning the electronic programs that fall under the subordinate name of “computer programs”, as clarified below:

28. “Young Iraqis lacked basic professional competencies in computer programs (Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, Word) as well as academic skills like research, writing, and public speaking, to personal attributes like behavior and attitude” (van den Toorn, 2020, p. 31).

In order to fill gaps, the author some of the co-hyponyms include” General and Business English”, “Introductions to Business”, “Finance”, “Marketing”, “Financial Accounting”, and “lessons” to represent the way of educating the Iraqi youth, such as:

29. “Courses include General and Business English, Introductions to Business, Finance, Marketing, Financial Accounting, and lessons and workshops teaching Professional Skills such as IT and computer programs, research, writing, presentation, communications, attitude and behavior, and workplace norms” (van den Toorn, 2020, p. 32).

3. Antonymy

By contradicting terms “employment” and “unemployment”, the author describes the current private sector which suffers from deficits and gives the available solutions to fulfill its aims, as we can notice below:

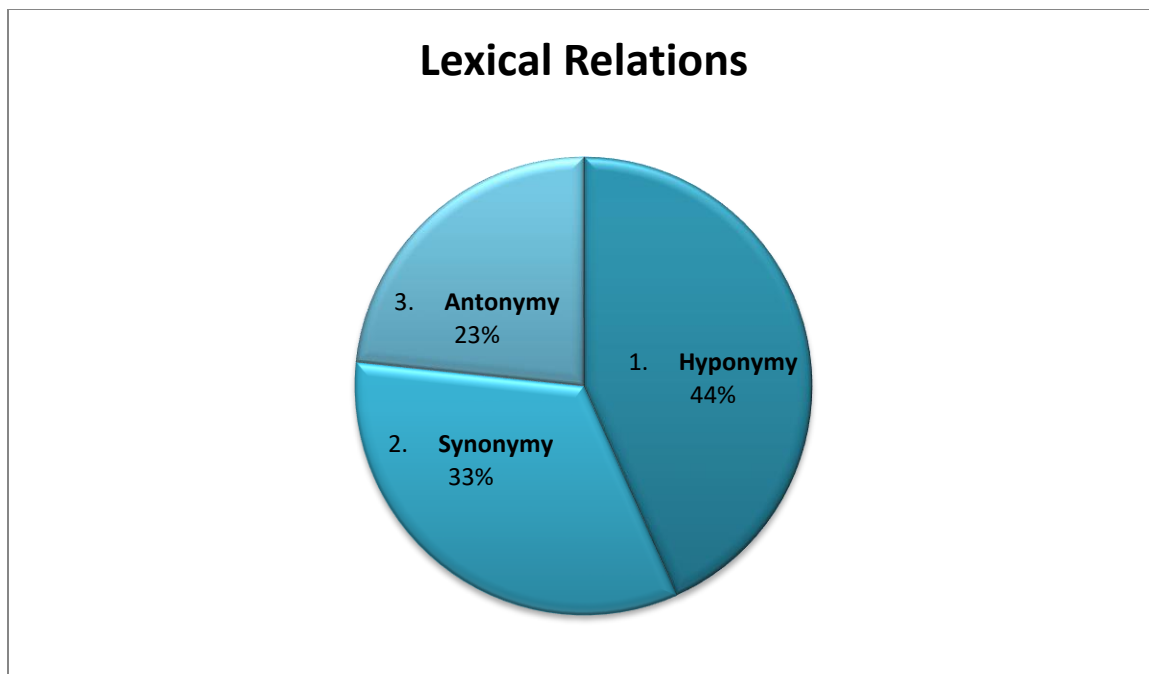
30. “BBS can start scratching the surface of solving Iraq’s education, employment, and private sector deficits, but it is only one program; Iraq needs dozens, that will address the skills and knowledge deficit in a variety of fields. Only through education can Iraq address its problems of youth unemployment” (van den Toorn, 2020, p. 32).

5. Findings

In this section, the author demonstrated the findings of the research paper that analysed the use of lexical relations in the selected two economic articles from the Iraqi magazine “ Business Landscape”. As shown in the following table and pie chart, the researcher points out the most dominant lexical relations employed in these articles:

Table 1 The Set of Lexical Relations

No.	Lexical Relations	Frequency	Percentage
1	Hyponymy	13	43%
2	Synonymy	10	33%
3	Antonymy	7	23%



6. Discussion

In this fragment, the author discusses the findings of the research paper based on the frequencies appeared as follows:

1. Hyponymy

By inserting various subordinate terms, hyponyms and co-hyponyms, the author describes the difficulties the banking sector and youth sector suffer from in Iraq. As the findings illustrate, it is regarded as the more frequent in these articles.

2. Synonymy

Synonymous terms are introduced in this magazine with two its articles to represent the status of the Iraqi banking as well as the obstacles facing the progress process in Iraq. As the chart reveals, the use of synonymous terms is the second more frequent lexical relationships in the selected data.

3. Antonymy

For the purpose of raising the wheel of development and increasing awareness for young people, the author inserts several antonymous terms to confirm this idea. In general, it is the last of the most frequent terms in the magazine.

7.Conclusions

Regarding the data selected, the researcher scrutinizes according to the research objectives stated in the first section of this paper, a conclusion can be prepared. The most frequent set of lexical relations are concentrated to be collected and observed. The author discovered the most dominant set of lexical relations which were represented by 13 cases of synonymous terms, 10 cases of hyponyms and 7 cases of antonyms. All these lexical relations enriched the magazine in general and its articles in particular with understandable information about Iraqi economic discourse.

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