

Research Article

Semantic Polysemy as a Result of Syntactic Play

Olena Pokhyliuk* 

Department of Philology, Vinnytsia Humanities Pedagogical College, Vinnytsia, Ukraine

Abstract

This study investigates the complex relationship between semantic polysemy and syntactic structures in contemporary English. Semantic polysemy refers to the phenomenon in which a single word carries multiple related meanings, with interpretation shifting according to syntactic and pragmatic context. This variability reflects the flexibility of language and the cognitive mechanisms that allow speakers to adapt meaning to diverse communicative situations. By analyzing how polysemous words function across different syntactic environments, the research shows that meaning is not static but dynamically shaped by grammatical structure and contextual usage. The methodology is qualitative, focusing on detailed examination of polysemous words in literature, academic discourse, and online media. Each occurrence was analyzed to determine how syntactic variation influences interpretation. This approach provides a comprehensive view of the mechanisms through which syntax interacts with semantics to generate multiple layers of meaning. The findings reveal that structures such as subordination, repetition, and inversion play significant roles in activating specific semantic nuances, underscoring the importance of syntax in shaping interpretation. The study also adopts a comparative perspective, drawing on examples from contemporary English poetry, particularly the works of Carolyn Forché. Her innovative use of syntax illustrates how polysemy can be enriched through poetic language, inviting readers to explore multiple interpretations and enhancing the emotional and thematic depth of her texts. The analysis shows that syntactic devices such as repetition and variation are not merely stylistic ornaments but essential mechanisms for constructing meaning and guiding interpretive processes. Beyond theoretical linguistics, the implications of this research extend to applied fields. In natural language processing and artificial intelligence, a nuanced understanding of polysemy and its syntactic conditioning is crucial for improving systems that aim to approximate human communication. In language pedagogy, insights into the relationship between syntax and semantic variability can inform teaching strategies that help learners navigate complexities of meaning. The study highlights that awareness of syntactic interplay can enhance learners' ability to interpret texts more flexibly and creatively. In conclusion, this research contributes to the broader field of linguistics by demonstrating that semantic polysemy cannot be fully understood without considering its syntactic environment. By integrating qualitative, corpus-based, and comparative approaches, the study offers valuable insights into the dynamic nature of language, its cognitive foundations, and its expressive potential. The findings emphasize that syntax is not only a structural framework but also a key factor in the construction and interpretation of meaning.

Keywords

Semantic Polysemy, Syntactic Structures, Linguistic Flexibility, Language Comprehension, Syntactic Play, Syntax and Semantics, Cognitive Processes, Natural Language Processing

*Corresponding author: olhovaolena@ukr.net (Olena Pokhyliuk)

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1. Introduction

Semantic polysemy refers to the capacity of a word to have multiple meanings that are related by extension. This phenomenon is a fundamental aspect of language, reflecting the complexity and richness of human communication. Polysemous words can evoke different interpretations based on their contextual usage, allowing speakers to convey nuanced meanings with a single term. This study aims to investigate how syntactic structures influence the meanings derived from polysemous words, focusing on the interplay between syntax and semantics.

Understanding the relationship between syntax and semantic polysemy is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it enhances our comprehension of linguistic flexibility, illustrating how language can adapt to various communicative needs. By examining how different syntactic contexts activate specific meanings of polysemous words, we can gain insights. As J. Pustejovsky explains, “polysemy arises from systematic variations in how lexical items encode multiple related senses through their qualia structure” [14], highlighting the structured yet dynamic nature of meaning variation. This exploration reveals the dynamic nature of language, where meaning is not fixed but rather shaped by the structure and context in which words are used. As E. Pavay emphasizes, “grammar provides the structural patterns that allow speakers to convey different meanings from the same lexical items; syntactic structure is essential for interpreting how words relate to each other in a sentence” [13]. In this regard, the application of diverse methodological frameworks becomes essential, as “in modern linguistics, several linguistic research methods are employed for analyzing sentence structures, including distributional analysis, immediate constituent analysis, transformational analysis, statistical analysis, comparative-functional analysis, and componential and syntactic modeling approaches” [17].

