GULGULIA SEMANTICS: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

Sneha Mishra¹ & Md. Mojibur Rahman²
¹,²Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad, Jharkhand INDIA

Abstract: The paper provides a description of meaning at word and sentence levels in the language spoken by Gulgulia Community in Dhanbad. It briefly deals with the antonyms, synonyms, hyponyms, polysemy, collocation, and ambiguity of meaning due to sound pattern, lexis and grammar. The object of this research is spoken Gulgulia language. Twelve native speakers work as informants. In arranging this research, the researchers use a descriptive qualitative method because there is a descriptive explanation of the data and the data analysed are in the form of words and sentences.

Keywords: Antonyms, Synonyms, Hyponyms, Polysemy, Collocation, and Ambiguity of meaning

I. INTRODUCTION

Gulgulia is the name of the mother-tongue of a nomadic community also called as Gulgulia belonging to the Indo-Aryan language family group. This community chiefly wanders from one place to another, limiting their range to the states of Bihar, Bengal and Jharkhand in India. However, for the purpose of this paper, I have only focused on the group wandering in the Patherdih region of Dhanbad in Jharkhand (India). Gulgulia is an undocumented language which exists amidst several dominant languages of Dhanbad such as Hindi, Bengali, Khortha and Bihari etc.

II. BACKGROUND OF THE COMMUNITY

India has been a country of ancient civilization. Apart from the Dravidians and Aryans people were organized in tribal alliances. Roma community was one such tribe formed by uniting several smaller tribes with varied dialects and races. This Roma tribe started leaving India due to several historical reasons. However, a few members that remained in India migrated towards the Northern and the Southern parts of the country. Ethnologists and linguists continue to study Roma who live in India nowadays. Gulgulia community is one such tribe which is a part of the Roma Community or the sub-group of the larger Nat community (Internet source).

The Gulgulia have been a vagrant gypsy tribe, which led a nomadic life for much of their history. They are often found on the outskirts of villages, near railway stations or forests, widely distributed in the states of Jharkhand, Bihar and Bengal who live by arranging shows of animals, begging and even petty thievery (Singh 2008). Most of the internet sources on Gulgulia community have reported either Bhojpuri or Hindi as their language of communication. However, the language used by the people of this community at Dhanbad is distinct from Bhojpuri or Hindi with regard to its vocabulary and structure and we shall address this language as Gulgulia, the mother tongue of the community as reported by B. Mallikarjun (2002).

The people belonging to the Gulgulia community, similar to the Nat community in Rajasthan (Swarankar & Lucas 2007) are not willing for any occupation and therefore could not adapt themselves in changing situations. Therefore, the Gulgulia particularly who came to Dhanbad found it easier to establish their settlements in the form of tents or temporary huts in the vicinity or at a distance from the village here. Since Gulgulia has been a nomadic language which has undergone dominance from several other languages belonging to the regions through which this community travelled it has become a moribund language which is breathing its last. Language death is associated with a reduction of vocabulary, reduction of domains and reduced complexity of linguistic structures (Abbi, Som & Das 2007) and Gulgulia demonstrates strict adherence to all these features.

III. THE SAMPLE

A total of twelve members of the Gulgulia speech community presently residing at Patherdih in Dhanbad (Jharkhand) participated in this study. With the help of the participants, the researchers were able to record and note down over hundreds of Gulgulia sentences and could investigate the basic structural pattern of the language
and the meaning. The participants were informed about the recording and it was only after their consent that the collection of data was carried out and the participants were compensated monetarily for their contribution. The audio recording was done using a Sony Digital Voice Recorder. Spoken conversations spontaneously occurring in different contexts of situations such as chit-chat, instructional context, narration and information context, plain interactional context were recorded and for the purpose of this paper, the researchers concentrated on the semantic aspects of the language.

IV. GULGULIA SEMANTICS

In linguistics, semantics is the subfield that is devoted to the study of meaning, as inherent at the levels of words, phrases, sentences and larger units of discourse.

(A) ANTONYMS

Antonyms refer to words having opposite meanings. Types of antonyms found in Gulgulia are the following:

1. BINARY OPPOSITES

Here, truth of one item in the pair corresponds to the falsity of the other item and falsity of one item implies the truth of the other item.

ʤinda: ‘maral’ ima:nda:r ‘beima:n’
‘alive’ ‘dead’ ‘honest’ ‘dishonest’

‘The dog is alive’ implies that the dog is not dead.

Binary opposites are non-gradable.

2. GRADABLE OPPOSITES

Here, truth of one item in the pair corresponds to the falsity of the other but it is not necessary that the falsity of one item will compulsorily lead to the truth of the other.

‘fair’ ‘very dark complexioned’

Gradable opposites represent the two extreme opposites on a continuous scale of qualities. ‘gaɔr’ and ‘kalija:’ are the two extreme opposites on a scale where other items also prevail such as matmael ‘olive complexioned’, sãːval ‘dark brown complexioned’.

When it is said, ʧhoːrjaː gaɔr ʧh ‘The girl is fair’, it implies ʧhoːrjaː kalijaː naːi ʧh ‘The girl is not dark complexioned.’ But when said ʧhoːrjaː gaɔr naːi ʧh ‘The girl is not fair’, it may not imply that the ʧhoːrjaː kalijaː ʧh ‘The girl is dark complexioned.’ It may imply that, ʧhoːrjaː matmael ʧh ‘The girl is olive complexioned’ or ʧhoːrjaː sãːval ʧh ‘The girl is dark brown complexioned.’

