## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# DESCRIPTION OF SENSE RELATIONS IN MACHA DIALECT OF THE OROMO LANGUAGE

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**ABSTRACT**

This study was designed to investigate sense relations of lexemes in Macha Dialect of the Oromo Language through the application of linguistic knowledge. It was set to identify the different horizontal and vertical sense relations in the dialect and to describe them systematically. Qualitative method was used to achieve the objectives of the study, and text analysis was employed in the discussions of the findings. The sense relations predominantly used in the dialect are antonymy, synonymy, hyponymy, homonymy, polysemy, member-collection, meronymy, portion-mass and metonymy. Some of these relations are further categorized into parcels of smaller sense relations.

## INTRODUCTION

Oromo language is categorized under Lowland East Cushitic group of the Afroasiatic phylum. The Lowland East Cushitic is further divided into Oromoid, Northern and Omo-Tana. It is the Oromoid sub-group that consists of Oromo (Hayward 2000). With regard to its geographical dialects, scholars have different views. For instance, Heine (1981) classified Oromo language as Ethiopian Oromo and Kenyan Oromo dialect areas. The Ethiopian Oromo has three major dialects: Macha spoken in Jimma, Limmu, Wollaga and Nonno; Tulama spoken in Shewa; and Eastern Oromo spoken by Ittu, Ania and Arsi among others. However, this classification did not consider Oromo spoken in Wollo in the North and Borana and Guji in the South. On the other hand, Bender *et al*. (1976) classified Oromo language of Ethiopia into five dialects. These are Western (E.g. Macha), Central (Tulama), Northern (Wollo, Rayya), Eastern (Harar) and Southern (Arsi, Guji and Borana). Regardless of the different classifications, the dialect that is predominantly used by media and many other formal contexts is the Macha dialect. Though the scholars have their own justifications for the classifications, the language is yet to have standard forms for various reasons, of which one is lack of lexical databases

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and semantic investigations. To put the process one step forth, investigation of sense relations is needed. Thus, the current study identified various sense relations of the language primarily from the variety (dialect) used on media, in courts, in academics, etc.

Study on Oromo language is lagging behind as far as modern semantic, pragmatic, corpora, philosophical and computational studies are concerned, which is recognized by scholars in the disciplines. To show few gaps, there are hardly any updated monolingual dictionaries and corpora in Oromo language. In addition, the various materials written in the language and many electronic and broadcast media of Oromo language are usually farfetched from one another in their lexical usages. Consequently, the users of the language face several challenges in understanding the written texts or the spoken ones. The basic source of such problems is lack of materials which harmoniously indicate the sense relations of the lexemes in the language. Therefore, the present study showed insights to the sense relations of Oromo language.

The main objective of this study is to indicate sense relationship between lexical items of the language, and to give brief descriptions on the relations. Thus, this work establishes, through the use of corpus methods and small-scale corpora, the various relations among lexical categories (parts of speech) of

Oromo language. Under the main objective, there are the following specific objectives:

- Identifying different horizontal and vertical sense relations among words;
- Analyzing the relations to provide descriptive information about the words.

The findings of this study provide a bank of samples that provide any user of the language with model lexical elements which can be used in relevant and appropriate contexts or where necessary, and thus it is very helpful in various empirical areas, such as media, academics, offices, etc. In addition, it helps any user of the language by indicating word sense disambiguation. In disambiguating word senses, contexts are identified reflecting the degree to which other words are likely to appear in the context of some previously identified word. Thus, overlap between the lexemes can be revealed and options are provided for the users.

The main focus of this study is on paradigmatic relations of words (lexemes). Paradigmatic relation shows the various sense (semantic) relations among words regardless of the different contexts. However, the syntagmatic relation is also indicated where necessary. Syntagmatic relation is the relationship between words (lexemes), usually in the form of subject, verb, object, complement, etc in a sentence. Because the syntagmatic relation of words is treated in syntactic and morphological studies, it is not the intention of this study to touch this relation. From the various areas of investigations in semantics, this study focuses only on the monolingual corpora of the words (lexemes). Accordingly, phonological, morphological, syntactic, pragmatic and discourse information of the words is all out of the scope of this study. Thus, data on (semantic) relations of the words (lexemes) were collected from various textbooks, court documents, news papers and accessible broadcast media which use Oromo language. Hence, the data did not incorporate the natural language being used by the speakers of the language orally in day-to-day communication for the reason that the variables are uncontrollable and the utterances are hardly used in written forms or on media.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Data Source:** The sources of data were as many soft copy materials as possible published by several disciplines which include: student research works in Addis Ababa and Jimma Universities, textbooks, court documents and newspapers, which are all written in Oromo language.

