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# CRITERIA FOR DELINEATING HOMONYMY FROM OTHER LINGUISTIC PHENOMENA

Rustamov Ilkhom Tursunovich

Associate Professor

ilhom.rustamov.20080223@gmail.com

https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1075-4052

+998919426699

| Abstract: | Keywords: |
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| This scholarly inquiry seeks to examine the criteria employed for distinguishing homonymy from other linguistic phenomena within the discipline of linguistics. Through an extensive review of relevant literature and qualitative analysis, the study endeavors to offer insights into the unique attributes that serve as demarcation points between homonymy and closely associated linguistic concepts, including polysemy and homophony. | homophony, homonymy, polysemy, linguistic phenomenon, linguistic phenomena, synonymy, antonymy, lexemes, contextual factors, effective communication. |

**Introduction**

Comprehending the criteria employed to distinguish homonymy from other linguistic phenomena is imperative for rigorous linguistic analysis. Homonymy, polysemy, and homophony, while interconnected, represent distinct linguistic phenomena necessitating precise classification. This article seeks to delve into the criteria utilized to differentiate homonymy from both polysemy and homophony, elucidating the distinctive characteristics inherent in each of these linguistic phenomena. Homonymy, as a linguistic phenomenon, involves words that share identical forms in either sound or spelling but possess disparate meanings. In contrast, polysemy refers to a scenario where a single word has multiple related meanings. Homophony, on the other hand, pertains to words that sound identical but may have divergent meanings and spellings. The precise demarcation of these phenomena is crucial for the accurate analysis of language and the effective communication of ideas.

The criteria for distinguishing homonymy hinge on the shared forms in either sound or spelling, necessitating differentiation from polysemy, where the focus is on the diverse but related meanings of a single word. Additionally, homonymy must be distinguished from homophony by considering both sound and spelling, as homophones share only similar sounds. A nuanced exploration of these criteria is essential to navigate the intricate landscape of linguistic analysis, ensuring precision and clarity in the delineation of these phenomena. This article aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of these criteria, thereby enhancing the linguistic community's ability to discern and articulate the nuances within homonymy, polysemy, and homophony.

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## Literature Review

The scholarly discourse on linguistic phenomena has thoroughly examined the criteria employed to differentiate homonymy from polysemy and homophony. Researchers have underscored that homonymy encompasses words with dissimilar meanings yet identical forms, whereas polysemy pertains to words with interconnected meanings, and homophony involves words with divergent meanings but similar sounds. Academic investigations have proposed criteria grounded in semantic, phonological, and contextual considerations to discern between these linguistic phenomena. The existing literature emphasizes the critical role of precise criteria in categorizing these linguistic phenomena to mitigate ambiguity and facilitate meticulous language analysis.

As is well-known, vocabulary exhibits a one-to-one correspondence between content and expression. The phenomena of homonymy and polysemy manifest prominently in contemporary English, representing multifaceted linguistic phenomena that encapsulate both historical and modern facets of language development, contributing to its continuous enrichment. Given the current significance of English in scientific activities, its nomination system is extensively developed, and the processes of homonymy and polysemy within this system are distinct, warranting further comprehensive exploration.

Despite numerous studies addressing the relationship between homonymy and polysemy, including works by scholars such as S.I.Ozhegova, A.A.Ufimtseva, S.I.Abaev, and others, homonymy remains insufficiently investigated in comparison to related phenomena like polysemy, synonymy, or antonymy. The terminology lacks order, and a classification that adequately reflects the formal and semantic relations among different classes of homonyms has not been established. The realm of homonymic lexicography also awaits sufficient exploration, particularly regarding the reflection of the homonymic series structure in dictionary organization.

In our research, we aim to bring a novel perspective by examining the characteristics of polysemy and homonymy in both English and Uzbek, conducting a semantic analysis of homonymous and polysemous lexemes within this framework. Linguists consistently identify homonymy and polysemy as primary forms of word ambiguity in a language. As reiterated, homonyms refer to words or terms sharing identical expression forms but differing semantically. Connections between homonyms and polysemy are marked by a disparity in meanings, with the reasons for homonymic occurrence rooted in the borrowing of terms from diverse sources and alterations in the sound forms of words.

