IDENTIFICATION OF SYNONYMOUS WORDS FOUND IN TIRUKKURAL

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Abstract: *Abstract:-According to Lyons (1977:270-4), the whole vocabulary of a language is structured through semantic relations. They are linguistically termed as sense relations. And the entire vocabulary may be explained through the different types of sense relations such as synonymy, hyponymy, binary opposition, non–binary opposition, part-whole relations, and so on. Most of the vocabularies show the relations of identity hold between two or more vocabulary items. Such a kind of vocabularies is included under the relations of synonymy. Many of the vocabularies are semantically related words that show contrast either between two words or more than two. Such a kind of vocabularies comes under opposition. When the contrast is between two words, the opposition is called as binary - opposition. When the contrast is between more than two, the opposition is called as non-binary opposition or incompatibility. A large section of the vocabulary shows the relation of hyponymy, i.e., a class of inclusion where a generic word includes as its members, a number of specific words. A large part of the vocabulary which does not fit into any of the above relations includes under part- whole relation, which is a relationship between the whole body of something and its parts. Thus, this paper is mainly concerned with identification of synonymous words found in tirukkuRaL written by the ever great Tamil scholar tiruvaLLuvar.*

Keywords:Semantic relations, Sense relations, Synonymy, Incompatibility, Hyponymy.

INTRODUCTION :-

The tirukkuRaL, as the masterpiece of tiruvaLLuvar, which seems to be a mini-work in size, but contains 133 chapters on different aspects of life, and each chapter consists of ten couplets. Each couplet is called kuRal-venba, which is one of the basic meters of Tamil prosody. It has been broadly divided into three parts, of which the first deals with aram (virtue) the moral value of human life, the second discusses porul (wealth) that refers to socio-economic values of life, and the third on inpam (love), which depicts the psychological values of life. There are 38 chapters in the first part, 70 chapters in the second part, and 25 chapters in the third part. In the third part, Thiruvalluvar plays the role of creative artist. But in the first two parts, we find Thiruvalluvar as a moral philosopher and political scientist. Only in the third part, Thiruvalluvar portrays the fascinating aspects of lovers, the akam 'inside' tradition which he has inherited from his ancestors. Perhaps, it can be claimed that there is no other work of non-religious nature, which stands in comparison to tirukkuRaL. In the range of subject-matter and brevity of the couplets, tirukkuRaL excels the other didactic literature of the World. That's why; the attempt was made with reference to tirukkuRaL.

SEMANTICS:

There are many branches in linguistics. Among them, semantics is the interesting discipline or field which is concerned with the study of the meanings of the content and functional words. Most of the Anthropologists, Philosophers, Psychologists, and Linguists are interested in the field of semantics. But, their approaches are different due to their different interests. There are different approaches to semantics among linguists. Thus, there is no agreement among researchers who work in the field of semantics, or at least no impressively strong concord of opinion about the nature of lexical meaning. They are inclined to interpret it in more or less psychological terms with the assumption; there is a mental process involved in various situations. Some of the linguists may, themselves, conceive of meaning rather than as a property of the linguistic terms, as their ability referring to something or their capability of something standing for something else.

The Aim:

The aims of this paper are to:

Identify the different kinds of synonymous words found in tirukkuRaL by adopting three methods, viz., such as substitution method, finding the opposites, and arranging the synonyms into a series where the distant meanings and overtones stand out by contrast.
Analyze them based on their structure through semantic relations; finally
Classify them based on Lyons' classification

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

This study launches a challenge, when the researchers deal with a study of lexical knowledge with reference to tirukkuRaL. Moreover, defining the lexical knowledge in terms of synonymy is not a crystal clear phenomenon emanated from discrepancies of defining synonymous lexical categories and classifying them into proper sub categories. Thus, the researchers should take the following procedure to run up the obstacles in the research process:

a.Giving a clear idea about the tirukkuRaL and tiruvaLLuvar
b.Defining lexical knowledge in terms of synonymy and its types with reference to tirukkuRaL
c.Sorting out the types of synonymy found in tirukkuRaL in terms of clear cut classification

This attempt is a way and a paradigm to detect similarities and differences of various kinds of lexical items. Due to in efficiency of defining the lexical items, which arises from discrepancies among semanticists, linguists, computational linguists, lexicographers, and rest of the academicians, a shadow is cast over the real definition and consequently the use as well as the usage of lexical knowledge. Besides, lexical knowledge, in many cases, is not analyzed separately from other categories, for instance, syntax in linguistics.

