

THE PHENOMENON OF POLYSEMY AND FACTORS THAT DETERMINE DEVELOPMENT OF POLYSEMY

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ABSTRACT

The issue of developing an integrated approach to the study of such a phenomenon in lexicology as polysemy seems interesting and especially topical at the present time due to the huge number of polysemantic words both in English and other languages, which is the relevance of developing this scientific article. In this scientific article, phenomenon of polysemy, metaphor, changes in word meaning and factors that determine the development of polysemy are discussed.

Key words: *polysemy, metaphor, semantic components, lexical meaning, context, semantic ambiguity, semantic changes, semantic motivation.*

Meaning is one of the most controversial and problematic issues in the theory of language. The issue of determining the meaning of a word is widely covered in the works of domestic and foreign linguists. However, despite centuries of history, he still has not received not only a universally recognized, but even at least a sufficiently clear answer.

In modern linguistics, two approaches to the problem of determining meaning can be distinguished: referential and functional. Scientists adhering to their perennial approach seek to describe the meaning as a component of the word, with the help of which a concept is transmitted, and which thus gives the word the ability to objectively reflect the existing reality, designate objects, qualities, actions and abstract concepts. Supporters of the functional approach study the function of the word in speech.

To describe the semantic structure of a word, we use the term lexical — grammatical category, which is characterized by lexical — semantic commonality, commonality of grammatical categories and forms of their manifestation, commonality of possible words — substitutes, a certain set of affixes and word

formation models. Each category has its own model of explanatory transformation with different key words included in it, as well as its lexical and syntactic valence.

A feature of the English language is the ability to combine in one-word variants belonging to different lexical and grammatical categories. In the development of different meanings of a word, the speech situation in which it falls, i.e., the contextual environment, plays an important role. Extra linguistic factors (social, socio-political, cultural-historical, scientific-technical, etc.) are also very significant in many cases.

Language forms can be associated with a number of signified and express, respectively, several meanings. This ability is an inexhaustible source of semantic ambiguity in the vocabulary, the number of examples of which in English, as well as in other languages, is unlimited.

The main types of semantic ambiguity are polysemy and homonymy. Polysemy, of a word is the presence of several interrelated meanings in a word, characterized by the commonality of one or more semantic components.

Polysemy (from Greek *polysemos* — polysemantic)¹— the presence of more than one meaning in a language unit — two or more. Often, when they talk about polysemy, they mean, first of all, the polysemy of words as units of vocabulary. Lexical polysemy — the ability of one word to serve to designate different objects and phenomena of reality.

The implementation of one or another meaning of the word is also carried out by a wider context or situation, the general theme of speech. In the same way that the context determines the specific meaning of a polysemantic word, under certain conditions it can create semantic diffuseness, i.e. compatibility of individual lexical meanings when their distinction is not made (and does not seem necessary). Not only lexical compatibility and word-formation features characterize the different meanings of words, but also in some cases the features of grammatical compatibility.²

There is a certain connection between the meanings of a polysemantic word, which gives reason to consider them the meanings of one word. Depending on the lexical environment (context, situation), the word, as it were, turns into different facets of its inherent semantics, and the detached meanings continue to be potentially present even in this word usage, which, in particular, is evidenced by both the restrictions imposed on the semantic development of the word and the possibility the use of derivatives and the use of synonymous substitutions. Forming a certain semantic unity, the meanings of a poly semantic word are connected on the basis of the similarity of realities (in form, appearance, color, position, common function) or contiguity, in

¹Amosova N. N. Phraseology of the English language. — M.: Leningrad. university, 1963. — S. 98

² Leshcheva L. M. The connection of lexical meaning sin the semantic structure of the word (on the material of adjective names in modern English):Abstract of the thesis.-Mn.,1985.-P.123.

accordance with which metaphorical and metonymic connections of meanings are distinguished.

There is a semantic connection between the meanings of a polysemantic word, which is also expressed in the presence of common elements in them. However, in a number of cases, the figurative meanings of words are not associated with the main common elements of meaning, but only with associative features.

When distinguishing between the basic and derivative meanings of a polysemantic word, the paradigmatic and syntagmatic conditionality of the word in individual meanings is taken into account. The main meanings are paradigmatically more fixed and syntagmatically freer. This generally corresponds to the definition of the main meaning as the least contextual (or the meaning that first arises in the mind of a native speaker when pronouncing a word out of context). The ratio between the main and figurative meanings does not remain unchanged: for some words, secondary (historically) meanings become main, basic. The set of meanings of a polysemantic word is always characterized by a certain organization, which is confirmed, in particular, by the redistribution of the meanings of the word (change in its semantic structure). The identity of the word is usually not questioned. It is difficult to single out the general meaning in the structure of a polysemantic word, since the correlation of the meanings of polysemantic words with various objects and phenomena of reality makes it impossible to attribute such a generalized meaning to the word - it would turn out to be cumbersome or empty. The peculiarities of polysemy are mainly determined by the originality of the vocabulary of the English language and the discrepancy between its semantic structure.

