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THE PROBLEM OF POLYSEMY AND HOMONYMY
IN THE SYSTEM OF ENGLISH NOUN

This article focuses on the treatment of polysemy and homonymy in monolingual and bilingual dictionaries in the system of English noun and includes some theoretical and practical aspects of the procedure of distinguishing between these phenomena disclosed in the PhD thesis of the author. Delimitation of meanings within the system of English noun in form of qualitatively different lexical semantic elements: metaphors, lexical semantic variants, syncrets, heterosemes and homonyms is dependent on the nature of metonymic shift or metaphorical transference or specificity of connotation. Ambiguous, heterosemous and homonymous elements, obtained in course of this analysis, should be further investigated with distributional-componential criterion based on distributional modelling and frequency of occurrence in the corpora. Distributional modelling presupposes determining of actual combinability of the nouns by means of submitting the selected distributional models in the special programme named "concordance", estimating the frequency of these models and dependence of occurrence of heterosemy and homonymy in them. Homonymous meanings in the system of nouns are characterised by uniqueness of contexts and lower or higher, compared with polysemous meanings, frequency of corpus identifiers.

Key words: polysemy, homonymy, heterosemy, concordance, frequency.

Formulation of a research problem and its significance. This distinction between polysemy, related phenomena and homonymy is not always clear-cut and mainly depends on the viewpoint of dictionary compilers towards enumeration of senses of nouns and their interpretation. Most linguists see the solution to the problem in choosing a certain criterion among the existing ones: etymological, relatedness of meaning or grammar and complex criteria such as: formal-semantic, relatedness of word-formation ranges, semantic congruence etc. However, as the practice of lexicography shows, none of them is universal and sufficient because not all semantically related words share common etymology and not all etymological cognates constitute the same semantic field. Thus, every dictionary entry should be thoroughly examined to assess the applicability of each criterion.

With respect to the problem we have previously made a chart of the nouns in which polysemy and homonymy are delimited differently in the four dictionaries mentioned below. It also includes the nouns with heterosemous meanings – meanings which are potentially homonymous but not actually ones. They are context-sensitive hybrids that are hardly ever highlighted in dictionaries. Thus, the *objects* of investigation are 353 selected nouns the meanings of which are ambiguously treated. We have analysed certain meanings of these nouns selected from four dictionaries to make this chart for comparison [1; 4; 22; 25]. The process was really time-consuming and challenging.

Conducting our investigation we resorted to six methods: the method of comparison of dictionary entries, componential analysis and synthesis, the method of lexico-semantic field, distributional and corpora analysis. This article mostly features the explanation of componential synthesis of lexical semantic elements and some aspects of application of other methods.

The structures of classification are lexical semantic elements of nouns corresponding to certain meanings or their parts and distributional models on the basis of which the frequency of usage of these elements can be estimated in the corpora.

Analysis of the research into this problem. The outlook onto the approaches towards the core meaning of the words and functioning of the system of lexical meaning of the noun is usually complex. There are two basic paradigms showing how this system is built, namely the unstoppable continuum of meaning which is hard to measure [11; 29], and the unity of elements [17]. We believe that it is important to distinguish the process of meaning change and the elements resulting from and simultaneously performing this change. These paradigms predetermine the choice of approaches and methods.

From the lexicographical standpoint it is difficult to find a golden medium while compiling a dictionary which means combining theoretical descriptions of some words and their adequate modern representation. So the authors of dictionaries either choose etymology or actual frequency in this respect, and making the decision is always complicated. The consequence is that the picture of the meaning of some words tends to be distorted because of the conflict between etymology, frequency of usage and semantics.

The newest approaches to the problem presuppose either the psycholinguistic behavioral research or a survey to find out the semantic and pragmatic difference in representation of meanings. For example, in behavioral studies there are two contrasted viewpoints as to how polysemy and homonymy are represented in the mental lexicon: like related or unrelated phenomena [20], [12]. L. Frazier and K. Reiner argued that the process of disambiguation is moulded by such factors as mutual exclusiveness of homonyms and unexclusiveness of polysemes and time needed for disambiguation [12].

Some experiments have shown that polysemous words embedded in phrasal contexts and homonymous words function identically but comprehension depends on the consistency of the context [18]. E. Kleposniotou [21, 13] suggests that in processing polysemous words there is no meaning competition unlike in homonymous ones. However, we infer that there may be a geterosemous zone of hybrids in the mental lexicon which can also facilitate or stumble the process of understanding but has not been thoroughly studied yet.

