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| Types of Homonyms in Terminology and Ways of Teaching Them | |  | Linguistics |
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| Abstract | | | |
| <p>The central aim of this article is to introduce some ways of teaching homonymy typical of specialized texts. Homonymy will be treated regarding its types and new ways of teaching it will be examined closely. This article is based on a study conducted in Albanian forestry compared with English language. Specialized language is the universal language among specialists of a domain and it should leave no room for ambiguity. But in some texts, students come across a set of terms which appear homonymous. Homonymy requires a special importance and treatment because it causes problems with respect to specialists' communication if it isn't avoided. Identifying and studying homonymy serves students as future professionals not only to avoid it but also to communicate more efficiently and easily. Good communication means that the message that you wish to send is received by the intended recipients without being distorted in any manner. Finally, we have tried to present and recommend some effective ways to teach students and make them recognize homonyms whenever they encounter them.</p> | | | |

1. Introduction

One of the main functions of terminology is to facilitate communication between professionals and non-professionals working in various areas. Wüster has considered “*terminology a tool that should be used as effectively as possible to eliminate ambiguity from scientific and technical communication*”. Since homonymy is a part of vocabulary, it is a part of communication as well. That's why it calls for our close attention.

While teaching terminology, lecturers inevitably encounter a serious problem of homonymy. It is worth mentioning that ambiguity, because of homonymy, always occurs if not studied, treated and clarified properly, as terms have a special reference within a particular discipline. Homonymy ambiguities can arise in cases such as 'She brought me a *box*' (a kind of shrub vs. container) where the common origin of the two senses in Lat. *buxus* has long since been obscured. The meanings of *box* make the reader quite confused. To be successful in teaching terminology one has to take fully into account homonymy cases, otherwise it would be useless doing it. Examples of homonymy are easier to spot in writing rather than in listening, so one could completely misunderstand the message. Thus, teaching and studying homonymy is important. We should find out ways and means to help students study terms without any difficulty at all. Homonymy occurs when two words are etymologically distinct but sound the same due to historical accident. They function as two totally unrelated words with clear-cut meanings or boundaries. e.g. “*flat* countries” and “he lives on the second floor *flat*.” “she got a good *mark*” and “*mark* the trees before you start harvesting”. In Albanian “*pres* drurët” (cut down trees) and “*pres* miqtë” (receive guests).

Homonymy resources for both languages (Albanian and English) are various, for example the same term belongs to two different fields of knowledge like *rrënjë* (*roots/radicle*) in botany, *rrënjë/common oak* in forestry; *bar/grass* (forestry) and *bar/medicine* (medicine), or *hare's ear*₁ i.e. ear of a hare (anatomy) and *hare's ear*₂, a species (forestry). Another case is when a term is built on the base of a common word like *bisht thiu*₁ and *bisht thiu*₂ (*millefolium/tail of a pig*); and in English. *box*₁ and *box*₂ (*kuti /bushi i shkurreve*).

At other times terms are taken over from one domain of knowledge into another, usually with varying meanings, but based on their outer form they lead to homonymy which arises inevitably, e.g. *këmbë/foot* (anatomy) and *këmbë* (forestry) *lëndë në këmbë /standing wood*.

These homonymic terms have no relation in meaning. This phenomenon, like in any other terminology, occurs as a negative manifestation in Albanian forestry. It appears as a deficiency of signs. The task ahead for students is to understand relationships between the linguistic form and meaning i.e. one name has two referents e.g. *kurorë* (*crown* of a tree and *crown* of a queen); *stand* (of trees) and as a verb.

2. Types of homonyms

Homonymy occurs when two senses of a given word are distinct. They are separated by etymology and therefore entirely unrelated in meaning. Let's take *bank*₁ and *bank*₂. There is no underlying relationship between two meanings which have come about independently of different root languages. According to Lyons "*two or more meanings can be associated with one form*". Thus, homonymy is a term used to refer to two or more words, which have the same form, but differ in meaning. They are pronounced alike, or spelled alike, in both languages. Homonyms are divided into:

