

SCTCMG 2019

International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism»

ENANTIOSEMY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Ekaterina Belova (a)*, Maria Arkhipova (b), Yulia Gavrikova (c), Anastasia Kosareva (d), Irina Povstyanaya (e)

*Corresponding author

- (a) Minin Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University, 1, Ulyanov st., Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
belova_katerina@inbox.ru, 8-910-7974260
- (b) Minin Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University, 1, Ulyanov st., Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
arhipovnn@yandex.ru, +7(831)2622053, #296
- (c) Minin Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University, 1, Ulyanov st., Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
y.a_gavrikova@mail.ru, +7(831)2622053, #193
- (d) Minin Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University, 1, Ulyanov st., Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
takashimchik@mail.ru, +7(831)2622053, #193
- (e) Minin Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University, 1, Ulyanov st., Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
povstyanayai@mail.ru, +7(831)2622053, #193

Abstract

One of the most urgent issues of modern linguistics is the problem of polysemy when the study of semantic relations inside a multivalent word excites the most prominent interest. However, some types of polysemy are still understudied by semasiology, in particular, polar values within a single unit developed due to certain reasons that are referred to as enantiosemy. The noted polysemy impedes the determination of the place of the studied phenomenon in the lexicosemantic system of the English language, because it involves a number of terms that are interrelated but different in content: homonymy, polysemy and antonymy, which envisages the multidimensionality of the study of this phenomenon. The practice of foreign language teaching testifies that enantiosemy receives little attention down to the disregard of such phenomenon in a language. Characteristic specificities of enantiosemy in a language allow stating that without understanding the analyzed phenomenon, learners of English may experience numerous difficulties when working with authentic materials or during communication with native speakers. The paper contains a vocabulary systematized during the work on printed lexicographic sources and purposed to facilitate the processes of searching, recognizing and learning enantiosemy units by the learners. Current work demonstrates the methods of semantization of enantiosemy units and types of exercises in the context of language learning that promote retention and reinforcement of their meaning, as well as separate methodological recommendations on delivering semantic processes of enantiosemy to students of language training profiles, which develops their communication skills and creative foreign-language proficiency.

© 2019 Published by Future Academy www.FutureAcademy.org.UK

Keywords: Enantiosemy, polysemy, semantics, lexical competence, linguo-didactics.



1. Introduction

The main goal of any communication act is information exchange which adequate perception requires accounting potential impediments that can negatively affect the decoding of a message received. During teaching of foreign-language communication, an extremely important task is the formation of the lexical competence covering the knowledge, active and correct usage of the vocabulary of the studied language. More attention should be paid to explanation of word meaning, because it is the understanding of its meaning which is connected with the adequate perception of a certain unit and its usage in speech.

One of the most complex semantic learning processes is the process of enantiosemym which must be explained for the English-language learners to be fully engaged in an communication act.

2. Problem Statement

The main tasks of the study are connected with the experiment execution that determines the skill for recognition and usage of enantiosemym units by the learners of profession-oriented directions in a higher education institution, as well as the tasks for selection of methodological recommendations aimed at simplification of enantiosemym semantization and its reinforcement through the proprietary set of exercises.

3. Research Questions

The research questions are in the determination of the linguistic status of enantiosemym, complexity and productivity of the studied phenomenon. The main one is the issue of practical significance of current investigation, in particular, the composition of the vocabulary of enantiosemym units of the English language for its application in common university course of modern English language.

4. Purpose of the Study

The study is aimed at comprehensive investigation of enantiosemym and discovery of application of received results in classes, in particular, by development of methodological principles and methods for explaining enantiosemym units and types of exercises purposed for learning and reinforcing their meaning by the students of profession-oriented foreign-language university programs.

5. Research Methods

The study uses general methods of description, interpretation and classification of materials, as well as methods of definitional and quantitative analyses, method of component-based analysis that allows highlighting the components of lexical meanings of certain contrasting semantic variants composing enantiosemym units. As an additional technique the method of context analysis was used, which allowed characterizing content and other specificities of the enantiosemym units.

6. Findings

Despite the term enantiosemy was introduced into the scientific practice in late XIX century, the question of the language origin of the phenomenon still has no unambiguous solution. Some Russian researchers, for example Bulakhovskiy (1988) regard enantiosemy as independent lexicosemantic category, while Novikov (1984), Ponomarenko (1972) and others consider this phenomenon as a variety of antonymy. Enantiosemy could be explained as a type of lexical homonymy (Lybkin, 1977); however, Bessonova (1982) and others insist on the definition of enantiosemy as some specific kind of polysemy.

