**SYNTACTIC AND LEXICO-SEMANTIC ANALYSES OF SELECTED SMS TEXT MESSAGES AMONG THE UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN STUDENTS**

**ABSTRACT**

Words form the basis for a Linguistic analysis at any level of language study. The aim of this essay was to identify the various Lexical and Syntactic elements that make up personal text messages among the students of the University of Ilorin. Lexical features, Lexical relations, Word-formation processes and Word Sequences were employed to unravel the Lexical and Syntactic elements contained in selected text messages. Among the findings in the work were that nouns are the most prominent lexical features in the personal text messages of the students of the University of Ilorin, while adverbs are the least used lexical features in the composition of these messages. It was also discovered that most of the words that were used in composing the messages were created through the word-formation process of derivation and that simple sentences in the most used sentence sequences in these messages. The conclusion in the essay was that effective communication through personal text messages among the University of Ilorin students can be ensued, if the receivers of the messages take into cognizance the various Lexical and Syntactic elements identified in their interpretation.

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**CHAPTER ONE**

**GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Communication through an effective use of language is a tool that makes a good human relationship. Human beings are considered higher animals because of their ability to communicate effectively through the use of language. Language as a tool for effective communication is the most important part of a human being that makes him different from animals, Adedimeji (2005,p.1). As a result of this great role language plays in a man’s life, language is studied at five major levels in linguistics (Tomori,1977,p.21 as cited by Adedimeji,2005,p.1). These levels are Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics and Pragmatics. Words are very essential in every level of language analysis.

A Lexeme as defined by Crystal (2008) is “a term used by some linguists to refer to the minimal distinctive unit in the semantic system of a language”. Crystal (2008) also defined Semantics as “a major branch of linguistics devoted to the study of meaning in a language”. Lexico-semantics therefore combines both the meaning of ‘Lexemes’ and ‘Semantics’. It originated from the linguistic fields of Lexicology and Semantics. Lexico-semantics as a subfield of Semantics addresses words and their meanings. It investigates the daily use of words among interactants with the aim of effective communication. Lexico-semantics deals with the relationship that exists between words, their meanings and the messages they convey.

SMS is a short message service that allows information to be passed across from one person to another, over a network at a particular rate. SMS is used as an abbreviation for all types of short text messaging in many parts of the world. SMS text messaging is one medium of communication that has found its way into the system of communication over the past few years. It is one technological device that its use is fast growing over a wide range in the whole of Africa and even the globe.

Communication through SMS is done by no other means but by the use of words. Lexemes are used to facilitate the effectiveness of this device. The effectiveness of this medium of communication depends on the appropriate combination of the words it carries, and in the combination of these words lies what is known as the message. Therefore, the relationship that exists between Lexico-semantics and SMS text messaging is effective communication, which is made possible through an appropriate combination of words into text messages.

From the foregoing, this work aims to investigate and identify the processes involved in the creation of these words, the various lexical relations and features that exist among the words that make up text messages. This will enhance a better interpretation and prevent misinterpretations among participants.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The problem which this work intends to solve is the problem of the misinterpretation of text messages as a result of a wrong choice of words or arrangement of lexemes in the composition of text messages, thereby leading to a breakdown in communication. This work intends to identify the various word-formation processes involved in the creation of new words, the lexical features and relationships that exist among words and also how these words are sequenced to build larger grammatical units. This work also intends to examine how these words contribute to the interpretation of a text message, thereby leading to better choices of words on the part of the sender and a more precise interpretation on the part of the receiver.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the body of knowledge through an investigation into the combination of word and their meaning in conveying an SMS. This work seeks to examine selected personal text messages sent by the students of the University of Ilorin between the ages of 18-25 years, identify the word-formation processes, lexical features and relations that exist among the lexemes that are contained in them. Also, how the knowledge of the lexical and semantic relations contribute to the meaning of the text messages would be examined. This will help to promote a better understanding of text messages.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This work will focus basically on the analysis of thirty personal text messages of the University of Ilorin students between the ages of 18-25 years. The analysis will be carried out through an identification of the word-formation processes, lexical features and relations and the word sequences among the words that make up these messages. The study will also take a look at the sequencing of words in the messages and how all these features contribute to the understanding of these messages.

1.5 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

This work is based on an analysis of SMS text messages using a Lexico-semantic approach. Several other studies have been conducted on SMS text messages. Among these are Awonusi (2004), who did “A Sociolinguistic study of SMS text messages as a register in Nigerian English”, Egbe (2005), discussed the “Aspects of the Grammar of SMS text messages”, Alabi, (2010b), wrote on “Stylistic creativity via schemes: Tropes, Lexical cohesion and Descriptive Adjectives in SMS text messaging among Nigerian university Graduates”.

However, going by the above, it can be observed that SMS text messages have been studied from various fields of linguistics ranging from Sociolinguistics, to Grammar, to Stylistics, etc. This study is however adding to the knowledge and analysis of SMS text messages in the Lexico-semantic field. This work will be of great relevance and a reference point to students of communication studies, users of SMS text messaging as a medium of communication and students of English language and literature.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

The selection of data for analysis in this study has been done randomly. The sources for the data for analysis in this study are text messages sent by the University of Ilorin students between the ages of 18-25 years. Out of these text messages, this work will focus on personal text messages (Chiluwa,2007, p.98 as cited by Alabi,2010b,p.1). Thirty personal text messages have been selected for analysis in this work. These messages represent the whole body of personal text messages and are considered suitable for the purpose for which this work is conducted. The analysis ofthese messages will be done through an identification of various elements that characterize lexemes i.e. word-formation processes, lexical relations and features and word sequencing in contributing to the messages they pass across as a result of their co-occurrence in an expression.

1.7 DATA DESCRIPTION

SMS was first used in December 1992 by a 22-year-old named Neil Papworth. The concept of SMS was developed by Friedhelm Hillebrand, Bernard Ghillebaert and Oculy Silaban in 1984, in the Franco-German GSM cooperation. However, following the inception of the Global System of Mobile communication (GSM) in Nigeria, in the year 2001, Alabi, (2010b), SMS text messaging has become a major medium of passing across information from one person to another irrespective of the distance between the ‘sender’ an ‘receiver’. MTN, which happened to be the first GSM Company in Nigeria, commenced its commercial services in August 2001. This commencement brought the Short Message Service (SMS) to limelight in the Nigerian communication system. Ever since then, text messaging has taken different turns.

The data for analysis in this study are personal text messages, as described by Chiluwa (2007) as “well wishing messages and messages that are used to express emotions”. Thirty of these messages have been selected for analysis using certain tools that will be discussed in the next chapter.

1.8 SUMMARY

So far in this chapter, an insight into the variables of the topic of this study has been created, the purpose, scope, justification and methodology for this study have been discussed. A more extensive and detailed discussion of the approach to the study and its elements is hoped to be discussed in the next chapter, which is the literature review.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will provide a clearer picture and a more extensive and detailed discussion of the variables contained in the topic of study. This chapter will focus on:

The meaning of lexis;

Lexical features;

Lexical relations;

Word-formation processes;

The sequence of words;

A brief examination of semantics;

Lexico-semantics; and

SMS text messaging in Nigeria.

