

Antonymy in Hausa Deaf Language

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Abstract

Antonym is more concentrated on the oppositeness of word meaning. This would explain the existence of a large quantity of the vocabulary of spoken languages as well as in sign languages. Hausa deaf language is one of the sign languages which has quantity of lexical antonyms. It occurs via the change of hand movement, orientation as well as sign's location in production. This article identifies and discusses lexical antonyms in the Hausa deaf language and shows the extreme function of parameters within their formation. Data were collected from deaf in various centres in the Kano metropolitan (Municipal, Fagge, Nassarawa, and Kumbotsu). The Hand Tiers Model initiated by Sandler (1989) was employed for the purpose of this analysis. The gradable, complementary, and relational antonyms were all identified in the Hausa deaf language. The article identifies how the gradable antonyms are produced in the Hausa Sign Language which denotes degrees of variable property with intermediate or middle ground scale. The article also discusses complementary antonyms in Hausa sign language. However, the article illustrates how the relational antonyms in Hausa sign language are formed.

Keywords: Hausa Sign Language; Antonyms; Gradable Antonyms; Complementary Antonyms; Relational Antonyms.

Introduction

Lexical meaning of signs is useful to make a distinction between lexical meaning and grammatical meaning (Matthews, 1997). Lexical meaning is primarily expressed in content words and grammatical meaning in function words. Content words include nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. All content lexical signs in Hausa deaf language such as the signs *uba* 'father', and *ajiye* 'drop' have descriptive meaning. Function words, on the other hand, include determiners, prepositions and conjunctions which have no descriptive or expressive

meaning at all, and appear to occur merely as part of particular grammatical constructions but in Hausa deaf language there is nothing like functional words as regard to findings. Some function lexical signs, like *in* or *on*, do have some degree of descriptive meaning (i.e., they describe spatial relationships between objects) and often may be used alone, but their meaning may sometimes be most clear at the phrase or sentence level and not at the level of the individual word e.g., in linguistics, semantic relation is one of the most important fields, in particular, lexical relation, which comprises synonymy, antonymy, and hyponymy. Two lexical items that have opposite meanings are referred to as antonyms. For example, sign words *babba* ‘big’ versus *karami* ‘small’ are antonyms. Some antonyms in Hausa have related forms, such as *miji* ‘husband’ and *mata* ‘wife’ (which differ in orientation only—for *husbandan* index finger extension while wife extension of index and middle fingers. There were researches conducted on different sign languages such as Pfau and Steinbach (2006), Johnson (2013), Schmaling (2000, 2011, 2013, 2016, 2019), Gwammaja (2009, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2018, 2019) and Kita (2003), but none of them had focused on antonym in Hausa Deaf Language. This article aims to identify the total parameters used by Hausa deaf people in their lexical formation. It also explains how the hand parameters are functioning in antonyms lexical formation within Hausa deaf language. This article also analyses the three forms of antonyms in HSL. These objectives will guide those who are not deaf to know how deaf forming their antonyms lexemes. The study adopts Hand Tier (Sandler, 1989) as framework which comprises the function of hand location, movement and location (body or neutral space) as well as the final parameter known as orientation which initiated by Battison, (1978). This theory is applicable for this analysis.

Antonym and its types

Previous accounts on antonym have made multiple distinctions among types of opposites. Some prefer to keep the term ‘antonym’ to refer to a specific sub-class of opposites expressed by gradable adjectives only (Lyons, 1968, 1977; Cruse 1986), others argue that the term ‘antonym’ should be used more generally and covers various types of otherwise-known opposites expressed by adjectives, nouns, and verbs (Jones, 2002). Unfortunately, choosing one term over the other does not help to solve any of the existing problems in giving a clear definition of the relation itself nor does it add any further understanding as to how to distinguish opposites from non-opposites in difficult cases. According to Kamilu (2016:121), gradable antonym defines as the pair of words with opposite meanings where the two meanings lie on a continuous spectrum. Murphy (2003) proposes to use the terms

‘antonym’ and opposite interchangeably, suggesting that all antonymous pairs share core antonym properties and will be recognized as such by any native speaker of sign language. In the present study, we are interested in finding all kinds of opposites in Hausa Deaf Language. For that reason, we use the term ‘opposite’ in its widest sense, referring to any kind of binary that indicate opposition in meaning. Illustrating opposites is an easier task than defining them mostly because the notion of oppositeness itself is difficult to delimit. Antonym is the name for oppositeness relation. And there are three main types of antonym, that is, gradable antonym, complementary antonym, and converse antonym (Hu, 2001:164-168).

