

# **Chapter one**

## **Introduction**

### **1-1 Background**

Words are not only treated as containers or fulfilling specific “roles” ; they also have relations. The meaning of “conceal” is “hide”. The meaning of “Shallow” is the “opposite of deep” . Doing so is characterizing the meaning of a word not in terms of its components but in terms of its relation to other words . This procedure has been used in the semantic description of Language (Yule,1996:118).

The words “conceal” and “hide” are synonyms. The lexical items “Shallow and deep” are antonyms. So students of English have recognize such relations.

In the Sudan university of science and technology Khartoum university and Wady Elneel university no researches conducted on synonyms and antonyms. In such universities some studies have been written on vocabulary in which synonyms and antonyms are included. This knowledge is obtained through the researcher observation.

This research is done on the field of synonyms and antonyms. The study raises teachers’ awareness of students of English. It will develop and promote them.

### **1-2 Statement of the problem**

The researcher wants to focus on investigating students of English understanding and use of synonyms and antonyms. The study shows how students of English respond to both relations.

### **1-3 Objectives of the study : This study aims to Investigate**

- To what degree students of English understand synonyms.
- How students of English understands antonyms.
- How students of English use synonyms.

- To what extent students of English use antonyms.

#### **1-4 Questions of the study**

This study is going to provide answers for the following questions:

- To what degree do students of English understand synonyms?
- How do students of English understand Antonyms?
- How do students of English use synonyms?
- To What extent do students of English use antonyms?

#### **1-5 Hypotheses of the study**

The researcher assumes the following.

- Students of English understand synonyms appropriately.
- Students of English understand Antonyms perfectly.
- Students of English use synonyms correctly.
- Students of English use antonyms properly.

#### **1-6 Significance of the study**

The study is important for the following:

- It helps English teachers to be aware of their students of English needs as far as synonyms and antonyms are concerned.
- It shows English teachers the importance of learning both relations.
- It enriches vocabularies of students of English of synonyms and antonyms.
- It supports English syllabus designers with proper vocabularies on both relations.

#### **1-7 Methodology of the study**

The researcher adopts quantitative method. It is also descriptive method and analytical. He designs a tool of test. That will be used to collect data. The researcher will select sample randomly.

## **1-8 Limits of the Study**

The study will be carried out to the following limitations: Place is restricted to Khartoum locality, Sudan University of science and technology. Time is limited to the academic year 2014-2015. And Topic is limited to Investigating the Understanding and Use of Synonyms and Antonyms of English language.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Synonyms and antonyms are included in semantics as they show meanings. They are related to vocabularies since they are words. Both are relevant to lexical relations because they reveal relations between words and others in language. That the researcher focuses on relevant fields of semantics, vocabulary and lexical relations to established part of literature review.

#### **2.2 Meanings of semantics**

Semantics is the study of meaning of words, phrases and sentences. In semantic analysis, there is always an attempt to focus on what the words conventionally mean, rather than on what speaker might want the words to mean on a particular occasion.. Linguistic semantics deals with the conversational meaning conveyed by the use of words and sentences of language (Yule, 1996 :114).

Semantics is the meaning of language. For example thousands of years philosophers have been pondering “the meaning of meaning”. Yet everyone knows a language user understand what is said to him or her and can produce strings of words that can convey meaning (Formkin and Rodman, 1983: 163).

Semantics is the study of meaning. But what is meaning? Philosophers have debated the question but no one has yet produced a satisfactory answer to it. The question is unanswerable. It makes two problematic presuppositions: (a) that what we refer to, in English with the word “meaning” has some kind of existence or reality (b) that everything referred to as meaning is similar if not identical in nature (Lyons, 1981: 136) .

Semantics is the technical term used to refer to the study of meaning . Unfortunately “meaning” covers a variety of aspects of language and there is

no very general agreement either about what meaning is or about the way in which it should be described (palmer, 1977:1) .

Semantics is defined as the study of meaning of language and the aim of semantics is to explain and clarify the nature of the various kinds of communication between people made possible by language (Al Busairi, 2010:1) .

Semantics is one of the richest and most fascinating parts of Linguistics. Among the kinds of questions semantics asks are the following:-.

- What are meanings' definitions? Ideas in our heads? Sets of objects in the world?
- Can all meanings be precisely defined?
- What explain relations between meanings like synonymy, antonyms (oppositeness), and so on?
- How do the meanings of words combine to create the meaning of sentences?
- What is the difference between literal and non-literal meaning?
- How do meanings relate to the minds of languages users, and to the things words refer to?
- What is the connection between what a word means, and the content in which it is used?
- How do the meanings of words interact with syntactic rules and principles?
- Do all languages express the same meanings?
- How do meanings change? (Riemer, 2010:2)

### **2.3 Background on vocabulary**

When most of us think about language, we think first about words. Words alone do not make a language; grammar is needed to combine them in some intelligible way. Moreover, words are relatively easy to learn, and

indeed all of us go on learning them all forever. They are also the least stable part of language. Words come into being, change their pronunciation and meanings, and disappear completely-all with comparative ease. Yet it is true that the vocabulary is the focus of language. It is in words that sounds and meanings, interlock to allow us to communicate with one another, and it is words that we arrange together to make sentences, conversations, and discourse of all kinds. Thus we have a paradox in that the most ephemeral part of language is also the center where meaning, pronunciation and grammar come together (Pyles and Alago, 1970:96) . Synonyms and antonyms are involved in vocabulary. They are used to explain and interpret some meanings of language. Thus these relations save learners' time for looking several words upon dictionary.

#### **2.4 Lexical Relations**

Generally words have denotative meaning (dictionary meaning) and they sometimes have associative meaning (implied meaning). But words also have relations with other words. These are called lexical relations. The types of lexical relations are: synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, prototypes, homophony, homonymy, polysemy, metonymy, taxonomy and collocation.

Most people think of 'synonymy' as implying 'having the same meaning' but it is easy to show that synonymy is always partial, never complete. "tall " and "high" are usually given as synonyms (Hago, 2005:133).

