Semantic shift in lumarama: a lexical pragmatics approach

Khachula, Aromo Annet
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Abstract:

This study is meant to analyze the semantic shifts in the Lumarama dialect of Luhya language, based on the lexical pragmatic approach. The study focuses on the types of semantic changes involved in determining the meaning of words in Lumarama. Chapter one provides an introduction to the study. Here the background information to the study is provided through a brief definition of semantic shift as the main concern for the research. The background to the language being studied is given in the chapter. In the same chapter, information on the statement of the problem has been presented, explaining why it is important to study the semantic shifts in Lumarama. The rationale of the investigation is given in addition to stating the scope and limitations of the study. Theoretical framework is looked at in details, alluding to a number of proponents. The lexical pragmatic theory forms the foundation of the study and its two sub-theories have been used; lexical semantics and conversational implicatures. The literature review is discussed in two ways: literature based on the study and the theoretical literature. Lastly, research methodology is presented in terms when and where the information was collected from and the methods used in collecting the information. The different types of semantic shifts involved in Lumarama are discussed in chapter two. There are two major types of semantic shifts analyzed through definitions and examples of utterances containing words which have been affected by a shift in their meaning. The discussion is done in relation to the pragmatic processes which result in the shift in the meaning of the affected words. In chapter three, the effects of semantic shifts in Lumarama are analyzed. In the analysis, attention is given to the advantages and disadvantages that Lumarama as a dialect has faced due to the semantic changes. Chapter four has the analysis of the data that had been collected. The data collection included oral interviews, recordings from vernacular radio stations and the researcher, who by virtue of being a native speaker of the dialect, possesses native speaker competence. The summary of the study is given in chapter five. The findings which come up as a result of the research are discussed before the conclusions and recommendations. Therefore, socio-cultural forces which allow people to come in contact under different circumstances, contribute to the shift in meaning of words in a language. The study also looks at the extent to which the Lumarama dialect has been affected by the changes which have occurred in the meanings of its lexemes.