Schmaling (2000) outlines the phonological and morphological processes in Hausa sign language (HSL). According to her, “the morphological processes include simultaneous affixation which may be used for both derivation and inflection and involves one or more of the following; classifiers (HS morphemes, orientation, location and movement ‘ORI, LOC, MOV’, hand arrangement as well as incorporation of non-manuals information”. She confirms that “handshape (HS) known as classifiers are found in Hausa Sign Language (HSL) and treated them as *manipulators* and *substitutors* (which comprise SASSes, handling and object classifiers)”. The book explains some issues concerning the morphemes and how they function in the lexical signs formation of HSL. She uses some icons which are too technical and would be difficult for the readers to differentiate the signs because sign language is language of visual gesture so, it needs pictures for illustration, but in her work, there is no single picture for illustration. She also uses some signs which can be understood only by Hausa deaf signers who attended Western education. Also, Schmaling (2011) displays how the different lexical signs of family relation names in HSL are formed. She mentions lexical signs of families such as ¹*bàaba* ‘father’, *uwaa* ‘mother’ and *yaarò* ‘boy’ as well as *`yaa* ‘daughter’, *daa* ‘son’, *dan uwaa* ‘brother’ and *`yaruwaa* ‘sister’ and also shows pictures of *wedding*, *greeting* and *guest* signs. She contributes a lot to the development of lexical signs of Hausa Sign Language, because she shows pictures on some kinship lexical signs of HSL used by Hausa deaf signers in their daily communication. In addition, Schmaling (2013) establishes signs related to communication issues in Hausa sign language (HSL). She demonstrates lexical signs like *kedaaɗii* ‘delicious’, *kyâu* ‘beauty’, *àmɓàanii* ‘importance’, *baabù* ‘there is none’ and *àkwai* ‘there is’ etc.

¹Note that long vowels are doubled and only low and falling tones are marked. High tone is unmarked. Low Tone is marked with a grave accent / ` / over the tone, bearing segment or nucleus while falling tone is marked with a circumflex / ^ / over the tone bearing segment

However, she illustrates some pictures portraying some lexical signs of Hausa sign language which are used by Hausa deaf signers in their daily affairs.

Gwammaja (2013) discusses the Hausa sign classifiers and its types which relate to size, shape specifiers (SASSes), semantics, body and instrumental classifiers. He cites many examples of each of the classifiers in HSL with an analysis. However, Gwammaja (2013) has displayed both single and double handed articulators used in signs production of HSL. He has mentioned the function of the parameters on numeration, incorporation of morphemes, mouth and double handed (balanced and unbalanced) signs formation. Finally, Gwammaja (2015) in his paper with title, *Orientation as an ultimate parameter for the lexical sign in Hausa Sign Language* reveals the orientation (finger(s) selection and palm facing) as the ultimate parameter among the four parameters employed in lexical sign formation of Hausa sign language. He describes static and dynamic orientation as well as the roles played by palm and finger (s) selection in sign production. Furthermore, he defines the term deaf and its types, differences as well as sign parameters. He also identifies the inflectional processes of HSL through the changes of orientation, movement and location. In addition, he demonstrates how inflection operates on the nouns and adjectives and also displays factors that are operative in the formation of new lexical sign via derivation from one grammatical class to another, such as noun to verb or verb to adjective and vice visa. None of the above reviewed literature that shared the same scope with this article.

Methodology

The methodology of gathering data for this study comprises primary and secondary procedure. The research is qualitative in nature.

