

CHALLENGES IN TEACHING POLYSEMY AND IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

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Abstract: *This article explores the major challenges involved in teaching polysemy and idiomatic expressions in language education. Polysemy, referring to the existence of multiple related meanings within a single lexical item, and idiomatic expressions, characterized by figurative and contextdependent meanings, represent complex aspects of language learning. The study examines the linguistic, pedagogical, and cultural factors that influence learners' understanding and use of these language phenomena. Particular attention is paid to semantic ambiguity, contextual interpretation, cultural differences, and the limitations of traditional teaching approaches. The article emphasizes the importance of communicative, context-based, and culturally informed teaching methods for improving learners' comprehension and practical language use. In conclusion, effective teaching of polysemy and idiomatic expressions plays a significant role in developing learners' communicative competence, semantic awareness, and intercultural understanding.*

Keywords: *polysemy, idiomatic expressions, language teaching, semantics, contextual meaning, communicative competence, intercultural communication.*

Annotatsiya: *Ushbu maqolada til ta'limida polisemiya va idiomatik ifodalarni o'qitishda uchraydigan asosiy muammolar tahlil qilinadi. Polisemiya — bir leksik birlikning bir nechta o'zaro bog'liq ma'nolarga ega bo'lish hodisasi bo'lsa, idiomatik ifodalar ko'chma va kontekstga bog'liq ma'nolari bilan til o'rganishning murakkab jihatlaridan biri hisoblanadi. Tadqiqot mazkur til hodisalarini tushunish va qo'llashga ta'sir qiluvchi lingvistik, pedagogik hamda madaniy omillarni o'rganadi. Semantik noaniqlik, kontekstual talqin, madaniy tafovutlar va an'anaviy o'qitish usullarining cheklanishlariga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi. Maqolada o'quvchilarning tushunish darajasi va amaliy til qo'llanilishini rivojlantirishda kommunikativ, kontekstga asoslangan hamda madaniy jihatdan integratsiyalashgan yondashuvlarning ahamiyati ta'kidlanadi. Xulosa qilib aytganda, polisemiya va idiomatik ifodalarni samarali o'qitish o'quvchilarning kommunikativ kompetensiyasi, semantik tafakkuri va madaniyatlararo tushunishini rivojlantirishda muhim ahamiyat kasb etadi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *polisemiya, idiomatik ifodalar, til o'qitish, semantika, kontekstual ma'no, kommunikativ kompetensiya, madaniyatlararo muloqot.*

Аннотация: *В данной статье рассматриваются основные трудности преподавания полисемии и идиоматических выражений в языковом образовании. Полисемия, представляющая собой наличие нескольких взаимосвязанных значений у одной лексической единицы, а также идиоматические выражения с их*

переносным и контекстуально обусловленным значением относятся к наиболее сложным аспектам изучения языка. В исследовании анализируются лингвистические, педагогические и культурные факторы, влияющие на понимание и использование данных языковых явлений обучающимися. Особое внимание уделяется семантической неоднозначности, контекстуальной интерпретации, культурным различиям и ограничениям традиционных методов обучения. В статье подчеркивается важность коммуникативных, контекстноориентированных и культурно интегрированных подходов к преподаванию для повышения уровня понимания и практического владения языком. В заключение отмечается, что эффективное обучение полисемии и идиоматическим выражениям играет важную роль в развитии коммуникативной компетенции, семантического восприятия и межкультурного понимания обучающихся.

Ключевые слова: полисемия, идиоматические выражения, преподавание языка, семантика, контекстуальное значение, коммуникативная компетенция межкультурная коммуникация.

Introduction. Language learning involves not only the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary, but also the understanding of semantic and figures figurative meanings. Among the most challenging aspects of language, teaching our polygamy and idiomatic expressions as they often require learners to interpret words beyond their literal meanings. "Polysemy is there association of one word with two or more related meanings" (Ullmann, 1992) "polysemy is the association of one word was two or more related meanings." This linguistic phenomenon frequently creates challenges for language learners due to semantic variation and contextual dependence. Similarly, idiomatic expressions represent another complex area of language learning. Fernando and Flavell (1981) define idioms as,, conventionalized multi word expressions, whose meaning cannot always be derived from the meanings of they are individual components. "Because idioms are strongly influence by culture and context, learners often struggle to understand and use them appropriately. Teaching these linguistic phenomena presents significant challenges in language education. Traditional methods based mainly on memorization and direct translation may not sufficiently develop learners' semantic awareness and communicative competence. Therefore, this article aims to examine the major challenges in teaching polysemy and idiomatic expressions and to explore effective pedagogical approaches for improving learners' contextual understanding and language proficiency.