Antonymy is opposite of meaning; "rich" is the opposite of "poor". "A wake" is the opposite of "asleep" (Denham and Lobeck, 1976 : 301).

There are words that refer to the class itself. This involves us in the notion of inclusion in the sense that "tulip" and "rose" are Included in "flowers" and "lion" and "elephant" in "mammal" or perhaps "animals". Similarly "scarlet" is included in "red" . Inclusion is thus a matter of class membership (Palmer, 1977 :76) .

Nyckees noted “Antonyms, metonyms, hyponyms and synonyms play a determining role in linguistic inter comprehension” (Nyckees cited in Riemer, 2010:136).

Lyon’s term for the relation is hyponymy. The “upper” term is the superordinate and the lower term is the hyponym (Palmer, 1977 :76),

It is clear that hyponymy is defined as inclusion; an item is included in another. That is to say a smaller unit is always involved in a larger unit. So hyponymy is always included in a super-ordinate. For example “rose” and “flower”. “rose” is a hyponym and “flower” is a super-ordinate.

The words “canary” , “dove”, “duck”, “flamingo”, “parrot”, “pelican”, swallow and thrush’ are all equally co-hyponyms of the super ordinate “bird”. The best example or the prototype of bird is the “robin”. The concept of prototype helps explain the meaning of certain words, like “bird”, not in terms of component feature (e.g has feather” “has wings”, but in terms of resemblance to the clearest exemplar (Yule, 1996 :120).

Homophones are words which are “half” identical. As a result of sound change or borrowing certain words from other languages, they come to have different spelling but identical pronunciation; “such words are called homophonous. For example, the past tense of the verb “read”/red/ is homophonous with “red” a name of colour (Al Busairi, 2010:84) .

Words that are different in meaning but alike in pronunciation such as “Loan” and “lone” are homonymous. English has a good many of them : stair and stare; soul and sole; pair and pear; to and too, no and know, flee and flea;. As the foregoing examples suggest, homophones are often alike in pronunciation but different in spelling. The unfortunate fact makes them especially subject to confusion in writing. When homophones are alike in spelling, they are called homographs such as wind “breeze” and wind “to list” (Pyles and Algeo, 1970 :219).

The same morphological word may have a range of different meanings as a glance at any dictionary will reveal. Polysemy, meaning “many meanings” is the name given to the study of these particular phenomena. In a dictionary entry for any given word, the meanings are listed in a particular order with the central meaning given first, followed by the most closely related meanings and with metaphorical extension coming last. If we look up the word “pupil”, we have two meanings; one who is taught by a teacher and the component of the eye (Hago, 2005 :13).

The relatedness of meaning found in polysemy is essentially based on similarity. The head of a company is similar to the head of a person on top of (and controlling) the body. There is another type of relationship between words based simply on a close connection in every day experience. That close connection can be based on container- contains relationship (bottle – coke; can –juice), a whole-part relationship (house-roof; car-wheel); or representative symbol relationship (king –crown; the president – the White House). These are examples of metonymy (Yule, 1996:122) .

Class inclusion relation of kind of is best demonstrated by taxonomies, by hyponymic hierarchies of names for plants and animals. This taxonomy shows five ranks: swamp white oak/ white oak/oak/tree/ plant. Learning that one cow is susceptible to mad “cow” disease, one might reasonably infer that all cows may be susceptible to the disease but not all that mammals or animals (Reimer, 2010:146).

A much less extreme view is that of Firth who argued that “You shall know a word by the company it keeps. His familiar example was that of “ass” which occurred (in a new variety of English) in you silly— , Do not be such an —. And with a limited set of adjectives such as silly, obstinate, stupid, awful and (occasionally) eg, regious. But for Firth this keeping company., which he called collocation, was merely part of the meaning of a word. As we have seen, meaning is also to be found in the context of situation and all the



other levels of analysis in the context of situation and all the other levels of analysis as well. Moreover, he was concerned with total distribution but with the more obvious and more interesting co-occurrences, the mutual expectancy of word as he put it (Palmer, 1977: 94) .

## **2.5 Definitions of Synonymy and Synonyms**

Expressions with the same meaning are synonymy. There are two points which should be noted about this definition. First it doesn't restrict the relation of synonymy to lexemes, it allows for the possibility that lexically simple expressions may have the same meaning as lexically complex expressions. Second it makes (identity, not merely similarity), of meaning (Lyons, 1996:60) .

Lyons (1968:75) said “when when question of the sameness of meaning arises for un sophisticated speakers, no appeal is made to an abstract entity of ‘meaning’: a given word or phrase is accepted as having the same meaning as another word or phrase if its substitution for the other in the given context yields the same meaning as the first utterance” (lyons cited in Riemer, 2010:151).

Words do not only sound the same but also have different meanings, there are words that sound differently but have the same or near meaning. Such words are called synonyms. There are dictionaries of synonyms that contain many hundreds of entries, such as a pathetic phlegmatic/ passive / sluggish / indifferent / pedigree / ancestry / geology / descent / lineage (Fromkin etal, 2003 :181) .

The words are said to be synonyms if they “mean the same thing”. The terms “movie”, “film” “flick” and “motion picture” all refer to the same set of referents in the real world and are usually taken to be synonymous terms. To address the notion of synonyms more formally, we can say that term “A” is synonymous with term “B” if every referent of term “A “is referent of term

“B” and vice versa. The vice versa is important: without it, we would be defining hyponymy (Finegan, 1994:167) .

For practical purpose we cut through the complexity and simply say that “to peel”: and “to skin” are synonyms. This means that they are close enough to allow the speaker a choice between them in a significant number of contexts. The measure of synonyms is replaceability. Two terms may share all but some small part of a field, but they are not synonyms unless one can be used instead of the other. Thus “man” and “boy” share practically an entire field of concept for the feature of “age” but they are still kept well apart unless the speaker himself is unsure of his meaning . The reason is that It is precisely the difference of age that we want to emphasize (Bounger, 1975:211).