In the procedural aspect, polysemy is the result of semantic changes, when one meaning arises on the basis of another according to certain models of semantic derivation and is associated with the latter by derivation relations. The reasons and ways of semantic derivation are diverse.¹

Among the reasons that cause the reuse of an already existing name with a meaning assigned to it, the main ones, apparently, are reasons of an extra linguistic order. Various historical, social, economic, technological and other changes in people's lives give rise to the need for new names. The answer to this need is the use of nominative means already available in the language in new meanings. A very important role in changing the semantics of a word is played by social factors, primarily the use of words by certain social groups. Each social environment is characterized by the originality of its designations, as a result of which the word acquires a different

¹ Litvin F.A. Polysemy of a word in language and speech. M., 1984. – C 136. Linguistic encyclopedic dictionary. - M.: Soviet Encyclopedia, 1990. - P.682

content in the speech of different social, cultural, professional groups and, accordingly, becomes ambiguous.

In addition to these factors that determine the development of polysemy of words, the psychological causes of semantic changes also deserve attention. This is, first of all, the existence of various kinds of prohibitions, or taboos, dictated by a sense of fear and religious beliefs (out of superstition, people avoid calling the devil, evil spirits, God, etc. by their proper names), a sense of delicacy when it comes to unpleasant topics, such as illness, death, etc., the desire to keep up appearances when talking about phenomena related to the sexual sphere of life, certain parts and functions of the human body, as well as various changes in the emotional assessment of objects and phenomena. For these reasons, speakers begin to use euphemisms to express the necessary meanings, i.e. substitute words that, over time, acquire these meanings as their permanent semantic characteristics.

Along with extra linguistic reasons that determine the emergence of new meanings and thus the development of the polysemy of words, there are intra linguistic reasons. These traditionally include constant joint compatibility and the resulting ellipse of the phrase, in which one remaining element of the phrase takes on the meaning of the entire phrase. Polysemy can also be the result of a semantic analogy, when in a group of words united by a single conceptual core, under the influence of the fact that one of the words of the group acquires some new meaning, all other members of the group develop similar meanings (for example, the words get, grasp, synonymous English catch grab, catch, after the latter received the meaning catch the meaning, understand, by analogy they also acquired the meaning to grasp with the mind, understand, realize.¹

From what has been said about the meaning of distribution in morphemes, it can be concluded that between the structural pattern of a word and its meaning there are cases where we can observe a direct connection. Such a relationship between morphemic structure and meaning is called morphological motivation. All single morpheme words, such as sing, say, eat, are not motivated by definition. In words consisting of several morphemes, the carrier of the meaning of the word is the combined meaning of the component morphemes and the meaning of the word structure. This can be demonstrated by semantic analysis of different words composed of the same morphemes with the same lexical meaning. The word fin-ger, for example, includes two morphemes whose common lexical meaning is the same; the difference in the meaning of these words can be explained by the difference in the location of the component morphemes.

¹ Amosova N. N. Phraseology of the English language. – M.: Leningrad. university, 1963. – S. 98.

If we can observe a direct connection between the structural pattern of a word and its meaning, we say that the word is motivated. The connection between the structure of a lexical unit and its meaning is complete if arbitrary and conditional, then we are talking about non-motivated or idiomatic words, e.g., matter, repetition. It should be noted that morphological motivation is "relative", ie the level of motivation can vary. There are different levels of partial motivation between complete motivation and lack of motivation. The word non-consonant, for example, is the lexical meaning of component morphemes both are fully motivated because the meaning of the template is completely transparent.

The term Semantic Motivation refers to the relationship between the central and co-existing meaning or meanings of a word, understood as a metaphorical extension of the central meaning. Metaphorical extension as a generalization of the denotative meaning of a word can be considered, which allows it to add new references similar to the original class of references in some sense. The similarity of different categories of references, such as appearances and functions, may account for the semantic motivation of a number of sub-meanings. For example, a woman who gives birth is called a mother; according to the extension, any action that is born is related to motherhood, for example, the mother of the invention in Necessity. The same principle can be observed in other senses: the mother takes care of the child, so we can say that she became a mother to her orphaned nephew, or that Romulus and Remus were the mothers of wolves; as well as the motherland, the mother's sign (= birth sign), the mother tongue, and so on. This metaphor extension can also be found in trivial metaphors such as anger, heartbreak, accidental jumps, and so on.

It should be noted, however, that the effect of intra linguistic causes is not as obvious as the influence of extra linguistic factors that cause the appearance of ambiguity, and much less has been studied as a result. Just as the causes of semantic changes can be, as shown above, very different, semantic changes themselves can also differ in nature, because they can be based on different patterns. In other words, the use of the name of some object to refer to some other object is not chaotic. The secondary use of names, usually described as the transfer of meanings, although it is undoubtedly more correct to speak of the transfer of names and the development of secondary meanings in them, is based on the laws of associations. They determine the types of semantic change soft he word in the course of its historical development, the types of relationships between meanings in diachrony and, as an end result, the types of meanings themselves in the semantic structure of a polysemantic word.¹

¹Nikitin M.V.Fundamental soft he linguistic theory of meaning.– M.: Leningrad.University, 1988.-P.108.

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