2.2THE MEANING OF LEXIS

Jackson & Amvela (2000, p.11) defined lexis as “the stock of words in a given language”. It is made up of the words the in a language, which is called vocabulary. The term “lexis” originated from Greek and it means “word”, Jackson & Amvela (2000, p.1). The lexis of any language is made up of lexemes. These lexemes are the words contained in the vocabulary of a language.

A lexeme as defined by Crystal (2008, p.276) is the “minimal distinctive unit in the semantic system of a language”. Lexemes have lexical rather than grammatical meanings. They function in different ways and can also be referred to as words. However, a lexeme carries a deeper meaning that goes beyond the meaning of an ordinary word.

In writing, at the level of ordinary language, a word is regarded as an item bounded by spaces(Jackson, 1988) and in speeches separated by pauses(Jackson & Amvela, 2000). A lexeme, as defined by Crystal (1995) as cited by Jackson & Amvela (2000, p.63) is a “unit of lexical meaning, which exists regardless of any inflectional ending it may have or the number of words it may contain”. From this definition, a lexeme is an independent item i.e. it can stand on its own. It forms the basis for larger words.

Lexemes can also be described as expressions that carry lexical meanings, that is, meanings that are permanently stored in the mind(Lobner, 2002). Lexemes are linguistic entities within a language system. They can be built into phrases, clauses and sentences. Lexemes are however different in their grammatical behaviour. As a result, they have been grouped into various categories, which in formal usage are called “word classes” or “lexical features”.

2.3 LEXICAL FEATURES

These are features that characterize the various words that make up an expression or an utterance i.e. phrase, clause or sentence. Lexical features are also called word classes(Lobner, 2002). Words are grouped into classes depending on their grammatical function or behaviour in an expression or an utterance. Every lexeme in an expression falls into at least one of these word classes. The knowledge of the word class of a lexeme in an utterance or expression enhances a proper interpretation of the whole expression. Alabi (2005, pp.22-39) identified eight word classes. All the word classes identified will be examined one after the other.

**Nouns**

Any word used to identify a person, animal; place or thing is considered a noun. Nouns are also used to identify objects, qualities, actions, ideas or concepts. Alabi (2005, p.22) believes that a noun names anything. Examples include: *Taofeeq, John, Sheep, Tortoise*, *Nigeria, Ilorin, books, biro, Goodness, Gentleness, Teaching, Maturity, Philosophy, Grammar,* etc. Nouns can further be divided into sub-groups according to form and composition. These sub-groups include:

*Propernouns*: They are names of people, continents, countries, races, institutions, days, months, subjects and careers, Alabi (2005, p.23). Examples of proper nouns include: *Elizabeth, Africa,Liberia, December, Linguistics, Wednesday, Computer science, Doctor*, etc.

*Commonnoun*s: These are nouns that denote tangible entities that can be seen or touched. They have a physical manifestation. Examples of nouns in this group are: *car, candle, hand*, etc.

*Abstractnouns*: The manifestation of these nouns exists in the mind. Alabi (2005) said that they express general terms, feeling, attributes, ideas or concepts. They cannot be seen or touched, they reside in the imagination of human beings e.g*. loyalty, foolishness, knowledge, love*, etc.

*Countnouns*: Count nouns can be identified where such determiners such as “a” or “an” precede them. They are nouns that can be counted or numbered e.g. *lecturer, box, umbrella, table*, etc.

*Massnouns*: These are nouns which are expressible in terms of quantity. They can also be referred to as “uncountable” or “non-count” nouns e.g. *blood, water, salt, sand*, etc.

Nouns name reference items in expressions. They act as subjects, objects and as complements in sentences.

**Verbs**

A verb is a word or group of words that express an action, an event or a state. Alabi (2005) wrote that:

No one can claim to have a control of a

language until he is able to operate the

verbal forms of the language. It is obvious

now that no grammatical analysis can be

carried out without due cognizance being

paidto meaning. Hence, meaningfulness

or meaninglessness of a grammatical stretch

depends extensively on the verb. (p.29)

He perceived the verb as a life-wire, running through the whole sentence structure. A verb completes the meaning of a sentence, an expression or an utterance. The lack of a verb in a sentence, results in meaninglessness. A verb describes an action. It tells how something is done or carried out. It also makes a statement or sentence complete. Without a verb, a sentence appears incomplete(Alabi, 2005). There are two major forms of verbs as identified by Alabi (2005,p.29). They are ‘full or main’ verbs e.g. verbs that takes the ‘-s’, ‘-ed’ or ‘-ing’ inflections i.e. *take, want, laugh,* etc. There also auxiliary verbs, which are used to show tense, person and mood. These verbs manifest in two forms. They operate as either variants or modal auxiliary verbs e.g. *can, will, may, need, had better, are to,* etc.

**Pronouns**

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Pronouns are parts of speech that are used to substitute for nouns or noun phrases. They are words used in place of nouns to refer to someone or something earlier mentioned or generally understood. Alabi (2005, p.26) identified ten kinds of pronouns. They are:

*Personalpronouns*: They take grammatical slots of persons, places or things e.g. *him, her, it, me,us, you,* and *them*.

*Relativepronouns*: They are used to introduce clauses that modify nouns which occur earlier in sentences. The relative pronouns in English are: *who, whom, whose, which* and *that.*

*Reflexivepronouns*: They are pronouns that show that the action in the sentence affects the person or thing that does the action. For example: myself, himself, themselves, itself, etc.

*Emphaticpronouns*: They are pronouns that are used for emphasis in certain contexts. To illustrate:

I’d like a glass of wine, and you have one for *yourself.*

She *herself* wanted to join the company.

*Exclamatorypronoun*: This is a kind of noun that is used in an exclamatory statement. The most prominent pronoun here is ‘what’. For instance:

What insolence!

What a delicious experience!

*Reciprocalpronouns*: These are pronouns that indicate what people feel, their relationship or what they do or have in common. The most frequently occurring reciprocal pronouns are each other and one another.

*Interrogativepronouns*: These are pronouns that are used to ask questions. They are identical with the ‘WH-series’, but they are functionally different. They are also used for personal references and case distinctions. Examples are: *who, which, what, whose, whom, why*, etc.

*Demonstrativepronouns*: Basically, there are two sets of demonstrative pronouns, which signify ‘nearness’ and ‘distance’. They are used to show contrasts, they sometimes function as determiners and they can also be used to express emotions in formal situations. Examples of demonstrative pronouns are: *this, that, these and those.*

*Indefinitepronouns*: This group includes pronouns: each, some, any, every and their inflections.

*The uses of ‘one’:* The pronoun ‘one’ can be used in place of ’a’ or ’an’. It may be used as an anaphoric substitute for singular or plural countable nouns. It could take the inflections ’-s’ or ’-self’ as in *ones* or *oneself*.

**Adjectives**

Adjectives are words that name quality or attribute, define, limit or modify nouns or pronouns. *Everyman’s Encyclopaedia* (1978, p.76) as cited by Alabi (2005, p.33) defined an adjective as “a part of speech used with a noun or substance, to express its quality or attribute”. Adjectives are most times preceded by intensifier ‘very’. E.g. “The man seems very old”. They can also be identified when they end with the inflections ‘-er’ or ‘-est’ indicating their superlative or comparative forms. They can also be premodified by ‘more’ or ‘most’.