Synonyms are lexemes which have the same meaning – a definition which sounds straight forward enough. However, when we think about it, the notion of synonymy is really rather curious for why should a language have more than one lexeme to express a particular meaning. One lexeme per meaning ought to be sufficient (crystal, 1995 : 164) .

It is possible for any sentence; in one language to have exactly the same meaning as any sentence in another language . It is also impossible for any sentence in a particular language to have exactly the same meaning as any other sentence in that same language (Nilsen and Nilsen , 1975:140).

The relation of synonymy has already been mentioned. It is defined by Lyons in terms of minimally different sentences entailing each other and differ by only one expression, the distinguishing expressions are taken to be synonymous (Singleton, 2000 :69) .

Two words are synonymous if they have the same sense; that is if they have the same values for all of their semantic features. For example the pairs: “conceal” “hide”, “stubborn” “obstinate” and “big” “large” seem to be

synonymous in English, presumably the meaning of each pair consists of the same set of features marked for the same value (Parker and Riley, 1994 :40).

The term synonymy or identity of meaning; is a semantic relation which is used to mean sameness of meaning: That is, if two or more words share meanings, they are synonymous or are synonyms of one another. And if a word “A” is a referent of “B” and vice versa: or to put it on Lyon’s words “if two sentences entail each other and differ by only lexical expression, (words) in question are held to be synonymous “e.g” “Faisal is very rich”, entails and is entailed by “Faisal is very wealthy”. However, synonymous are often but not always intersubstitutable in sentences or they may refer slightly to different concepts. Thus, there are many instances when one word is appropriate in a sentence, but its synonyms would be odd (AlBusairi, 2010:59-60) .

When two or more expressions share the same or highly similar meaning each is said to be a synonym of the other terms. Perfectly synonymous terms are extremely rare; indeed they probably do not exist at all in our usual day- to – day speech. “Sphere”, “globe”, and “orb” are synonyms much of time; for example any of the three could be used in the sentence “The earth is a great –. Most synonyms are equivalent in some contexts only – not in all. Synonymy is thus a matter of degree depending on the number of contexts in which two terms share the same sense (Pyles, and Algeo, 1068 :2018).

Though synonyms are words that are approximately alike in meaning, no two words are ever exactly alike. “ability” and capacity”, for example, are often considered synonyms; yet there is an important shade of difference between them, “ability” is the power to do something; “capacity” is the power to hold something (Christ, 1966:124) .

Synonymy is used to mean “sameness of meaning”. It is obvious that for the dictionary maker, many sets of words which have the same meaning

they are synonyms, or are synonymous of one another. This makes it possible for them to define “Gala” as “festivity” or “movies” as “thrush”, though there is a little use in this method if neither word is known to the reader, eg if “hoastiz”: is defined as “stink–bird”; or “nerve” as “firm”. Of course, dictionaries seldom rely solely on synonymy but add descriptive details to enlighten the reader (Palmer, 1977:59).

## **2.6 Types of Synonyms**

Synonyms are defined previously as words that are identical in meaning. There are two types of synonyms, they are near synonyms and absolute or total synonyms.

### **2.6.1 Near Synonyms**

Such synonyms have great similarity of meaning. If there is a difference, at least, in one of the three components of meaning (denotation, connotation and range of application, the members of the pair are near synonyms. Some words keep the company of certain words. Take for example “answer and reply “reply” in “she had only one answer in the test correct” while “answer” is appropriate in this sentence, its near synonym “reply” would sound odd. The adjectives “fast”, quick and rapid, may be used interchangeably in reference to someone, running speed but “quick” is used to describe something done in a short time (I have a quick phone call, that was quick ) thought it would take another hour) , “fast” is used to describe a person or thing that moves at great speed “the horse was fast, but not a good jumper’ “ He bought a fast car), and rapid is applied to the movement itself “ rapid change’ “ rapid population growth, the patient made rapid recovery). Thus “a fast talker” (someone who talks quickly and easily but is often not honest or sincere) is different from “a quick talker” and we say that’ “the fast lane “not” the rapid lane “for the outside part of a motor way where vehicles can travel at the fastest speed (AlBusairi, 2010 :61) .

It is obviously the case that many words are close in meaning, is overlap. There is, that is to say close sense of synonymy. This kind of synonymy that is exploited by the dictionary maker for “mature”, possible near synonyms are “adult”, “ripe” and “perfect”. For “govern: we may suggest “direct” “control”, “determine” and “require”, while “Loose’ has large set of near synonyms such as: “inexact”, “free”, “relaxed”, “vague”, lax’, “unbound” , in attentive and slack (Palmer, 1977 :62).

### **2.6.2 Absolute synonyms**

Absolute synonym pairs which are neither polysemous (having two or more related meanings) or connotative are found in the special languages; there are however absolute synonymy among words, too. Pairs of absolute words are frequently found in languages; Loan words may co-exist with native words as alternatives. For example, the recently introduced “mobile” as given an Arabic term (or terms) which differs from one Arab country to another. However, the origin term is used side by side with the two native term or terms. In Sudan the two native terms “aljawal” and “almahmmul” coexist with the foreign “mobile”. Similarly, in the middle East and Gulf countries more terms are used as “ assahrawi” and “alkhlwi” and perhaps others, are used as alternatives (Al Busiar, 2010:61-62).

Ullman points out that “One of the few places where full word synonymy seems reasonable common is to technical vocabulary, giving as example the fact in medicine inflammation of the “blind guts” can be synonymously refer to as either ‘caecitis’ or ‘typhlities” (Ullman cited in Riemer, 2010: 152).

It has been suggested that true or total or absolute synonyms are mutually interchangeable in all their environments. But it is almost certainly the case that there are no total synonyms in this sense. Indeed this seem to be that no two words have exactly the same meaning; we shall find, of course, that some words are interchangeable in certain environments only, e.g. That

“deep” or “profound” may be used with “sympathy” but only “deep” with “water”. That a road may be “broad” or “wide” but an accent only “broad” (Palmer 1977,:63) .

