



HOMONYMY AND POLYSEMY IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the problems of homonyms and polysemous words which are often considered as ambiguous words both in Uzbek and English languages.

Polysemy is inherent in the very nature of words and concepts as every object and every notion has many features and a concept reflected in a word always contains a generalisation of several traits of the object. Some of these traits or components of meaning are common with other objects. Hence the possibility of using the same name in secondary nomination for objects possessing common features which are sometimes only implied in the original meaning. A word when acquiring new meaning or meanings may also retain, and most often retains the previous meaning. Not only different words have different meanings; it's also the case that the same word may have a set of meanings. This phenomenon is called polysemy.

Polysemy (or multiple meaning) is a property of single lexemes; and this is what differentiates it, in principle, from homonymy. For example, 'bank¹' and 'bank²' (meaning, respectively, "side of a

river" and "financial institution") are normally regarded as homonyms, whereas the noun 'neck' is treated in standard dictionaries of English as a single lexeme with several distinguishable meanings: i.e. as being polysemous. Our notation captures this distinction between homonymy and polysemy: cf. 'bank/ : 'bank/, each of which may in fact be polysemous; but 'neck', whose meanings are roughly "neck!" = "part of the body", "neck²" = "part of shirt or other garment", "neck³" = "part of bottle", "neck⁴" = "narrow strip of land", etc. [2, p.147].

Homonymy is considered a lexical ambiguity type where the different unrelated meanings share the same orthography and phonology. Polysemy, on the other hand, accounts for ambiguous words that, besides sharing the same orthography and phonology, also share some semantic connection, in other words, whose different senses are semantically related.



Polysemy is the coexistence of many possible meanings for a word or phrase. Most words of the English language are polysemantic. Highly developed polysemy is one of the characteristic features of the English language. The system of meanings of any polysemantic word develops gradually, mostly over the centuries, as more and more new meanings are either added to old ones, or out some of them. We say that the word is polysemantic when it has many meanings. In the word the main and the secondary meanings are distinguished. Thus, the word is polysemantic in the language but in actual speech it is always monosemantic, that is, it has only one meaning. It is in the context that makes the polysemantic word monosemantic.

The semantic structure of a polysemantic word is treated as a system of meanings.

The text determines the meaning of the polysemantic word and the text forms a polysemous word. Especially the word that occurs through polysemy create comic images and funny images or characters in a text.[4,p.5]

The problem of polysemy is mainly the problem of interrelation and interdependence of various meanings of the same word. Though it is the object of confusion and one of the most controversial problems in linguistics. It is of great importance in studying English as it presents the diverse meanings of expressive layer.

There is no clear border-line between homonymy and polysemy in different dictionaries. Thus in some dictionaries words such as fly —(Myxa), (a two winged insect) and fly — (a flap of cloth covering the buttons on a garment) are treated as

two different words and in others (Ex. the Concise Oxford Dictionary and the Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English) — as different meanings of one and the same word [1, p.91].

Traditionally, there are two criteria to distinguish both types: etymology and the previously mentioned related/unrelated meaning factor. As far as etymology is concerned, words from distinct sources are considered homonymous, whereas those which derive from the same source are considered polysemous. This etymological criterion, though, is not always conclusive, as many words have an unknown background. The second criterion is far more used, since usually, ambiguous word senses are easily defined as related or unrelated. Nonetheless, even though there is an evident connection between polysemous words' senses, it is very difficult to establish a common semantic feature for each of them; that is why relatedness and unrelatedness seem not to be appropriate terms for lexical ambiguity distinction.

Another criterion that has been suggested as a way to distinguish between polysemy and homonymy is speaker intuitions about sense relations. According to this 'folk-etymological' criterion, two senses are polysemous if they are judged by native speakers to be related, and homonymous if they are judged to be unrelated. A problem with this criterion is that sense relatedness appears to be a matter of degree, and that judgements about the relatedness of the senses of a given word are likely to be subjective, so some speakers may claim to see a relation between the senses of a word form where others do not. Furthermore, it is not clear that such speaker intuitions have any



bearing on the way in which individuals use and understand words (quite unlike grammaticality judgements, which are considered the basic data to be explained within generative syntax). This might be because intuitions about sense relations are largely metalinguistic, that is, arrived at by thinking about language, and not a direct reflex of the way in which word meanings are represented in the mental lexicon [3, p.9].

In the conclusion, we can say that the problem of polysemy and homonymy may cause difficulties during the translation or communication. To overcome them students need to see and practice words in context, since it is the context that allows them to understand the meaning of the word.

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