Term “enantiosemy” (from greek *enantios* meaning opposite, *sema* meaning sign) envisages the phenomenon “when the same word includes two opposite meanings” (Romanchuk, 2016, p. 49). There are terms antagonym, contronym (Bryson, 2015), autoantonym (Ogneva, 2016), Janus words (Rawson, 2013). In this study, enantiosemy means the combination in the semantic structure of the same unit of different levels of language of antonymic meanings which updating is conditioned by the context.

The classification of enantiosemic units is made based on certain indicators (Makhmutova, 2009), in particular, by the principle of phenomenon origin (diachronic and synchronic), part-of-speech, stylistic (single-style and different-style) and level belonging (word-formation, lexical, phraseological), as well as by the type of opposed semes (nominative and emotionally-evaluative). Current work assumes the existence of such multitude of classifications that not only exhibit no controversy, but are coupled to a certain extent.

Indeed, the synchronic intralingual enantiosemy exists when opposite meanings develop in the words of a single language. For instance, English verb *to dust*, that originated from Old English, from the very beginning was developing opposite meanings: “*to rid of dust*” (1560) and “*to sprinkle with dust*” (1590) (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2018). The synchronous interlingual enantiosemy assumes the presence of opposite meanings for etymologically synonymic words in cognate languages, for instance, the verb *to ravel* was known in the meaning of “*to untangle*” together with verb *ravelen* in Danish which meant “*to tangle, to fray*” (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2018).

Diachronous intralingual enantiosemy occurs in the course of historical development of the word meaning up to opposite on, and with due regard of a note by Kravtsova (2006), both of the words continue working. For example, adjective *fast* the today is well known in the meaning of quick initially meant *firmly fixed, immovable* which has not become obsolete; however, according to the context analysis, is used less frequently and brings about ambiguous interpretations when working with authentic materials.

A detailed classification of enantiosemy based on a multitude of factors, including part-of-speech belonging of a word, its position in a sentence, etymology and intonational expression, was made by Brodskiy (1998). The researchers represent enantiosemy as some opposition thus denoting speech and lingual enantiosemy, the latter including lexical, phraseological, grammatical and syntactical enantiosemy.

The component analysis is traditionally suggested as a method to detect tiny content units in the meaning of linguistic entities termed as semes. When establishing the enantiosemy opposition, it is essential to determine the internal structure of contraposition, namely, to distinguish general and differential semes of opposition components (Bessonova, 1982). For instance, in verb *overlook*, the integral semantic component is component *to watch, to look*, while the differential ones can be semes *to look carefully, to inspect* and *to neglect, to miss* (LDCE, 2014).

Thus, polysemantic words are hard to perceive not only for foreign speakers, but also for native speakers, because ignorance of all the meanings of a specific unit impedes the understanding and communication of information (Zimina, 2015). Enantiosemey, distinguished by some researchers as a case of extreme polysemy, causes complications of no less severity. The update of one of opposite meaning of an enantiosemic unit is conditioned by the context or intentions of the speaker (Litvinova, 2012).

When working with enantiosemic units, the learners should take into account that the recognition and differentiation of the meaning of a word are facilitated by the conversational situation, intonation, lexical environment of a word, and, first of all, context of different spread. The teaching of such type of lexis requires detailed work with English-language vocabularies.

Enantiosemic units selected and systematized by the continuous sampling method are the examples of intralingual enantiosemey that is the most complicated for perception. Its learning is provided by detailed work in lexicographic sources (LDCE, 2014; Merriam-Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus., 2018) and conscious learning of antonymic meanings, which in the course of the study lead to the composition of a vocabulary which is partially presented below:

