

THE USAGE OF POLYSEMY IN DICTIONARIES AND CONTEXTS

Tukhtayeva Munisa Saidoqil kizi,

Master's student,

Uzbekistan state world languages university

Abstract

For lexical semanticists and lexicographers alike, polysemy—the phenomenon in which a language unit manifests numerous unique yet related meanings—has always been a subject of significant interest. The main purpose of this article is to determine how context affects how polysemous lexical elements are interpreted in their various senses.

Keywords: context, word meaning, homonymy, lexical semantics, and polysemy.

Абстракт

Как для специалистов по лексической семантике, так и для лексикографов полисемия — явление, при котором языковая единица проявляет множество уникальных, но связанных между собой значений — всегда представляла значительный интерес. Основная цель этой статьи - определить, как контекст влияет на то, как многозначные лексические элементы интерпретируются в их различных смыслах.

Ключевые слова: контекст, значение слова, омонимия, лексическая семантика, полисемия.

Abstrakt

Leksik semantiklar va leksikograflar uchun polisemiya - til birligi ko'plab noyob, ammo bir-biriga bog'liq ma'nolarni namoyon qiladigan hodisa - har doim katta qiziqish mavzusi bo'lib kelgan. Ushbu maqolaning asosiy maqsadi ko'p ma'noli leksik elementlarning turli ma'nolarda talqin qilinishiga kontekst qanday ta'sir qilishini aniqlashdan iborat.

Kalit so'zlar: kontekst, so'z ma'nosi, omonimiya, leksik semantika va polisemiya.

The majority of contemporary dictionaries strive to document and describe the meanings of lexical forms as they are used [1] in a particular language community while doing so in a way that allows the dictionary user to comprehend the possible uses of the words. It is not always clear whether specific usages should be listed as distinct senses or how the link between specific lexical units should be expressed, though, given the intrinsic flexibility of word meaning. In order to examine the relationship between lexicographic practice, language use, and theoretical theories of word meaning, this article focuses on a specific sort of meaning variation. Polysemy - from Ancient Greek πολύ- (polý-) 'many', and σῆμα (sêma) 'sign') is the

capacity for a sign (e.g. a symbol, a morpheme, a word, or a phrase) to have multiple related meanings. For example, a word can have several word senses.[3] Polysemy is distinct from monosemy, where a word has a single meaning.[3] Polysemy is distinct from homonymy - or homophony - which is an accidental similarity between two or more words (such as bear the animal, and the verb bear); whereas homonymy is a mere linguistic coincidence, polysemy is not. In discerning whether a given set of meanings represent polysemy or homonymy, it is often necessary to look at the history of the word to see whether the two meanings are historically related. Dictionary writers often list polysemes in the same entry and enter homonyms as separate headwords.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the three most polysemous words in English are run, put, and set, in that order [4]. The focus here is cases where two lexical items have a 'dual' relationship whereby the meaning of one term can be construed more broadly or narrowly so that it either includes or contrasts with the meaning of the other. This is illustrated by a dog, whose general 'canine mammal' reading is heteronymous to bitch, while the more specific 'male canine mammal' reading is a co-hyponym of bitch. Take a look at the polysemy examples below and find one word that they all have in common:

1. He has served his time in prison.
2. The free food is served to homeless people only.
3. This old bike has served me well.
4. The new mall will serve the community well.
5. My mom served in the medical corps.

All five sentences use the same verb serve. Although each sentence carries a different sense of serve, they all imply the same meaning of 'giving service':

1. He has served his time in prison → spend some time (in prison).
2. The free food is served for homeless people only → provide.
3. This old bike has served me well → be useful.
4. The new mall will serve the community well → provide.
5. My mom serves in the medical corps → work as [8].

The majority of contemporary dictionaries strive to document and describe the meanings of lexical forms as they are used [1] in a particular language community while doing so in a way that allows the dictionary user to comprehend the possible uses of the words. It is not always clear whether specific usages should be listed as distinct senses or how the link between specific lexical units should be expressed, though, given the intrinsic flexibility of word meaning. In order to examine the relationship between lexicographic practice, language use, and theoretical theories of word

meaning, this article focuses on a specific sort of meaning variation. The concepts whose broader and narrower readings are more distinct and separable in definitional terms are frequently represented explicitly as vertically polysemous in dictionaries. As a result, they would also merit inclusion in dictionaries. As the dictionary survey showed that lexicographers had access to a variety of definitional procedures, this would not necessarily require listing the larger and narrower interpretations as different senses. Instead, more subtle meaning distinctions may be represented. The position of a given vertical polyseme on the ambiguity-vagueness continuum can therefore be represented using a variety of definitional techniques. This overview of theoretical accounts of vertical polysemy, including a cognitive linguistic account where the difference between polysemy and vagueness is viewed as a matter of degree.

The narrower readings of lexical items have typically been viewed as contextual variations of the more general readings in theoretical descriptions of lexical items having broader and narrower interpretations. This indicates that rather than being viewed as polysemy, the meaning fluctuation has frequently been viewed as a case of vagueness or indeterminacy. Semantic markedness explanations of vertical polysemy [6] show that the broader reading is prioritized. The semantic markedness principle states that in situations when an animal species only has one sex-specific phrase (such as bitch for a female dog or drake for a male duck), the broad, unmarked species name (dog or duck) might occasionally be used to cover the lexical gap. Similar to earlier pragmatic theories, more modern ones have a propensity to see the restricted readings as extended usages rather than as discrete senses. A hearer would assume, for instance, that a speaker who says, "I've wounded my finger," is being as informative as she can be, rather than using the more precise phrase, "thumb," which would have been erroneous or untrue in the situation. As a result, the finger can be understood to signify "not thumb." Yet, pragmatic and semantic markedness theories frequently overlook the readings' potential for conventionalization. Contextual usages that begin as interpretations frequently turn into semantics. Importantly, translational equivalents may not always have vertical polysemy across languages. Given that pragmatic inferences are language-neutral, we would anticipate finding the narrower interpretation in German as well if it were solely pragmatic. Nonetheless, these cross-linguistic variations imply that English and German have formed different standards for finger and Finger, which we would anticipate to be encoded in each language's lexicon in a different way. Scientists examine the link between cups and mugs and maintain that it is not polysemy for cups to either include or omit mugs. Although the prototype category structure is what drives the meaning change of the cup and many other examples, their broader and narrower readings are more complex than simple variations of a single prototype category. In these instances, the broader and narrower readings differ significantly to the point that it may be demonstrated that the readings

have various truth conditions. This is a common ambiguity criterion, according to which a word can simultaneously be true of one referent and false of another. As a word might appear in sentences with the form p or not p , it can be said to be ambiguous. It is demonstrated that this is the case for both the broad and narrow meanings of the word "cup in." As was shown above, both interpretations might sometimes result in actual ambiguity.

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