**Data Collection:** The texts from the sources mentioned above were collected manually in soft and photo copies based on their availabilities. Word paradigm was used to find out all the relations among the words in the texts. The words were selected using various tools based on lexical universal frames. The tools werere direct elicitation, Swedish wordlist and recording.

**Sampling Technique:** To make the sample data representative, we used proportionate stratified sampling technique. The sources of the text data were clustered based on their characteristics, such as textbooks, newspapers, court files and student research papers. Such classification helped us in selecting texts from each category to make the data representative and addressing several issues of the society. We collected the text data from each category using the various appropriate tools, and we manually clustered the collected text.

**Method of Analysis:** The analysis of sense (semantic) relations was primarily based on texts gathered through various tools mentioned above. Here, the words were classified according to their different relations, like synonymy, homonymy, hyponymy, antonymy, meronymy, metonymy, polysemy, gradables, complementary, etc. In line with the classifications, analysis and discussion of their meanings were done. Syntagmatic illustrations were given only where necessary.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Semantics is the study of meaning that can be of words or sentences communicated through language. It is a broad field that has strong attachment with philosophy and psychology in creating and transmitting meaning. It is one of the branches of semiotics, the general study of the whole group of systems grounded on the arbitrariness of sign and the object it represents. Semantic knowledge is emphasized considering the notion of entailment that indicates the relationship between words, phrases or sentences, and semantics sets up components of grammar to give meanings to different aspects. Meaning cannot be identified as a separate level, autonomous from the study of other levels of grammar which is associated with cognitive grammar. Lexicon is the mental store of words which is finite body of knowledge, but sentence meaning is more productive than word meaning which can be listed in lexicon. Semantic description uses recursive and repetitive rules of syntax to create sentence meanings that are compositional. Thus, model grammar categorizes meaning as a more stable body of word meaning in a lexicon and infinite composed meanings of sentences (Saeed, 1997).

Language is built from a number of lexemes (words) that are systematically combined together to produce meaningful utterances. Lexemes are considered as basic in every language as each of them carries meaning, and the meanings of big structures such as sentences are the outcome of the sum total of meaning of words. Chain among words of a language forms a structure; and thus, lexicons are perceived as network. Chains in lexicon are governed by organizational principle which is the lexical field (Saeed, 1997: 63, and Murphy, 2006:314).

Despite the fact that meaning of a word is far from logical explanations, the relation among words, particularly lexemes, is convincingly logical and is explainable (Murphy, 2006: 314). Various linguists, philosophers and psychologists have defined some important aspects of a word's meaning such as the difference between concept and reference. The conceptual model is a kind of cognitive structure which demonstrates some environmental aspects and represents different linguistic, psychological and pragmatic characteristics. Relation among words (lexemes) of a language is often considered as lexical relation. However, sense (semantic) relation and lexical relation are different for some scholars. Sense (Semantic) relation often seems to be either cognitive or descriptive meaning or conceptual relation among lexicon of the language, whereas lexical relation possibly includes linguistic relation of words of a language such as phonological and morphological simil

arity in addition to meaning relation (Murphy, 2006:341, and Lyons, 1977). As long as there are no significant differences between them, sense (semantic) relation is predominantly used in this study. Within the field of lexical semantics, sense (semantic) relations typically have the function of establishing links between senses of words. But in essence, the list of sense relations is infinite, spanning from very general ones holding between large sets of senses to the fully idiosyncratic ones which may only hold between two specific senses. Sense (Semantic) relation encompasses chain among words such as antonymy, synonymy, hyponymy, homonymy, polysemy, member-collection, meronymy, portion-mass, metonymy, and others. The number and types of relations can vary across languages (Chelliah and De Reuse 2011: 413-15).

Contrary to the various semantic relations existing in Oromo language, which is widely spoken and used in Ethiopia, little has been said so far, and there are only few or hardly any lexicological and lexicographic studies (lexical standardization). The language is currently official language of Oromia National Regional State (which is the largest region in Ethiopia). It is used by Oromo people who cover 34.5% of the total population (Census report 2008). It is also instructional language from elementary to university level.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the findings in relation to sense relations among lexical items in Macha Dialect of Oromo are presented. The relations identified are antonymy, synonymy, hyponymy, homonymy, polysemy, member-collection, meronymy, portion-mass relation and metonymy. Some of these relations have their own sub-portions, which are discussed with illustrations. The presentations and discussions of data gathered for the sense relations are as follow.