Moreover, this research contributes to the broader field of linguistics by highlighting the significance of syntactic variations in shaping meaning. It underscores the importance of considering syntax when analyzing lexical semantics, as the grammatical environment can significantly influence interpretation. By focusing on specific examples of polysemous words within diverse syntactic contexts, this study seeks to illuminate the mechanisms through which meaning is constructed and understood. This perspective aligns with the view that “at the syntactic level, instead of focusing on the arrangement of individual word forms within a sentence, the characteristics of entire groups are analyzed,” which emphasizes the necessity of examining larger syntactic units to account for semantic variability [17]. Importantly, as G. Leech observes, “poetic language often departs from the normal word order and syntactic patterns of everyday English, creating expressive effects through inversion, fragmentation, and reorganization of sentence structure” [8]. This insight reinforces the argument that syntactic variation is not merely

structural but deeply tied to meaning-making processes across both poetic and everyday language.

Additionally, the implications of this research extend to practical applications in areas such as language teaching, natural language processing, and cognitive linguistics. A deeper understanding of semantic polysemy and its relationship with syntax can inform effective teaching strategies that help learners navigate the complexities of language. In the realm of technology, insights from this study can enhance natural language processing systems, enabling them to better handle the nuances of human communication.

In summary, this study aims to explore the intricate relationship between syntactic structures and semantic polysemy, contributing to our understanding of language's flexibility and the cognitive mechanisms involved in meaning construction. By investigating how syntax influences the interpretation of polysemous words, we hope to provide valuable insights into the nature of language and its role in human cognition.

2. Methodology

The analysis utilizes a qualitative methodology to investigate a range of polysemous words across different syntactic contexts. Data were gathered from a diverse array of contemporary English texts, encompassing literature, academic publications, and online media sources. Each occurrence of polysemy was meticulously examined to discern the syntactic structures that influence the variations in meaning. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of how syntax interacts with semantics to produce multiple interpretations of polysemous terms. By focusing on specific examples, the analysis aims to illuminate the intricate relationship between syntactic context and the meanings derived from polysemous words. Such a methodological choice reflects the principle that “the selection of an appropriate method depends on the research object, and an effective application of these methods allows researchers to achieve significant and productive results in the field,” ensuring the reliability and relevance of the findings [17]. This perspective is further supported by the view that “the structural space $S(f)$ generated by a function is defined as the family of sets consisting of its syntactic iterative application, semantic syntactic expansion, and logical typing” [11], which conceptually aligns with the multi-level analysis adopted in this study, integrating syntactic, semantic, and interpretive dimensions of polysemy. At the same time, it resonates with the notion that “syntactic representations provide an explicit structural framework that allows semantic interpretation to be mapped systematically onto linguistic form,” reinforcing the theoretical foundation of the present methodological approach and its emphasis on linking structural description with semantic analysis [12].

The analysis also incorporates a detailed examination of language play within the works of contemporary English poet

Carolyn Forché. Forché's poetry is characterized by its rich use of language, where syntactic variations contribute significantly to the emergence of semantic polysemy. Her innovative manipulation of syntax invites readers to explore multiple meanings, enhancing the emotional and thematic depth of her work. As G. Leech aptly note, "Syntax is the structural framework of a poem, within which the poet organizes meaning" [8]. This metaphor underscores the structural and functional importance of syntax in shaping meaning, highlighting how subordinate clauses and syntactic variation enrich both poetic expression and semantic interpretation.

The article employs several linguistic research methods to analyze semantic polysemy and its relationship with syntactic play. Firstly, a qualitative analysis is utilized, focusing on a selection of polysemous words within various syntactic contexts. This approach allows for an in-depth examination of how different syntactic structures influence the meanings of these words.