Population

The article aimed to study the Antonymy formation by Hausa Deaf people in Kano State. Target populace of the study are deafmeeting in some deaf centres within the eight selected Local Governments of Kano Metropolitan (Municipal, Dala, Fagge, Nassarawa, Gwale, Tarauni, Kumbotso and Ungogo) irrespective of their age, educational qualification, marital status and occupation.

Sampling techniques

For the sample size and nature of the study, it is inappropriate to employ the whole population as the subject of the study, rather a fraction of population was purposively

selected and worked on to represent all population of the deaf in centres of eight Local Government of Kano Metropolitan. The study used the cluster sampling technique in order to locate the area of our target respondents. The centres comprise Tudun Maliki and Panshekara (Kumbotso), Koki and GidanShattima (Municipal), Fagge and Gobirawa (Fagge), Tudun Wada and KwanarJaba (Nassarawa), Dorayi and Diso (Gwale), Gyadi-Gyadi and Unguwa Uku (Tarauni), Kulkul and Jakara (Dala) as well as Gayawa and Fanisau (Ungogo). We selected eighty (80) respondents, five from each centre.

Data Collection

We gathered the eighty (80) respondents at Almunazzama Adult school located opposite gidan Maitangaran (Tal'udu) in Kano city. The data collected from our respondents in two ways: firstly, we asked them to produce some lexical signs related to gradable (*tsafta* 'clean'/*datti* 'dirty', *kyau* 'beauty'/ *muni* 'ugly'), complementary (*tashi* 'stand up'/ *zauna* 'sit down, *karya* 'break'/ *hada* 'joined) and relational (*mata* 'wife'/ *miji* 'husband', *saurayi* 'boy friend'/*budurwa* 'girl friend'). Secondly we wrote some lexical related to antonym on the board and asked them to produced their sign. During the lexical signs production by deaf respondents, we used camera to video the act. We also watched the video with artists (Kamal and Nafi'u) who helped to draw the used pictures in the analysis of this study. Substantial information was collected via participant observations as well as taking part in casual conversations with deaf friends in daily conversations. Some data were also found from written documents on Hausa sign language.







Hausa deaf antonyms





Like any sign language, Hausa deaf language possesses the commonest types of antonyms which are itemised by some scholars in the field of semantic relation. The types of antonyms found in Hausa Deaf Language are three, namely: gradable, complementary and relational.

Gradable antonym

There are gradable antonyms in Hausa deaf language. In this lexical relationship, the positive of one sign does not necessarily imply the negative of the other. Examples would include *tsafta* 'clean'/*datti* 'dirty', *kyau* 'beauty' *muni* 'ugly'. Although the two members of these pairs contrast in meaning, they are both gradable so that signers can emphasise the degree to which one or other sign should provide and serve in-between the two lexical signs because the meanings are relative.

Table 1: Gradable antonyms

S/no.	Lexical A	Middle Lexical	Lexical B
1	Tsafta 'clean' 		 Datti 'dirty'
2	Kyau 'beauty' 		 Muni 'ugly'
3	Dogo 'tall' 		 Gajere 'short'

	<p>Babba ‘big’</p> 		 <p>Karami ‘small’</p>
5	<p>Rufe ‘close’</p> 		 <p>Bude ‘open’</p>





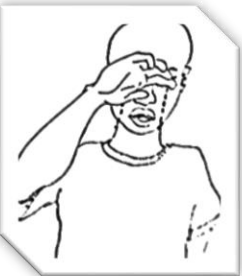

As in examples 1-5, all the lexical signs are in antonymic forms but differ due to hand’s movement (arc, straight and round), location (body or neutral space) and orientation (finger (s) selection and palm facing). In this form of antonyms, a middle ground or sign in-between the lexical signs is applied, that is why I indicated at middle column of the table by sign of good. In 1a, the sign of *tsafta* ‘clean’ which is the opposite of *datti* ‘dirty’ forms with the movement of hands in the space with all fingers extension and palm facing upward then the thumb twists all the fingers whereas the sign of *datti* ‘dirty’ forms when the hands move in the neutral space with selection of fingers in bent and palm facing down ward. In 2a, the sign of *kyau* ‘beauty’ is formed when a single hand moves up with a palm facing the signer in the neutral space and slightly sliding as well as the thumb twist only index and middle fingers while, the opposite sign is *muni* ‘ugly’, as we can see in Table 1. It produces when the hand moves to face region (forehead) with an index finger extension and palm facing down ward as well as the face tensed. The next parallel lexical signs are