### Antonymy

Various scholars view the scope of the term 'antonym' in different ways. For instance, Lyons (1977:274), and Croft and Alan (2004:167) used antonym to refer merely to gradable opposites whereas Saeed (2003:67) and Murphy (2006:431) consider 'antonym' as any lexical pairs that constitute oppositions. In its later sense, antonymy is defined as relation in which two words share all relevant properties except for one that causes them to be incompatible (Murphy, 2006:314, and Katz, 1972:159). It has also been traditionally regarded as paradigmatic opposition permanently available in lexicon of a language (Stubbs, 2002:38). Antonymy can have a number of subcategories all of which are broadly antonyms in that their senses are so opposed in such a way that the members of a pair of antonyms are mutually exclusive in their application (Katz, 1972: 159).

### Gradable Antonymy

This sort of antonymy is characterized by gradability; the items are gradable in a sense that they can hold varying degrees, and the relation between the items is contrary since the assertion of one entails the negation of the other, but not vice versa (Murphy, 2006: 314). Macha-Oromo, *jaba:* 'strong, hard'- *la:fa:* 'weak' portrays this kind of opposition. *Jaba:* 'strong' entails *la:fa: miti* 'not weak', but *la:fa:miti* 'not weak' doesn't

necessarily mean *jaba:* strong'. In gradable antonymy, one of the items is marked while the other is not in such a way that only one is used to ask or describe the degree of gradable quality (Palmer, 1976: 76). This is also true in Macha-Oromo; for instance, in *de:ra:* 'long'- *gaba:ba:* 'short', *de:ra:* 'long' is most frequently used as in *me:tira lama de:reta* 'It is two meters long' than *me:tira lama gaba:bbata* 'It is two meters short'. Relationship between items in gradable antonymy typically manifests two characteristics; there are usually intermediate terms between the gradable antonyms, and the terms used are typically relative. In Macha-Oromo words such as *gudda:* 'big'- *t'ik'k'a:* 'small', there is such intermediate term *giddu-gale:ssa* 'medium', and in fact no precise measure exists to talk about whether an object is *gudda:* 'big', *giddu-gale:ssa* 'medium' or *t'ik'k'a:* 'small'. *Hoʔa:* 'hot'- *k'orra:* 'cold', *de:ra:* 'long', *gaba:ba:* 'short', *dansa:* 'good'- *bada:* 'bad', *la:fa:* 'soft'- *jaba:* 'hard', *balla:* 'wide'-*dîp'p'a:* 'narrow', *furda:* 'thick'- *k'alla:* 'thin', and *bare:da:* 'handsome'-*fokkisa:* 'ugly' are some examples of gradable antonyms in Oromo.

### Non-Gradable Antonymy

These are antonyms which are not gradable, and thus there are no any intermediate terms between the two opposing pairs. Non-gradable antonyms can be various types: directional, antipodal and kinship as illustrated below with examples.

### Directional Antonymy

Antonyms with in this category exhibit reversal relationship between items or arguments. Relations are often characterized by symmetry, transitivity and reversibility (Palmer, 1976: 79). Directional antonymy has further categories under it: reverse opposition and converse relation.

### Reverse Opposition

Reverse opposition contains terms that express movements in such a way that one form describes in one direction, and the other in opposite direction. By extension, the terms can also be applied to any process which can be reversed (Saeed, 1997: 67, and Lyons, 1977: 282). The opposing pairs differ in the directions they describe (Palmer, 1976: 77). *Kore* 'climbed'-*buʔe* 'dismounted', *dufe* 'came'- *de:me* 'went', *bahe* 'went out'- *se:ne* 'entered', *kufe* 'failed'- *kaʔe* 'stood up', and *lik'imse* 'swallowed'- *tufe* 'spitted' are some instances of reverse opposition in the dialect. If we consider *dufe* 'came'-*de:me* 'went', *dufe* 'came' designates movement towards the speaker while *de:me* 'went' displays moving away from the speaker. So, the relation between the senses of the lexemes is referred as reverse.