Main Body. Teaching polysemy and idiomatic expressions remains one of the most challenging areas of language teaching, as both linguistic phenomena require learners to understand meanings beyond literal interpretation. In semantic theory, Stephen Ullman (1962) defines polysemy as the association of a single lexical item with multiple, interrelated meanings. Similarly, Lyons (1977) argues that polysemy is a natural feature of lexical systems in which a single word develops multiple semantic interpretations.

MODERN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND INNOVATIVE TEACHING SOLUTIONS

Supporting this view, Cruz (2000) argues that the meaning of polysemous words can only be accurately determined through contextual analysis. This often poses challenges for language learners who rely on direct translation or dictionary definitions. For example, the English word "head" can refer to a body part, the head of an institution, or the top of an object. Without contextual understanding, students may misunderstand or misuse such vocabulary items. Therefore, teaching polysemy requires not only teaching vocabulary, but also developing semantic sensitivity and contextual thinking skills. Idiomatic expressions pose an additional challenge in foreign language teaching because their meanings are often non-literal and culturally conditioned. Fernando and Flavell (1981) define idioms as conditional expressions whose meanings cannot always be predicted from the meanings of the individual components. Similarly, McCarthy and O'Dell (2002) argue that idioms reflect natural language usage and often have meanings deeply rooted in cultural understanding. Furthermore, as Cooper (1999) points out, learners often struggle with idioms because they tend to interpret the expressions literally rather than figuratively. For example, the expression "spill the beans" does not directly mean to spill the beans but to reveal a secret. Students who are unaware of the portable nature of idioms may not be able to understand such expressions correctly. Furthermore, the cultural references embedded in idioms can exacerbate comprehension problems for students learning English as a foreign language.

Traditional approaches to language teaching are often inadequate to address the problems of polysemy and idiomatic expressions. According to Nation (2001), vocabulary acquisition is more effective when learners are repeatedly exposed to lexical items in meaningful contexts. Similarly, Lewis (1993) argues that language teaching should emphasize lexical patterns and contextual chunks rather than memorizing individual words. Furthermore, Boers and Lindstromberg (2008) emphasize the importance of metaphorical awareness, contextual learning, and authentic materials in teaching figurative language. Methods that rely solely on memorization, translation, or dictionary definitions may support short-term retention of vocabulary, but rarely develop deeper semantic understanding or communicative competence. Consequently, students can theoretically recognize a word or phrase and try to use it correctly in real-life communication.

To overcome these pedagogical problems, teachers need to implement communicative, contextual, and culturally sensitive teaching methods. Richards and Rodgers (2001) argue that communicative language teaching increases students' ability to use language meaningfully in real-life situations. Similarly, Larsen-Freeman (2000) emphasizes the role of interaction, contextual practice, and student engagement in effective language acquisition. Furthermore, as Krashen (1985) points out, language learning is more successful when students receive meaningful and understandable information. Through the integration of authentic texts, classroom interaction, semantic analysis, and cross-cultural discussions, teachers can help students better interpret polysemantic words and idiomatic expressions. Such educational strategies not only help expand vocabulary, but

also help develop communicative competence, semantic awareness, and intercultural understanding.

Conclusion. In conclusion, teaching polysemy and idiomatic expressions remains a significant challenge in language teaching due to their semantic complexity, contextual dependence, and cultural characteristics. Learners often face difficulties in correctly interpreting multiple meanings and figurative expressions. As discussed in this article, traditional teaching methods alone may not be sufficient to develop deep semantic understanding. Therefore, the use of communicative, context-based, and culturally-oriented teaching methods is essential to enhance learners' language competence, semantic awareness, and effective communication skills.

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