



POLYSEMY OF LINGUISTIC TERMS IN ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN LANGUAGES

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This paper explores the nature of polysemy in the English language, examining its origins, structural characteristics, and role of communication. It is based on a comparative linguistic analysis of compound word polysemy in English and Russian languages. The study also discusses how context determines meaning and how polysemy affects translation, language teaching, and lexicography. By analyzing theoretical frameworks and practical examples, this paper provides an overview of how polysemy reflects the flexibility and richness of the English lexicon. The main goal is to identify how compound words with multiple meanings function in different cultural and linguistic environments. It deeply discusses the problems of the homonym and polysemy in modern English and Russian languages. Thus, it gives information about differences of homonym and polysemy, it finds the ways of differentiating homonymic and polysemantic words.

In the modern system of knowledge, a critical examination of the evolution of scholarly perspectives on meaning, particularly with regard to the underlying mechanisms of semantic transfer, allows for the identification of several overarching tendencies directed toward the construction of an integrated theory of semantic transformation. The formulation of comprehensive theoretical generalizations in this domain is accompanied by considerable methodological and conceptual challenges. These difficulties may be divided into objective and subjective categories. Objective obstacles are primarily connected with the inherent complexity of determining the initial semantic configuration from which subsequent transformations emerge, as well as with establishing clear criteria for modeling these processes. Subjective factors, in turn, are related to differences in theoretical frameworks and interpretative approaches adopted by researchers within various linguistic traditions. The research was done earlier by various scientists such as Vinogradov V.V and Ulman S.A.

The development of polysemy, characteristic of the general literary language, restrains the strict logical and semantic boundaries of the term, therefore, the terms are also characterized by specific types of polysemy associated with the development of scientific knowledge. For European languages, polysemy is a linguistic universal. The widespread use of polysemy, on the one hand, indicates the constant development of the language and the acquisition of new meanings by existing lexical units, and, on the other hand, indicates the limitedness of linguistic signs and an infinite number of objects of reality that need nomination and description. In recent years, both the theoretical foundations and practical applications of terminology studies have developed intensively; however, many issues within this field remain unresolved. The main problem when dealing with polysemantic words is trying to detect the true meaning from Source Language to the Target language, it seems difficult to differentiate between languages until the interpreter totally aware of culture of the SL and intended meaning of the author. The processes of terminological nomination and their specific features in legal



terminology, particularly within the sublanguage of law enforcement, constitute a broad and productive area for linguistic research ¹. The term may be regarded as the central nominative unit, defined as a specialized lexical item, either a word or a word combination, that serves to denote a precise concept within a particular field of knowledge. Analytical observations demonstrate that in the sphere of law enforcement, a considerable number of terms do not fully correspond to the fundamental principles of terminological consistency and systematic organization. One of the key characteristics of a term derives from its semiotic nature, as it represents an indivisible unity of form and content". ² Ideally, a single linguistic form should correlate with one clearly defined concept. In practice, however, this principle is frequently violated, which results in the emergence of polysemy. Polysemy remains one of the central phenomena investigated in modern linguistic research. It has long attracted scholarly attention. In the twentieth century, V. V. Vinogradov emphasized that no language is capable of assigning a separate lexical unit to every distinct idea. Instead, language distributes numerous meanings within broader conceptual categories. This observation highlights the inherent economy and flexibility of linguistic systems.

According to S. V. Grinev, the most reliable method for determining polysemy is the method that studying the features of the functioning of terms in special texts. As the study of English law enforcement terms shows, the difference in the meanings of the terms is reflected in different terminological environment in the text.³ For example: 1. *The trees along the far bank of the river were stunning in the autumn. The police observed a man enter the bank.* Here as we can observe the term "bank" has two different meanings. In the first example the word bank is referred as the edge of the river, whereas in the second example the word bank is referred as a financial institution.