### Converse

Converse opposition encompasses terms that describe relation between two entities from alternative view point (Saeed, 1997: 67). It follows the pattern *if x is p to y, then y is q to x*. For instance, *John sold a pen to James* entails *James bought a pen from John* (Murphy, 2006: 314). The following pairs of Macha-Oromo words display this kind of opposition: *irra* 'on'- *jala* 'below', *dura* 'front'- *du:ba* 'back', *bita:* 'left'- *mirga* 'right', and *bite* 'bought'- *gurgure* 'sold'. It is noticeable that in *bita:*

'left'- *mirga* 'right', if Girmay is found at the left of *Č'a:la:*, then, *Č'a:la:* is found to the right of Girmay.

## Antipodal

Antipodal opposition describes entities that are taxonomically specified, but are found in two extremes in spatial sequence; it is dominant in directional lexemes. These lexemes belong to the same field, and each lexeme diametrically is opposed to its converse in the two dimensional space (Lyons, 1977: 273). Therefore, in the target dialect pairs of terms such as *ka:ba* 'north'- *kibba* 'south' and *baha* 'east'- *dîha* 'west' show antipodal opposition. Antipodal opposition operates well in the area of color too; colors can be arranged as paired antipodal opposites in three dimensional space. Thus, *adi:* 'white'- *gurra:čča* 'black' relationship portrays this relation in Macha-Oromo.

## Kinship

Kinship terms are especially interesting in discussion of relative opposition since many of them indicate not only the relationship but also the sex of a person concerned which blocks reversibility (Palmer, 1976: 68). Kinship vocabularies in many languages also manifest the principle of antipodal in various ways (Lyons, 1977: 284). However, the opposing pairs contradict each other based on sex in family taxonomy. Pairs such as *ja:rsa* 'old man'- *ja:rti:* 'old woman', *ʔabba:* 'father'- *ha:da* 'mother', and *ʔaka:kayyu:* 'grandfather'- *ʔakko* 'grandmother' can be mentioned as examples of kinship terminologies in Macha-Oromo.

## Incompatibility (Taxonomic Sisters)

Logical incompatibility is semantic rather than lexical relations; the meanings are incompatible not the words themselves since the relation holds between specific senses of the word. Because formal properties of words involved are irrelevant to the relation, the relationship of senses hold between lexemes in many member sets (Murphy, 2006: 314, and Lyons, 1977: 280). Sentences with incompatibility term contradict each other; terms obtain their value from their contrastive relation with others. Incompatibility also refers to items in particular classes which are at the same level, but contradict each other (Palmer, 1976: 76, and Saeed, 1997: 60). If we consider examples such as *wi:t'ata* 'Monday'- *sambata* 'Sunday', *harʔa* 'today'- *boru* 'tomorrow' and *barana* 'this year'- *egeree* 'next year', we can see that there is no lexical relation between pairs in incompatibility. Incompatibility differs from antipodal opposition in two ways. Unlike incompatibility, the pairs in antipodal are diametrically opposed. And, in antipodal, the opposition between the pair is oblivious and perceivable among the speakers. Hence, *adi:* 'white'- *gurra:čča* 'black' are considered as antipodal not because they are diametrically opposed, but because they are perceived as naturally opposite by the speakers.

## Complementarity (Simple Antonym, Contradiction)

In this kind of opposition, the terms behave complementary to each other; they obtain their value from their contrastive relation with others (Palmer, 1976: 77). Simple antonym is relation between words where the negation of one implies the positive of other. Senses of this antonym completely bisect

some domain (Saeed, 1997: 66, and Murphy, 2006: 314). Complementarities are construed as mutually excluding some domains. Therefore, if *x* and *y* are adjective complementarities, the entity of *x* is not the entity of *y*, and if it is not of *x*, it is *y* (Croft and Alan, 2004: 167). Macha-Oromo pairs of words like *duʔa:* 'dead'- *jira:* 'alive', *bana:* 'open'- *č'ufa:* 'closed' *ya:date* 'recalled'- *ʔirra:ɱfate* 'forgot', *kufe* 'failed'- *darbe* 'passed', and *k'e:rro:* 'bachelor'- *su:bbo:* 'married' are examples of simple antonyms. From these instances, we can see that if someone is alive he/she is not dead, and if he/she is dead, he/she is not alive.