Lexemes may be described as absolute synonyms if only they have the same distribution in all their meanings and in all their contexts of occurrence. Absolute synonymy is defined as almost non-existent. In fact it is probably restricted to highly specialized vocabulary that is purely descriptive (Lyons, 1981: 148) .

Lyons proposes a different classification of synonyms, “(i) synonyms are fully synonymous if, and only if all their meanings are identical; (ii) synonyms are totally synonymous if, and only if, they are synonyms in all contexts; (iii) synonyms are completely synonymous if, and only of, they are identical on all relevant dimensions of meaning” (Lyons cited in Cruse 1995:292).

Murphy showed that “Everybody and everyone are not lexical synonyms since they are not mutually substitutable in every context” (Murphy cited in Riemer, 2010:152).

To make a distinction between absolute and complete synonymy. Context – restricted synonyms may be relatively rare, but it certainly exists. For example, “broad and “wide’ are not absolutely synonymous since there are contexts in which only one word is normally used and the substitution for one for the other, if acceptable, might reasonably be held to involve some difference of meanings (e.g he has broad shoulders, she has a lovely broad smile, and the door was three feet wide). But there are also contexts in which they appear to be completely synonymous (e.g they painted a wide/broad strips right across the wall (Lyons, 1981:149).

## **2.7 Concepts of Antonymy and Antonyms**

Antonymy or oppositeness is another structural relation that helps to determine word. This is a paradigmatic relation, as it is the relation between

words in a semantic field, but it is between only two items (Graddol et al, 2001:111).

Murphy said “temper” means both ‘to harden’ and ‘to soften’; ‘cleave’ means both ‘stick together’ and ‘force apart’ and “sanction’ means ‘to approve’ and ‘to censure’. Furthermore, there are many denominal verbs for putting in or taking out things which show similar auto antonymy” (Murphy cited in Riemer, 2010:139) .

Two words are antonyms if their meanings differ only in the value for a single semantic feature. The following pairs are all antonyms: “dead” and “alive”, “hot” and “cold”, and “above” and “below”. The meaning of the members of each pair are presumably identical except for opposite values of some semantic feature (Parker and Riley, 1994:42) .

The word antonym derives from the Greek root anti (meaning opposite). It denotes opposition in meaning. It is a binary relationship in that it characterizes the relationship between only two words at the time (Finegan, 1994:168).

The meaning of a word may be partially defined by saying “not”; for example “male” means “not female”, “dead” means “not to alive”. Words that are opposite are often called antonyms. Ironically, the basic property of word, that are antonyms is that they share all but one semantic property, “beautiful” and “tall” are not antonyms, beautiful and ugly, or tall and short are. The property they do not share is present in one and absent in the other (Fromkin, et al, 2003: 182).

Antonymy is defined as opposite meaning; “rich” is the opposite of “poor”, and “teacher” is the opposite of “student”. These opposites or antonyms, seem to be based in fact If you are rich, you can’t be poor, if you are awake, you can’t be asleep; and defined in the class the “opposite” roles of teacher and student seem well and obvious (Denham and Lobeck, 2013:30).

Antonym is the companion term for synonym in answer to, Is it wet? One has a choice between No, it is not wet and No, it is dry. The contrary opposition between wet and dry can be within a field of presence of moisture (Bounger, 1975:212) .

Antonyms are words or phrases that are opposites with respect to some component of their making. Some antonyms in English are: “dark – light” , “boy-girl”, “hot-cold”, “up-down”, “in-out” and “come-go”. In each of these pairs, the two words contrast with respect to at least one component of their meaning. Thus the meaning of “boy” and “girl” are opposite with respect to gender, although they are alike with respect to species (both are human). Similarly, “come” and “go” are opposites with respect to effectation although both involve the concept of movement (O’Grady et al, 1996: 269-270) .

Antonym is exemplified by such pairs: “long-short” “fast”-“slow”, “easy:-“difficult”, “good”-“bad” and “hot”– “cold”. Antonyms share the following characteristic:

- (i) They are fully gradable (most are adjectives, a few are verb).
- (ii) Member of a pair denotes degree of some variable property such as length, speed, weight and accuracy.
- (iii) When more strongly intensified, the members of a pair move as it were, in opposite direction along the scale representing degrees of the relevant variable property. Thus, very heavy and very light, for instance, are more widely separated on the scale of weight than fairly heavy and fairly light.
- (IV) the terms of a pair do not strictly bisect a domain: There is a range of values of the variable property, lying between those covered by the opposed terms (Cruse, 1995: 204).

Antonyms are words which have the same selection sub-categorization requirement and the same selection restrictions, but whose most specific semantic features are polar extremes of each other. For example, “shout” and “whisper” are both verbs of communication which take human subjects, they



must have a direct object which is on the communication itself as in “John shouted/whispered come here (Nilsen and Nilsen, 1975:134).

Antonyms are words of opposite sense like good/bad, up/down, black/white. There are, however many kinds of opposition, so most words have several antonyms not just one. Several oppositions result when words contrast with respect to only one part of their meanings. The word “man”, for example, has the sense “adults, male, human being’ with three semantic features. Each of those semantic features has its own opposite. Thus “man” is opposite of opposite of “a boy” in age to “woman” in sex, and to “beast” in species (Pyles and Algeo 1970:223) .

“Feast” “famine”, “friend” “foe”, “up” “down”, “hot” “cold”, etc- are common place expressions and phrases which illustrate a tendency in our languages to group antonyms together. An antonym is a word of opposite meaning, as “a friend” is the opposite of “foe” and “hot” of “cold” A word like “feast” may have both a synonym “banquet” – and an “antonym”- “famine” (Christ, 1996:134) .

Antonymy may be characterized as a relationship of incompatibility between two terms with respect to some given dimensions of contrast. Some words seem to have more than one antonym, depending on the dimension of contrast involved both “boy’ and “woman” depending on whether the dimension is sex or age. “Sweet”, has both “bitter’ and “sour” (Riemer, 2010: 137) .