Full or perfect homonyms, i.e. they have the same pronunciation and same spelling, so the identity covers both the spoken and written form. E.g. *bank*₁ (shore) & *bank*₂ (institution); *saw*₁ (device), *saw*₂ (past simple of *see*) and *saw*₃ (a machine); *rose*₁ (a plant) and *rose*₂ (past simple of *rise*); *stalk*₁ (part of a plant), *stalk*₂ (follow/harass a person); *cell*₁ (the microscopic unit of an organism), *cell*₂ (a room in a prison); *mark*₁ – (to mark the trees or to blaze the trees), *mark*₂ (a numerical award denoting excellence, proficiency), e.g. "he always gets good marks"; *palm*₁ (a tree), *palm*₂ (palm of the hand); *ash*₁ (a tree species), *ash*₂ (ash of cigarettes, firewoods, etc); *needle*₁ (a leaf of coniferales), *needle*₂ (a very thin small piece of smooth steel used in sewing), *bark*₁ (skin of a tree), *bark*₂ (the cry of the dog), etc.

In Albanian: *hiri*₁ (trees' disease), *hiri*₂ (ash of fires, etc); *fond*₁ (forest stock) *fond*₂ (fund); *presje*₁ (a plant termed *sedge*), *presje*₂ (comma in linguistics); *kupë*₁ (calyx), *kupë*₂ (bowl); *rrëshqitje*₁ (skidding in forest transport), *rrëshqitje*₂ (slipping); *pishinë*₁ (common pine, is used in Peja), *pishinë*₂ (a swimming pool); *lakuriq*₁ (a bat, a bird), *lakuriq* (an adjective meaning naked); *mare*₁ (strawberry tree), *mare*₂ (shame); *halë*₁ (needles/leaves of conifers), *halë*₂ (fishbone), *biotë*₁ (a living thing), *biotë*₂ (otherwise called tuja/wall creeper); *zogth*₁ (dialectical, meaning checquer tree), and *zogth*₂ (meaning a bird). etc.

Partial homonyms: they differ in meaning and spelling. E.g. *check* (a wood defect) and *cheque* (a written order to a bank to pay.....etc); *knot* (part of a tree, or sometimes considered as a wood defect) and *not* (negative particle); *hare* (wild rabbit), and *hair* (of a mammal, man)

It is obvious that in two words or terms, two meanings/concepts are quite remote and one of the meanings/concepts has nothing to do with the field of forestry. The boundaries in their meanings are clear-cut.

Homonyms can also be divided into **homophones** and **homographs**.

Homophones have the same pronunciations but different meanings.

e.g. *site* (an area full of trees/*sight* (view)); *fir* (a coniferous species)/*fur* (skin of an animal); *bear* (animal)/*bare* (adj, uncover); *deer* (animal)/*dear* (beloved person). *bow* – to bend and *bough* - a new tree branch; *horse* – animal (used in forest transport) and *hoarse* – belonging to voice (his voice is hoarse today); *raise* (v, rise) and *rays* (n, strips of cells extending radially within a tree...etc), *sell* (the opposite of buy/purchase) and *cell* (the microscopic unit of an organism); *knot* (that part that links the limb with the tree trunk or a wood defect)/*not* (as a particle); *hare* (wild rabbit), and *hair* (of a mammal, man); *wait* (expect someone) and *weight* (the heaviness of wood and bark)

Homographs have the same spelling and pronunciation, but different meanings. E.g. **bank** (institution and river shore); **rose** (as a plant and past simple of *rise*); **bark** (cry of dogs and skin of trees); **saw** (as an equipment in forestry operation and past simple of *see*); **stand** (verb) and **stand** (an aggregation of trees or other growth occupying a specific area....etc); **leaves** (foliage) and **leaves** as a verb (the bus leaves...); **palm** (a tree species) and **palm** of a hand; **chop** (a piece of meat) and **chop** (to cut logs into smaller pieces); **ash** (a species/frashër) and **ash** (ash/hiri of fire woods); **cup** (a container) and **cup** (wood defect); **trunk** (of a tree) and **trunk** (of an elephant); **leaf** (plural -leaves meaning foliage) and **leaf** (paper); **wood** (timber) and **wood** (small forest); **dock** (a kind of plant/lëpjetë) and **dock** at the seashore; **horse tail** (a kind of grass) and **horse tail** (a part of horse body) **llapush** (n; butterbur) and **llapush** (adj; long-eared), **ombrela** (a way of arranged petals) and **ombrela** (a dialectical word, meaning an *umbrella*); **valle** (a tree which grows up to 20m) and **valle** (a dance), **bishtpelëz** (fescue grass or a mule's tail); **bishtqeni** (dog's tail grass or dog's tail). etc

