POLYSEMY AND LEXICAL VARIATION IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK: A COMPARATIVE LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This article explores the phenomenon of polysemy and its interaction with lexical variation in English and Uzbek. Polysemy, the coexistence of multiple related meanings within a single word, is a crucial aspect of lexical semantics. Through a comparative analysis, the article identifies how polysemy manifests in both languages, influenced by culture, context, and linguistic structure. The study also examines the role of cognitive and sociolinguistic factors in shaping meaning, providing examples from both English and Uzbek to illustrate the fluidity of semantic variation.

Keywords: Polysemy, lexical variation, comparative linguistics, English-Uzbek translation, semantic analysis, cognitive linguistics, metaphor, cultural context

Аннотация

В статье рассматриваются явления полисемии и лексической вариативности в английском и узбекском языках. Полисемия, то есть наличие у слова нескольких взаимосвязанных значений, является важной частью семантической системы языка. Проведён сравнительный анализ проявления полисемии в двух языках с учётом культурных и когнитивных факторов. Особое внимание уделяется трудностям перевода и обучения, а также влиянию социолингвистического контекста на формирование значений.

Ключевые слова: Полисемия, лексическая вариативность, сопоставительное языкознание, перевод с английского на узбекский, семантический анализ, когнитивная лингвистика, метафора, культурный контекст

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqolada ingliz va o'zbek tillarida so'zlarning ko'p ma'noliligi (polisemiya) va leksik variatsiya muammolari ko'rib chiqiladi. So'zning bir nechta o'zaro bog'liq ma'nolarga ega bo'lishi til semantikasi uchun muhim hisoblanadi. Maqolada ikki til o'rtasida polisemiya qanday ifodalanishi, madaniyat, kontekst va til tuzilmasi bilan qanday bog'liq ekani tahlil qilinadi. Shuningdek, kognitiv va sotsiolingvistik omillarning ma'no shakllanishiga ta'siri, tarjima va o'qitishdagi muammolar misollar bilan yoritib beriladi.

Kalit so'zlar: Polisemiya, leksik variatsiya, qiyosiy tilshunoslik, inglizcha-o'zbekcha tarjima, semantik tahlil, kognitiv tilshunoslik, metafora, madaniy kontekst

Polysemy, the linguistic phenomenon where a single lexical item holds multiple related meanings, is a fundamental aspect of language and meaning-making. Unlike homonymy, where meanings are unrelated, polysemy involves a semantic relationship among senses of a word, which allows speakers to use and interpret language flexibly and efficiently. This paper explores the nature of polysemy and its manifestation in English and Uzbek, two languages with different linguistic roots and cultural traditions. Polysemy exists on a spectrum. Some words develop multiple senses through metaphorical extension (e.g., 'head' as a body part and 'head' of a company), while others do so through metonymy or functional association. Scholars such as Cruse (2000) and Lyons (1977) emphasize that polysemy is not merely a lexical oddity but a core feature of semantic organization. In English, polysemy is prevalent due to the language's long history of contact and borrowing. In Uzbek, polysemy also occurs frequently, influenced by Turkic morphology and cultural factors.

Lexical variation refers to differences in word choice or usage depending on regional, social, or contextual factors. In English, dialects may favor certain polysemous uses over others (e.g., 'pants' in the US vs. the UK). In Uzbek, regional differences (e.g., Tashkent vs. Samarkand speech) similarly affect word meanings. Culture deeply shapes which meanings become salient. As Kövecses (2005) argues, metaphorical extensions often derive from shared cultural metaphors. Cognitive linguistics provides useful tools for understanding polysemy as a product of mental mapping and schema. Lakoff (1987) proposed radial categories, where one core meaning gives rise to related senses. The English word 'book' extends from physical to abstract meanings. In Uzbek, "yo'l" (road) similarly extends to refer to a metaphorical life path, reflecting the experiential basis of polysemy. Polysemy poses challenges for translation and learners, who must identify contextually appropriate meanings. In translation between English and Uzbek, direct equivalents may not exist. For instance, translating 'She has a warm heart' into Uzbek ("Uning dili iliq") captures the metaphor, but differences in tone and cultural framing require deeper interpretation. Polysemy is a dynamic and culturally rich aspect of language that reveals how humans conceptualize and communicate meaning. Through a comparative analysis of English and Uzbek, this article has shown how lexical items carry multiple related meanings shaped by context, cognition, and culture. Recognizing and understanding polysemy enhances communication and cross-cultural linguistic awareness.

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