- | | | |
|--------------|--|---|
| 1. alight | 1. To get on (to land), | 2. Get off (the vehicle) |
| 2. blunt | 1. Not sharp, | 2. Direct and sharp (blunt criticism) |
| 3. break | 1. To stop, | 2. To start |
| 4. buckle | 1. To connect, | 2. To break or collapse (from pressure or heat) |
| 5. clear | 1. To make tidier by putting things, | 2. To remove things |
| 6. cleave | 1. To cut apart, | 2. To stick together |
| 7. clip | 1. To fasten, | 2. To detach |
| 8. consult | 1. To inform, | 2. To obtain advice |
| 9. demon | 1. Evil spirit, | 2. Someone who is good at something |
| 10. dust | 1. To add particles, | 2. To remove dust |
| 11. fast | 1. Quick, | 2. Stuck and immovable |
| 12. find | 1. To discover something you have been searching for | 2. To discover something by chance |
| 13. lane | 1. A narrow road in countryside, | 2. A wide road in a city |
| 14. lease | 1. To offer property for rent, | 2. To hold such property |
| 15. nervy | 1. Nervous and easily frightened, | 2. Brave and confident (AmE) |
| 16. pagan | 1. Someone who believes in religion, | 2. Someone who has no beliefs |
| 17. phase | 1. To start, | 2. To stop |
| 18. peep | 1. To look quickly, | 2. To look at something because it is interesting |
| 19. peruse | 1. Read carefully, | 2. To skim |
| 20. put out | 1. Extinguish, | 2. Generate |
| 21. quiddity | 1. Essence, | 2. A trifling point |
| 22. raid | 1. A visit made by police, | 2. An attack by criminals |
| 23. ravel | 1. To entangle, | 2. To disentangle |
| 24. rent | 1. To purchase use of something, | 2. To sell |
| 25. resign | 1. To quit, | 2. To sign up again |

26. sanction	1. To approve,	2. To boycott
27. scan	1. To peruse,	2. To glance quickly
28. screen	1. To present,	2. To conceal
29. seed	1. To sow seed,	2. To remove seeds
30. swear	1. To take an oath,	2. To use bad language

The technological side of foreign-language lexis teaching is often connected with the semantization of lexical units (Lyulyaeva, 2017; Maslyko, 1999). Methodological literature gives different ways for the discovery of the meaning of a word: 1. way of separate phrases; 2. way of story telling; 3. way of story telling with elements of a discussion; 4. way of a discussion; 5. way of situations; 6. way of unassisted familiarizing with a word. The selection of the word semantization way depends on certain factors, namely: a) number of words introduced in a class; b) capability of thematic organization of words; c) linguistic and other specificities of words; d) language learning degree; e) educational skills of learners (Shamov, 2009; Shamov & Guseva, 2018).

One of the most effective approaches to conversion of a new word into a specific sign word is semantization which the enrichment of English lexicon begins with. This approach is mainly expressed in the interpretation of the lexical meaning of a word reinforced in a language as a sound complex (Passov, 1991). The methodology of English language teaching traditionally uses untranslatable and translatable methods of word semantization. The translatable word semantization can be performed by two methods: translation of a lexical unit from English into Russian, and translation of the interpretation of a lexical unit. The untranslatable methods are:

– implementation of visual aspects or illustrating situations (oral and written) for clarification of abstract concepts, in particular for discovery of the meanings of enantiosemic phraseological locutions; for instance *to chew the fat* which is not only an example of an enantiophraseme—when the meaning is opposite to the external view of the phrase, but also demonstrates the development of contradictory meanings in it that depend of the context. *To chew the fat* is used several times in the book (Salinger, 2015) in the meaning of *to have a long friendly conversation* or *to grumble*. To discover the meaning of this phraseological locution, one should address to the preceding context. The first of the meanings (chatter) was updated in the conversation of the main character with adored sister Phebe, while the second meaning was used when Holden argued with the girl he asked out to a theater, which is obvious due to the context analysis.

– usage of synonyms, definitions and explanations in foreign language. Indeed, the semantization of verb *to clip* can be realize by selecting the number of synonyms for each of the meaning: *to clip* means *to fasten*, *to hold tightly* or *to clip* means *to detach*, *to cut apart*;

– selection of antonyms for the meanings of enantiosemic units: *to overlook the key fact* means *to notice the key fact*; *to overlook the map* means *to glance quickly at the map*;

– etymological analysis;

– composition of a vocabulary which should include learned words.

To reinforce a new word and its semantic field in the mind of a learner, one can use the following vocabulary-semantic exercises:

1. Composition of word combinations and sentences that reflect the semantic specificity of the studied unit and its lexical compatibility. For instance, an effective task can be the following: Compose one or two word combinations with the words below using the example. Example: *to seed the field, to seed the pepper*.

To enjoin, fast, fix, oversight

2. Composition of thematic word groups.

Task: Select synonyms for each opposite meaning of a word: *to peruse, presently, to screen, to trip*.

3. Composition of separate sentences or texts with limited volume using proposed words.

The exercises above should be used in combination. The main task of these tasks is the primary learning of an English word semantic and its valence by a Russian-speaking student and then introduction of it into speech.