## Synonymy

Loosely speaking, synonymy is the sense/semantic relation of 'sameness' of meaning. Technically, for two words to be synonymous, they have to be similar and share all essential components, and thus capable of being used to substitute one another in all contexts without any noticeable difference in their meanings. This type of relation is termed as complete or absolute synonymy. Complete synonymy, however, does exist rarely due to stylistic, regional, dialectal, emotional and contextual differences that create differences between synonymous words (Palmer 1976: 59-65, Fromkin and Rodman 1993: 131, Crystal 1997: 105, Herford and Heasley 2006: 102, and Murphy 2006: 367). For example, in Macha-Oromo *soba* and *kijiba*- 'false', and *ka:te* and *fi:ge*- 'ran' seem examples of complete synonymous.
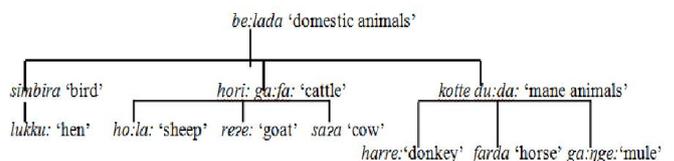
The other type of synonymy which occurs in languages is termed as partial synonymy. According to Murphy (2006) and Lyons (1995:61), this type of synonymy indicates semantically similar lexical elements which differ by some dimensions or degrees of meaning and use. These are words/lexemes which share most of their necessary components or constituents with one another, but not all. In the dialect, examples of partial synonyms are given below.

| Synonymous Words | | Gloss | Synonymous Word | | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *k'abe:ňňa* | *duniya:* | 'property' | *so:rata* | *ňa:ta* | 'food' |
| *di:na* | *ʔamaja:ji:* | 'enemy' | *huč'č'u:* | *ʔuffata* | 'cloth' |
| *be:la* | *k'o:k'a* | 'hunger' | | *wayya:* | |

In the following lexical elements, the sense relations among the pairs are slightly different based on the contexts in which they are used. However, they seem identical in their free occurrences.

## Hyponymy

Hyponymy is the relationship of enclosure of meaning where a specific word is included within or under a general word (Lyons, 1977: 291, and Kempson, 1977: 83). The following example shows this relationship in Oromo
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*be:lada* 'domestic animals'

*simbira* 'bird'          *hori: ga:fa:* 'cattle'          *kotte du:da:* 'mane animals'

*lukku:* 'hen'     *ho:la:* 'sheep'  *reʔe:* 'goat'  *saʔa* 'cow'

*harre:* 'donkey'  *farda* 'horse'  *ga:ŋge:* 'mule'

The words (like *harre:* 'donkey', *farda* 'horse', *ga:ŋge:* 'mule') which are included under the general word *kotte du:da:* 'mane animals' are known as a hyponyms or subordinates. The general terms (like *be:llada* 'domestic animals'), which head a list of many specific words like *simbira* 'birds', *hori: ga:fa:* 'cattle', and *kotte du:da:* 'mane animals' under them, are hypernyms or super-ordinates. According to Lyons (1977: 291), the words under the same hypernym are co-hyponyms to each other. Hyponymy is a vertical relationship between each lower term and the higher term whereas co-hyponym is a horizontal relation between words under the same hypernym.

Hyponymy is always transitive in relation (Saeed, 2003: 70). In the above relation, *harre:* 'donkey' is a hyponym of *kotte du:da:* 'mane animals', and *kotte du:da:* 'mane animals' is a hyponym of *be:lada* 'domestic animals' by which *harre:* 'donkey' is automatically a hyponym of *be:lada* 'domestic animals' by transitivity. A word may have both a hyponym and a super-ordinate term. For example, in the above relation *kotte du:da:* 'mane animals' has *be:lada* 'domestic animals' as hpernym and has *harre:* 'donkey', *farda* 'horse' and *ga:ŋge:* 'mule' as hyponym.

## Homonymy

Homonyms are words which have the same form, but are unrelated in meaning. There is no conceptual connection between a word's two meanings as far as homonyms are concerned (Lyons, 1977: 22, and Palmer, 1976: 65). Yet, homonym can be viewed in two ways: homophone and homograph. Homophones are words which are pronounced identically (Saeed 2003); whereas homographs are words which are spelled the same, but have unrelated meanings (Koskela and Murphy, 2006: 742). In the dialect, both homophones and homographs overlap and share the same illustrations.

| Word | Meaning | Gloss | Word | Meaning | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. hojja: | dalaga: | 'work' | b. bukke: | č'ina: | 'beside' |
| | ɗe:rina | 'height' | | luyina | 'hermaphrodite' |
| | k'ola buna: | 'leaf of coffee' | c. gaɗe: | bada: | 'bad' |
| | | | | soda:ta: | 'fearsome' |

As observed from the following examples, a word in Macha dialect is spelled and pronounced the same way to give both homophones and homographs which indicate different interpretations. In example (a), the word **hojja:** is a homophone and homograph which had three unrelated meanings: 'work', 'height' and 'leaf of coffee'.