Antonyms are not so easy to provide as are synonyms. There are two important pitfalls. First of all one word may have many antonyms depending upon the way in which it is used. Clear, for example, is a word of many meanings. We may talk about a clear day clear conscience or a clear style of writing. Obviously one antonym will not do far all of these. The antonyms of the first use might be overcast or cloudy; of the second might be troubled; of the third, it might be un intelligible (Christ, 1966 :135) .

In analyzing antonymy, it is important to realize that only one Semantic continuum at a time can be used in setting up opposites; for example, in the real world the end result whether someone shout or whisper, is that something is communicated. So on this basis, the two words are synonyms, not antonyms; instead something like “remained silent” would be the antonym for both “shout” and “whisper”. Another feature which verbs of communication might be ranked on is strength or definiteness with which something is said with this feature in mind “vow” and “swear” are antonyms of such expression as “hint at” and “imply”. But if the feature is being contrasted speed, then “chatter” and “drawl” are antonyms. But if the important feature is distinctness then “enunciate” is the antonym of both “chatter” and “drawl” (Nilsen and Nilsen, 1976:13).

Antonymy is an important relation within the vocabulary of a language. Another mark of the significance of antonymy is the fact that many languages can create antonyms morphologically. English does this productively with the prefix un. For example free and un-free are English antonyms (Riemer, 2010:137).

## **2.8 Kinds of Antonyms**

Antonyms refer to a pair of words in opposition. They can be classified into different sorts. There are three main kinds of antonyms: gradable, non-gradable or complementary and converse antonyms.

### **2.8.1 Gradable Antonyms**

For example, take the pairs of old/young, high/low (if we are young, then we are not old) but there are intervening degrees between the polar opposites; we can be very young, fairly young, not so young and so on (Graddol et al, 2001:113).

If terms A and B are gradable antonyms then B can't be used to describe the same referent, and vice versa. Thus “hot/cold”, “love/hates” “always/never” are gradable antonyms. For gradable antonyms there will be

words to describe intermediate stages: “sometime”, “seldom”, “occasionally” and often are gradations between “always” and “never” (Finnegan, 1994:169).

There are gradable pairs of antonyms big/small, hot /cold, fast/ slow and happy/sad. The meaning of adjectives in gradable pairs is related to the object they modify. The words themselves do not provide an absolute scale. Thus we know that “a small” elephant” is much bigger than “a large mouse”. “Fast” is faster when applied to an airplane than to a car (Fromkin et al, 2003:182).

Polar antonyms (also known as gradable antonyms imply the possibility of gradation between them the assertion of one of a pair e.g (rich/poor) implies the denial of the other, but the denial of one does not necessarily imply the assertion of the other. “Liz is rich” entails “Liz is not poor” doesn’t entail “Liz is rich” (Singleton, 200:72)

Implicitly graded antonyms refer to pairs of items such as “big/small” “good/bad” and “young/old” etc. In other words “big” “good” and “young” can be interpreted in terms of being bigger, better and “younger” than something which is established for as the norm of the comparison. Thus when we say that “one fly is bigger than another”, we imply that “big” is to be understood in the context of flies . This accounts for the apparent paradox of “a big fly being smaller than small dog”, in the latter context means “small when is compared with other dogs (Hago, 2005:136).

Antonyms can be explicitly graded but using words such as “very”, “fairly” or “not so” but in fact they can be thought of as always being implicitly graded. We only interpret words such as “old”, “wide” in terms of being older, bigger than something else. Thus implicit grading can be used in advertising: products are often described “new” “good”, “clear” or “bright” which are all adjectives that imply favorable comparison with other product (Graddol et al, 2001:111-112) .

For gradable antonyms there are intermediate terms. Take for example the pairs “hot” and “cold”. We can say X is neither hot nor cold. X may be hot or cold. The intermediate terms, “warm” and “cool” are gradations between “hot” and “cold” which form a pair of antonyms themselves hot, warm, cool ..... cold (Al Busairi, 2010:68) .

Murphy “Similarly, the English verbs “love” “hate” show comparable behaviour to many gradable adjectives” (Murphy cited in Riemer, 2010:139).

If we ask how low a bridge is, then we imply that it is low rather than high. Similarly “a bitch” is unquestionably a female animal; people sometimes speak of female dog but they would be most unlikely to speak of a male bitch.

If we ask the question: How high is the wall? This implies that the wall may be is low. Often there is a noun derived from the unmarked term (high), we have a noun height and it is not driven from the marked term (low) (Graddol et al, 2001:113) .

### **2.8.2 Non Gradable Antonyms (Complementary Antonyms)**

In contrast to “large” and “small”, “single” and “married” are mutually exclusive and complementary. A person can’t be described with a term that doesn’t have either single or married as a hyponymy: thus single: and married are complementary. Furthermore, “single” and “married” generally can’t be used in a comparative or superlative sense. The pair constitute an example of non-gradable antonymy (also sometimes called complementary) (Finegan, 1994:169).

Complementary pairs are contradictory since it is impossible for the two terms to be true at the same time, a person can’t be single and married or dead and a live at the sometime. Thus, the negation of one member implies the assertion of the other. For example the relationship between the pairs “dead” and “alive” is different from the one between “old” and “young”. Thus : “X is dead”. X implies “X is not alive”. But “X is young” implies “X is not

old”, while “X is old” does not imply “X is young”. It could imply “middle-aged” (AlBusairi, 2010:71-72).

We can recognize complementary antonyms by some situation, we deny that one term applies to some situation, are effectively commit ourselves to the applicability of the other term; and if we assert one term, we implicitly deny the other. Thus “John is not dead” “entails “John is a live” (Cruse,1995:199) .

Binary antonyms are pairs that exhaust all possibilities along some dimension. “Dead” and “alive” are examples of binary antonyms. Everything that can be dead or alive is, in fact either dead or alive there is no middle ground between the two. All people, for example are either dead or alive (Parker and Riley, 1994:42-43).