METHODOLOGY:

a. Data Sources:

For the present study, the data have been randomly collected from the primary source text tirukkuRaL and also from other source books namely tirukkuRaL tiRavu kool written by Dr M Mangaiyarkkarasi, THIRUKKURAL (Tamil- English Version) by Rev. G U Pope, Rev. W H Drew, and Rev. John Lazaras, and so on.

b. Method:

As far as the methodology is concerned, the method of introspection is needed to probe the subjective contents of consciousness, because the main object of this study is qualitative mental phenomena as they exist in awareness. Further, it is oriented with phenomenology of conceptual content and its structure in language which comes under the cognitive semantics. Hence, the researchers in the field of linguistics as a scientific study go to where meaning is located. And the meaning is located in conscious experience. In the case of such subjective data, they go to their location consists of introspection. And it is also included such procedures as the controlled manipulation of the linguistic material whose meanings have been assessed. The use of introspection method has been recognized as an appropriate and arguably necessary methodology in any science including linguistics and applied linguistics in particular cognitive science, together with other generally accepted methodologies. Thus, the method of introspection is employed with rigor in this attempt made.

Synonymy:

Synonymy, which is a category of lexical knowledge, can be considered at two levels: The deep structure, which is called the mental lexicon and the surface level, which is called word performance, which can be manifested not necessarily and exactly in the form of performance. Concisely, the synonymy phenomena and categories are commonly detected in all languages as an amalgam of two opposite phenomena known as both universalities and varieties, within the linguistic framework, the universalities lead to language commonalities and similarities. Conversely, varieties result in language dissimilarities or differentiations. It is worth noting that such a classification is detected in all lexical categories and sub-categories. It should be noted that the lexical categories of research study are synonymy, antonymy, idiomaticity, collocation, concrete, and abstract. Thus, the words, which have identical or sameness of meaning, are known as synonymy. Two terms are said to be synonymous if they are substitutable in the same context without difference in meaning. For example, in tirukkuRaL, the words iTummpai and irul for 'tunpam' in the meaning of 'suffering' are synonymous. These words are substitutable in the following examples.

a. veeNTutal….yaaNTum iTummpai ila.(kuRaL 4)
b. iruL ceer iruvinaiyum….(kuRaL 5), iruL niingki …(kuRaL 352)

In the above said couplets (a) and (b), the lexemes iTummpai and iruL convey the same meaning tunpam (sufferings). Thus, they are synonymous as they are substitutable in the same

context without affecting the meaning. Charles W Kreidler (2006) states that it raises the question if 'x' has the same meaning as 'y'. In this case, it is not necessary to use 'y' since it has the same meaning as 'x'. In other words x = x. This is redundancy, while the mental process is based on economy principle. In other words, the more accessible word is processed, the sooner the redundant words will be faded.

Assuming that iTummpai (kuRaL 4, & 138), and iruL (kuRaL 5 & 352) refer to the same meaning that is tunpam 'suffering', then if the meaning (a) is true, the meaning (b) will be true; if the meaning (b) is true, the meaning (a) will be true; and if either is false, the other is false. This is common basis for establishing that terms iTummpai (kuRaL 4), and iruL (kuRaL 5) are synonyms; when used in predictions with the same referring expression, the predictions have the same truth value. The lexemes iTummpai and iruL are synonyms; the meanings (a) and (b) are paraphrases of each other. Thus, any two sentences (a) and (b) that differ only in the presence of synonymous terms one can express their truth relationship in the following way:

$$\textbf{a -> b} \text{ and } \textbf{b ->}$$
$$\textbf{a}$$

The truth of sentence (a) entails the truth of (b), and vice versa.

$$\textbf{-a -> -b} \text{ and } \textbf{-b -}$$
$$\textbf{> -a}$$

The falsity of sentence (a) entails the falsity of sentence (b) and vice versa. In the tabular form:

Sentence (a)	Sentence (b)
TRUE	TRUE
FALSE	FALSE

The synonymy is an instance of mutual entailment, and synonyms are instances of mutual hyponymy. The word nalloor 'persons those who are good / good persons' is a hyponym of ciRantoor 'persons those who are great / great persons', for example, and ciRantoor 'persons those who are great / great persons', is a hyponym of nalloor 'persons those who are good / good persons'.

Synonyms may be nouns or adjectives, adverbs or verbs.The illustration is given in table-1.

Table-1			
Lexeme	**Category**	**Conceptual Interpretation**	**Meaning**
arasu (381)		the person (he) who rules his	king
mannan (386)	Noun	country	
ii (412) *valanku* (99), *taa* (171) *nal* (1150 &, 1156	Verb	Action of giving	give/ provide
cem (91) *nal* (513)	Adjective	Describing good quality of a person / thing	good/ great

Types of Synonymy:

According to Zgusta (1971:90), there are four types of synonymy, such as (1) Absolute synonymy, (2) Near synonymy, (3) Partial synonymy, and (4) Total synonymy.

1. Absolute (Complete or True) Synonymy:

Absolute synonymy refers to synonymous words, which are compatible with each other in all situations. In other words, synonymy is at the paradigmatic level. Thus, the absolute synonyms can be used interchangeably. On the other hand, each synonymous word can be replaced by another one.