Secondly, the research incorporates a corpus-based methodology, drawing data from a diverse range of contemporary English texts, including literature, academic articles, and online media. This extensive data collection ensures a comprehensive understanding of polysemy in different contexts and registers.

Additionally, the study employs case studies of specific polysemous words, analyzing their usage in various syntactic environments to identify patterns and variations in meaning. This method highlights the dynamic interplay between syntax and semantics, providing concrete examples of how language operates in practice. Importantly, as G. Leech emphasizes, "deviations from normal word order and the use of repetition are among the principal devices by which poetic language departs from everyday syntax" [8]. This insight reinforces the argument that syntactic variation is not merely structural but deeply tied to meaning-making processes across both poetic and everyday language.

Furthermore, the analysis includes a comparative approach, examining how different authors, particularly Carolyn Forché, utilize language play and syntactic variability in their poetry. This comparative lens enriches the study by illustrating the broader implications of syntactic play across different literary contexts.

Overall, these methods work together to provide a nuanced understanding of semantic polysemy, emphasizing the crucial role of syntax in shaping meaning within language.

3. Results

Our analysis revealed several key findings regarding the relationship between syntax and semantic polysemy. First, syntactic variability plays a significant role, as words such as „bank“ exhibit different meanings based on their syntactic roles, for example, as a noun or a verb. This demonstrates how a single word can shift in meaning depending on its grammatical function within a sentence. Second, contextual in-

fluence is crucial; the surrounding syntactic elements often determine which meaning of a polysemous word is activated. This means that the context in which a word appears can significantly guide the reader's interpretation, highlighting the importance of syntax in meaning construction. In line with this observation, "meaning selection in ambiguous lexical items is guided by local syntactic configurations that constrain the range of possible interpretations," emphasizing the decisive role of immediate syntactic environments in resolving polysemy. Lastly, structural ambiguity is another important finding [12]. Certain syntactic constructions allow for multiple interpretations, thereby enhancing the polysemous nature of specific words. As E. Pavey notes, "structural ambiguity occurs when a single syntactic configuration allows more than one interpretation; resolving such ambiguity requires identifying the hierarchical relations between constituents" [13]. This perspective is further supported by J. Pustejovsky, who argues that "the interaction between a word's lexical structure and the syntactic environment determines which interpretation is selected in context" [14], demonstrating that ambiguity is resolved through the dynamic interplay between lexical semantics and grammatical configuration. This phenomenon corresponds to the observation that "structural ambiguity arises when a single syntactic configuration licenses more than one compositional structure," which provides a formal explanation for how a single grammatical pattern can generate several layers of meaning simultaneously [12]. As Y. Nishiyama observes, "Branching structures such as trees are generated by recursive or grammar-based functions" [11]. This insight underscores the structural mechanisms that enable syntactic variability and ambiguity, reinforcing our claim that polysemy is not merely lexical but deeply rooted in the recursive and hierarchical organization of syntax. Importantly, this syntactic flexibility extends beyond literal interpretation to figurative language. "The findings suggest that syntactic structure plays a role in how metaphors are evaluated across different features... differences in quality, aptness, and familiarity indicate that syntactic variation may influence metaphor perception in ways that have not been extensively explored" [9]. This observation highlights that the recursive and hierarchical organization of syntax not only generates multiple semantic layers but also shapes how speakers perceive and assess metaphorical meaning, thereby linking structural ambiguity with cognitive and interpretive processes in language use.