The absence of clear criteria for distinguishing between homonymy and polysemy without contextual information has led various researchers to categorize cases of ambiguity as both polysemy and homonymy. In such instances, recourse to a dictionary proves helpful, as polysemes are typically presented together, while homonyms are treated in distinct entries. Etymology often offers insights into meaningful distinctions[1]. Contemporary linguistics lacks a universally accepted interpretation of polysemy, with clear criteria for differentiating homonyms and polysemes. Given that ambiguity is not inherent to designating a specific concept in a particular language, a definition must be formulated unambiguously, aligning with

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the core principle of eliminating ambiguity within terminological fields[2]. For instance, the modern English word "term" exhibits ambiguity by encapsulating two invariant meanings: 1) a specialized concept in a specific field; and 2) a period.

Polysemy, defined as the presence of multiple meanings in a linguistic unit with a connection between them or the transfer of common features from one denotation to another, will be a focus of our research. Specifically, we are interested in lexical polysemy—the capacity of a single word to denote various objects and phenomena in reality. The asymmetry of the linguistic sign is a key factor contributing to polysemy, reflecting the principle of conserving linguistic resources for optimal meaning transmission. The frequency of word usage is considered a determining factor in the development of its derived meanings, and in speech, contextualization serves to concretize meanings, neutralizing polysemy[3].

Language constitutes a fundamental aspect of human existence, permeating our speech, writing, and thoughts. The combination of words in language serves to formulate statements conveying meaning. The term "meaning" stands out as a highly ambiguous and contentious concept in language theory. Language itself is inherently ambiguous, with words frequently embodying multiple meanings. Navigating this ambiguity requires language users to make decisions regarding the intended meaning based on contextual cues within statements. Polysemy and homonymy, as manifestations of ambiguity, play integral roles in everyday language use. Individuals' comprehension of spoken words reflects their interpretation of the sentiments conveyed by those words. Ambiguity, viewed as a linguistic phenomenon, was characteristic of Old English vocabulary. Therefore, the lexical and semantic structure of a polysemic word is often analyzed diachronically to comprehend the evolution and changes in its meaning. This includes processes such as acquiring new meanings while relinquishing old ones, acquiring new meanings while retaining old ones, acquiring new meanings and relinquishing some old ones, or maintaining a single meaning without acquiring new ones[4]. Employing a synchronous approach to ambiguity aids in identifying all the meanings a word possesses within a specific timeframe, distinguishing primary from secondary meanings. This interpretative process occurs bidirectionally. In the analysis of word variants and synonyms, researchers traverse from content to expression, considering diverse means of expressing the same content to varying degrees.

The assumption of synonymy, signifying lexical equivalence in a language, emanates from individuals' capacity to establish conceptual or extralinguistic equivalence, and occasionally identity, consequently asserting the coexistence of disparate phonetic manifestations. Within semantic analysis, the theoretical distinction between homonymy and polysemy poses a challenge that has engaged the interest of numerous linguists. Polysemy, derived from the Latin "polly-seamus," can be broadly characterized as the presence of multiple related meanings within a single lexeme. The inherent property of polysemy being associated with individual words distinguishes it fundamentally from homonymy. For instance, words like "neck," "guard," "music," and "bachelor" exhibit ambiguity, featuring one lexeme in standard English dictionaries with several discernible meanings, while homonyms typically have distinct entries in dictionaries. Resolving the predicament of differentiating homonymy from ambiguity

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involves recognizing that the diverse meanings of a word share historical roots, tracing back to a common origin. For instance, "pupil" (student) and "pupil" (eyes) lack a historical connection, emerging as similar coincidences. These cases involve metaphorical connections, utilizing the same word in disparate contexts, as seen in "face" (noun - the front of the head) and "face" (noun - the front of the clock). Ambiguity is explicable as the coexistence of multiple semantic specifications for the same lexical element, while homonymy can be defined as the presence of multiple morphological specifications sharing identical phonological or graphical forms.