Adjectives can be sub-divided into four classes according to Alabi (2005, p.34). Adjectives can be stative or dynamic. They refer to entities that are regarded as stable, whether concrete or abstract and they are dynamic in the sense that they have the ability to show tense and aspect.

Adjectives can also be gradable or non-gradable. Adjectives are gradable when they can be modified by adverbs which convey the degree of intensity of adjectives. Gradable adjectives indicate or show comparison. E.g. *old/older/oldest, beautiful/morebeautiful/most beautiful*, etc. In a case of an adjective being premodified by an adverb in order to show intensity, we can have for example: *very sweet, so beautiful, too fast*, etc, while adjectives denoting province and adjectives that cannot take the comparative and superlative markers are referred to as non-gradable adjectives. Examples include: *British, Nigerian, Sulphuric, previous,* etc.

Another class of adjectives is the inherent adjectives. They constitute the majority of the adjectives in English. Inherent adjectives are used to describe inherent attributes of nouns. Instances are: *black, ferrous, wooden, golden,* etc. Unlike the inherent adjectives, non-inherent adjectives do not describe direct features of the nouns they modify.

**Adverbs**

The major grammatical assignment of an adverb is to modify or qualify a verb. It gives more information about an adjective or another adverb. Adverbs can be identified easily because most times they carry the suffix ‘-ly’. Examples include *briefly, exceedingly,successfully, slowly*, etc.

**Prepositions**

A preposition expresses a relation between two entities (Quirk & Greenbaum, 2000, p.143). Also according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* as cited by Alabi (2005, p.37), a preposition is an indeclinable word or particle serving to mark the relationship between two notional words, a latter of which is usually a noun or a pronoun. A preposition links a noun or its equivalent to another part of the sentence or to the sentence as a whole. Prepositions connect two units in a sentence and specify a relationship between them e.g. *by, in, within, on* top *of*, etc. Prepositions also give accurate descriptions of an action.

**Conjunctions**

Conjunctions are words or group of words that join other words or group of words together. They act as linkers between words, phrases or clauses. According to Alabi (2005, p.38), there are three major kinds of conjunctions. They are:

*Coordinatingconjunctions*: They are used to join words, phrase or clauses. E.g. *and, so, yet, but*and*or*.

*Correlativeconjunctions*: They are words that are closely related and they depend on each other. They usually occur in pairs. Examples are: *both . . . and, either . . . or, neither . . . nor, not only . .*. *but also*.

*Subordinatingconjunctions*: These are conjunctions that are used to link minor or dependent clauses to major or independent clauses. For example: *since, although, because, so that, unless*, etc.

**Interjections**

Interjections according to Alabi (2005, p.39) are “words or group of words used as exclamations to express sudden or strong emotions”. Such expressions usually end with an exclamation mark [!].

2.4 LEXICAL RELATIONS

Lexical relations can be referred to as certain relationships that exist among lexemes in a language. They are certain linguistic units that develop as a result of the co-occurrence of words in conveying meaning. Udofot (1998,pp.38-51) identified five major types of lexical relations that exist among lexemes in a language. They are: synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, homonymy and polysemy. To these, we shall add ambiguity, tautology, meronymy and holonymy.

**Synonymy**

Saeed (2009, p.65) defined synonymy as a “relationship that exists between different phonological words which have the same or very similar meanings”. Synonymy is that lexical relationship that holds between two words that can express the same thing. Synonymy exists among the following words or pairs: *girl/lass, lawyer/attorney, sofa/couch, little/small*, etc. Words are synonymous, if the sentences resulting from the substitution of one for another have the same meaning.

However synonyms may differ according to the context. They may also differ as a result of belonging to different dialects of a language e.g. the American English ‘fall’ and British English ‘autumn’. Synonyms may also differ depending on the different styles in which they are used. Palmer (1981) as cited by Udofot (1998) gave an example of English expressions which can be regarded as synonymous, but are distinguished according to style e.g. “a nasty smell” and “an horrible stink”, which in proper setting can be seen as posh for the former and colloquial for the latter.

**Antonymy**

Traditionally, antonyms are words that are opposite in meaning. Antonymy indicates an oppositeness of meaning. When two words refer to opposing events, they are said to be antonyms. Udofot (1998) further divided antonyms into three major types under a general label of ‘antonymy’.

*Simple antonymy*: This is a relationship that exists between words, such that the negative of one implies the opposite of the other. Saeed (2009) called these types of antonyms ’complementary pairs’ or ‘binary pairs’. Examples of words in this group are: *dead/alive, pass/fail, hit/miss, asleep/awake*, etc.

*Gradable antonymy*: This is a relationship that exists among opposites, where the opposite of one term does not necessarily indicate the positive of the other. This relationship is most times associated with adjectives and it has two basic features.

Firstly, there are usually intermediate terms, so that for example, in between gradable antonyms tall and short, we can find ‘average’. This implies that a fellow is not tall does not necessarily mean that he is short. Secondly, the terms are usually relative e.g. a thick pencil is likely to be thinner than a thin girl.

*Converses*: This is a set of antonyms that show a reversal of a relationship between items. Palmer (1981) as cited by Udofot (1998) referred to these types of antonyms as ‘relational opposites’. This relation is peculiar to verbs, adverbs and prepositions e.g. *lend/borrow, give/receive,below/above, behind/in front of, in/on,* etc.

**Hyponymy**

Udofot (1998) said “hyponymy is an umbrella word used to refer to class membership”. The items that constitute this umbrella term are called co-hyponyms. Hyponymy deals with a relationship of inclusion. A hyponym includes the meaning of a more general term e.g. cat and rat are co-hyponyms of animals, sister and mother are co-hyponyms of woman, etc. However, the superordinate term is called hypernym e.g. *animals, man, cars*, etc.

**Homonymy and Polysemy**

A case of homonymy is a situation whereby several words with the same morphological shape or sound have different meanings as in the case of *pale/pale, bare/bear,mourning/morning, compliment/complement*, etc. But when a single word refers to different things and events, such a word is said to be ‘polysemous’ e.g. *bank*, a bank can refer to a safe place where money and other valuables are kept, it can also refer to a land along a river or canal, it can mean a row of keys and it also means a place where sperm or blood is kept for medical use.

Udofot (1998) opined that it is however difficult for a layman to know the difference between homonymy and polysemy. As a guideline, the dictionary lists the different sets of meaning of a polysemous word under one entry, while homonyms are treated as separate entities. The problem of distinguishing between homonymy and polysemy can be tackled from the point of view of etymology i.e. if identical words have different origins; they are treated as homonyms and given separate entries. On the other hand, if they have the same origin, they are treated as polysemous.

**Ambiguity and Tautology**

Ambiguity and tautology are other lexical relations that exist among expressions and utterances. Ambiguity as described by Lobner (2002) is the technical term used to describe a phenomenon whereby a word or a sentence has more than one meaning. A word, a sentence or an utterance is said to be ambiguous, if it can be interpreted in more than one way(Lobner, 2002). Tautology however, involves the logical truth contained in an expression or utterance i.e. that A and B are necessarily true. E.g. *My father is my father*. This tautology is always true in its literal meaning without having to refer to the facts in the world ( Saeed, 2009).