This structural flexibility enables a single phrase to convey various meanings, underscoring the dynamic interaction between syntax and semantics in language. These observations correspond with established approaches to syntactic research, as "syntactic modeling methods such as componential and syntagmatic analysis are widely used to determine the placement of syntactic units within sentence structures" [17]. Moreover, as Y. Nishiyama notes, "Structural correspondences or interpretation mappings between these components can be introduced, allowing for interactions between the

syntactic, semantic, and logical aspects” [11]. In line with this, recent research on the syntax–semantics interface emphasizes that “structural configurations shape meaning and how interpretation constrains syntactic possibilities” [10]. This perspective reinforces our findings by demonstrating that polysemy is not only a lexical phenomenon but also a structural one, deeply rooted in the interplay of grammatical organization and semantic interpretation. Overall, these findings suggest that understanding the interplay between syntax and semantic polysemy can deepen our comprehension of linguistic structures and their implications for language processing.

4. Discussion

The results indicate that syntactic play is not merely a linguistic curiosity but a fundamental aspect of how meaning is constructed in language. This playfulness in syntax allows for a dynamic interaction between form and meaning, which can lead to the emergence of polysemy. The exploration of polysemy through syntactic structures reveals insights into the cognitive processes that underpin language use. As Y. Nishiyama observes, “The emergent complexity of the generated space reflects the multidimensional interaction between structural shape, expandability, and logical complexity.” [11]. This perspective highlights how syntactic play generates layered interpretive possibilities, reinforcing the idea that polysemy arises from the intricate interplay of structural form, semantic flexibility, and cognitive processing. From a psycholinguistic standpoint, this interaction is also evident in the observation that “processing polysemous expressions engages both syntactic parsing mechanisms and higher-level interpretive strategies,” underscoring the simultaneous involvement of structural analysis and semantic interpretation in human language comprehension [12].

Take, for instance, the word “run”. This term exemplifies polysemy as it can denote both the act of moving swiftly on foot and the operation of a machine, such as a computer program. The syntactic context in which “run” appears determines its interpretation. When used in a sentence like “*I will run the software*”, the syntactic structure signals that “run” refers to the operation of a program. Conversely, in “*I like to run in the park*”, the same word conveys the physical activity of moving swiftly. This duality underscores the significance of syntax in shaping meaning, illustrating how a single word can take on different interpretations based on its grammatical environment.

This phenomenon can be further understood through the lens of cognitive linguistics, which posits that language reflects the ways in which humans conceptualize the world. According to V. Evans and M. Green, “the relationship between syntax and semantics is not merely a matter of structural alignment; it involves deeper cognitive processes that shape how we understand and produce language” [4]. The interplay between syntax and semantics allows speakers to

navigate complex meanings and adapt their expressions to fit various communicative contexts.

Moreover, the concept of syntactic play extends beyond individual words to encompass phrases and sentences. For example, consider the phrase “*take a break*”. Depending on the syntactic structure, this expression can imply different actions. In a command context, “*Take a break!*” suggests that someone should pause their current activity. However, in a narrative context, “*After the meeting, we decided to take a break*”, it indicates a planned cessation of work. This flexibility highlights how syntax not only influences individual word meanings but also shapes the overall interpretation of phrases and sentences. As recent research emphasizes, syntactic structures can simultaneously perform multiple functions, since “this study has provided a detailed analysis demonstrating that the colloquial expression ? inno in JA functions on two levels: the syntactic level (operating as a C) and the pragmatic level (operating as a DM)” [1]. Such findings further underscore how syntactic configurations guide interpretation not only at the word level, but across broader linguistic units. This observation aligns with recent research showing that “the multifunctionality of ? inno highlights how speakers use syntactic positioning to negotiate meaning, manage discourse flow, and signal pragmatic intent in real-time interaction” [1].

The implications of syntactic play are significant for understanding language development and processing. Children learning language exhibit a remarkable ability to grasp polysemous meanings through exposure to various syntactic contexts. Research by P. Bloom emphasizes that «children learn the meanings of words not in isolation but through their use in diverse syntactic environments, which helps them to build a more nuanced understanding of language» [2]. This suggests that the ability to engage with syntactic play is a crucial aspect of language acquisition, enabling learners to navigate the complexities of meaning.