## **2.9 Previous Studies**

At Sudan university of Science and Technology, Khartoum University and Nile Valley University, there are no studies conducted on synonyms and antonyms, The researcher found some researches written on vocabulary in which synonyms and antonyms are included. Thus the researcher focuses on vocabulary as a relevant field to review previous studies. The previous studies were local and international. They were M.A and Ph.D theses.

### **2.9.1 Local previous Study (1)**

The topic about “the Problems of English Language Vocabulary Learning”. The study was conducted at Sudan University of Science and Technology. The tools used in the research were a test and questionnaire in secondary schools. The main finding is that: polysemy and homonymy cause problem in learners’ understanding (Osman (2012) cited in (Mohammed, 2014-2015).

The above study is relevant to the topic for two reasons: Firstly, it concentrated on vocabulary in which the topic is involved. Secondly, its main finding centered on polysemy and Homonymy as lexical relations in which

synonymy and antonymy are included. This study is also irrelevant in the sense that the area between polysemy and homonymy is vague and confused for the learners, but in the researchers' topic, the area between synonymy and antonymy is clear and distinctive for the learners.

### **2,9,2 Local previous Study (2)**

The topic is about "Evaluation Computer Use in Teaching English Vocabulary Sudan University of Science and Technology". The tools used in research were test for students and questionnaire for teachers in secondary schools. The main Findings were: Lack of using computer in teaching English vocabulary and students who use computer a void vocabulary mistakes (Ali (2010) cited in Mohammed 2014-2015).

The above study related vocabulary to means of technology, to show how a computer facilitates learning English vocabulary. It is relevant to the researcher's topic because synonyms and antonyms are vocabulary that can be taught by computer to facilitate learning and acquiring new vocabulary.

## **Chapter three**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter gives account of methodology. In this chapter the researcher shows all the steps that were undertaken from the beginning up to the end of the research. This methodology was used by the researcher to achieve the required objectives. It consisted of method, tool, population, sample, validity and reliability of the tool and procedures.

#### **3.2 Research method**

The researcher used the quantitative method. It was also descriptive method and analytical. The quantitative method was used to show the number of respondents and their percentages in each of result. Then all issues were judged and discussed to arrive at a whole judgment to confirm or reject the hypotheses.

#### **3.3 Tool of the study**

A test was use as a tool to collect the required data. The test was constructed to obtain data from students of English, third year at Sudan University of Science and Technology. It was about investigating the Understanding and Use of Synonyms and Antonyms. The test contained four key questions: some in the understanding of synonyms, antonyms and use of synonyms and antonyms. Each major question of the test consisted of 5 items hence there are twenty items for investigating both the understanding and use of synonyms and antonyms.

#### **3.4 Population and sample of the study**

Population of the study is about students of English at universities of Khartoum locality. Sample for the study is learners of English at Sudan University of Science and Technology in Khartoum Locality. The researcher

used random sample; He selected randomly third year learners of English at University.

### **3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Test**

Validity means that the test should measure the aim for which it has been designed.

I was directed to adjust the following key questions: a – use a similar meaning of each word in a sentence b- Use the opposite of each word in a sentence c- Fill in the space with the similar meaning of the underlined word.

The previous questions were adjusted as follow: a- Use a word with a similar meaning to each of the following words in a sentence b- Use the opposite of each of the following words in a sentence c- Fill in the space with the word having a similar meaning to the underline word.

The word “always” was changed into the word “badly” to cope with the use of antonyms properly. Also, the words well” and “study”, were mended to the items “glad” and “injure” to suit the understanding of synonyms correctly.

Here  $N$  is equal to the number of items,  $c$ -bar is the average inter-item covariance among the items and  $v$ -bar equals the average variance.

One can see from this formula that if a researcher increases the number of items in the test that means he increases Cronbach’s alpha. Additionally, if the average inter-item correlation is low, alpha will be low. As the average inter-item correlation increases, Cronbach’s alpha increases as well (holding the number of items constant). Here are some of the most used methods for calculating the reliability:

1. Split half .
2. Alpha Cronbach or Cronbach’s Alpha .
3. Test and retest.
4. Equivalent images,
5. Gutt man equation.

The value of good reliability ranges between (0-1). The researcher chose Cronbach’s Alpha to measure the reliability of the test. That method



depends on Correlation . Also it is based on standardized items of the test. The reliability was statistically measured as shown in the table below.

**Table (3-1) Statistical Reliability of the Test**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on standardized items	Number of items
0.584	0.592	20
=0.6	=0.6	

### **3.6 Procedures**

The information of the test was based on synonyms and antonyms It was collected from an easy dictionary of synonyms and antonyms. It was also typically gathered from reference 'Semantics'; a course book (2010).

The researcher took permission from one of the lecturers to get use of the lecture in the third year. They were nearly seventy learners. They were told to be tested instead of the lecture. So they prepared themselves for the test. The researcher distributed the test papers to fifty students. He selected them randomly to choose the exact sample of the study.

The room was large and good. The respondents sat on comfortable seats. The weather was warm the students were unstressed, relaxed doing the test. Enough time was devoted to students (testes); about half an hour.

The test papers were collected individually. All the copies were gathered and obtained by this way. Thus proper context was produced for the test of the study.

## Chapter four

### Data analysis and Discussions of Results

#### 4-1 Introduction

Chapter four is useful as it shows study questions, tables of test results, discussions and testing hypotheses. The tables are discussed to provide answers for the study questions. So, the results of the test are obtained. Then the researcher confirms or rejects them due to the obtained results of the study.

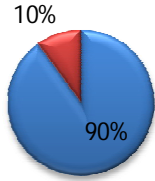
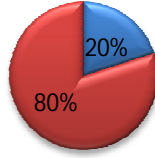
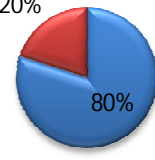
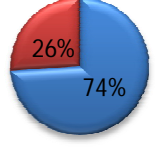
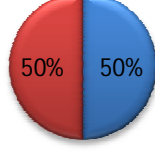
#### 4.2 Question One

To what degree do students of English understand synonyms? This is the first study question. It is answered through the discussion of the table and master table below.