Another study, conducted by L. Pylkkännen et al [28] used the stimuli and methods of Klein and Murphy [18] asking participants to make acceptability judgements on two-word phrases to find out whether the process of polysemy and homonymy involves identity or just formal or semantic similarity. Meaning competition in polysemy was also observed in these studies.

One of the newest surveys has been made by D. Kachurin [5]. He analysed the distance between the problematic meanings of nouns obtained in the survey during which the respondents had to estimate the meanings according to a five-point scale [5, 242–246]. However, the number of respondents was rather little and their encyclopedic knowledge can by no means substitute the information of dictionary entries. D. Kachurin acknowledges that qualitative estimation is not sufficient because the researcher should be confident as to what relation is established by the respondent: semantic, pragmatic or stylistic [5, 268]. Nevertheless, the results explicate some practical solutions for disambiguation of polysemy and homonymy and the motives of the speaker's choice.

The goal and the specific tasks of the article. is to show the theoretical and practical solutions to the problem of polysemy and homonymy in the system of English noun. As to the tasks, we will begin with the overview of polysemy and homonymy from lexicological and lexicographical perspective, the newest behavioral approaches to the problem and move on to the explanation of cases of using different criteria and describe some aspects of using the distributional-componential method based on distributional and semantic criterion, corpora resources and categorical parameters to establish the behaviour of homonymy and related phenomena such as heterosemy.

Statement regarding the basic material of the research and the justification of the results obtained. The immediate components of lexeme are not always stable. In our study we followed L. Kudrievatykh's [8] theory of lexico-semantic transformation in which the meanings of a polysemous word are treated not just like manifold representations of the core meaning (in this case O. Smirnitskii's term lexical semantic variant – LSV is used) but from the viewpoint of genuine regular polysemy (including metaphor, metonymy and scientific terms), lexical semantic variability (including synonymy and related phenomena), heterosemy and pure homonymy, whereas the traditional distinction between polysemy and homonymy merely presupposes the relatedness or unrelatedness of meaning [23].

The analysis of lexicographic data shows that each meaning within the semantic structure of the vocabulary noun entry should be tagged according to its semantic value as described above and

should be generally referred to as a lexical semantic entity or unit and only then it is possible to determine the homonymy. These units constitute a lexeme (or sememe as its inner representation). However, some linguists argue that only full words can be referred to as "entities", so we decided to substitute these by "lexical semantic elements" (LSE) and "components" (LSC) constituting these elements. LSEs have been divided into two groups: variants (synonyms, near-synonyms and pure polysemes: metaphorical and metonymical) and pronominalizations (heterosemes and pure homonyms). Example and statistics

Thus, we have found out the bulk of lexico-semantic elements pertain to the category of lexical semantic variants, to be more precise, they are 37,3 % of the selected elements, syncrets (including metonymy) – 31,6 %, homonyms – 13,9 %, heterosemes – 9,9 %, functional transferences (metaphors) – 7,09 %, respectively.

As a pragmatic phenomenon lexical semantic variation has something in common with synonymy or near-synonymy. There are several models of this variation described by L. Kudrevatykh: synesthetic usage, e. g. designation of different location, vector or direction character of the feature; designation of different temporality; designation of different causativeness; designation of different aspectuality (active/passive, static/dynamic) [8].

For example, in A. Zahnitko dictionary the nouns have the following meanings: *arm* 'сила' (power), 'влада' (power), 'могутність'(mighty); *jackpot* 'куш' (large sum), 'найбільший виграш у лотереї' (the biggest prize in a lottery) [4, 30, 295]. There is practically no shift in meaning but parallel specification of core meaning.