**Meronymy and Holonymy**

Another set of lexical relations that are prominent among word and expressions are meronymy and holonymy. Halliday (1985, pp311-312) as cited by Alabi, (2010b, p.10) said meronymy and its super-ordinate term holonymy are the description of the ‘part-whole’ relation of meaning. Meronyms are the component part, while holonym is the term which is used for the whole.

2.5 WORD-FORMATION PROCESSES

In conducting a lexical analysis of words in a language, it is important to know how these words came into the language. Yule (1985, p.64) described word-formation processes as “the process whereby new words came into being in a language”. Yule (1986) opined that the constant evolution of old words and new uses of old words should be considered as a healthy sign of vitality and creativity on the part of the language users in shaping the language to meet their own needs.

Yule (1985) identified nine processes by which new words are formed in a language and how old words are used in new ways in the language. These processes are: coinage, borrowing, compounding, blending, conversion, clipping, backformation, acronyms and derivation.

**Coinage**

This word-formation process is regarded as the least common process of word-formation in English. It involves the invention of absolutely new terms. This process of word-formation arose from the necessity for language users to accommodate new feelings, expressions, thoughts, etc. Coinages have also been said to have resulted from the change in the social outlook and other forms of development or inadequacy of existing lexical items to express current ideas or events(Odebunmi, 2006, p.48). Examples include*: house girl, carry over, nylon,zipper*, etc.

**Borrowing**

Yule (1985, p.65) described this word-formation process as “the taking over of words from other languages”. It involves the direct importation of words from other languages. Words formed through this process are called “loan-words”. English has adopted a large number of words from other languages. E.g*. tycoon* (Japanese), *yogurt* (Turkish), *piano* (Italian), *alcohol*(Arabic), etc.

**Compounding**

It involves the joining together of two separate words to produce a single form. This process is done with or without hyphenation i.e. with or without the use of a hyphen in between the two words. Examples are *school bag, sweet heart, love-sick, finger print*, etc.

**Blending**

This word-formation process is done by taking the beginning of one word and joining it to the end of the other word. The joining of two separate words in order to produce a single form is also present in this process. These word forms resulted from blending: *brunch* (breakfast + lunch), *motel* (motor + hotel), *transistor* (transfer + resistor), etc.

**Conversion**

This process involves for a change in the grammatical function of a word. For instance, when a noun comes to be used as a verb. This process can also be referred to as ‘category change’ or ‘functional shift’ (Yule 1985, p.67). The change of the grammatical class of the word does not imply a change in the spelling or pronunciation of the word. E.g. the word ‘release’ in the sentences below:

(I) He has been released.

(ii) They ordered his release.

In sentence (I), ‘release’ is functioning as a verb, while in sentence (ii) it has been converted to a noun.

**Clipping**

Yule (1985, p.66) said this word-formation process occurs “when a word of more than one syllable is reduced to a shorter form, often in casual speech”. It involves the subtraction of one or more syllables from a word. The subtraction may occur at the beginning, the end

or at both ends of the word, Quirk & Greenbaum (2000, p.448). Examples

are*: phone* - telephone, *photo* - photograph, *fridge* - refrigerator, etc.

**Back formation**

Usually in this word-formation process, a word of one type (usually a noun) is reduced to form another word of a different type (usually a verb), (Yule, 1985, p.67). This reduction usually results from the subtraction of a morpheme from the longer word. E.g*. peddle*–peddler, *baby-sit* – baby-sitter, *educate* – education, *investigate* – investigation, etc

**Acronyms**

These are new words formed from the initial letters of a set of other words. There are two sets of words that result from this process. When the initial letters are pronounced with the name of the letters of the alphabet, they are called ‘alphabetisms’. But when they are pronounced like individual words, they are called ‘acronyms’. Examples of the two sets include: *CD, DVD, VCD, ATM, AIDS, WAEC, NEPA, ROM*, etc.

**Derivation**

This word-formation process is regarded as the most common word-formation process to be found in the production of new English words. Yule (1985,p.69) said “it is accomplished by means of a large number of small ‘bits’ of English language which are not usually given separate listings in the dictionaries”. These small bits of language are called ‘affixes’ and covers the study of affixation in English language.

These affixes can be added to the beginning of a word, in which case they are prefixes, middle, where they are infixes or the end of the word, whereby they are called suffixes. Examples are: *disqualify, unpalatable, respectful, lovely*, etc. There are also words that have affixations at the beginning and at the end e.g. *unfaithfulness*(has two suffixes), *disrespectful*, etc. Infixation is not very common in English language, but Yule (1985) gave a few examples namely: *Hallebloodyluja! unfuckingbelievable*, etc. These words are used in informal situations.

Following the notion in the earlier definition of lexis, that words are built into phrases, clauses and sentences, we will now discuss what we tag “the sequencing of words” or “word sequencing”. If arranged in ascending order, words rank second from the bottom on the grammatical rank scale. They are said to have developed from morphemes, and they go on to form larger units of language such as phrases, clauses and sentences.

2.6 SEQUENCE OF WORDS

Words are central to the process of language analysis at all levels of language study. They serve as the building blocks for larger grammatical units in language. These grammatical units starting from the phrase will be examined.

**The Phrase**

Olujide (2005, p.42) defined a phrase as “a well ordered small group of words that are related to each other, occurring within a sentence or a clause. This group usually does not have a finite verb and it cannot make complete sense on its own”. Phrases are usually named after their main words. These main words can be referred to as head words, which can be nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs or prepositions. Therefore, we have noun, verbal, adjectival,adverbial and prepositional phrases.

A phrase may be made up of one, two or more words, it is usually located within a clause or a sentence, it does not make a complete sentence on its own and it usually carries a compulsory element called the head word. The phrase is named after its headword which can be a noun, verb, adjective, adverb or preposition.

**The Clause**

A clause refers to a group of words containing a verb. It makes up part of a sentence. It may or may not make a complete sense on its own. In English language, we can identify two main types of clauses, namely: the independent clause or main clause; and the dependent or subordinate clause.

An independent or main clause can make a full meaning on its own, even when separated from the rest of the sentence(Olujide, 2005). A main clause can pass for a simple sentence. E.g. *Education is the way out of ignorance and a path to knowledge*. There are two main clauses in this sentence:

\* Education is the way out of ignorance.

\*Education is the path to knowledge.

These two independent clauses have been joined by a coordinating conjunction, therefore they can be called coordinate clauses. When two independent clauses are joined by ‘and’, ‘or’, ‘but’, ‘nor’,etc, they are referred to as coordinate clauses(Olujide, 2005)

Dependent or subordinate clauses on the other hand, cannot make a complete sense on their own. They depend on other parts of the sentence for their meaning(Olujide, 2005). These clauses are usually introduced by subordination conjunctions like; because, unless, until, if, etc. This is why they are called subordinating conjunctions. E.g.

\* Lola passed her exams, because she read her books.

\* I did not sleep last night, until PHCN restored electricity.

**The Sentence**

Crystal (2008, p.432) defined a sentence as “the largest structural unit in terms of which the grammar of a language is organized”. A sentence is usually a group of words that expresses a complete meaning. It is made up of words, built into phrases and clauses. Sentences can be grouped based on their function and structure.