Homographs have the same spelling, but different pronunciations and meanings, in English.. Let's say: **bow** /bou/– the weapon which shoots arrows (e.g. "bow and arrow"); while **bow** /bau/– lumber defect (end-to-end curve along the face usually caused by improper storage of lumber; introduces internal stresses by the wood that make it difficult to cut); or **wind** (noun)/**wind** (verb); **row/rou/** of trees and **row/rau/** – quarrel; **sow** (to plant the seeds) and **sow** (female pig)

Homonyms may also be classified by the type of meaning into: lexical, lexico-grammatical and grammatical homonymy, but this is not our discussion point in this article.

Starting from the above mentioned examples, it should be pointed out that there should be a distinction between “real” homonyms which have no links with each other concerning their etymology such as *bear – animal* and *bear – as a verb*, and homonyms that have links with polysemy because they share the same origin or etymology, for example *mouth* of a river and *mouth* of an animal; *trunk* of an organ and *trunk* of a tree; *limbs* of a tree and *limbs* of a man;

In terminology, according to the above conception, homonymy will be a case of polysemy where meanings (concepts) expressed by a sign (term) are generally remote or distant. Therefore, "polysemy will be regarded as shriveled in homonymy"

3. Ways of teaching homonymy

When working with any other type of text like terminological or specialized texts, homonymy cases cannot be ruled out. The problem is how to avoid them, in what sort of ways. There may be many different and effective ways of teaching homonymy, and it is important to keep in mind “*transparency*” of the terms so that students, specialists are likely to understand what is meant by them. Homonymy is a very interesting phenomenon and useful for our teaching and students as well. To us, we should find out **many ways** to help them study them easier and make them more exciting. In addition, we also have to give them some tips to help them learn them better. *A question arises: How can students be helped to identify homonymous terms?*

1. Students should know this and pay attention to **pronunciation**. Moreover, they **should take notice of context** when they translate or listen to them. This determines meaning /concept of the term. As we know, the number of words' senses is more than the number of words themselves.

E.g. “Ç’po bën/what are you doing? Po *pres anshelikën*/Im cutting angelica. ”. If this situation is in a written form, homonymy can easily be spotted by students. But, in case it occurs in listening, then students have to be careful as *pres* might mean *receive Angelica* or *cut angelica* (a curative herb). Thus, it is the context that decides.

1.1. Additional context can help students to disambiguate the sentence e.g What a nice brush! (it's rather ambiguous; an *implement* with hair and a handle....., or *shrub*). In Albanian “kjo *shtupë* nuk bën” (this evergreen sedge is useless, i.e. leaves to be desired and *shtupë* – wad) These terms should be used in wider contexts, otherwise they would lead to a misunderstanding or confusion.

2. Grouping of terms under some headings may help facilitate teaching Let's say **name species** such as *plants, shrubs, trees*, etc. for example **forest transport** like *forest roads and their benefits, means of transport*, etc; **forest operations** such as *thinnings, felling, delimiting, debarking, bucking, clearcutting, shelterwood cutting*, etc; ; **tools and vehicles** used in forest operations and timber transport, etc.

3. It must be noted that **species names should be accompanied by definitions** or even **descriptions**, whenever possible, especially when their names are involved in homonymous situations, such as: *bisht thiu₁/ tail of a pig* and *bisht thiu₂/ millefolium*, a species; *bishtdhelpr₁/ meadow foxtail*, a plant and *bishtdhelpr₂/ a foxtail*; *bishtlepuri₁/hare'tail grass* and *bishtlepuri₂/ a hare's tail*; *akte₁/baneberry* and *akte₂/acts*; *bishtluani₁/motherwort* and *bishtluani₂/ a lion's tail*; *bishtmiu₁/miccomeria* and *bishtmiu₂/ a mouse tail*; In English: *box (container/kuti and a kind of shrub/bushi i shkurreve)*; *ash (a kind of broadleaved tree/frashër and ash (of firewood/ hiri)*); *cup (a container/filxhan and wood defect/lakim i dërrasës)*, etc.

