



POLYSEMANTIC WORDS AND THEIR FEATURES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Currently the English language is a universal language and significant steps are being taken by the education system of Uzbekistan to develop the system of teaching English as a foreign language. The Presidential Decree №1875- “On measures of improvement of learning foreign languages” contributes a noteworthy progress of teaching English as a foreign language in the educational institutions of Uzbekistan. Moreover, the current president of Uzbekistan has mentioned in his last speech that everybody should improve their language skills, and everybody should pay attention to their knowledge of English. Therefore, nowadays learning English: its grammar, lexicology and four skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking) is getting a vital issue. This article is devoted to one of the branch of linguistics of the English language: polysemy in the English language.

It is generally known that most words convey several concepts and thus possess the corresponding number of meanings. A word having several meanings is called polysemantic, and the ability of words to have more than one meaning is described by the term polysemy.

Keywords: polysemy, meaning, concept, collocation, polylinguistic features.

Introduction

Polysemy is certainly not an anomaly. Most English words are polysemantic. It should be noted that the wealth of expressive resources of a language largely depends on the degree to which polysemy has developed in the language. Sometimes people who are not very well informed in linguistic matters claim that a language is lacking in words if the need arises for the same word to be applied to several different phenomena. In actual fact, it is exactly the opposite: if each word is found to be capable of conveying at least two concepts instead of one, the expressive potential of the whole vocabulary increases twofold. Hence, a well-developed polysemy is a great advantage in a language.





On the other hand, it should be pointed out that the number of sound combinations that human speech organs can produce is limited. Therefore at a certain stage of language development the production of new words by morphological means is limited as well, and polysemy becomes increasingly important for enriching the vocabulary. From this, it should be clear that the process of enriching the vocabulary does not consist merely in adding new words to it, but, also, in the constant development of polysemy.

The system of meanings of any polysemantic word develops gradually, mostly over the centuries, as more and more new meanings are added to old ones, or oust some of them. So the complicated processes of polysemy development involve both the appearance of new meanings and the loss of old ones. Yet, the general tendency with English vocabulary at the modern stage of its history is to increase the total number of its meanings and in this way to provide for a quantitative and qualitative growth of the language's expressive resources.

It is not in every polysemantic word that such a centre can be found. Some semantic structures are arranged on a different principle. In the following list of meanings of the adjective "dull" one can hardly hope to find a generalized meaning covering and holding together the rest of the semantic structure.

Dull, *adj.*

1. A dull book, a dull film - uninteresting, monotonous, boring.
2. A dull student - slow in understanding, stupid.
3. Dull weather, a dull day, a dull colour - not clear or bright.
4. A dull sound - not loud or distinct.
5. A dull knife - not sharp.
6. Trade is dull - not active.
7. Dull eyes (arch.) - seeing badly.
8. Dull ears (arch.) - hearing badly.

Polysemy does not interfere with the communicative function of the language because in every case the situation and context cancel all the unnecessary meanings and make speech unambiguous.

Types of meaning of a polysemantic word according to V.V. Vinogradov

1. Nominative
2. Nominative-derivative
3. Colligationally conditioned
4. Collocationally conditioned
5. Phraseologically bound





The nominative meaning denotes the objects of extralinguistic reality in direct and straightforward way, reflecting their actual relations. Thus, for example: to carry whose nominative meaning is “to support the weight of and move from place to place” normally combines with nouns like a box, a chair, a heavy stone, a baby, etc. The nominative meaning is the basic of all the other meanings of the word. It is said to be “free”. The word may have several “free” meanings but they all depend on the nominative one: that is why they are called “nominative-derivative”, for example: sweet in the nominative-derivative meaning of “pleasant, attractive” goes with face, voice, singer, little boy, temper, etc.

Side by side with the “free” meanings of the word there are linguistically conditioned (or “bound”) meanings which can be of two kinds: colligationally conditioned and collocationally conditioned.

The former can be illustrated by the uses of the verb to keep. When used with nouns like hens, bees, pigs, etc. the verb means “own or manage especially for profit”. The verb to keep has altogether different meaning, namely “continue doing something” when it is used with a gerund, for example: Keep smiling!

The colligationally conditioned meaning is determined by the morphosyntactic combinability of the word, while the collocationally conditioned meaning depends on its lexical-phraseological ties, e.g. the verb to love in the expression I’d love to meet them.

Used Literature

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