A sentence can perform a declarative function, whereby it states a fact. Usually, in a declarative sentence, the subject is always present and it generally precedes the verb or else in exceptional cases. E.g. *I love you*. Also, sentences can be interrogative, whereby they ask questions. E.g. *Do you love me?* They can be imperative, in which they express a command. These sentences summon an action. E.g. *Stand up*. They can also take the form of wishes, prayers or requests. E.g. “I wish you good luck”, “May God be with you”, “Allow me to introduce myself”, etc. Finally, sentences can be exclamatory. In performing this function, they express strong feelings and emotions. E.g. What a hectic day!

According to structure, sentences can be simple, compound, complex or compound-complex (Olujide,2005,p.53). A simple sentence contains only an independent clause with a subject i.e. the person or thing referred to and a predicate (verb). E.g. Lolade cried.

A compound sentence is made up of two or more main clauses, joined together by a coordinating conjunction, a correlative conjunction, a colon ( : ), a comma ( , ), or a semi colon ( ; ) ( Olujide, 2005). An example of a compound sentence is:

Tolani loves to eat and she loves to play football.

The complex sentence contains one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses. These clauses are joined together by subordinating conjunction. E.g.: Tope could not sleep last night, until PHCN restored electricity, because of the heat.

A compound-complex sentence is made up of at least two main clauses and one subordinate clause. An example is:

Tolu wrote the exam and got the scholarship because she prepared very well.

In summary, knowledge of the origin of a word, its word class, lexical relation and features particular to it in an expression, allows for an easier understanding and interpretation of the expression as a whole.

2.7 A BRIEF EXAMINATION OF SEMANTICS

Saeed (2009) defined Semantics as the study of communication through language. Semantics could also be defined as the study of the meaning of words and sentences. The major entities in the study of meaning are Words - phrases - clauses - sentences. Semantics moves in this order and this is why words are indispensable in the study of meaning. In linguistics, Semantics is the subfield that is devoted to the study of meaning that is inherent at the levels of words, phrases, clauses, sentences and larger units of discourse (texts). Words serve as basis for any Semantic study and this is why they are considered indispensable in the study of meaning.

Lyons (1968, p.400) as cited by Udofot (1998, p.4) explained that the term Semantics was coined from a Greek word meaning to ‘signify’. Lyons (1977, pp.1-3) preferred to approach the term ‘meaning’ in relation to its verb ‘to mean’. Semantics is the technical name of the branch of linguistics which deals with the study of meaning. One major concern of Semantics is to how meaning attaches to larger chunks of texts, possibly as a result of the composition from smaller units of meaning.

Crystal (2008) defined Semantics as “a major branch of linguistics devoted to the study of meaning in a language”. Semantics however can be considered as a transdisciplinary field of study. It intersects with other fields of inquiry including Lexicology, Syntax, Pragmatics, Etymology, etc. In Semantics, the context sometimes dictates the meaning of an expression. In order to determine the meaning of an utterance, there must be a speaker, hearer, context and expression. This is how Pragmatics came into the study of meaning.

Furthermore, Jackson (2007, p.59) opined that Semantics is “the study of meaning. Semantics is also a branch of philosophy; but within linguistics it encompasses the meaning of words (Lexical Semantics) and the meaning of sentences”.

2.8 LEXICO-SEMANTICS

Lexico-semantic as a concept is a constituency of two different words i.e. ‘lexis’ and ‘semantics’. Crystal (2008, p.276) defined a lexeme as “a minimal distinctive unit in the semantic system of a language”, while ‘semantics’ was defined as that branch of linguistics that is devoted to the study of meaning in a language(Crystal, 2008, p.428). Lexico-semantics as a concept therefore combines the meaning of ‘lexeme’ and ‘semantics’. It is concerned with the relationship that exists between words and their meanings and also the messages that they carry.

Lexico-semantics is the study of the meaning of words and how these words combine to form the meaning of larger contexts. Lexico-semantics does not stop at the level of words alone; it goes on to the level of sentences and larger units of words. Saeed (2009,p.54) is of the opinion that “lexical relations are central to how speakers construct meaning” i.e. the intention of the speaker is central to how he constructs his words in an expression, thereby giving the expression his own meaning or interpretation. Saeed (2009, p.53) further went on to give two traditional descriptive aims of lexico-semantics. They are:

(I) To represent the meaning of each word in a language; and

(ii) To show how the meaning of the words in a language are interrelated.

Furthermore, Lexico-semantics covers theories of the classification and decomposition of word meaning, the differences and similarities between the lexico-semantic structure of different languages and the relationship between word meaning, sentence meaning and syntax.

2.9 SMS TEXT MESSAGING IN NIGERIA

The Global System for Mobile communication came into use in Nigeria in the year 2001 (Alabi, 2010a). Alongside this system of communication came the Short Message Service (SMS). The Short Message Service (SMS) is the the communication component service of a phone, web or mobile communication system, that allows the exchange of short text messages between fixed lines or mobile phones. SMS text messaging as used by modern handsets is a part of the Global System for Mobile communication (GSM), as a means of sending messages of more than 160 characters to and from GSM mobile handsets. In Nigeria, most SMS messages are mobile - to - mobile text messages, although the standard supports other types of broadcast messaging as well.

SMS allows individuals the liberty to pass across information regardless of the distance between the texter i.e. the sender, and the textee i.e. the receiver. However, since SMS text messaging became a part of the Global System of communication in Nigeria, Nigerian scholars have conducted researches on its use and usages. One of these scholars and his work is Egbe (2009). He discussed the vast possibilities offered by text messages. He wrote that:

Indeed for many users, sending greetings at Christmas, Easter, Sallah, anniversaries, wedding ceremonies or events is done using

the mobile handset through text messages, ratherthan cards. Even invitations to events,

meetings are high powered gathering are

sent through text messages*.* (p.39)

Halliday & Hasan (1981) as cited by Uhunmwangho (2009,p.27) defined a text message as “any linguistic event, usually a written form of speech, that is imbued with meaning”. SMS text messages serve as a cheaper alternative for many Nigerians today, in which they pay less, as against the higher costs on oral phone calls. The Short Message Service gives the subscriber the advantage of choosing a specific number of words that would communicate comprehensively, but briefly, with minimum cost(Chiluwa 2007,p.96). As a result of the limitation in the time and space that comes along with the Short Message Service, subscribers have devised an alternative means for sending text messages. They have created new linguistic forms to enable them maximize the available space and at the same time, make sure they say all that is to be said to the understanding of the receiver.

SMS text messaging has become a vital part of our communication system in Nigeria. It has found a place for itself and it has come to stay. Various new devices are now developed to promote its usage e.g. Blackberries and I-phones. In Nigeria today, people receive invitations to employment interviews, warnings, announcements, etc via text messages. SMS text messaging is moving fast on a wide range in the Nigerian communication system and even in the whole of Africa.

2.10 SUMMARY

This chapter has shed more light on the variables that constitute the topic of study and the analytical tools for data analysis in this study. In the next chapter, the identified elements under the lexical features, lexical relations, word-formation processes and word sequencing as discussed in this chapter will be used to analyse the data for this.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**DATA ANALYSIS**

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As mentioned earlier in chapter one, thirty messages have been selected out of the whole body of personal text messages. All the identified features will be used to analyze all thirty messages that constitute the data for this essay.

