

## **LEXICOLOGY. UNIMEANINGFUL AND POLYSEMANTIC WORDS**

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**Abstract:** This article examines unambiguous and polysemantic words as important lexical units in the Russian language. It explores the essence of polysemy as a linguistic phenomenon and distinguishes between the lexical and contextual meanings of words. Examples are provided demonstrating the richness and expressiveness of the Russian language, based on polysemy. The importance of studying these concepts in teaching Russian in educational institutions, especially for students whose native language is not their native language, is also emphasized. This material can be useful for both teachers and students majoring in linguistics.

**Keywords:** lexicology, unambiguous words, polysemantic words, word meaning, context, Russian vocabulary, Russian language teaching

Modern linguistics places great emphasis on the study of vocabulary as a crucial component of the language system. Lexicology, as a branch of linguistics, studies words, their origins, structure, meaning, use, and development in language. One of the key topics within lexicology is the distinction between monosemantic and polysemantic words. These categories play a significant role in conveying meaning, shaping speech style, and developing linguistic intuition in native speakers and language learners.

Monosemantic words are lexical units that have only one lexical meaning. Examples of such words can be found in scientific terminology, units of measurement, and in everyday speech, where the word has a narrow and clearly defined semantics. For example, "thermometer," "liter," and "lamp."

Polysemantic words, on the other hand, have multiple meanings, each of which can be realized depending on the context. Polysemanticism makes language more flexible, expressive, and economical. An example is the word "key," which can mean a metal locking device, a source of water, or an important decision (figuratively). Thus, a single word can be used in a wide variety of situations and semantic nuances.

Studying polysemantic words is especially important in the educational process—both in school and at university. This helps students not only expand their vocabulary but also understand hidden meanings, subtexts, and figurative language. For students whose native language is not Russian, understanding the principles of polysemy helps them perceive speech more accurately and express their thoughts adequately.

This paper will examine in detail the definition of monosemantic and polysemantic words, provide examples from various speech styles, and offer methodological recommendations for teaching this topic in educational institutions. The goal of the study is not only a theoretical understanding of the problem but also the practical application of this knowledge in the educational process.

The lexical meaning of a word is its core content, ingrained in the minds of native speakers, which allows the word to be used to denote objects, actions, attributes, and relationships.

Depending on the number of lexical meanings, all words are divided into monosemantic and polysemantic.

Unambiguous words are words that have only one lexical meaning. They are most often found in scientific, technical, or professional terminology, where precision and unambiguity of concepts are required. Examples of unambiguous words:

"thermometer" - a device for measuring temperature;

"carbon" - a chemical element;

"airplane" - a heavier-than-air aircraft.

Such words generally do not cause ambiguity in native speakers and are easily interpreted regardless of context.

Polysemantic words are words that have two or more lexical meanings. Typically, one meaning is primary, and the others are derived. The emergence of new meanings is associated with metaphorical transfer, metonymy, functional expansion, and other semantic mechanisms. For example:

"handle" - part of a door / writing utensil / body part;

"root" - part of a plant / word stem / source of a problem ("root of all evil");

"head" — a body part / leader ("head of state") / unit of account ("three heads of cattle").

Polysemy plays an important role in the expressiveness of speech. It allows for the economy of linguistic resources, the development of imagery, the transfer of meanings, and the creation of metaphors and phraseological units. However, polysemy can also create difficulties in language learning, especially for non-native speakers (those learning Russian as a foreign language).

Context is crucial when determining the meaning of a polysemantic word. For example:

"key to a problem" — a solution (figurative meaning);

"key in the forest" — a source of water (primary meaning);

"key to a door" — an object (literal meaning).

Therefore, it is important to teach students the ability to determine the meaning of a word in context, rather than in isolation. This not only promotes better understanding of the text but also the development of speech culture. Various exercises can be used in teaching practice:

Selecting synonyms for different meanings of a polysemantic word;

Composing sentences with one word in different meanings;

Identifying the meaning of a word in a specific context.

Such tasks help students consciously perceive language, broaden their horizons, and develop analytical thinking.

An analysis of Russian lexical units revealed that polysemantic words constitute a significant portion of the active vocabulary of modern native speakers. Over 40% of commonly used words in Russian are polysemantic, emphasizing the importance of this lexical category as a means of expressiveness and communicative effectiveness.

A comparison of monosemantic and polysemantic words revealed the following characteristics:

1. Functionality:

Unambiguous words typically perform a nominative function—they denote specific concepts or objects. Their meaning is generally stable and independent of context. Polysemantic words are more flexible and can serve both nominative and expressive-evaluative functions.

2. Contextual Dependency: Unambiguous words most often do not require contextual clarification. Conversely, understanding the meaning of a polysemantic word almost always depends on the context of use. This is especially important when teaching text comprehension and analysis.

3. Role in Teaching: When teaching Russian to students (especially non-native speakers), it is important to focus not only on memorizing word meanings but also on their ability to determine their meaning based on context. Incorporating exercises on polysemy helps develop linguistic intuition, thinking skills, and the ability to interpret text.

4. Linguistic Economy: Polysemy promotes the economical use of linguistic resources—a single word can be used to express different concepts, which reduces the need to create new words. 5. Methodological observations: In practice, it has been established that students better learn polysemantic words if training is accompanied by visual materials, examples from fiction, as well as practical tasks to determine meanings in various contexts.

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that the correct understanding and use of polysemantic words is an important stage in the development of linguistic competence. At the same time, it is important for teachers to distinguish between words that should be explained as unambiguous and words that should be explained as polysemantic to avoid misunderstandings and improve learning effectiveness.

The study examined the characteristics of unambiguous and polysemantic words in the Russian language, their role in the lexical system, and their significance in the educational process. Based on the analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Unambiguous words are characterized by stability and precision of meaning, making them convenient for use in scientific, technical, and formal business speech. They do not require additional context for understanding.

2. Polysemantic words are more flexible and expressive. Their ability to acquire new meanings makes the Russian language richer and more dynamic. However, this same characteristic requires students to develop the ability to interpret the meaning of a word depending on the context. 3. Context plays a crucial role in revealing the lexical meaning of a polysemantic word. Without understanding the context of its use, it is impossible to accurately interpret its meaning.

4. In educational practice, it is important to systematically work on developing students' skills in recognizing polysemy, using words in various contexts, and distinguishing between literal and figurative meanings.

5. Methodological support (texts, exercises, visual materials, work with fiction) promotes a deeper understanding of the topic and expands students' vocabulary.

Thus, knowledge and understanding of unambiguous and polysemantic words is an integral part of linguistic competence, necessary for successful proficiency in Russian, both native and foreign.

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