

The Degree of Acquisition of Somatic Polysemous Words in The Speech of Preschool-Age Children

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Received: 30 June 2025; **Accepted:** 26 July 2025; **Published:** 28 August 2025

Abstract: This article aims to provide a detailed examination of the problem of polysemous word acquisition, specifically those denoting certain body parts, in the speech of preschool-aged Uzbek children. The main objective of this study is to determine the level of acquisition of polysemy within the framework of L1. The issue addressed in this article has not yet been studied from a psycholinguistic perspective in Uzbek linguistics. Therefore, the author has conducted an in-depth investigation of the problem, presenting the solution in a unique manner. The study employed observational, componential, and statistical analysis methods. The findings provide important insights for both applied and theoretical linguistics and will serve as a foundation for future research in the fields of psycholinguistics, language education, and cognitive linguistics.

Keywords: Somatism, polysemy, acquisition, explanatory dictionary, figurative meaning, metaphor, initial acquisition.

Introduction: In anthropocentric linguistics, the term "somatism" is used to generalize the names of body parts. [Starix, 2011: 80-84]. Since somatisms are a common, universal, and high-frequency unit for all languages, the main 3 somatic polysemous words (eye, ear, foot) were selected as the subject of this article. The words eye and ear are located in the head of the body according to the anatomical location classification, correspond to the sensory organs and speech activity of a person, and are considered to have the most metaphorical meanings in linguistics. [Rahmatova, 2025: 11]. Polysemous words embody different meanings of one form, and in most studies we come across ideas that polysemy arises in context. There is no language in the world without polysemy. We have almost no idea about its occurrence. When scientists talk about the importance of polysemy, they put forward ideas such as "it helps to make the language more convenient for use" and "prevents memory strain". These ideas, in our opinion, are conclusions after the emergence of polysemy, but there is still no clear scientific idea about the process by which it arose. Since language lives directly in a person and his speech, we can get such an idea by analyzing the relationship of polysemy units with living speech

and consciousness. In addition, to date, no psycholinguistic study of polysemy, in particular, somatic polysemy, has been conducted in Uzbek linguistics. Statistical, observational, and component analysis methods were used to scientifically study the above problem.

METHOD

We will familiarize ourselves with the meanings given in the explanatory dictionary and the component analyses of Uzbek linguists of the polysemous words selected for our study:

We will classify and analyze the words identified below according to the types and methods of meaning expansion:

According to the explanatory dictionary, the word "eye" has 4 different meanings:

1. The organ of vision of a living being. Ko'z kosasi. Ko'z oqi. Ko'z qorachig'i. Qora ko'z. Shahlo ko'z. Xumor ko'z. Ayagan ko'zga cho'p tushar (proverb). Qarg'a qarg'aning ko'zini cho'qimas (proverb). Ko'z qo'rqqoq qo'l botir (proverb);
2. Look, gaze, look. [Kumushning] Ko'zlari o'ynaguvchi qizlardan bo'lsa ham, haqiqatda boshqa bir narsani ko'rgandek. A.Qodiriy, "Bygone days". Gulnor

buzuq qiz bo'lsa ko'zimizdan uzoqroq joyga yo'qolgani yaxshi. Oybek, Tanlangan asarlar. Zulfizarni esa odamlarning yomon ko'zlaridan oltinlarni yashirganday yashirasan. K.Yashin, Hamza;

3. Vision. Ko'zi xira. Ko'zi o'tkir. Ko'zi ojiz. – Bir vaqtlar do'ppi tikdim, ko'rpa qavidim... endi unday ishlarga ko'zim o'tmay qoldi. Oybek, Tanlangan asarlari. Yozuvchining ko'zi ham, dimog'i ham, qulog'i ham hech kimnikiga o'xshamaydi. Shukrullo, Javohirlar sandig'i;

4. Movable. A part or fragment of some object that is distinguished by a mark and resembles an eye. Derazaning ko'zi. Yog'ochning ko'zi. Buloqning ko'zi. [O'zbek tilining izohli lug'ati, 2022: 1014-1020].

According to the explanatory dictionary, the word "foot" has 6 different meanings:

1. An organ that serves to support the body of a person, animal, bird, and living organisms in general, and to walk or crawl. O'ng oyoq. Chap oyoq. Ipak qurtining oyoqlari. Do'st – boshga, dushman oyoqqa boqadi. Maqol. – O'ng oyog'imni ko'tarsam, chap oyog'im yega kirib ketayotgandek bo'laveradi. X.To'xtaboyev, Shirin qovunlar mamlakati;

2. The base of an object such as a table, chair, sofa, or bed that rests on the ground. Dadam suvog'i ko'chgan devorlarga, eski shkof, oyog'i maymoq stullarga bir qarab qo'ydi. S.Siyoyev, Yorug'lik;

