

## CULTURAL PECULIARITIES OF POLYSEMY AND HOMONYMY IN ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN LANGUAGES

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**Annotation.** This article explores the linguistic and extralinguistic factors that impact the formation of polysemy in both English and Russian, focusing on a typological comparison. The study explores the mechanisms through which meanings broaden and constrict, alongside the roles of metaphor, metonymy, and synonymy in the evolution of polysemy. Special emphasis is placed on the morphological characteristics of the languages: the analytical nature and morphological isolation of English foster the polysemy of root words, while the Russian word-formation system, which makes extensive use of affixes, encourages them.

**Аннотация:** В статье рассматриваются лингвистические и экстралингвистические факторы, влияющие на формирование полисемии в английском и русском языках, с упором на типологическое сравнение. В исследовании изучаются механизмы, посредством которых значения расширяются и сужаются, а также роль метафоры, метонимии и синонимии в развитии полисемии. Особое внимание уделяется морфологическим характеристикам языков: аналитическая природа и морфологическая изолированность английского языка способствуют полисемии корневых слов, в то время как русская система словообразования, широко использующая аффиксы, поощряет ее.

**Keywords:** polysemy, homonymy, metaphor and metonymy, linguistic cognition, national and cultural specifics, semantic divergence.

**Ключевые слова:** Полисемия, омонимия, метафора и метонимия, лингвистическая когнитивность, национальные и культурные особенности, семантическое разнообразие.

According to V.V. Vinogradov “Polysemy, as a linguistic phenomenon, is shaped by various factors, including the impact of other words—mainly synonyms—as well as the processes of broadening and narrowing meanings, metaphor, and metonymy. A crucial aspect of understanding polysemy involves typological comparisons between languages, which help identify both universal and specific mechanisms that drive the

semantic evolution of lexemes” [3]. When conducting language comparisons, it is important to consider the extent of semantic similarity among polysemic words, as well as the discrepancies that arise from internal (linguistic) and external (extralinguistic) influences. As noted by Ulman. S. [2]

For instance, a comparison of the English term *finger* reveals both shared and distinct meanings. Both terms refer to "finger of the hand," "glove finger," and "technical finger." However, *finger* also encompasses figurative meanings such as "straw," "peninsula," "parquet element," and "planting gallery," while *finger* specifically denotes ladies' fingers as a variety of grapes. These distinctions can be partly attributed to national peculiarities in figurative understanding: an English speaker connects a breadstick with a finger, while a Russian speaker is more likely to associate it with a stick. Such variations highlight the significance of the extralinguistic context. In English, the term "mill" has taken on numerous additional definitions, including "textile factory," "metallurgical plant," "coffee grinder," "roller," "grinding machine," "prison," and "fighting arena," among others. Conversely, the Russian term "мелька" has maintained a more focused definition, primarily linked to the concept of grinding. In this language, production terms have been largely replaced by borrowed words like "фабрика" [factory] and "завод" [plant]. The Russian suffix "-ица" serves to narrow the meaning, forming words that have a specific subject emphasis, which limits their potential for multiple meanings. The lack of such suffix-based limitations in English, particularly in standalone nouns, allows for a greater prevalence of polysemy. For instance, the terms *gang*, *ring*, *fall*, *idea*, and *thought* illustrate a considerable range of meanings, both literal and metaphorical. Analyzing suffix nouns ending in -ment, -cy, and -ship (such as: *agreement*, *appointment*, *privacy*, *citizenship*) reveals that the level of polysemy in these terms is frequently on par with their counterparts in Russian. However, it is primarily root, standalone nouns that tend to exhibit a high potential for polysemy.

The English term "bottom," although it shares certain meanings with the Russian "дно", does not encompass the derivative meanings expressed by Russian suffixes such as "донник", "бездна". This highlights the structural reliance of Russian vocabulary on word-formation morphemes, while English frequently employs a single word to represent a broad range of meanings. Furthermore, homonymy in English plays a significant role in enhancing expressive potential. The contemporary classification of homonyms, as defined by I.V. Arnold, categorizes them into absolute, partial homonyms, homographs, homophones, and paronyms. The most productive homonyms emerged through the conversion and segmentation of polysemy, highlighting the significant structural adaptability of the English language. Homonyms are frequently employed in humor, puns, and various forms of wordplay, enhancing the expressiveness and depth of speech. Consequently, a typological comparison

between English and Russian reveals that the elevated level of polysemy in English can be attributed to both the morphological isolation of its lexemes and the language's analytical nature. [1]

According to the analysis, the structural characteristics of the Russian language, which rely heavily on affixes, restrict the broadening of meanings, resulting in the creation of new words rather than the enhancement of existing ones. This paves the way for further exploration of how word-formation processes intersect with semantic changes in various language types.

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