3.2 LEXICAL FEATURES

Lexical features are the various categories or word classes that lexemes fall into based on their grammatical functions in an expression. The lexical features that are present in our data are: nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, preposition and conjunctions. They are discussed next.

**Nouns**

Nouns can be defined as the name of persons, animals, places, things, qualities, concepts, ideas or actions, Alabi (2005). Nouns serve as reference items in text messages and expressions. There are nouns in all the data. In all, there are two hundred nouns in the data, totalling 39.22%, where the most prominent is the sub-class of proper nouns with 37.5%, followed by abstract nouns with 18%, the common nouns have 8.5%, and countable nouns with 4.5%. The least portion is the sub-class of uncountable nouns with 1.5%. Proper nouns “Month and Night” and abstract noun “Love” were used more than once in our data, thereby giving them more prominence than other nouns in the data.

**Verbs**

Verbs describe a class of ‘doing’ or ‘action’ words, (Crystal, 2008). They complete the meaning of a sentence. There are one hundred and forty-three instances of the use of verbs in the text messages. Verbs are present in all the text messages. They take up 28.04% of the data. The most prominent types of verbs are finite verbs with sixty-seven occurrences and making up 46.8% of the verbs in the data, modal auxiliary verbs come next with 3.4% and then primary auxiliary verbs with 3.4%. The most recurrent verbs are primary auxiliary verbs ‘is’, ‘do’, ‘have’ and their inflections.

**Pronouns**

Pronouns are grammatical terms used in place of a noun or noun phrase, Alabi (2005). Pronouns were used sixty-seven times in the data, thereby making them 13.12% of the data. The pronouns present in the data are Personal pronouns ‘I’ , ‘We’ , ‘You’ , ‘They’ , ‘He’ , ‘It’ , Indefinite pronouns ‘Anyone’ and ‘Some people’ and Demonstrative pronouns ‘That’ and ‘this‘. The most prominent forms of pronoun in the text messages are personal pronouns ‘I’ and ‘You’ and their inflections ‘My’ and ‘Your’, hence upholding the kind of messages, which are personal messages. These pronouns depict the level of intimacy contained in personal text messages.

**Adjectives**

Adjectives are words that refer to items which specify the attributes of nouns, Crystal (2008). In the data, there are twenty-eight adjectives, thereby making adjectives 5.5% of our data. The adjectives in the messages are: *beautiful, soft, clean, peaceful, strong,focused, determined, sweet, marvelous, tasty, wonderful, thankful, friendly, successful, fruitful, splashing, youthful, crystal, morning, sunset, great, bright, colorful, unfallable, new, good*, and *special*, where ‘good’ was repeated twice. Adjectives have been used to give more information about nouns and subject in the text messages.

**Adverbs**

An adverb is a word that gives more information about a verb, an adjective, a phrase or another adverb(Wehmeier, 2000). The only adverb in our data is ‘sincerely’, which makes adverbs 0.19% of our data.

**Prepositions**

Wehmeier (2000,p.917) defined this word class as “a word or group of word. . .used before a noun or pronoun to show place, position or method”. Prepositions link nouns and other parts of expressions together. There are forty-four instances of the use of prepositions in the data, with prepositions ‘in’, ‘to’ and ‘of’ being the most prominent. Prepositions take 8.63% of the text messages. Not all the text messages have prepositions in them.

**Conjunctions**

Conjunctions were defined by Crystal (2004,p213) as “items which join clauses or parts of clauses”. Conjunctions were used twenty-seven times in the data. They take up 5.3% of the text messages. The most prominent conjunctions are the coordinating conjunctions ‘and’ and ‘but’ as they occur twelve and six times respectively. Other conjunctions in the messages are coordinating conjunctions ‘so’ and subordinating conjunctions ‘unless’, ‘if’ and ‘because’.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Class** | **Nouns** | **Verbs** | **Pronouns** | **Adjectives** | **Adverbs** | **Prepositions** | **Conjunctions** |
| **Frequency** | 39.22% | 28.04% | 13.12% | 5.5% | 0.19% | 8.63% | 5.3% |

Below is a table that represents the occurrence of all the word classes in the data.

**Table 1: WORD CLASSES**

According to the data and as represented in Table 1, the word class with the highest frequency is the noun with 39.22%. All the text messages have nouns in them, and out of the five hundred and ten lexemes in our data, nouns are two hundred, thereby taking the largest portion. Following the noun class is the verb with 28.04%. Verbs are present in all the text messages. They are one hundred and forty - three in number, whereby they perform the function of completing the sense in the text messages. Next to the verbal class is the word class of pronouns with 13.12%, occurring sixty-seven times. The word class of preposition come next to the pronouns with 8.63 %, then adjectives with 5.5%, conjunctions with 5.3% and adverbs with the least frequency, 0.19%. Nouns, according to the data as represented in the table above, are the most prominent, while the least prominent is the word class of adjectives.

3.3 LEXICAL RELATIONS

This is a lexical category that is made up of the various lexical relations that exist among lexemes, as a result of their co-occurrence in expressions. Under this group, we have six sub-groups that have been found in the data. They are: synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy and hypernymy, homonymy, polysemy, ambiguity, meronymy and holonymy.

**Synonymy**

Jackson & Amvela (2000,p.92) defined synonymy as “a relationship of sameness of meaning that may hold between two words”. Words are synonymous if they have the same meaning. In our data, synonymy only exists between the words flame and fire, as used in message 21. Synonymy constitutes 0.2% of the data.

**Antonymy**

A relationship of antonymy is that which exists among two words that denote two opposite possibilities(Lobner, 2002). It indicates an oppositeness of meaning between two words. There are twelve word pairs that exhibit antonymous relationships in the data. These antonymous relationships can be further categorized into simple antonyms and converse pairs. The simple antonyms in our data are: *moon/sun, day/night, evil/good, sorrow/joy,summer/winter, autumn/spring, yesterday/today/tomorrow*. The converse pairs in our data are: *above/below, say-hi/say-bye, give-up/still-try, before*/*behind and live/die*. 2.4% of our data are antonyms. The most prominent antonyms in the text messages are simple antonyms, as they form 58.3% of the antonyms in the data.

**Hyponymy and Hypernymy**

Crystal (2008) describes this relationship as a ‘kind of’ relationship that exists among words. It involves a relationship between an item and its variables. The superordinate item here is the hypernym, while the members are called co-hyponyms. The ‘kind of’ relationship can be found in our data among ‘colours’ and its co-hyponyms: *yellow, white*, *orange, black, red and pink*, ‘cutlery’ and *bowl, spoon, fork and glass*, ‘fruits’ and *orange,banana, mango, pawpaw, grape,apple, carrot, pineapple, strawberry and lemon* and then ‘occupation’ and its co-hyponyms: *Doctor and Engineer*. Hyponyms are 0.8% of the text messages.