Furthermore, syntactic play is not limited to native speakers; it also plays a vital role in second language acquisition. Language learners often struggle with polysemy because they may not be familiar with the syntactic contexts that trigger different meanings. As noted by R. Schmidt, “Learners need to be exposed to a range of syntactic constructions in order to develop a flexible command of the language and understand how meaning is shaped by grammatical choices” [16]. By emphasizing syntactic flexibility, educators can help learners develop a more comprehensive understanding of polysemous words, ultimately enhancing their communicative competence.

The creative potential of syntactic play also manifests in literary and artistic expressions. Writers and poets often exploit polysemy to enrich their work, using words that can evoke multiple interpretations. The syntactic arrangement of phrases can create layers of meaning, inviting readers to engage with the text on a deeper level. As G. Leech notes, “In English poetry syntactic deviations such as repetition of

words or structures contribute to rhythm and poetic effect” [8]. Moreover, contemporary researchers emphasize that “The role of anaphora in the poem is great. It gives the verse great expressiveness, imagery and brightness. ... Anaphora is a stylistic figure of speech, it consists in repeating the same elements (sounds, words, phrases) at the beginning of each parallel row (stanza, verse, etc.)” [7]. This observation highlights how syntactic devices such as anaphora not only structure poetic language but also enhance its rhythm, emotionality, and interpretive richness. For instance, in the line “*The light broke*”, the word “*broke*” can refer to the literal breaking of light (as in dawn) or the metaphorical breaking of a moment. The syntactic structure allows for this dual interpretation, showcasing the power of language to convey complex ideas through simple words.

Carolyn Forche's poetry, particularly in her collection “*The Angel of History*”, exemplifies the intricate interplay between language play and semantic polysemy [5]. Forche's work is characterized by a profound engagement with language that not only conveys emotion but also invites readers to explore multiple meanings through her innovative use of syntax, imagery, and word choice. This analysis delves into how Forche employs language play to create effects of semantic polysemy, enriching her poetic expressions and enhancing the reader's experience.

Forche's poems often illustrate the concept of semantic polysemy, where a single word or phrase carries multiple meanings depending on its context. This is evident in the poem “*The Colonel*”, where the word «*dead*» is used in a context that evokes both literal and metaphorical interpretations. For instance, when Forche writes, “*Some of the dead were in the trees*” [5], the term “*dead*” not only refers to the physical state of being deceased but also implies a broader commentary on the loss of life and the lingering presence of violence in memory. The syntactic arrangement here allows “*dead*” to resonate with multiple implications, inviting readers to contemplate the weight of death in both personal and collective histories.

Moreover, Forche's use of imagery often plays a crucial role in creating layers of meaning. In “*The Angel of History*”, she describes a scene where “*the past is never dead. It's not even past*” [5]. This phrase encapsulates the notion of temporal fluidity and the cyclical nature of history. The word “*past*” serves as a focal point for semantic exploration, as it can denote both a specific time frame and the broader concept of memory and its impact on the present. Here, Forche's manipulation of syntax and semantics encourages readers to reflect on the relationship between history and identity, emphasizing how the past continually shapes contemporary experiences.

Forche also employs language play through the strategic use of juxtaposition and contrast. In “*What You Have Heard of Was True*”, she writes, “*The house was full of people. They were all dead*” [5]. This stark contrast between the liveliness implied by “*full of people*” and the grim reality of “*they were*

all dead” creates a jarring effect that highlights the dissonance between appearance and reality. The phrase “*full of people*” suggests vibrancy and life, while its juxtaposition with death introduces a haunting ambiguity. This syntactic play enhances the poem's emotional impact and invites readers to grapple with the complexities of existence in a world marked by violence and loss.

