



POLYSEMY IN THE LEXICAL-SEMANTIC FIELD "FITNESS"

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Abstract The phenomenon of polysemy remains an intriguing subject in linguistic studies, particularly within specialized lexical-semantic fields such as "Fitness." Although polysemy, or multiple meanings in a single lexical unit, has been recognized and studied since the 19th century, its complexity and dynamic nature make it an ongoing area of interest. This article examines how polysemy functions in the lexical-semantic field of "Fitness" through the lens of classical linguistic theory and modern cognitive linguistics. Attention is paid to definitions and distinctions made by scholars such as A.I. Smirnitsky, A.Ya. Shaikevich, and Yu.D. Apresyan. A typological overview is provided, covering radial, chain, and metaphorically/metonymically motivated polysemy. Specific examples from authoritative English dictionaries illustrate how the term "fitness" and related words like "active" and "activeness" exhibit varying degrees of polysemy. The cognitive dimensions of polysemy are also considered, emphasizing the mental representation and categorization of concepts. Through this multifaceted analysis, the article underscores the relevance of polysemy in enriching and expanding the functional capacity of the "Fitness" lexicon.

Keywords: *polysemy; fitness; lexical semantics; cognitive linguistics; metaphor; metonymy; prototype theory; semantic field; dictionary analysis*

Introduction

Despite being introduced in the 19th century, the term "polysemy" continues to inspire debate and investigation among linguists. Scholars such as A.I. Smirnitsky and N.G. Goltsova define polysemy as the presence of multiple meanings in a word. Meanwhile, others, like A.Ya. Shaikevich and O.S. Akhmanova, emphasize the necessity of semantic connection between those meanings [Shaikevich: 2005; Akhmanova: 1966]. Disagreements persist, especially with figures like A.A. Potebnya and L.V. Shcherba who argue that the presence of multiple meanings equates to entirely different words, thus rejecting polysemy in favor of homonymy [Potebnya: 1941, p. 198; Shcherba: 1974].

This article focuses on examining polysemy within the specialized lexical-semantic field "Fitness," a domain that includes terms associated with health, physical capability, and biological adaptability. By analyzing the meanings of key lexemes such as "fitness," "active," and "activeness," and consulting leading dictionaries, this study aims to map out patterns and types of polysemy relevant to this field.



Main Body

1. Theoretical Approaches to Polysemy Polysemy is traditionally defined as the presence of several interrelated meanings in one linguistic unit. Scholars such as Rosenthal and Telenkova define it as multiple meanings derived from the original meaning [Rosenthal, Telenkova: 1976, p. 129]. Komlev and Eliseeva reinforce this idea, noting the presence of semantic connections between meanings [Komlev: 2006; Eliseeva: 2004, p. 124].

Yu.D. Apresyan identifies metaphorical and metonymical types of polysemy. Metaphorical polysemy is based on similarity (e.g., "golden" in "golden autumn") while metonymy is based on proximity (e.g., "silver" for both material and object) [Apresyan: 1995]. Synecdoche, as highlighted by Pustoshilo, is a special type of metonymy (e.g., using "head" for a smart person) [Pustoshilo: 2011].

E.P. Denisov offers a cognitive explanation, asserting that polysemy reflects how both hemispheres of the brain process information—analytically and imaginatively [Denisov: 1993, pp. 40–41].

2. Types of Polysemy Shaikevich categorizes polysemy into monocentric (one core meaning) and polycentric (multiple centers) types [Shaikevich: 2005, pp. 144–146]. L.A. Novikov expands this classification with semasiological and semasiological-onomasiological types, depending on associative and conceptual links [Novikov: 1982, pp. 203–204]. Grinev-Grinevich and Dubenets introduce radial, chain, and radial-chain types [Grinev-Grinevich, 2014; Dubenets, 2004].

Apresyan also distinguishes between regular and irregular polysemy. Regular polysemy involves semantic patterns seen in other words, while irregular polysemy does not [Apresyan: 1995].

3. Cognitive Approaches Cognitive linguistics, particularly through the works of E. Rosch and G. Lakoff, explains polysemy via prototypes and categorization. The concept of "family resemblance" suggests that related meanings cluster around a prototypical core, forming a radial structure that explains why a single word may acquire multiple, related meanings [Lakoff: 1996].

4. Polysemy in the Lexical-Semantic Field "Fitness" The term "fitness" itself is polysemous. According to several dictionaries, it denotes: 1) the state of being physically healthy, 2) the quality of being suitable, and 3) biological ability to survive and reproduce.

Words within this semantic field also exhibit polysemy:

- *Active* (adj.):



1. Engaged in action;
2. Physically energetic;
3. Involving motion or activity;
4. Capable of change or influence.

• *Activeness* (n.):

1. Physical energy of a person.

While *activeness* appears monosemous, *active* illustrates radial polysemy, with meanings branching out from a central idea of energy or motion.

Moreover, *capacity*, *strength*, *endurance*, and *mobility* also show polysemous characteristics depending on context, e.g., biological capacity vs. mechanical capacity.

Conclusion Polysemy plays a critical role in the development and functioning of the lexical-semantic field "Fitness." It enhances the richness and versatility of language, allowing a single word to encapsulate various aspects of physical, biological, and functional properties. Classical linguistic theories, supplemented by cognitive and prototype-based models, offer complementary perspectives in understanding how meanings proliferate and interrelate. The analysis of core terms such as "fitness" and "active" demonstrates how polysemy serves as a bridge between different domains of knowledge and human experience, reinforcing the idea that language is not just a tool of communication but also of cognition.

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