**Homonymy**

Udofot (1998) described a case of homonymy as that which exists when two words have the same morphological and phonological structure, but they carry different meanings. The only case of homonymy in the messages is between ‘present’ and ‘present[s]’ as we have in message 25. The former is used as in the text message to indicate time, while the latter is used instead of gifts. This makes hyponyms 0.2% of the data.

**Polysemy**

A word is polysemous, if it has different meanings. ‘Notice’ is the only polysemous word in the data as we have it in message 24. It is used as a noun and as a verb. Polysemy is 0.2% of the messages.

**Ambiguity**

This lexical relation can be said to result from polysemy. It is a phenomenon whereby a word or a sentence has more than one meaning. The words that can be considered ambiguous in the text messages are: ‘sentence’, ‘present’ and ‘notice’. ‘Sentence’ as a word can mean in the grammatical sense, the largest structural unit that the grammar of a language is organized(Crystal, 2008). It can also mean punishment ordered by a court of law or an act of pronouncing sentence upon somebody(*Random House Unabridged Dictionary,*2011). ‘Sentence’ is functioning as a verb in the text message, which is an act of pronouncing sentence on somebody. ‘Present’ as used in message 25 can indicate time or an object. ‘Notice’ can mean a piece of information, warning, note or sign and it can also mean to pay attention to or perceive *Random House Unabridged Dictionary,* 2011. These words have more than one meaning, which can only be determined based on their context of use.

**Meronymy and Holonymy**

This can be described as a ‘part-whole’ relationship that exists among a word and its component parts(Crystal, 2008). In this case, the superordinate term is a holonym, while the components are called meronyms. The part-whole relationships in the text messages are: ‘You’ and *legs, hand, ears, eyes* and heart in message 7, ‘A lifetime’ and *year, month, week,day, hour, minute and second* in message 8, ‘You’ and *speech, hand, eyes, heart and mind* in message 10, ‘A week’ and *Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday* and *Saturday* in message 11, ‘A Movie’ and *drama, action, suspense, horror and comedy* in message 12 and ‘My body’ and *rib, skin and blood.*

The table below shows the frequency of each lexical relation in the text messages.

**Table 2: LEXICAL RELATIONS**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Lexical relations** | **Synonymy** | **Antonymy** | **Hyponymy** | **Homonymy** | **Polysemy** | **Ambiguity** | **Meronymy** |
| **Frequency** | 0.2% | 2.4% | 0.8% | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.6% | 1% |

According to Table 2, the lexical relation with the highest frequency is antonymy with 2.4% i.e. antonyms are the most prominent lexical relations used in the messages, following antonymy is meronymy with 1%, then hyponymy with 0.8%, ambiguity with 0.6% then homonymy 0.2% and polysemy also with 0.2%. From these results, it can be said that the most used lexical relation in the data is antonymy, while the least used are homonymy and polysemy.

3.4 WORD-FORMATION PROCESSES

Word-formation processes are the linguistic means through which new words are formed in English language(Bussman, 1996). The word-formation processes involved in the creation of words in the text messages are: coinage, compounding, conversion, clipping, acronyms and derivation. These processes will now be discussed as found in the data.

**Coinage**

This is a word-formation process that involves the creation and acceptance of the different uses of totally new words in a language, Yule (1985). ‘Aspirin’ is a word in our data that results from this process. It was also cited by Yule (1985,p.64) as a word which was created as a trade name for a company product, but has become a general term for any version of that product. Aspirin as used in message 29, can refer to any other pain-killer.

**Compounding**

This involves the creation of new forms through the process of joining two independent words to form a single word. Words formed through this process in the text messages are: *lifetime, good luck, breakfast, weekend*, *text mate, star lights, good night* and *birthday*. All the words in this group are non- hyphenated. 1.6% of the words in the data are created through this process.

**Conversion**

Conversion can be defined as “a process by which a word belonging to one class is transferred to another word class without any concomitant change of form, either in pronunciation or spelling”(Jackson & Amvela, 2000,p.86). In the data, words that belong to this group are: notice, bath, cream, towel, perfume and cloth. All these words are nouns that now function as verbs as a result of conversion. They are 1.2% of the text messages.

**Clipping**

This involves the reduction in length of longer words to shorter forms. The only example is ‘flu’ in message 29. The reduction has been done at both the beginning and end of the original word, which is ‘influenza’.

**Acronyms**

This is a word-formation process where the initial letters of a set of words are used to form single words and they can be pronounced as a single word. IDIOT in message 23 comes from this process.

**Derivation**

This process involves the creation of new words by the addition of affixes to the beginning, middle or end of already existing words. This addition can also occur at the beginning and end of the word. Words that have been derived through this process in the messages are: *marvelous. Tasty, wonderful, thankful, friendly, successful, likeness, fruitful,youthful, colorful, engineer, sincerely, talented, criminal, unfallable, fulfillment, beautiful, peaceful, prosperity, brighten and succeed*. Twenty (20) of these words are derived through the addition of a suffix to their base forms, while ’unfallable’ has both a prefix and suffix. 4.12% of the words in the data were created through this process.

The frequency of occurrence of all the word-formation processes in the data are represented in the table below

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Process** | **Coinage** | **Compounding** | **Conversion** | **Clipping** | **Acronyms** | **Derivation** |
| **Frequency** | 0.2% | 1.6% | 1.2% | 0.2% | 0.2% | 4.12% |

**Table 3: WORD-FORMATION PROCESSES**

Table 3 shows that most of the words in the data were created through derivation, which confirms derivation as the most productive word formation process, while very few of the words were created through coinage, clipping and acronyms, as they have 0.2% respectively.

3.5 SEQUENCE OF WORDS

This section describes how words combine to form larger grammatical structures of phrases, clauses and sentences.

**Phrases**

This is a small group of words that are related to each other, occuring in a clause or a sentence. This group does not have a finite verb and it does not make a complete sense on its own(Olujide, 2005). There are fifty-two phrases in the messages, where 98.1% are noun phrases and 1.9% are verbal phrases.

**Clauses**

These are groups of words that contain a verb. A clause may or may not make a complete sense on its own(Olujide, 2005). Clauses can be main or independent or subordinate or dependent. Main clauses can also be regarded as simple sentences. In the messages, there are fifty-four main clauses/simple sentences and fifty-one subordinate clauses.

**Sentences**

A sentence is usually a group of words that express a complete meaning(Olujide, 2005). In the text messages, there are fifty-four simple sentences, eleven compound sentences, 10 complex sentences and nine compound-complex sentences.

The number of times each word sequence occurs in the data is shown in the table below.

**Table 4: SEQUENCE OF WORDS**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sequences** | **Phrase** | **Clause** | **Sentence** |
| **Frequency** | 52 | 105 | 30 |

Table 4 represents the total number of phrases, clauses and sentences in the messages. The total number of phrases comprises of the total number of noun phrases and verbal phrase, the total number of clauses sums up the total number of main and subordinate clauses, where the main clauses are also simple sentences. The frequency for sentences sums up the total number of compound, complex and compound-complex sentences.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

4.1 **Summary**

This study analyzed personal text messages in order to bring out the various lexical and grammatical devices that characterize them. Twenty-seven of these devices were identified for the analysis of thirty personal text messages, composed and sent by the University of Ilorin students between the year 2008 and 2010. These devices were grouped into lexical features or word classes, lexical relations, word-formation processes and word sequences.