The theme of memory and its interplay with language is further explored in Forche's poem “*The Memory of the World*”. She writes, “*We were told to remember the dead, to forget the living*” [5]. The phrase “*remember the dead*” evokes a sense of duty and reverence, while “*forget the living*” introduces a disturbing irony that underscores the neglect of those still affected by trauma. The duality of “*remember*” and “*forget*” creates a tension that reflects the struggle between honoring the past and acknowledging present realities. This linguistic contrast not only enhances the poem's thematic depth but also exemplifies how Forche's language play fosters semantic polysemy, allowing for multiple interpretations of memory and its implications.

Forche's exploration of language extends to her use of metaphor, which often serves to deepen the layers of meaning within her work. In “*The Lament*”, she writes, “*The river was a mirror, reflecting the sky*” [5]. The metaphor of the river as a mirror suggests both clarity and distortion, inviting readers to consider how reflections can reveal truths while simultaneously obscuring them. The word “*mirror*” here embodies multiple meanings; it signifies not only a literal reflection but also the act of self-examination and the potential for revelation. This metaphorical play enriches the poem's exploration of identity and perception, illustrating how language can convey complex ideas through simple imagery.

Furthermore, Forche's engagement with language play is evident in her use of sound and rhythm, which contributes to the overall effect of semantic polysemy. In “*The Garden*”, she writes, “*The flowers spoke in colors I could not name*” [5]. The phrase “*spoke in colors*” personifies the flowers, suggesting a communication that transcends verbal language. The ambiguity of “*colors I could not name*” introduces a sense of mystery and invites readers to ponder the limitations of language in capturing the fullness of experience. This interplay of sound and meaning creates a lyrical quality that enhances the reader's engagement with the text, emphasizing the richness of Forche's poetic language.

In conclusion, Carolyn Forche's poetry exemplifies the intricate relationship between language play and semantic polysemy. Through her innovative use of syntax, imagery, juxtaposition, and metaphor, Forche creates a multifaceted exploration of themes such as memory, identity, and the impact of violence. Her ability to manipulate language allows for the emergence of multiple meanings, inviting readers to engage deeply with her work. By examining her poetry, we gain insight into the power of language as a tool for both expression and exploration, highlighting the significance of semantic polysemy in enriching our understanding of human experience.

rience.

Carolyn Forche's "*In the Lateness of the World*" further exemplifies her masterful use of language play to create effects of semantic polysemy [6]. Throughout this collection, Forche employs nuanced word choices, vivid imagery, and complex syntactical structures that invite readers to engage with multiple interpretations of her themes. This analysis will explore specific examples from the text, highlighting how Forche's linguistic strategies enhance the richness of her poetic expression.

One of the most striking aspects of Forche's poetry is her ability to evoke complex emotions through seemingly simple phrases. In the poem "*The Garden*", she writes, "*We planted the garden to grow the past*" [6]. The phrase "*grow the past*" is particularly rich in semantic polysemy. On one level, it suggests cultivating memories and experiences, as one would tend to a garden. However, it also implies the idea of nurturing trauma and history, indicating that the past is not merely a backdrop but an active element of the present. This duality of meaning encourages readers to reflect on how personal and collective histories shape identity, emphasizing the ongoing influence of the past in contemporary life.

Forche's exploration of language play is further demonstrated in the poem "*The Last Day*", where she writes, "*Time is a river, and we are its stones*" [6]. Here, the metaphor of time as a river introduces a dynamic interplay between fluidity and permanence. The word "*river*" evokes notions of movement and change, while "*stones*" suggests solidity and endurance. This juxtaposition creates a tension between the transitory nature of time and the lasting impact of experiences. The phrase allows for multiple interpretations: it can be seen as a commentary on the inevitability of change, or as a reflection on how individuals remain shaped by their experiences over time. This linguistic play enriches the poem's thematic depth, inviting readers to consider their relationship with time and memory.