Syncretism is an unalienable part of regular polysemy and according to Y. Apresian it is composed by metonymic processes. In our study this category comprises special terms in the system of noun meanings coined on the principle of radial polysemy with preserved feature of semantic derivation. For example, such meanings of the noun *involution* are syncrets: '*мат.* інволюція' (*Mathematics*: an operation, such as negation, which, when applied to itself, returns the original number); '*бот.* закручування' (*Botany*: involute formation or structure); *фізіол.* дегенерація (*Physiology*: reduction in size of an organ or part, as of the uterus following childbirth or as a result of ageing); '*біол.* дегенерація' (retrogression; restoration of a former state). Syncrets of another type belong to one of metonymic models, like those defined by J. Pusteiovskyi [27, 425–426]: quantity/mass, e. g. *clot* 'грудка' (a lump of material formed from the content of a liquid) – 'тромб' (thrombus) [4, 101]; container/contents, e. g. (9) *crib* 'ясла' (a stall for cattle) – 'невелика квартира' (a small flat) [4, 129]; figure/ground, e. g. *feather* 'перо' (one of the light, flat growths forming the plumage of birds) – '*збірн.* оперення' (plumage) [4, 204]; product/producer, e. g. *packer* (machine for packing) – 'пакувальник' (one whose occupation is the processing and packing of wholesale goods, usually meat products) [4, 385]; plant/fruit, e. g. *lemon* 'лимон' (a spiny evergreen tree, *Citrus limon*) – 'the fruit of this tree' [4, 314]; process/result, e. g. *poll* 'реєстрація виборців' (registration of voters) – 'список виборців' (list of voters) etc [4, 414]. However, we argue that more universal metonymic models have been put forward by L. Novikov and include such mechanisms of the shift of meaning as: action/result of this action; action/place of action; action/means of action; action/subject of action; feature/a person or a thing with this feature; container/contents; item/material; profession/person having it; dance/music [9, 575–577].

Heterosemy comprises the examples of noun meanings having special markers in the dictionary, specifications of genre, slang, jargon, professional, obsolete and pejorative character. These meanings can only be inferred with additional knowledge obtained from a certain social or professional subculture and lexicon. For example, in the analysed list of nouns there are such heterosemous elements as in [18] *duck* 'гравець, який не набрав жодного очка' (a player who didn't get a score), 'вантажівка-амфібія' (an amphibious military truck used during World War II) [4, 175].

In our study the examples of heterosemy and homonymy have been found with the help of etymological criterion explaining the reasons for usage of certain nouns with ascribed connotations

typical of a subculture or other sphere of being. The etymological dictionaries contain such information, although they do not show current urban usage of nouns in these meanings [26; 32]. Homonymy was established in those cases where the relation of etymology was indefinite as in *barnacle* as well as in cases when the distinction is strictly emphasised. The meanings '*орн.* казарка білощока' (the barnacle goose) and 'вусоногий рак' (a shellfish adhering to trees over the water) in analysed dictionaries are enlisted in one entry [1; 4; 22; 25]. The etymological theory relating the nomination of these animals has many obscurities [32, 117–118], but in *The free dictionary* it is somewhat different:

"…Because the barnacle goose breeds in the Arctic, no one at that time had ever witnessed the bird breeding; as a result, it was thought to be spontaneously generated from trees along the shore, or from rotting wood. Wood that has been in the ocean for any length of time is often dotted with barnacles, and it was natural for people to believe that the crustaceans were also engendered directly from the wood, like the geese. In fact, as different as the two creatures might appear to us, they share a similar trait: barnacles have long feathery cirri that are reminiscent of a bird's plumage" [31].

In some cases we have resorted to the semantic-transformational criterion. Transformational rules imply the semantic analysis of meanings transferred into different surroundings, contexts or even languages. The correspondence of background of the meanings enables to regard them as polysemous, heterosemous or homonymous nouns. The obligatory condition is that this background should be maximally common, although the mode of nomination might be different in different language mentality, in native and non-native speakers' lexicon. In the noun *dog* the meaning '*сл.* страшна людина (про жінку)' (slang an ugly person, especially a woman) – heterosemy. In Ukrainian there is a proverb 'Гарні личко і коса, та, як собака, всіх куса' (literally means: 'A girl has a beautiful face and plait but bites everybody like a dog); in German there is a corresponding one: 'wie ein Hund leben', meaning 'to live in bad relationships' [30]. The Ukrainian idiom '*собача душа*' (dog's soul) is used as a pejorative expression with negative connotation [2, 277]. Thus the slang meaning is not a homonymous but a heterosemous one.

The noun *fox* – 'розм. першокурсник' (a first-year student) has a unique connotation in English whereas in Ukrainian there is also a simile «хитрий як лисиця» (as cunning as a fox), and 'старий лис' means: 'бувала, досвідчена людина' (a stager, experienced person), 'знев. підступна, лукава людина' (derogative, a perfidious, false-hearted person) or 'літній чоловік, який залицяється до дівчат, спокусник' (an elderly man paying his addresses to young girls) [2, 424–425]. In German there is an expression – '*schlau wie ein Fuchs sein*' [30]. Uniqueness of connotation in English in 'a first-year student' directly points at its homonymous character.