**Table (4-1) Understanding of Synonyms**

Fill in the space with a word having similar meaning to the underlined word	Correctly	Incorrectly	Percentage of correctly
1. Glad	45	5	90%
2. Student	10	40	20%
3. False	40	10	80%
4. Many	37	13	74%
5. Injure	25	25	50%
Study population: 50 (100%)			

**Table of figures No (4-1): Understanding of Synonyms**

Fill in the space with a word having similar meaning to the underlined word (Glad)	Correctly	Incorrectly	Percentage of correctly	Figures
Glad	45	5	90%	 <p>10% 90%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Correctly</li> <li>■ Incorrectly</li> </ul>
Student	10	40	20%	 <p>20% 80%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Correctly</li> <li>■ Incorrectly</li> </ul>
FALSE	40	10	80%	 <p>20% 80%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Correctly</li> <li>■ Incorrectly</li> </ul>
Many	37	13	74%	 <p>26% 74%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Correctly</li> <li>■ Incorrectly</li> </ul>
Injure	25	25	50%	 <p>50% 50%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Correctly</li> <li>■ Incorrectly</li> </ul>
Study population = 50 (100%)				

### 4.2.1 Discussion one

Students of English understand synonyms as follows: 45 persons with the percentage of 90 understand synonyms correctly 10 learners with the percentage of 20% understand them correctly. 40 candidates with the percentage of 20% respond to them correctly. 37 students with percentage of 74% understand correctly. 25 persons with the percentage of 50% understand correctly. There are 157 correct response with the percentage of 63% in understanding synonyms.

Learners of English understand synonym in as follows: 5 persons with the percentage of 10% understand synonyms incorrectly. 40 students with the percentage of 80 respond incorrectly. 10 candidates with the percentage of 20% understand incorrectly. 13 learners with the percentage of 26% respond incorrectly. 25 of them understand incorrectly with the percentage of 50%. But there are 157 correct response with the percentage of 63%. They are 93 incorrect response with the percentage of 37% in the understanding of synonyms. So students of English understand synonyms appropriately.


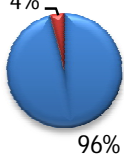


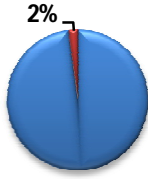
### 4.3 Question Two

How do students of English understand antonyms? This is the second question in the study. It can be answered through the discussion of the table and master table below.

**Table (4-2) Understanding of Antonyms**

Fill in the space with the opposite of the underlined word	Correctly	Incorrectly	Percentage of correctly
1. Girl	49	1	98%
2. Lazy	48	2	96%
3. Husband	49	1	98%
4. Cheep	31	19	62%
5. Tall	49	1	98%
Study population – 50 (100%)			

**Table of figures No (4-2): Understanding of Antonyms**

Fill in the space with the opposite of the underlined word	Correctly	Incorrectly	Percentage of correctly	Figures
Girl	49	1	98%	 <p>2% 98%</p> <p>Correctly Incorrectly</p>
Lazy	48	2	96%	 <p>4% 96%</p> <p>Correctly Incorrectly</p>
Husband	49	1	98%	 <p>2% 98%</p> <p>Correctly Incorrectly</p>
Cheap	31	19	62%	 <p>38% 62%</p> <p>Correctly Incorrectly</p>
Tall	49	1	98%	 <p>2% 98%</p> <p>Correctly Incorrectly</p>
Study population = 50 (100%)				

**4.3.1 Discussion Two**

Learners of English understand antonyms as follows: 49 students with the percentage of 98% understand antonyms correctly. 48 learners with the percentage of 96% understand correctly. 49 candidates with the percentage 98% understand correctly. 31 persons with the percentage of 62% understand correctly. 49 students with the percentage of 98% understand correctly. There

are 226 correct response with the percentage of 90% in understanding antonyms.

Learners understand antonyms as follows: I learner with the percentage of 2% understands antonyms incorrectly. 2 students with the percentage of 4% understand incorrectly. I candidates with the percentage of 2% understands incorrectly. 19 persons with the percentage of 38% understand incorrectly. I learner with the percentage of 2% understands antonyms incorrectly. That students of English understand antonyms perfectly.

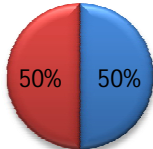
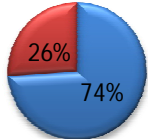
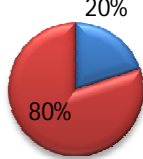
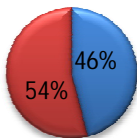
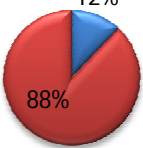
#### 4-4 Question Three

How do students of English use synonyms? This is the third study question. It can be answered though the discussion of the table and master table below.

**Table no (4-3) Use of Synonyms**

Use a word a similar meaning to each of the following words un sentences	Correctly	Incorrectly	Percentage of correctly
1. Unhappy	25	25	50%
2. Love	37	13	74%
3. Quickly	10	40	20%
4. Large	23	27	48%
5. Cancel	6	44	12%
Study population = 50 (100%)			

**Table of figures No (4-3): Use of Synonyms**

Use a word with a similar meaning to each of the following words in a sentence	Correctly	Incorrectly	Percentage of Correctly	Figures
Unhappy	25	25	50%	 <p>50% 50%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Correctly</li> <li>■ Incorrectly</li> </ul>
Love	37	13	74%	 <p>26% 74%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ correctly</li> <li>■ Incorrectly</li> </ul>
Quickly	10	40	20%	 <p>20% 80%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ correctly</li> <li>■ Incorrectly</li> </ul>
Large	23	27	46%	 <p>46% 54%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ correctly</li> <li>■ Incorrectly</li> </ul>
Conceal	6	44	12%	 <p>12% 88%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ correctly</li> <li>■ Incorrectly</li> </ul>
Study population = 50 (100%)				

**4.4.1 Discussion Three**

Learners' of English respond to the use of synonyms as follows: 25 persons with the percentage of 50% use synonyms correctly. 37 students with the percentage of 74% respond to use them correctly. 10 candidates with the percentage of 20% answer correctly. 23 learners with the percentage of 48% respond correctly; 6 students with the percentage of 12% use synonyms correctly.