dogo ‘tall’ and *gajere* ‘short’, they are contrasted in terms of meaning and sign formation. The sign *dogo* ‘tall’ is produced if the hand moves upward above the head of the signer with all fingers extension and the palm facing left/right (depending on the hand used by the signer) whereas, the sign *gajere* ‘short’ is formed as a result of hand movement upward with all fingers selection and palm facing right/left (depending on the hand used by the signer) slightly then the hand descending to the waist of the signer. In sign 4, the opposition signs of *babba* ‘big’ and *karami* ‘small’ share location and orientation but differ in terms of hand’s movement only. Finally, the sign in example 5, is formed when the dual hands move symmetrically to the space with an extension of all the fingers for both hands and palms facing the signer slightly, and with the palms facing each other. Therefore, the opposite sign in this form is produced when the double hands move symmetrically to the space with all fingers extension for the both hands and the palms facing each other slightly, the palms facing away from the signer. All the above signs are gradable antonyms because signs denote degrees of some variable properties, along the scale representing degrees of the relevant variable property.

Complementary antonym

Complementary antonyms are sometimes called absolute antonyms because as complementarities, “there is no-man’s land, no neutral ground and no possibility of a third term lying between them (Cruse 1986:199; in Emenanjo, 2015:304). In this category, the antonym consists of items that logically exclude each other without a third possibility or an intermediate position in- between the two aspects like dead/alive. There are pairs of complementary antonyms in Hausa deaf language. This is a relationship in which the positive of one sign implies the negative of the other. They have an either/or relationship. There are usually only two members in a complementary antonym pair as can be seen in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Complementary antonym

S/no.	Lexical A	Middle Lexical	Lexical B
6	<p>Tashi 'stand up'</p> 		 <p>Zauna 'sit down'</p>
7	<p>Karya 'break'</p> 		 <p>Hada 'join'</p>
8	<p>Kuka 'cry'</p> 		 <p>Dariya 'laugh'</p>

9	Dauka 'take' 	 Ajiye 'drop'
10	 Arha 'cheap'	 Tsada 'cost'

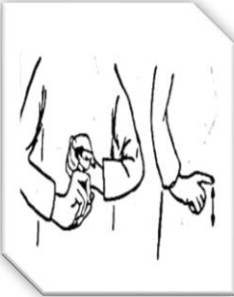

Complementary antonyms refer to pairs of properties with procedures that are inversely related to each other as demonstrated in examples 6-10 of the above in Table 2. Then, there is no room for middle ground of the sign because the pairs are balanced. In HDL, examples would include the signs *ja* 'pull'/ *tura* 'push', *karya* 'break'/ *hada* 'join' and *kuka* 'cry'/ *dariya* 'laugh'. There are usually only two members in a complementary antonym pair e.g., to say that someone is pull means that something it comes toward the person and the opposite form refers to something that moves away from the person, and vice versa. The same in 7, the signs *karya* 'break'/ *hada* 'join', *kuka* 'cry'/ *dariya* 'laugh', *dauka* 'take'/ *ajiye* 'drop' and finally, *arha* 'cheap' 'cheap'/ *tsada* 'cost'. As in 6a (tashi), it produces when the two hands move to neutral space with selection of all fingers and palms facing upward while 6b shows the opposite sign of *zauna*. What makes difference between the signs is changing of parameter, because palms in 6a facing upward while in 6b palms facing down ward. The second parallel lexical signs of complementary are *karya* 'brak' and *hada* 'join', they are contrasted in terms of meaning and sign formation. The sign *karya* 'break' is produced if the two hands move to the neutral space with all fingers folded