The most important complex structural-semantic criterion with which we acknowledge the fact of polysemy, heterosemy and homonymy is called distributional-componential due to the corresponding structural semantic analysis. It combines the techniques of distributional analysis of occurrences of noun meanings in corpus texts with their componential representation. It has been put forward by R. Boltianskaia but is never mentioned in existing classifications of criteria distinguishing polysemy from homonymy. In the study conducted by R. Boltianskaia problematic meanings of verbs were described in terms of distributional formulae determining semantic formulae. The semantic formula is a set of semantic-syntagmatic indexes of analysed words. R. Boltianskaia distinguished classes (subject, attribute, predicate, determiner) and subclasses of words denoting living beings $\underline{N_A}$, concrete nouns N_c, persons N_A, non-persons N^-_A, things Nc_I, substances N_{c2} and abstract nouns N^-_c [3].

To classify the meanings of problematic nouns we have used a wider system of categories, developed by Russian linguists, namely Liashevskaia, Shemanaeva, Kobritsov et. al. for Russian national corpus [6]. It presupposes more detailed semantic descriptions of nouns within three big groups of tags: class (part of speech), lexical and semantic features (a lexeme's thematic class, mereology (e. g. part – whole), topology and evaluation) and derivational features (diminutives, nomina agentis).

Distributional analysis was carried out on the basis of corpus resource, elabourated by Sharoff et al. [33], namely the concordance interface. We have chosen 4 kernel and 4 adjunct distributional models from *Frequency dictionary of combinability* to verify the distributional hypothesis of homonymy selected on the principle of seven types of most informative immediate contexts put forward by A. Kaplan [10], [16]. The hypothesis, according to W. Mańczak, claims that the higher frequency of the element denotes its simplicity [24] and M. Kochergan also argues that for the meanings of the noun there are strong and weak distributional models [7]. Thus strong distributional models must be responsible for polysemy whereas the weak ones for heterosemy or homonymy.

We have found out that the frequency of usage of the meanings of nouns in corpora is a very important factor which facilitates the process of disambiguation. Most frequent models, such as N+N and A+N, show higher results of homonymy occurrences. We have also revealed a regularity which implies that homonymy identifiers which appear in one model will appear in other models extrapolated onto the system of noun meaning. Moreover, homonymous units usually have specific context environment not typical of polysemous units that are usually more numerous and thus less complex. For instance, most dictionaries do not recognize *bachelor* as a 'university degree' and 'unmarried man'. In *British National Corpus* and *British National Corpus from 2006* in the model N+N modified in our study as N+noun, where noun=target noun, *bachelor* is represented with the following markers, called 'identifiers': *life* (4 instances), *brother* (4 instances), *party* (2 instances), *Fellow*(1 instance). The context of the latter, pointing at homonymy is as follows: "…The author spent much of his life as a bachelor Fellow of Brasenose College Oxford; his cloistered life was devoted to writing, notably on classical antiquity and the Italian Renaissance" [15]. However, the identifier cloistered may also show his unmarried status.

Homonymy was also found in *Dictionary of National Biography: Missing persons* in the model Ving+noun with identifiers *becoming*: "…He had a long career in the university, *becoming bachelor* and then (c. 1284) doctor of theology as well as master c. 1290" [15], and *confirming* in another example.

Heterosemy is less frequent in the selection of nouns but it occurs in a wider range of distributional models. For example, heterosemous meaning 'person' of the noun *lot* appeared in 3 models: A+noun ('respectable *lot*', 'biddable *lot*', 'corrupt *lot*', 'funny *lot*', 'ungrateful *lot*'), Ven+noun (Past Participle+noun) ('maligned *lot*', 'organized lot') and noun+V$_=$ (noun+infinitive). Heterosemous lexico-semantic elements are even more difficult to find.

Conclusions and prospects for further research. Finding the optimal solution to the existing problem of polysemy and homonymy is a real challenge for linguists. First of all, it is important to ascertain that the elements constituting the system of English noun are qualitatively and quantitatively different and might be potentially or strictly homonymous. In each case of dictionary usage of the noun the choice of criterion starts with the etymological one and predetermines the involvement of additional criteria. Distributional-componential criterion functions as a tool to investigate the actual combinability of meanings of the noun within distributional models. Due to distributional modelling the estimated frequency factor shows qualitative and quantitative difference between polysemy, heterosemy and homonymy.