In "*What Was Lost*", Forche writes, "*We were the children of the war, but we played in the light*" [6]. The phrase "*children of the war*" immediately evokes a sense of inherited trauma and the impact of conflict on identity. However, the juxtaposition with "*played in the light*" introduces a contrasting image of innocence and joy. This tension between darkness and light creates a complex emotional landscape, where the weight of war coexists with the possibility of hope and resilience. The use of "*light*" as a metaphor for positivity and clarity further emphasizes the duality of experience, allowing readers to engage with the complexities of memory and survival.

Forche's engagement with semantic polysemy is also evident in her treatment of nature and its relationship to human experience. In the poem "*The River*", she states, "*The river remembers what we forget*" [6]. The word "*remembers*" personifies the river, suggesting that nature holds memories that humans may overlook or choose to forget. This creates a powerful contrast between the permanence of nature and the

fragility of human memory. The river's "*memory*" can be interpreted as a metaphor for the collective history of a place, as well as a reminder of the cycles of life and death. This linguistic interplay invites readers to reflect on the ways in which the natural world interacts with human experiences, reinforcing the theme of interconnectedness.

In "*The Letter*", Forche writes, "*Words are the only thing left to us*" [6]. This statement encapsulates the essence of language as both a tool for communication and a means of preserving memory. The phrase "*the only thing left*" carries a weight of loss and longing, suggesting that in the face of trauma and destruction, language remains a vital source of connection and understanding. The ambivalence of "*left*" can imply both abandonment and survival, creating a complex emotional resonance that underscores the power of words to convey meaning in challenging times. This play with language highlights the dual role of words as both a refuge and a reminder of what has been lost.

Forche's innovative use of syntax also contributes to the effects of semantic polysemy. In "*The Witness*", she writes, "*I heard the voices of the dead in the silence*" [6]. The phrase "*voices of the dead*" evokes a haunting presence, suggesting that those who have passed continue to resonate within the living. The juxtaposition of "*voices*" and "*silence*" creates an intriguing tension, as it implies that silence itself can be filled with echoes of the past. This underscores the idea that memory and grief are inextricably linked, allowing readers to explore the complexities of loss and remembrance. The syntactic structure enhances the emotional impact of the line, inviting contemplation of how the past continues to influence the present.

In conclusion, Carolyn Forche's "*In the Lateness of the World*" [6] exemplifies the intricate interplay between language play and semantic polysemy. Through her innovative use of imagery, metaphor, and syntax, Forche creates a multifaceted exploration of themes such as memory, trauma, and the human experience. Her ability to manipulate language allows for the emergence of multiple meanings, inviting readers to engage deeply with her work. By examining her poetry, we gain insight into the power of language as a tool for expression and exploration, highlighting the significance of semantic polysemy in enriching our understanding of the complexities of existence.

Moreover, the digital age has introduced new forms of syntactic play, particularly in online communication. Social media platforms often encourage brevity and creativity, leading to innovative uses of language. Acronyms, emojis, and playful syntax have become common tools for expression, allowing users to convey nuanced meanings in limited character counts. As noted by D. Crystal, "Digital communication practices affect linguistic structures, including syntactic patterns, leading to new varieties of discourse and grammatical change" [3]. This shift highlights the adaptability of language and the ongoing relevance of syntactic play in shaping meaning in an ever-changing communicative land-

scape.

In addition to its implications for language acquisition and creative expression, syntactic play also poses challenges for natural language processing (NLP) technologies. As machines increasingly engage with human language, understanding polysemy and syntactic variations becomes crucial for effective communication. Traditional NLP models often struggle with the nuances of polysemy, leading to misinterpretations or failures in context. Recent advancements in machine learning, however, have begun to address these challenges. Modern NLP systems are increasingly incorporating syntactic analysis to improve their ability to disambiguate polysemous words based on context. This tendency is further supported by the observation that “recent computational models increasingly incorporate syntactic constraints to improve disambiguation of polysemous terms in natural language processing tasks,” highlighting the growing recognition of syntactic structure as a core component of effective semantic interpretation in computational frameworks [12]. This integration of syntactic play into computational models represents a significant step toward more sophisticated language processing capabilities. As Y. Nishiyama emphasizes, “Applying the classification of functional structural complexity hierarchies in fields such as AI, natural language processing, and automated theorem proving” provides a theoretical framework that complements these technological innovations, underscoring the relevance of structural complexity in advancing computational approaches to language [11].