Students of English also use synonyms incorrectly as follow: 25 persons with the percentage of 50% use them in correctly 13 learners with the percentage of 26% respond incorrectly. 40 persons with the percentage of 20% answer incorrectly. 27 candidates with the percentage of 52% use synonyms incorrectly and 44 learners with the percentage of 88% respond incorrectly.

Thus there are 149 incorrect response with the percentage of 60% that students of English use synonyms incorrectly.

#### **4-5 Question Four**

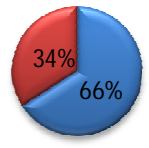
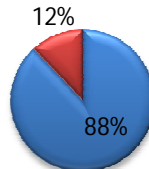
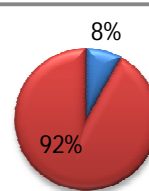
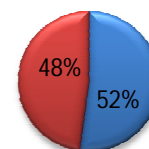
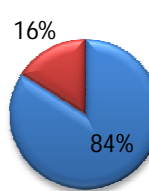
To what extent do students of English use antonyms? This is the fourth question of the study. It can be answered through the discussion of the table and master table below.

**Table No (4-4) Use of Antonyms**

Use the opposite of each of the following words in a sentences	correctly	incorrectly	Percentage of correctly
1. Come	33	17	66%
2. Woman	44	6	88%
3. Badly	4	46	8%
4. End	26	24	52%
5. Beautiful	42	8	84%



**Table of figures No (4-4) : Use of Antonyms**

Use the opposite of each of the following words in a sentence	Correctly	Incorrectly	Percentage of correctly	Figures
Come	33	17	66%	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Correctly</li> <li>■ Incorrectly</li> </ul>
Woman	44	6	88%	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Correctly</li> <li>■ Incorrectly</li> </ul>
Badly	4	46	8%	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Correctly</li> <li>■ Incorrectly</li> </ul>
End	26	24	52%	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Correctly</li> <li>■ Incorrectly</li> </ul>
Beautiful	42	8	84%	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Correctly</li> <li>■ Incorrectly</li> </ul>
Study population = 50 (100%)				

**4.5.1 Discussion Four**

Students of English use antonyms as follows: 33 persons with the percentage of 66% respond correctly. 44 learners with the percentage of 88% answer correctly 4 candidates with the percentage of 8% use them correctly. 26 students with the percentage of 52% use antonyms correctly. 42 persons with percentage of 84% answer correctly .

Learners of English use antonym as follows: 17 persons with the percentage of 34% use antonyms incorrectly. 6 students with the percentage of 12% respond incorrectly. 46 candidates, with the percentage of 92% answer incorrectly. 24 learners with the percentage of 48% use them incorrectly. 8 persons with the percentage of 16% answer incorrectly. Hence there are (101) incorrectly response with the percentage of 40% in that use.

Students use antonyms with the percentage of 40% incorrectly. But they use them correctly with the percentage of 60%. So students of English use antonyms properly,

#### **4.6 Testing Hypotheses**

This test is used to reveal whether the hypotheses of the study are proved or not. In this sense, the researcher confirms or rejects hypotheses. He depends on the obtained results of the study,

##### **4.6.1 Testing Hypothesis one**

In the discussion one, the result was, students of English understand synonyms appropriately. The hypothesis one was, students of English understand synonyms appropriately. Hence the hypothesis one is equivalent to the result. That it is proved. Finally, he researcher confirms hypothesis one in the study.

##### **4.6.2 Testing Hypothesis Two**

Discussion two yields a result that students of English understand antonyms perfectly. The hypothesis two was, students of English understand antonyms perfectly. So the result and the hypothesis two are equivalent. So the hypothesis two is proved and its confirmed by the researcher in the study.

##### **4.6.3 Testing Hypothesis Three**

In the discussion three, the result was that, students of English use synonyms incorrectly. But the hypothesis three was that students of English use synonyms correctly to. So the hypothesis is not typical to the result.

Therefore the hypothesis is not proved. That the researcher rejects the hypothesis three.

#### **4.6.4 Testing Hypothesis Four**

Students of English use antonyms properly as the result of discussion four. The hypothesis four was, students of English use antonyms properly. It is typical to the result. Hence, the hypothesis four is proved. Then the researcher confirms the hypothesis four in the study.

## **Chapter five**

### **Conclusions, Findings, Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Studies**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter is useful for the followings reasons: it reflects problems of the study. It also suggests proper solutions for them and the section calls for other relevant topics of the study. This section is important: it includes the topic; it shows the end of the study, this chapter provides: findings, recommendations and suggestions for further studies; the researcher: extracts the findings, recommends to suit with them and suggests other topics for further studies.

#### **5.2 Conclusions**

The researcher achieved the data analysis and came out with its results. He extracted the following findings of the study:

1. Students of English have problems in the understanding of synonyms.
2. Students of English have problems in the understanding of antonyms.
3. Students of English have problems in the use of synonyms.
4. Students of English have problems in the use of antonyms

#### **5.3 Recommendations**

To solve the above problems, the researcher recommends that:

1. Students should refer to a dictionary of synonyms and antonyms.
2. Students should consult New Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary with CD Rom inside.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies**

The topic of the study is Investigating Understanding and Use of Synonyms and Antonyms. This topic is inclusive, it shows elements of progress and it can be developed. For further studies the researcher suggests the following topics:

- Investigating Understanding and Use of Synonyms, Antonyms and Collocations.
- Investigating the Understanding and Use of collocations.
- The Problems of Lexical Relations for University Students of English.
- Investigation the Problems of Learning Vocabulary items in Secondary Schools.

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## **Appendices**