## Research Methodology

In the pursuit of examining the criteria utilized to differentiate homonymy from other linguistic phenomena, a comprehensive literature review was undertaken. This involved a thorough exploration of existing definitions and criteria proposed by linguistic scholars, thereby ensuring a nuanced understanding of the conceptual framework surrounding homonymy in comparison to related linguistic phenomena. Simultaneously, a qualitative analysis of linguistic data was conducted to illustrate and delve into instances of homonymy, polysemy, and homophony. This analytical approach facilitated the exploration of the distinct characteristics exhibited by each of these linguistic phenomena in light of the identified criteria. The literature review encompassed a broad spectrum of scholarly contributions, enabling the identification of varying perspectives and theoretical underpinnings regarding the criteria for distinguishing homonymy from other linguistic phenomena. This comprehensive exploration was instrumental in gaining insights into the evolving nature of linguistic analyses and the refinement of criteria over time. The qualitative analysis of linguistic data served as a complementary component of the research methodology, providing concrete examples and instances of homonymy, polysemy, and homophony. Through this empirical examination, the study aimed to enrich the understanding of these linguistic phenomena and the intricacies involved in their differentiation. The identified criteria, rooted in semantic, phonological, and contextual factors, were systematically applied to analyze linguistic data, ensuring a rigorous evaluation of each phenomenon. In essence, the research methodology was meticulously crafted to provide a comprehensive and in-depth comprehension of the criteria employed in distinguishing homonymy from related linguistic phenomena. By synthesizing insights from the literature review and empirical analysis, the study contributes to the refinement of criteria, facilitating a nuanced and accurate classification of these linguistic phenomena within the broader landscape of language analysis.

## Analysis and Results

The examination yielded insights into the criteria utilized to distinguish homonymy from other linguistic phenomena, encompassing a range of factors such as semantic distinctiveness, etymological origins, and phonological properties. Through a systematic analysis of examples and instances representing homonymy, polysemy, and homophony, the study aimed to assess their alignment with the identified criteria. The findings underscored the imperative of employing precise and well-defined criteria for the accurate differentiation of homonymy from polysemy and homophony, shedding light on the nuanced yet pivotal distinctions among these

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linguistic phenomena. Semantic distinctiveness emerged as a crucial criterion, requiring a meticulous examination of the meanings associated with words to ascertain whether they exhibit discrete or interconnected semantic features. The exploration of etymological origins proved instrumental, as it provided valuable insights into the historical development and evolution of words, contributing to the delineation of distinct linguistic phenomena. Additionally, the consideration of phonological properties, including sound and spelling, played a pivotal role in the differentiation process, especially when discerning homonymy from homophony.

Concrete examples were systematically analyzed to illustrate how these criteria operated in real-world linguistic contexts. The nuanced examination of semantic, etymological, and phonological facets revealed the intricate dynamics involved in distinguishing homonymy from related linguistic phenomena. The study emphasized the need for a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to criteria, acknowledging the interplay of various factors in the classification of these linguistic phenomena. In conclusion, the research underscored that establishing and applying precise criteria is paramount for accurately differentiating homonymy from polysemy and homophony. The nuanced exploration of semantic, etymological, and phonological dimensions contributes to a more refined understanding of these linguistic phenomena, promoting clarity and accuracy in linguistic analyses. This study contributes to the ongoing discourse on the criteria governing linguistic classifications, emphasizing their significance in the accurate interpretation and differentiation of words within language analysis.

## Conclusion

In summary, the delineation criteria employed to distinguish homonymy from other linguistic phenomena are imperative for precise language analysis and categorization. This study, through a comprehensive review of the unique attributes associated with homonymy, polysemy, and homophony, emphasizes the significance of employing exact criteria in linguistic analysis. The comprehension and application of these criteria play a pivotal role in accurately categorizing linguistic phenomena, contributing to an enhanced understanding of language structure and usage. Continued research endeavors in exploring and refining these criteria will further advance our knowledge of linguistic phenomena, fostering ongoing improvements in their systematic categorization.

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