4. Avoidance of homonymy can be achieved by **finding or coining new signifiers** for definite concepts expressed by word terms, especially for concepts that can be associated from the whole conceptual structure, like Albanian forestry terminology. E.g. *druri (tree)* and *druja (wood)*. Students can be involved in such activities, besides terminologists as well..

5. Another way may be **searching and locating in the General Language a word, raising it to the term status with a view to designating one of the concepts**. Examples: In Albanian, *bredh₁/fir* and *bredh₂/wander*; In English *box₁/bushi*, a species in forestry and *box₂/a cointainer*; *palm₁* a species/tree and *palm₂* (of hand), etc.

6. In case of adjectives, they can be better **clarified by means of antonyms or synonyms** (it occurs esp. when we dictate sentences and students have to write down). Let's say: *dead* trees (the opposite *living* or its synonym *non-living*) and *Dad (father)* as a noun; *hi!* as a greeting and *high* (thinnings) as opposed to *low* (thinnings) (in Albanian, rrallime nga lart dhe rrallime nga poshtë).

7. Another way is by matching the two parts of the sentences. We give a lot of sentences using homonyms so that students can differentiate them (their meanings) by matching. Examples:

Did you see the bat? It's near the cage. (*a flying mammal*)

Where did you put the bat? Near the cage of the parrot. (*sports equipment*)

8. Teachers can design some **multiple choice exercises** like this:

a. We will do it you like it or not.

whether/weather

b you like to have some tea?

wood/would

c. I need to see if there is any in the board.

cheque/check

d. This needs thinnings.

sight/site

9. Students should be let free to discover English and Albanian homonymous terms with creative and interesting activities such as puns. This would make the students identify more easily the homonymous terms.

10. Pun is a good and funny way in teaching. In this case we “play with words or terms”.

Pun is known for its effect on playing with different meanings of a word or bringing two terms together with a similar form but different meanings. It's done for humorous purposes and sometimes having excitement in communication. It makes students remember the terms better. They should be **given in a written form** in order to let the students distinguish the two or three meanings depending on the number of homonyms included..

‘You say you are studying *trees*? What *branch* of the subject are you specializing in?

You *sow* the seeds while I feed the *sow*

What a *row* from the last class in the *row* ?

Our *bear* cannot *bear* to be *bare* at any hour.”

It's hard to *wind* in the sails in this *wind*.

“Ah (an exclamation) mor’ djalë, që nuk zgjodhe një *ah* (beech tree)!”

“O, *bari*, (shepherd) *bari* (grass) është tharë.....”

“*Bredh* (wander) për një *bredh* (fir) gjithë ditën, po s’të zë syri asnjë”.

To understand the above mentioned examples, students need **a wider context**, because the ability to effectively communicate depends on common understanding of terms and definitions and their proper usage.

11. Teachers should make students aware of homonymy existence. So review homonyms frequently in order to avoid mistakes caused by them through wide varieties of activities

12. Give clear explanations how various sounds are spelled is also an effective method to help learners identify homonyms correctly.

13. Categorizing terms according to the parts of speech. (noun, verb, adjective). Example: *farëkuq*, an adjective (a red seed) and *farëkuq* a noun, *fierthorn* in forestry; *bukuroshe* an adjective – beautiful and *bukuroshe* a noun – *daisy* in forestry. In English: *check* – verb (control) and *checks* (or splits) in timber.

14. The involvement of students in terminological work (for systematization and standardization of terms) may make them distinguish homonymy better and why not coin new signifiers/terms in order to regulate the non-accordance one term= 2 concepts..

4. Conclusions

Homonymy has to do with the absence of signs (terms), for example, *rrënjë* refers or expresses two different concepts : 1. *tree root* (as part of a tree) and 2. *common oak* (a shrub species). Therefore, coining new terms through ways and word formation tools of Albanian language which should respond to the relevant concepts leads to the avoidance of this phenomenon. Standardization of forest terminology is indispensable, as well. Moreover, this article will help teachers become more sensitive to homonymy teaching problem which asks for attention, dedication and commitment. We can say that these recommended ways are not envisaged that teachers teaching students will stop at these activities or ways. They are intended as ways that can serve in their teaching. Of course, they have their own ways and methods of teaching suitable to their students and are free to use them.

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