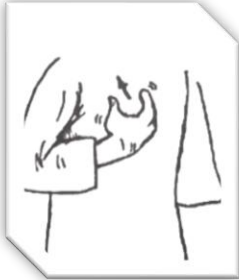



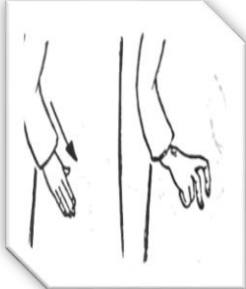
and the palms facing down ward slightly facing each other whereas, the sign *hada* ‘join’ is formed as a result of two hands movement to the neutral space with extension of all fingers and palms facing opposite. In sign 8, the opposition signs of *kuka* ‘cry’ and *dariya* ‘laugh’ share hand movement and orientation but differ in terms of location only. in 8a, hand moves to eye region which indicates the location of cry whereas 8b, hand moves to mouth region which also shows location of laugh. It is also the same in 9a and 9b, where the signs shared the same hands, movement, location but differ in orientation process.

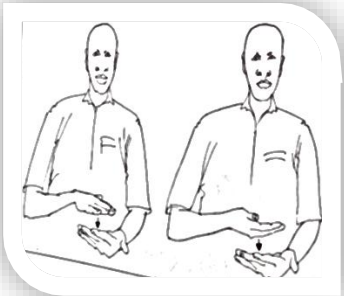

Relational antonym

Emenanjo (2015:305) defines relational pairs as terms denoting kinship, professional and ranks/position relations. In relational opposition or reverse involves two terms, that are positively related, in the sense that predication of one term entails that the other can be predicated too (and similarly for their negation); typically, however, predication of the opposite term involves a shift of perspective in the linguistic construal of an identical real-world situation or event. Thus, subject and prepositional object of be the husband of/be the wife of switch places: if A is the husband of B, B is the wife of A, and if A is not the husband of B, B is not the wife of A. Relational antonyms are those opposite signs for which the same action or state of affairs may be seen from two different perspectives, such as husband/ wife or teacher/student. These antonyms are said to have a converse relationship. See examples below:

Table 3: Relational antonym

S/no.	Lexical A	Middle Lexical	Lexical B
11	 <p>Miji</p>		 <p>Mata</p>

<p>12</p>	<p>Saurayi 'boy friend'</p> 		 <p>Budurwa 'girl friend'</p>
<p>13</p>	<p>Uba 'father'</p> 		 <p>Da 'son'</p>
<p>14</p>	<p>Uwa 'mother'</p> 		 <p>'Ya 'daughter'</p>

15	<p>Malami/malama 'teacher'</p> 	 <p>Dalibi/daliba 'student'</p>
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As in examples 11-15, all signs are relational antonyms in Hausa Deaf Language. Generally, relational pairs denote relationship between persons or between objects and with such interdependence that one member of the pair presupposes the other member. Indeed, relational pairs can be converses or reverses. As converses, they express contractual relationships. In contractual relationships, if one assumes one, the other entails its converse. As reverses, if one party engages in one, he/she leaves or gives up the other. In Signs 11 are opposite in form but have marital relation. The same in 12, which denotes friendship relation but contrasts in meaning then, sign 13-14, deal with pairs of lexical signs are opposed to each other but related by kinship (mother and daughter/father and son). Lastly, signs 15 possess antonym arrangement but have professional relation because teaching is profession; so, there is teaching and learning between teacher and student.

Conclusion

In this paper, we provide different scholarly meaning of antonyms, and look at the distinctions between gradable, complementary and relational meanings. Antonyms signs of Hausa deaf language were also explored, as well as its types. We use some pictures to give detail explanation in the analysis. The article identifies how the gradable antonyms are produced in the Hausa Sign Language which denotes degrees of variable property with intermediate or middle ground scale. The article also discusses the complementary antonyms in Hausa Sign Language. However, the article illustrates how the relational antonyms in Hausa Sign Language are formed. The pictures indicate various lexical signs of antonyms are used for easier identification. This study focuses on one lexical relation which is known as antonym. It is also restricted to only Hausa Deaf Language. So, the door

is now opened for those who have interest in the area to further the study or look at other angle.

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