3. CONVERSE TERMS/ RELATIONAL OPPOSITES

These are the kind of antonyms in which existence of one item in the pair compulsorily implies the presence of the other too.

‘take’ ‘give’ ‘buy’ ‘sell’

When said, kunaːl ramaːdhar ke ʧaːkaː diːliːbe, ‘Kunal will give money to Ramadhar’, it also implies that ramaːdhar kunaːl se ʧaːkaː niːliːbe ‘Ramadhar will take money from Kunal.’

(B) SYNONYMS

Synonyms are the words with the same or similar meanings.

Gulgulia shows the pattern of synonymy where one word may belong to the native vocabulary and the other word may be borrowed from any other dominating language of the region.
(C) HOMONYMS
In Gulgulia, those words which have same pronunciation but different meanings are known as homonyms. Since the language lacks script, analysis at the level of spelling is not possible.

kaṛa:i: 'utensil meant for cooking' 'embroidery'
paka: 'ripe' 'strong'
andhija: 'storm' 'blind'
ka:ṭ 'wood' 'cut'
bhēṭ 'meeting' 'gift, present'
ma:g 'spouse' 'month of February and March.'

(D) POLYSEMY
A polysemy is a word or phrase having multiple related meanings. It is distinct from homonymy where several meanings of a word may be unrelated.

dənṭo 'teeth'
'Set of hard, bony structures in the jaws used for biting and chewing.'

dənṭo 'teeth'
'A projecting part on a tool or other instrument.'

1) hamə:ɾ dənṭo te darad ġh
   My teeth in pain is
   'I have pain in my teeth.'

2) e adʒa:ɾ ke dənṭo fōkhi: ġh
   This tool of teeth sharp is
   'The teeth of this tool are sharp.'

(E) HYPONYM and HYPERNYM
A Hyponym is a word or phrase whose semantic field is included within that of another word which is its hypernym.

hā:s 'duck', suga: 'parrot', kapṭar 'pigeon' are all hyponyms of pa:khi: 'bird' (known as hypernym).

(F) COLLOCATION
Collocation is the habitual co-occurrence of a word with certain other words of the same language. In Gulgulia, we find collocations that are predictable from the meanings of the word that co-occur. Gulgulia permits tīṛt commonly with kinds of noise made by the birds but it does not permit tīṛt for the kinds of noise made by the animals.

(G) AMBIGUITY
Ambiguity is an attribute of any concept, idea, and statement or claims whose meaning, intention or interpretation cannot be definitively resolved according to a rule or process consisting of a finite number of steps.

TYPES OF AMBIGUITIES IN GULGULIA
1. PHONOLOGICAL AMBIGUITY
When expressions are spoken out of context, it may at times lead to phonological ambiguity in Gulgulia.

du: + raṭ 'two nights'

This ambiguity generally takes place due to juncture. In du: + raṭ, the juncture happens to occur after u: and in du:raṭ there is no juncture. But in a connected speech, the syllable boundary may get neutralized and the juncture occurs in such a minimal form that it can hardly be perceived and du: + raṭ ‘two nights’ may be heard as du:raṭ ‘far’.

2. LEXICAL AMBIGUITY
Lexical ambiguity is caused due to use of words which are homonymous in nature.

hama:ɾ kaṇai: bana:ilis
I utensil made
Or
Embroidery
‘I got a utensil or embroidery made.’

Here, kara:i: could be either any of the two – utensil or the embroidery.

3. **GRAMMATICAL AMBIGUITY**

Ambiguities arising out of grammatical devices are known as grammatical ambiguity.

**hama mota: a:dmi a:r a-raṭ se nafrat ʧh**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pronoun</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Conjunction</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Postposition</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
<th>Aux</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>fat</td>
<td>man</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>woman</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>hate</td>
<td>present tense marker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘I hate fat man and woman’.

The conceptual structure underlying this sentence can be paraphrased as:
1. **hama mota: a:dmi a:r a-raṭ se nafrat ʧh** (Figure 1)
   ‘I hate a fat man and woman’.

2. **hama mota: a:dmi a:r mota: a-raṭ se nafrat ʧh** (Figure 2)
   ‘I hate both a fat man and a fat woman.’

**FIGURE 1: TREE DIAGRAM FOR SENTENCE IV (G) 3. 1.**

![Tree Diagram for Sentence IV (G) 3. 1.]

**FIGURE 2: TREE DIAGRAM FOR SENTENCE IV (G) 3. 2.**

![Tree Diagram for Sentence IV (G) 3. 2.]
V. CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate the semantic aspects of the language spoken by Gulgulia community in Dhanbad. To this end, the researchers firstly, established the lexical meaning such as antonyms, synonyms, hyponyms, polysemy, and collocation. Secondly, the paper discusses the ambiguity in the language. The ambiguity arises in Gulgulia due to phonology, lexis and grammar.

VI. REFERENCES


INTERNET SOURCES

[1] Encyclopine.org/en/Nomads-of-India
[3] ROP3 Peoples- Docstoc