## Polysemy

Polysemy is the condition of a single lexical item having multiple meanings (Yule 1996, Formkin 1988, Despatie 1976, and Saeed 2003). If we are to identify the semantics of lexical items, we have to check for the eventuality of a given word having multiple interpretations

Here, sameness of a word is not a matter of chance or arbitrary, but it is through extension. Polysemy seems identical with homonymy, but the two categories differ in their lexical entry in dictionary; polysemy is found under the same entry, and homonymous words are listed as a new entry because of their distinction in the historical development of the lexemes. The

following are some illustrations in Oromo with their descriptions.

i. **ʔija**  a. *ʔagartu:* 'sense organ'
        b. *ʔija lilmo:* 'hole of a needle'
        c. *ʔija budde:ni* 'holes on injera'

The three meanings given in (i) are related. The first meaning is a part of body of any animal which is used to see. The other meanings are derived from this meaning; the *holes on injera* are named *ʔija budde:ni:*, and *ʔija lilmo:* indicates a hole at the bottom of a sewing needle.

ii. **ja:rti:**  a. *ma:ŋguddo:* 'older woman'
         b. *ni:ti:* 'wife'

The same word has different related meanings in (ii) above; both meanings have the concepts of feminine, but (b) may or may not indicate older woman.

iii. **hi:ku:**  a. *gargar ba:su:* 'untie'
          b. *ni:ti: gadi dî:su:* 'divorce'
          c. *jijji:ru: (afa:n)* 'translate'

The main concept of *hi:ku:* is to detach something from its basement. In this sense, it works for (a) and (b). This concept also extends to translate one language to another like in (c). Both Polysemy and homonymy are sense/lexical relations that occur between words that are similar in written form or pronunciation. The difference between them lies on relatedness of meaning that exists between the words. If the meaning of a word is far apart from each other and not related to each other, the relation is homonymic. And if there is a closely related meaning between words of the same entry, the relationship is polysemic (Herford and Heasley, 1983: 123, and Koskela and Murphy, 2006: 742).

## Member-Collection

Member-collection is "a relationship between the word for a unit and usual word for a collection of the units" (Saeed, 2003: 71). In dialect, units can be grouped together and have their own name. Mainly, such relation is applicable in countable nouns. This type of relation is few in the dialect; some of them are illustrated as follows:

a. *ho:ma: kanni:sa:* 'Swarm of bee'
b. *girrisa simbira:* 'Flock of bird'
c. *hak'ara jima:* 'bundle of chat'
d. *daʔa lo:ni:* 'herd of cattle'

The examples show that we are not talking about one bee, bird or cattle, but about group of each. These groups are expressed by adjectives before them.

## Meronymy

Meronymy is the persistent relation between words in the sense of part-whole indication in which the actual parts prominently have clear boundaries recognizable in wholes of the same type (Ralph, 2001: 8761, and Croft and Alan, 2004: 153). The lexical hierarchy of part-whole type shows vertical and horizontal relations. The converse relation of whole to part is said to be holonymy.

Meronymy is also explained as the ability of using two expressions in a language as "*A is a part of B, or B has A*" (Palmer, 1981: 312, and Saeed, 1997: 70). For example, in Oromo *ka:ttu:* 'wing' is one of the body parts of *simbira* 'bird', or *simbira* 'bird' has *ka:ttu:* 'wing'. In this set, *simbira:* 'bird' is a whole and *ka:ttu:* 'wing' is a part. Let us consider the following relations of a meronymic hierarchy for *nama* 'man'.
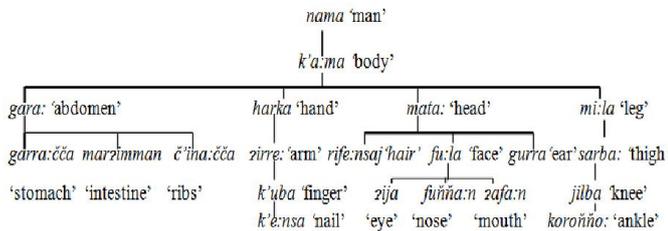


In the above structure, the relationship between *nama-k'a:ma* 'man-body', *k'a:ma-gara:* 'body-abdomen', *harka-ʔirre:* 'hand-arm', etc., is vertical and is called meronymy while that of *gara:čča-marʔimman* 'stomach-intestine', *gara:-harka* 'abdomen-hand', *ʔija-ʔafa:n* 'eye-mouth', etc., is co-meronymy (horizontal). There is yet converse relation of meronymy like *mata:-k'a:ma* 'head-body', *fu:la-mata:* 'face-head', etc., which is holonymy.