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Навроцька Ірина. Проблема омонімії та полісемії в системі англійського іменника. Увага сфокусована на дослідженні полісемії та омонімії у одномовних та двомовних словниках у системі англійського іменника й містить деякі теоретичні й практичні аспекти процедури розмежування цих явищ, які показано у кандидатській дисертації автора. Визначення межі між значеннями у системі англійського іменника у формі якісно відмінних лексико-семантичних елементів: метафор, лексико-семантичних варіантів, синкретів, гетеросемів та омонімів, залежить від природи метонімічного зсуву чи метафоричного переносу або

специфічного характеру конотації. Неоднозначні, гетеросемічні та омонімічні елементи, отримані під час аналізу, мають надалі бути досліджені за допомогою дистрибутивно-компонентного критерію на основі дистрибутивного моделювання та частотності вживання в корпусах. Дистрибутивне моделювання полягає у визначенні актуальної сполучуваності іменників шляхом підстановки відібраних дистрибутивних моделей у спеціальній програмі, що називається «коркондансером», підрахунку частотності цих моделей й залежності появи в них гетеросемії та омонімії. Омонімічні значення у системі іменника характеризуються унікальністю контекстів і нижчою, або вищою, порівняно із полісемічними значеннями, частотністю корпусних ідентифікаторів.

Ключові слова: полісемія, омонімія, гетеросемія, конкорданс, частотність.

Навроцкая Ирина. Проблема омонимии и полисемии в системе существительного английского языка. Внимание сфокусировано на исследовании омонимии и полисемии в одноязычных и двуязычных словарях английского языка в системе английского существительного и содержит некоторые теоретические и практические аспекты процедуры разграничения этих явлений, которые указаны в кандидатской диссертации автора. Обозначение грани между значениями в системе английского существительного в форме качественно отличающихся лексико-семантических элементов: метафор, лексико-семантических вариантов, синкретов, гетеросемов и омонимов, зависит от природы метонимического смещения или метафорического переноса или специфичного характера коннотации. Неоднозначные, гетеросемические и омонимические элементы, полученные в результате анализа, должны в дальнейшем быть исследованы с помощью дистрибутивно-компонентного критерия на основе дистрибутивного моделирования и частотности использования в корпусах. Дистрибутивное моделирование состоит в определении актуальной сочетаемости существительных посредством подстановки отобраных дистрибутивных моделей в специальной программе, именуемой «конкордансером», подсчете частотности этих моделей и зависимости появления в них гетеросемии и омонимии. Омонимические значения в системе существительного характеризуются уникальностью контекстов и более низкой или высшей, по сравнению с полисемическими значениями, частотностью корпусных идентификаторов.

Ключевые слова: полисемия, омонимия, гетеросемия, конкорданс, частотность.

Larysa Nizhehorodtseva-Kyrychenko

PERSONIFICATION OF MENTAL CONCEPTS

The article presents a brief excursus of linguistic and cognitive reasoning concerning the personification of the basic lexical units of the lexical-semantic field "Intellectual activity". Personalization process implements an intrinsic property of metaphors, that is the property of anthropocentrism. It must be mentioned that the content of conceptual personification differs because while transforming personally identifiable object in a new status, it presents deeper comprehention. The article also summarizes the relationship between metaphorical shift and personification. Personification is a subtype of the metaphor, the essence of which is to express the transfer of characteristics of a living object to an inanimate object. The article also highlights the universal mechanism of personification that relates ideas, abstractions and inanimate objects with human nature, character, or feelings; representation of imaginary beings or things like having a human character, intellect and emotions. In the focus of analyses there are verbalized concepts of mind, memory, thought, soul, spirit, wisdom, which constitute the basic parcel of lexical-semantic field "Intellectual activity". Verbalized abstract concepts that relate to intellectual activity, are often targeted to personification process that could not go unnoticed in lexical studies.

Key words: lexical-semantic field, cognitive linguistics, intellectual activity, verbalized concept, personification.

Formulation of a research problem and its significance. Topicality of the article is determined by the fact that cognitive aspect of linguistic investigations helps to explicate and clarify a lot of lexical phenomena in any language. The last few years have witnessed a spectacular change of climate in linguistics which endures the anthropocentric shift of scientific investigations. It enables linguists to retrospect the role of language and thought from the point of view of cognition.