Polysemy can also occur when a word that has been known and used for a long time takes on a new, distinct meaning or meanings, which may become more prevalent than the original meaning or even supersede it. ⁴ In English we have an example of the evolution of word "File" in terms of polysemy. Originally it was referred as a container for storing papers, now it commonly refers to a digital data container. Also in Russian we have an example of the word "Облако" that meant a weather phenomenon but with rapid growth of technology now it is commonly referred as the digital resources managed by third-party providers

Language itself functions as a complex, multilevel structure characterized by internal correlations between its components. The development of phonological theory and structural approaches contributed to the active application of componential analysis in semantic studies, as scholars sought to systematize and classify the elements underlying semantic structure. At the same time, the question of the objectivity of isolating such semantic units and determining their linguistic status has remained controversial. In the second half of the twentieth century,

N. Z. Kotelova critically evaluated new tendencies in semantics connected with the construction and use of a so-called "pure" semantic metalanguage, pointing out theoretical weaknesses in the frameworks proposed by researchers working within this approach.⁵ . As a

¹ Lyons, J. Semantics Vol 2. Cambridge University Press.1977, pp 59-60 .

² Evans, V,&Green, M. COGNITIVE Linguistics: An introduction. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.2006, pp 15.

³ Riemer, N. Introducing Semantics. Cambridge University Press. 2010, pp 211

⁴ Vinogradov V.V. Russian language: Grammatical doctrine of the word 3rd ed.M.2022, 286 p

⁵ Leshcheva, L. M. Lexical polysemy in cognitive aspect / L. M. Leshcheva. - M. 2014, pp 19.



valid example we can see that the word "construction" means building something physically, but it can also intend forming an abstract theory or Semantic model

If we compare the polysemy in Russian and English languages, we can find both similarities and differences. As in English, the lexical method of distinguishing polysemy and homonymy is used in Russian to the same degree. For example, in Russian the word "светлый" used in the meaning of "светлая комната" is related to the synonyms "яркий, освещённый", while the word "светлый" in the meaning of "светлый ум" corresponds to the synonyms such as "ясный" or "умный". Since the synonyms used in these meanings belong to different synonymic rows but are semantically connected, we may conclude that in this case we are dealing with two meanings of one polysemantic word.

On the other hand, based to the result of M. Lynne Murphy approach, context plays a key role in understanding the correct meaning of a polysemous compound word.⁶ For example the Russian word "ключ" illustrates homonymy. The word "ключ" meaning "a device for opening a lock" has synonyms such as "отмычка", while the word "ключ" in the meaning of "a natural spring" does not share any semantic connection with the first meaning and belongs to a completely different synonymic row. Thus, we can conclude that in this case the word "ключ" and "ключ" should be treated as homonyms.

According to Charles Fillmore idea, word meaning is never fixed but shaped by frames of experience and culture.⁷ Cultural background influences how compound words are formed and understood. In English many compounds have figurative meanings. As example: "cold war" refers to political tension rather than temperature, and "black market" means illegal trade. Russian shows similar patterns. The phrase "чёрный рынок" carries a figurative meaning, and expressions like "железная воля" ("iron will") emphasize strong determination rather than physical qualities. In both languages, adjectives like "black," "cold," "iron," or "green" often lose their direct descriptive function and acquire symbolic or culturally shaped meanings. From the global point of view, polysemous compounds in English and Russian reflect not only linguistic processes but also historical experience and social values. The meanings won't appear transparent, they will extend further in the eyes of the audience who will implant a new meaning to it.

Conclusion.

In conclusion polysemous words in Russian and English represent complex semantic, cognitive, and cultural processes. Although polysemy enhances communicative flexibility and fosters creative language use, it also creates difficulties in language acquisition, translation, and computational language processing. The results of the study show that compound word polysemy is a widespread and meaningful phenomenon, but the way complicated compounds are understood and interpreted depends not only on grammar but also on culture, context, and background knowledge. An examination of metaphorical and metonymic mechanisms, supported by comparative analysis, provides deeper insight into the ways meanings are formed, expanded, and interpreted across languages. Consequently, a thorough understanding

⁶ Jumaeva Sh. H. Comparative typological Analysis of Homonym and polysemy in English, Russian and Uzbek. 2021, pp 2.

⁷ Charles J. Frame Semantics. University of California, Hanshin Publishing company.1982, pp 117.



of polysemy is of fundamental importance for linguists, educators, translators, and developers of intelligent language systems.

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