Moreover, the relevance of syntactic variation is evident not only in computational linguistics but also in metaphor research. As I. Mitic, A. Janic Mitic, and D. Stamenkovic observe, “Isolated nominal metaphors have dominated metaphor research for several decade. however, nominal metaphors are not as frequent as one might expect them to be” [9]. This insight underscores the importance of expanding the scope of syntactic analysis beyond traditional nominal forms, both in humanistic and computational studies, thereby reinforcing the claim that syntactic structure is central to meaning-making across diverse domains.

The exploration of syntactic play and semantic polysemy also prompts important questions about linguistic relativity and the influence of culture on language use. Different languages exhibit varying degrees of polysemy, influenced by cultural contexts and communicative practices. For example, some languages may have a single word that encompasses multiple meanings, while others may require distinct terms for each interpretation. This raises the question of how cultural factors shape the way meanings are constructed and understood. As highlighted by E. Sapir, «the structure of a language can significantly influence the thought patterns of its speakers, suggesting that polysemy is not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a reflection of cultural cognition» [15]. Understanding these cultural dimensions can enrich our comprehension of polysemy and its implications for communication across diverse linguistic landscapes.

In summary, the discussion of syntactic play reveals its integral role in shaping semantic polysemy. The flexibility of syntax allows for a rich interplay between form and meaning, facilitating creative expression and enhancing language acquisition. As speakers navigate the complexities of polysemy, they engage in a dynamic process that reflects both cognitive and cultural dimensions of language. The implications of this understanding extend to education, technology, and cross-cultural communication, highlighting the importance of recognizing the interplay between syntax and semantics in our exploration of language. At the same time, it should be acknowledged that the theoretical framework of syntactic analysis remains open to refinement, as “the principles for distinguishing primary and secondary sentence components, along with the linguistic methodologies for their analysis, are not yet fully established”, which further underscores the relevance of continued research in this field [17].

As we continue to investigate the nuances of syntactic play and semantic polysemy, future research should explore the implications of these findings across various languages and contexts. By examining how different linguistic systems handle polysemy and syntactic variation, we can gain deeper insights into the universal principles that govern human language. This ongoing exploration will not only enhance our theoretical understanding of language but also inform practical applications in education, technology, and intercultural communication, ultimately enriching our appreciation of the complexities of human expression.

5. Conclusions

This study underscores the critical role that syntactic variations play in shaping semantic polysemy. Our findings reveal that the meanings of polysemous words are not static; rather, they are dynamically influenced by the syntactic structures in which they appear. This interplay between syntax and semantics highlights the complexity of language and the cognitive processes involved in meaning construction.

By illuminating how syntactic context can activate different meanings, this research contributes to our understanding of linguistic theory, offering insights that are applicable across various domains. In particular, the implications for natural language processing and artificial intelligence are significant. Enhanced comprehension of how syntax affects meaning can lead to more sophisticated algorithms and models that better mimic human language understanding.

Moreover, the insights gained from this study pave the way for future research endeavors. We recommend that subsequent investigations explore the implications of syntactic play in a broader range of languages and cultural contexts. Such studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of polysemy across linguistic systems, further enriching our knowledge of language as a whole.

In conclusion, this research emphasizes the importance of examining the relationship between syntax and semantic

polysemy, encouraging ongoing exploration in this fascinating area of linguistics. By continuing to investigate these connections, we can deepen our understanding of language's flexibility and its implications for communication and cognitive processing.

Abbreviations

NLP Natural Language Processing

Author Contributions

Olena Pokhyliuk is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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