## Types of Meronymy

Scholars categorize meronymic relations into different types, of which Lyons (1977) and Murphy (2006) are the common ones. They classified the relations as inalienable (necessary) and alienable (optional) types.

## Inalienable (Necessary)

This type of meronymic relation shows that there is strong and inalienable attachment between the whole and the part. Having *harka* 'hand' is a necessary condition for *k'a:ma* 'body' to exist.

*ʔafa:n- hidî:* 'mouth- lip'     *mana- k'ina:t't'i:* 'house- roof'
*jirma- dame:* 'stem- branch     'fu:la- ʔija* 'face- eye'

In the above relation, for *mana* 'house' to exist, it needs *k'ina:t't'i:* 'roof'. Thus, parts are necessary conditions for well-formed wholes, and even if they are detached, they are still parts of the wholes.

## Alienable (Optional)

Optional type of meronymy indicates that wholes can exist without the parts. For instance, in the relation *balbala- č'uftu:* 'door- lock', *balbala* 'door' can exist without *č'uftu:* lock. Cruse (1986) also identified meronymic relations based on his diagnostic frames as follows:
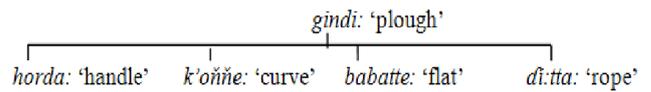
## Whole-Segment Relation

*Wagga:* 'year' has twelve segments that are *jiʔa* 'months'. *Jiʔa* 'month', in turn, has four *torban* 'weeks'.

*wagga:-jiʔa-torban-guyya:-saʔa:* 'year-month-week-day-hour'
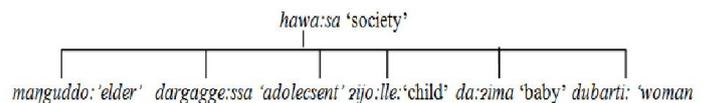
In this relation, the parts are segments coming together to make whole.

## Whole-Functional Component Relation



In the description indicated above, each part has its own function to make the farming tool *gindi:* 'plough' complete. The components are all functional units for the tool to perform the expected function.

## Collection-Member Relation



The relationship between *hawa:sa* 'society' and *maŋguddo:* 'elder', *dargagge:ssa* 'adolecsent', *ʔijo:lle:* 'child', *da:ʔima* 'baby' and *dubarti:* 'woman' is a kind of compound and components because they all together make the whole society. Lexemes having part-whole relations indicate certain sub-category of possessions that are either inalienable or alienable matches. The example of *nama* 'man' shows inalienable relation in that *nama* 'man' and his *k'a:ma* 'body' are inseparable from each other while that of *hawa:sa* 'society' indicates alienable relation because the whole may not be affected if one of the parts are detached from it (Lyons, 1977: 312). In some relations, if A is a part of B which is in turn a part of C, then A can be described as a part of C. The relation of A to C is termed as transitive. For example, *k'uba* 'finger' is part of *k'a:ma* 'body'. There are also entities which indicate no part-whole relation between the expressions of entities at two ends-intransitive. Likewise, h*idda* 'root' is a part of *muka* 'tree', and m*uka* 'tree' is part of *bosona* 'forest'. But, *hidda* 'root' is not part of *bosona* 'forest'. Such meronymic relations are less transitive when compared to transitive.

## Portion-Mass Relation

Portion-mass relation indicates the sense relation of words which do not have certain definite shapes or precise limits. The lexemes can denote materials (water, butter, etc.), or immaterial (admiration, justice, safety, etc.) (Saeed, 1997: 71, and Laycock, 2006: 535). For instance, the relationship between *to:ra* 'line' and *bok'k'ollo:* 'maize' is not of the same type, but serves as individuating function. Thus, we can use expressions like the following in Oromo.

*to:ra- bok'k'ollo:* 'line of maize'
*hida: -garbu:* 'bundle of barley'
*č'op'a- biša:ni:* 'drop of water'
*ka:su:- k'ora:ni:* 'bundle of wood'
*tu:lla:- t'a:fi:* 'hill of teff'

These expressions enable the speakers of the language to differentiate the amount of the entities by adding various quantifiers to the lexical items (Lynos, 1977: 315).