4.2 **Findings**

After the analysis of the text messages it was discovered that among the word classes, the most frequently occurring element is the noun with 39.22%. It was discovered that all thetext messages had noun elements in them. These elements were used for reference, comparative and expressive purposes by senders in conveying their messages to the receivers. The noun was followed by the verb with 28.04%.Verbs were used as a life wire to complete the meaning of the text messages. As mentioned in chapter two, that without verbs, expressions including text messages will be meaningless. After the verb came pronoun with 13.2% and was used to avoid a repetition of nouns. Following the pronoun was preposition with 8.63%, used to give precise descriptions of places, time and mode of particular actions. Thereafter came adjectives with 5.5%, which were used to create accurate pictures of actions and things to the receiver. Closely after adjective was conjunction with 5.3%. Conjunctions were used to perform a linking function of joining words, phrases and clauses. Adverbs had the least frequency with 0.19%. There were no interjections in the data.

A number of lexical relations were found in the text messages. Antonymy rated the highest with 2.4%. Antonyms were used to create contrasts in order to create meaning. Meronymy comes next with 1%, used to make known what the component parts of objects or human beings signify in relation to the expression of certain human feelings and emotions. Coming after meronymy is hyponymy with 0.8%, then Ambiguity with 0.6%, then synonymy with 0.2%, homonymy with 0.2% and polysemy with 0.2% as well. The use of polysemy and homonymy show other possible meanings of a particular word, object, idea or phenomenon in passing across a message. The use of these other possible meanings however resulted in ambiguity.

Furthermore, most of the words that were used in the composition of the messages were created through derivation, which had 4.12%. Following it was compounding with 1.6% and conversion with 1.2%. Coinages had 0.2%, clipping had 0.2% and acronyms also had 0.2%. Borrowings, blends and back-formations where not found in our data.

The most prominent word sequence was the clause which had 20.5%. This was as a result of the use of very short expressions that are not sentences and they contained finite verbs, which did not make them phrases either. Next to the clause came phrases with 10.2% and then sentences with 5.9%. Most of the sentences used were simple sentences or dependent clauses, while other sentences were products of a combination of main and subordinate clauses.

4.3 **Conclusion**

The attempt of this essay was a Syntactic and a Lexico-semantic analysis of the personal text messages of the students of the University of Ilorin. As a result of the findings, it can therefore be concluded that, if an effective communication through personal text messages should be achieved, receivers should take note of all the lexical and syntactic features identified, for an appropriate interpretation.

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**APPENDIX**

**Text Message 1**: As the the moon comes out at night to brighten out darkness, as the sun brightens the day, so my love will be in your heart.

**Text Message 2**: pple live, pple die, pple laugh, ppl cry, someppl say hi, some say bye, some give-up, some still try, others may forget you, but never will I.

**Text Message 3**: Rain’s of summer, snow’s of winter, grace’s of autumn and glory’s of spring. May the beauty of every season give your heart a beautiful reason 2 smile. may you succeed in every of ur endeavours.

**Text Message 4**: The past is experience, present is experiment, future is expectations. use ur experience in ur experiment to get ur expectations.

**Text Message 5**: God will be above u 2 bless u, below u 2 support u, b4 u 2 guide u, behind u 2 protect u, beside you 2 comfort u, inside u 2 arrest u and sentence u 2 prosperity 4 d rest of ur life.

**Text Message 6:**  Yesterday is a story, 2moro is a mystery, 2day is a gift. don’t allow the blessing of 2day to pass u by. Av a blessed day.

**Text Message7**: God gave u 2legs, 2hands, 2ears, 2eyes, but why did he give u 1 heart? probably he wants u 2 look 4 d oda!

**Text Message 8**: There are 12 months in a year, 30 days in a month, 7 days in a week, 24 hours in a day, 60 seconds in minute, but only one U in a lifetime

**Text Message 9**: Leaves don’t just fall from the tree, clouds don’t just form in the sky, angels don’t just come down from heaven and I don’t just text anyone, unless they are special. Gudnyt!

**Text Message 10**: Soft speech, clean heart, peaceful eyes, strong hands, focused mind and a determined decision with God’s love always makes you a winner. Best of luck!

**Text Message 11**: I wish you to have a sweet Sunday, marvelous Monday, tasty Tuesday, wonderful Wednesday, thankful Thursday, friendly Friday, successful, Saturday. Have a great week!

**Text Message 12:** Life’s like a MOVIE, when you’re sad; DRAMA, angry; ACTION, afraid; SUSPENCE, when U look in the mirror; HORROR and now you’re laughing dat’s COMEDY.

**Text Message 13**: Meaning of some colors; yellow for special, white for grace, orange for luck, black for hatred, red for love, pink for likeness. So I chose for you orange. Wishing you Good luck!

**Text Message 14**: I have a special breakfast for you dis morning; a bowl full of joy, a spoon designed with prosperity, a fork made of peace and a glass filled with luv. Pls enjoy Ur meal!

**Text Message 15**: orange, banana, mango, pawpaw, grape, apple, carrot, pineapple, strawberry, lemon. Just a few but have a fruitful weekend.

**Text Message 16**: stealing the blue from the splashing seas, a tringe of green from the youthful trees, a bit of orange from the sunset hills with crystal white from the morning dues. I have framed a bright and colorfulwish just for you

**Text Message 17**: Among flowers there are roses, among stones there are diamonds, among deities there are gods, among friends there are angels, and among angels there you are.

**Text Message 18**: How I wish I am a doctor, ‘cos at least I can cure your broken heart, but I’ m just an aspiring engineer, who wants to build it back.

**Text Message 20**: When star lights twinkle and play, a warm goodnight I always say, in your dreams I will stay to bring you smiles for the coming day. Gudnyt!

**Text Message 21**: A candle may melt and its fire may die, but the love you have given me will always stay as a flame in my heart.

**Text Message 22**: I wish I could brk my ribs to make a pen, cut my skin to make paper, take my blood to make ink just to write I luv you!

**Text Message 23**: you’re just an IDIOT, simply becos u’re; I -intelligent, D-decent, I- impressive, O- optimistic, T- talented. See u’re simply an IDIOT.

**Text Message 24**: If you notice dis notice, u will notice dat dis notice is not worth noticing.

**Text Message 25**: Forget about Ur past, u can’t change it, forget about Ur future, u can’t predict it. Just think about the present, u can handle it. Enjoy all the presents every moment and be happy. Happy Birthday!

**Text Message 26**: Beyond Ur fears and visions lay d unfallable hand of the unfallable lord. It’s a nw hope, nw path to fulfillment, nw level n a nw month. Api nw month!

Text Message: If to love is a crime, I wouldn’t mind becoming a criminal just becos of U.

**Text Message 28**: This month, God will bath you with MERCY, towel U with HONOUR, cream U with LOVE, clothe U with GRACE, adorn U with SUCCESS.

**Text Message 29**: I don’t have measles, I’m not confined to the bed, aspirin won’t help cos it’s not my head, I don’t have backache or the flu, it’s more serious. . .I’m missing you.

**Text Message 30:** There is night, so we can appreciate day, sorrow so we can appreciate joy, evil so we can appreciate good, U so I can appreciate LOVE.