

LEXICAL-SEMANTIC PATTERNS OF POLYSEMY IN KOREAN AND UZBEK: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract: *Polysemy represents one of the most significant mechanisms of lexical development in natural languages. This article examines lexical-semantic patterns of polysemy in Korean and Uzbek through a comparative analysis focusing on semantic extension, functional meaning transfer, and contextual disambiguation. The study is based on material derived from a Bachelor's thesis and supported by contemporary theories of lexical semantics and regular polysemy. The findings indicate that while both languages rely heavily on metaphorical and metonymic extension, Korean demonstrates a particularly high degree of verb-centered polysemy. The results contribute to comparative linguistics, bilingual lexicography, translation studies, and foreign language pedagogy.*

Keywords: *polysemy; lexical semantics; Korean language; Uzbek language; semantic extension; functional meaning transfer; context.*

ЛЕКСИКО-СЕМАНТИЧЕСКИЕ МОДЕЛИ ПОЛИСЕМИИ В КОРЕЙСКОМ И УЗБЕКСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ: СРАВНИТЕЛЬНОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ

Аннотация: Полисемия является одним из важнейших механизмов развития лексической системы языка. В статье рассматриваются лексико-семантические особенности полисемии в корейском и узбекском языках на основе сравнительного анализа семантического расширения, функционального переноса значений и контекстуальной актуализации. Исследование опирается на материалы выпускной квалификационной работы и современные теоретические подходы к лексической семантике и регулярной полисемии. Результаты показывают, что, несмотря на общие

механизмы формирования значений, корейский язык характеризуется высокой продуктивностью глагольной полисемии. Полученные выводы имеют значение для сравнительного языкознания, лексикографии, перевода и методики преподавания языков.

Ключевые слова: полисемия; лексическая семантика; корейский язык; узбекский язык; семантическое расширение; функциональный перенос; контекст

1. Introduction

Polysemy, defined as the coexistence of multiple related meanings within a single lexical unit, plays a central role in language economy and semantic development [1]. Unlike homonymy, polysemy involves meanings that are historically and conceptually connected [2]. Numerous studies in lexical semantics emphasize that polysemy emerges as a result of metaphorical, metonymic, and functional extensions [3].

In Korean and Uzbek, polysemy is a productive and widespread phenomenon, particularly evident in verbs and high-frequency lexical items. The Bachelor's thesis underlying this article provides detailed examples of polysemous structures in both languages, highlighting semantic shifts in Korean verbs such as 먹다 (eat/use/drink) and 가다 (go/pass/occur) as well as Uzbek nominal and verbal polysemy [4].

The aim of this article is to systematize these observations within a comparative IMRAD framework and to relate them to modern linguistic theory.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employs a **qualitative comparative methodology**. The primary data consist of:

- Lexical examples documented in the Bachelor's thesis on Korean–Uzbek polysemy [4].
- Supplementary theoretical sources on lexical semantics, polysemy, and semantic ambiguity [1–3, 5–10].

The analytical framework integrates:

- Classical lexical-semantic theory [1,2]
- Regular polysemy models [6,7]
- Contextual semantics and functional transfer theory [8,9]

Lexical items were analyzed by identifying their basic meaning, derived meanings, and semantic extension mechanisms.

3. Results

3.1 Shared polysemy mechanisms

Both Korean and Uzbek demonstrate extensive use of metaphor and metonymy in meaning extension. For example, Uzbek lexical items frequently expand from physical to abstract domains, while Korean exhibits similar patterns in both nominal and verbal systems [4].

3.2 Verb-centered polysemy in Korean

The results show that Korean verbs display particularly productive polysemy. The verb 먹다 extends beyond physical ingestion to denote usage and consumption, while 가다 expresses motion, temporal progression, deterioration, and continuity [4]. Such extensions are consistent with regular polysemy models proposed in lexical semantics [6].

3.3 Functional meaning transfer

Functional similarity rather than physical resemblance motivates certain extensions, such as “leg” referring to both human limbs and table supports. This mechanism operates systematically in both languages and aligns with cognitive semantic principles [8].

4. Discussion

The findings confirm that polysemy is governed by universal cognitive mechanisms but shaped by language-specific grammatical and discourse structures. Korean shows higher flexibility in verb-based polysemy, whereas Uzbek displays stronger nominal polysemy patterns [4,10].

These differences have important implications for bilingual dictionaries, translation accuracy, and second-language instruction. Teaching strategies should emphasize semantic networks rather than isolated meanings [11–13].

5. Conclusion

This comparative study demonstrates that Korean and Uzbek share fundamental polysemy mechanisms while differing in their structural realization. Korean verb polysemy is especially productive, supported by contextual and functional extensions. The results support the integration of regular polysemy theory into comparative linguistics and applied language studies.

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