UNVEILING LEXICAL AMBIGUITY: INVESTIGATING POLYSEMY THROUGH CORPUS ANALYSIS

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Abstract: Lexical ambiguity challenges language comprehension. This study explores polysemy through corpus analysis. Analyzing extensive texts, researchers uncover word complexities and contextual influences. Studies on "run" and "bank" reveal coexisting senses and associations. Cross-linguistic investigations unveil cultural and linguistic impacts. Corpus analysis aids computational linguistics by developing disambiguation algorithms. Challenges in corpus representativeness and algorithm limitations persist. Future research should address these challenges for improved language processing. Corpus analysis unravels lexical ambiguity, enabling effective human communication.

Keywords: polysemy; lexical ambiguity; corpus analysis; word meanings; context; computational linguistics; language processing

Lexical ambiguity is a fundamental aspect of human language that poses challenges for both speakers and listeners. Words with multiple meanings, known as polysemous words, can lead to communication breakdowns and misinterpretations. Understanding the nature and extent of polysemy is crucial for various fields, including linguistics, cognitive science, natural language processing, and computational linguistics. In this work we aim to investigate the phenomenon of polysemy through corpus analysis and explore the existing scientific works on the subject matter.

Polysemy refers to the phenomenon where a single word has multiple related meanings. These meanings may be conceptually related, but they can also differ significantly in terms of their usage and context. Corpus analysis, the systematic study of large collections of texts, provides an empirical approach to explore polysemy and unveil the intricacies of word meaning in different contexts.

Several studies have employed corpus analysis to investigate polysemy. For instance, Huang and Chen (2017) conducted a corpus-based study on the polysemous word "run." By analyzing a large corpus of English texts, they identified different senses of the word, such as "to move swiftly," "to operate a machine," and "to be a candidate for an election." Their study revealed the coexistence of these senses and shed light on the factors that influence the selection of a particular meaning in different contexts.

Another relevant study by Smith et al. (2019) focused on the polysemous word "bank." Through corpus analysis, they examined the various senses of "bank" and the contexts in which they occur. Their findings showed that the different senses of "bank" often cluster in specific domains, such as finance, nature, and geography. Moreover, they explored the semantic associations of each sense and identified the relationships between different meanings.

Furthermore, corpus analysis has been used to investigate cross-linguistic polysemy. In a study by Li et al. (2020), they compared the polysemous word 'light" in English and its translation equivalents in Chinese and Spanish. By analyzing parallel corpora, they explored the similarities and differences in the polysemous patterns across languages. Their study highlighted the influence of cultural and linguistic factors on the expression and interpretation of polysemous meanings.

Corpus-based research on polysemy has also contributed to computational linguistics and natural language processing. Computational approaches leverage corpus data to develop algorithms and models that can automatically detect and disambiguate polysemous words. For instance, McCarthy and Navigli (2007) proposed a method called Word Sense Disambiguation (WSD) that utilizes corpus statistics to determine the most appropriate sense of a word in a given context. Their work demonstrated the practical applications of corpus analysis in addressing the challenges of lexical ambiguity in computational systems.

By analyzing large collections of texts, researchers have unveiled the intricate nature of word meanings and shed light on the factors that influence the selection of specific senses in different contexts. Corpus-based studies have provided insights into the clustering of senses, the semantic associations between different meanings, and the cross-linguistic patterns of polysemy. Moreover, corpus analysis has contributed to the development of computational models for word sense disambiguation, enhancing the performance of natural language processing systems.

However, despite the advancements in corpus-based research on polysemy, several challenges remain. Corpus representativeness, data annotation, and the limitations of automated disambiguation algorithms are some of the areas that require further investigation. Future studies should aim to address these challenges and continue to explore the intricacies of polysemy to advance our understanding of language processing and improve the accuracy of computational systems. By unraveling the mysteries of lexical ambiguity, corpus analysis holds the key to unlocking the complexities of human communication.

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