7. Conclusion

The process of English language teaching is aimed at mastering a knowledge about the language and correct application of such proficiency necessary for successful communication. Enrichment of vocabulary and understanding of lexicosemantic regularities of the English language are the most important conditions of its learning.

Enantiosemy is a method to express immanent properties of a language evoking the ambiguity of interpretation of multiple-meaning units, which poses the strongest difficulties in teaching perception and understanding of foreign speech, thus decreasing the efficiency of the language as a communication means. Since, the enantiosemy is a special type of lexicosemantic relations and widely presented in the speech of native speakers, a modern methodology of English language teaching should focus on such linguistic phenomenon, because it is included into the list of communication demands of every person learning this language.

The testing of the exercises introduced into a foreign-language teaching course of linguistic training profiles of Minin university have unveiled insufficient generation of recognition skills in terms of enantiosemic units by the learners. Awareness of the units capable of combining opposite meanings will help preventing a multitude of difficulties connected not only with English language learning, but also in terms of profession-oriented subjects, such as lexicology and theory and practice of translation. It is assumed that the presented methodological recommendations can simplify the description of semantic enantiosemy processes by a teacher, while the systematized vocabulary will facilitate the search and learning by learners of units developing opposite meanings.

References

- Bessonova, L. E. (1982). *Enantiosemy is a special type in the system of lexical oppositions. Problems of lexical and categorical semantics*. Simferopol: Simferopol State Univ.
- Brodskiy, M. Yu. (1998). *Lexical enantiosemy in comparative aspect: in modern English and French languages*. Ekaterinburg.
- Bryson, B. (2015). *The Mother Tongue English and How It Got That Way*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Kravtsova, V. Yu. (2006). On the determination of enantiosemy nature and essence. *Science and Education*, 2, 62–68.

- Litvinova, E. A. (2012). On the productivity of enantiosemy. *Lingua Mobilis*, 2(35), 74–81.
- Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDCE)* (6th ed.). (2014). Pearson Education Limited.
- Lybkin, V. V. (1977). *On the enantiosemy in modern English language. Issues of Romano-Germanic linguistics, iss. 5*. Saratov, Press of Saratov University.
- Lyulyaeva, N. A. (2017). Algorithmization of foreign language teaching in higher school. *Problems of modern pedagogical education*, 55–11, 63–73.
- Makhmutova, L. R. (2009). Place of enantiosemy in language system. *Proceedings of Kazan State University*, 3, 276–281.
- Maslyko, E. A. (1999). *Bible of English language teaching: guide*. Moscow, Higher School.
- Merriam-Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus*. (2018) Retrieved from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/priceless>
- Novikov, L. A. (1984). *Russian antonymy and its lexicographic description. Vocabulary of Russian language antonyms*. Moscow: Russian language.
- Ogneva, S. V. (2016). On the sources of enantiosemy (on the example of the English language). *Philology and linguistics in modern society*. In *Proc. IV Intern. Sci. Conf.* (pp. 85–89). Moscow: Buki-Vedi.
- Online Etymology Dictionary*. (2018). Retrieved from: <https://www.etymonline.com>
- Passov, E. I. (1991). *Communicative method of teaching foreign-language speaking, iss. 2*. Moscow: Prosveshchenie.
- Ponomarenko, T. G. (1972). *On inrword antonymy in modern Russian language. Word in lexicosemantic language system*. Leningrad: LGPI.
- Rawson, H. (2013). *Janus Words Two-faced English*. Retrieved from <https://dictionaryblog.cambridge.org>
- Romanchuk, Yu. V. (2016). What is the source of opposite meanings of a word? *Philological science in Russia and abroad*. In *Proc. IV Intern. Sci. Conf., December 2016* (pp. 47–49). St. Petersburg: Svoyo izdatelstvo.
- Salinger, J. D. (2015). *The Catcher in the Rye*. St. Petersburg, Antologiya, KARO.
- Shamov, A. N. (2009). Principles of teaching lexical aspect of foreign language. *Foreign languages in school*, 4, 2–8.
- Shamov, A. N., & Guseva, L. V. (2018). The role of evaluation tools kit in recording of foreign language learning results. *Advances in Intelligent Systems and Computing*, 677, 203–209.
- Zimina, M. V. (2015). Problems of language consciousness in modern linguistics. *Linguistics, linguo-didactics, theory of translation: urgent issues and perspectives of study*. In *Proceedings of International Scientific and Practical Conference* (pp. 48–52). Cheboksary: Chuvash State University.