The untenable of existence of full synonymy may raise the question whether there is an extreme synonymy or not. The crux of the matter is that synonymy initiates from zero, extends to near and propositional and ends in absolute. However, the usage of zero synonymy has raised the question whether the term is accurate or not. If zero synonymy is not synonymy, it cannot be a part of it. Thus, the usage of zero synonymy is redundant, and it cannot solve any problem. In other words, it cannot be considered as synonymy since it is based on the lack of existence of synonymy. Besides, it seems the absolute synonymy exists merely at the theoretical level. Despite the fact that there are some words borrowed from the other countries, it is sometimes impossible to find two exact synonymous words. In other words, it is impossible to detect two words which are the same in all situations. In further details, a word is virtually synonymous with another word when it is in compatible with it in every specific situation. Even in the borrowing phenomena, the etymological differentiations can be found. Needless to say, detecting appropriate classifications in synonymy irrespective of idiosyncratic synonymy classifications mounts challenges.

According to Ullman (1962), the words which are identical in the components of lexical meaning, are termed as designation, connotation, and range of application. The usage of absolute synonyms in tirukkuRaL is rare. The terms kuuRu (186) and col (184) found in tirukkuRaL for referring to 'the action of saying' are known as absolute synonyms. Some other examples are illustrated in table-2.

Table-2			
Synonyms	**Category**	**Conceptual Interpretation**	**Meaning**
iRai (436)	Noun (abstract)	the supreme being /a deity	God
iRaivan (5, 10)			
aatipakavan (1)			
teyvam (55)			
vaḻangku (245) *taa* (171), *aLi* (390)	Verb	action of giving	give
manam (295), *uLLam*(39,65)…)	Noun	part of human body	heart
inpam(224,283)	Noun (abstract)	realization of joyful emotion	happiness
initu (64,66…)			
il (59), *illaval* (53) *peNTir*(58)	Noun	married woman in a house	Wife

2. Near (Almost) Synonymy:

The words which are identical in designative meaning but differing in range of application are termed as near synonyms. The terms uTambu (80), uTal (65), mey (65), and yaakkai (79) are used to represent a human body. They are identical in designative meaning but differ in range of application. They share the components of designation and range of application, but differ in connotation. While comparing the absolute synonyms and near synonyms found in tirukkuRaL, the near synonyms are more in number. They are simply illustrated in the table-3 given below:

Table-3			
Synonyms	**Category**	**Connotational difference**	**Meaning**
uTambu (80)	NOUN	neutral-no connotation	human body
uTal (65)		simple general language	
mey (65)		literary connotation	
uun (251,252)			
yaakkai (79),		expressive – derogatory	
uN (251, 253)	VERB	literary connotation	eat
tin (254)		derogatory	

Likeness of meaning in which peripheral differences can be detected in a cornerstone issue is defining near synonymy. In other words, some scales of degree are detected in the near synonymous words. The elements such as aspectual distribution, prototypical distinctions, background differences, and degree of specialization are helpful cues in detecting such type of synonymy.

3. Partial Synonymy:

The words that have more than one polysemous meaning are partial synonyms. When a polysemous word is synonymous with another word, it may be only with reference to one of its meanings. It may not be synonymous with that word with reference to its other meanings. The word ciRappu (18, 31, 58…) in tirukkuRaL has two meanings (1) 'dignity' and (2) 'great' 'having outstanding character or quality', and it is synonymous with the word uyarvu(135, 595) in its first meaning. This is called partial synonymy. Some other examples are given in table-4.

Table-4		
Synonyms Meaning	**Category**	**Meaning**
ciirmai (195), niRmai(195), ciRappu(195:1)	Noun	greatness/ glory
maaTci(52, 60), akaL(372), aakutal(683, 823)	Derived Noun	becoming
aRuvatu(315), maRRa (400), eenai (392)	Adjective	other

4. Total Synonymy:

The words which are substituted or replaced by one another are called total synonymy. They are interchangeable in all the contexts in which they occur for denoting a person as a dear / lover. Thus, the terms kaatalar (1185) and koNkan (1186) found in tirukkuRaL are considered as total synonymy based on the substitutability criterion, because they are interchangeable in all the contexts in which they occur. Some other examples are illustrated in table-5.

Table-5		
Synonyms Meaning	**Category**	**Meaning**
tunpu(195:1)	Noun	suffering
tunpam(195:2)		
eetam(275)		
iruL(5)		
iTumpai (4)		
aacai (266)	Noun(abstract)	desire
aarvam(74)		
mannan(386,488..)	Noun	king
mannavan(388,445,542..)		
mannar(556,692)		
kuuRu (186)	Verb	say
col(184)		
urai(193)		

CONCLUSION:

The concept of synonymy and its types have been discussed, so far, on the basis of the components of the lexical meaning that is semantic content of the word and also context dependent approach or substitutability without difference in meaning. They are essential for the complete understanding of the concept of synonymy. All types of synonymous words like absolute synonyms, near synonyms, partial synonyms and total synonyms are found in tirukkuRaL. Among them near synonyms are more in number than others, whereas total synonyms are less in number than others. The grammatical category of synonym may be noun or verb or an adjective. There is no adverb found as to be a synonym in tirukkuRaL.

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