## Metonymy

Metonymy is a cognitive and linguistic relation among lexemes in which one conceptual entity provides mental access to

another entity within the same structure. The relations are cognitively rooted in patterns of human action and experiences of handling objects. There are certain types of metonymic relations (Yule, 1996: 122, and Nerlich, 2006: 110).

### Cause-Effect Relation

In cause-effect metonymic relations, the item indicated first in pairings show cause for the second item to happen. These relations are common in the dialect mentioned as in many other languages too.

> *dukkuba-duʔa* 'sikness-death'
> *daɗɗabu:-bok'oččᵤ:* 'tirdness-rest'
> *ɗe:bu:-ɗugu:* 'thirsty-drinking'

In the pairings indicated above, the first items in the pairs of the lexemes are causes for the second to occur.

### Container-Content Relation

As far as various cultures of the world are concerned, many cultural society or linguistic groups use different tools or equipments in their daily lives. Some of these tools are seen in the form of container-content relations. The following are examples for these.

> *ʔokkote:-biša:n* 'pot-water'
> *kollo:-k'arši:* 'pocket-money'
> *sa:nduk'a-miʔa* 'box-furniture'

In general, metonymy takes meaning from related concepts or domains. One entity has relation with another to emphasize certain aspects in the given structure (Kennedy, 2001: 13325).

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Semantic relations have been a subject of interest of various disciplines since ancient times. More recently, they have become a major theme of interest of linguistics, as they present a convenient and natural way to organize huge amounts of lexical data in various relations. The present study can be one of those which contribute for advancement of lexical semantics, especially for sense relations in Macha Dialect of the Oromo Language.

The study was designed to identify different horizontal and vertical sense relations among words, and to analyze the relations and to provide descriptive information about the words in the target dialect. To achieve the objectives set, qualitative research method is applied in the overall study. The data were gathered from student research works in Addis Ababa and Jimma Universities, textbooks, court documents and newspapers using proportionate stratified sampling techniques. The analysis is made using text analysis method.

The findings show that nine major sense relations are commonly used in the target dialect of the language. These are antonymy, synonymy, hyponymy, homonymy, polysemy, member-collection, meronymy, portion-mass and metonymy relations. However, some of these sense relations have their own sub-divisions which are exemplified in the discussions of the results.

### Recommendation/Implication

As indicated in different sections of results and discussion, sense relations are very helpful in using the language wherever required. To achieve the intended target, using appropriate lexemes both in spoken and written forms of the language is mandatory. However, the lexical items are not automated and set in data base or corpus forms. Thus, exhaustive lexical standardization is required in the language in order to avoid lexical ambiguity, to restrict lexical distributions, and to have representative and standard variety in the language.

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# APPENDIX

**Table 1. Consonant phonemes of Mecha Dialect (Oromo Language)**

| Manner of Articulation | Place of Articulation | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Bilabial | Labiodental | Alveolar | Alveopalatal | Palatal | Velar | Glottal |
| Plosive | b | | t   d | | | k   g | ʔ |
| Implosive | | | | | | | |
| Fricative | | f | s | ʃ | | | h |
| Affricate | | | | | tʃ   dʒ | | |
| Ejective | p' | | t' | | c' | k' | |
| Nasal | m | | | | | | |
| Lateral | | | | | | | |
| Trill | | | | | | | |
| Glide | w | | | | | | |

*\* The symbols in the left corner show voiceless consonants and those in the right corner show the voiced ones.*
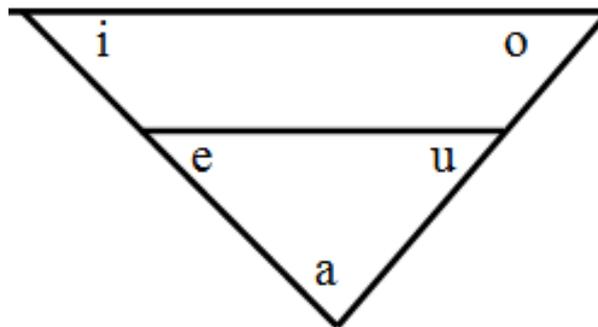


*\*All vowel phonemes have long counter parts which are indicated by colon (:).*

**Figure 1. Vowel phonemes of Mecha Dialect (Oromo Language)**

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