3. End. Ko'chaning boshidan oyog'igacha tosh terilgan. – Podachi podaning oyoq tomonidan chang yutib, elan-qaran yurib kelayotgan sigirni tayog'i bilan ko'rsatib: "Anavi seniki", dedi. S.Anorboyev, Hamsuhbatlar;

4. The end, the time when a season, period, etc., is ending. Kuz kunlarining oyog'i va qish kunlarining boshi edi. A.Qodiriy, O'tgan kunlar;

5. Edge, margin, lower side; skirt. Asaxon bir to'da qizlar bilan oyoqroqda g'uj bo'lib turganini ko'rgan Soraxon o'rtaga tushib, yigitlarni chaqirib oldi. H.G'ulom, Senga intilaman. [O'zbek tilining izohli lug'ati, 2022: 569-573].

According to the explanatory dictionary, the word "ear" has 7 different meanings:

1. The organ of hearing and balance in humans and vertebrates and its external part. Odamning qulog'i. Otning qulog'i. Quloq pardasi. Quloq suprasi. Quloq kasalliklari. Quloqqa boltoq taqmoq. Qulog'ini (qulog'idan) cho'zmoq. – Qiy-chuv, chag'ir-chug'ur quloqni kar qiladi. Oyek, Tanlangan asarlar;

2. A part of something that serves to hold, hang,

or fasten. Chelakning qulog'i. Yog'och karavotning qulog'i. Chig'irning qulog'i. Qozonchining erki bor, qaydan quloq chiqarsa. Maqol;

3. The long part of a headgear that is pulled down to cover the ears and chin and keep the head warm. Telpakning qulog'i;

4. A part of some mechanisms and musical instruments that is used to turn or adjust. Dutorning qulog'i. – Mashshoqlar o'z asboblarning quloqlarini burab, sozini to'g'rilashdi. A.Qahhor, Sarob;

5. s.t. A device used to control a car, tractor, etc.; steering wheel. Hushyorlik bilan moshina qulog'ini burab ketayotgan yosh shofyor Kozim, o'zining harbiy holatda ekanini sezib, nihoyatda g'ayratlangan. M.Muhamedov, Mashq;

6. s.t. The place where a plant's leaves or shoots grow; the first shoot, leaf. Uch yuz gektarcha yerning g'o'zasi uchinchi marta ekildi. Ammo biz ham bo'sh kelmadik: g'o'za quloq ko'rsatdi deguncha parvarishlab, yaganalayverdik. Y.Shamsharov, Yengish;

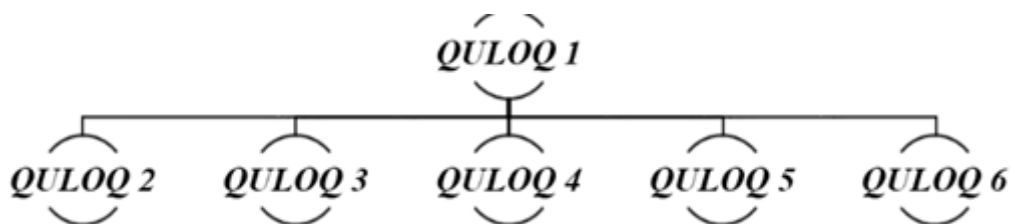
7. s.t. a person who conveys everything, a spy. "Quloq" ess yo'talishda davom etdi. Asta-sekin ko'kara boshladi. [izohli lug'at 4-tom., 2022, 272-bet].

Based on theoretical sources in the Uzbek language, we provide a component analysis of the meanings of the above lexical units:

In the abstract of the PhD dissertation of Bukhara State University researcher Feruza Nazrullayeva entitled "Semantics of Linguistic Units Denoting Human Head Organs in English and Uzbek Languages", it is said that the word "eye" has more than 53 meanings in the Uzbek language. [F.Narzullayeva, 2023: 17].

Regarding the lexeme "mouth", she states that "there are meanings related to the use of the oral lexeme in the Uzbek language as a noun, verb, adjective, and adverb. It is used as a noun, verb, adjective, and adverb, and is often a homograph. Also, denotative and connotative meanings of the oral lexeme expressed through each word group have emerged." [F.Narzullayeva, 2023: 18].

In his article "Semantic Structure of Polysemantic Words in Memoir Texts," linguist Ismoiljon Khojialiyeu analyzes the polysemantic word "kuloq," and focuses on the fan-shaped, chain-like connections between denotative and connotative meanings in polysemy. At the same time, he analyzes the relationship between the derived meanings of the word "kuloq" and its main meaning in a chain-like relationship:



According to this model, the mobile meanings of the word kulak are indirectly connected to each other, and each of them is directly connected to the main meaning. This type of connection is called a fan-shaped connection. [I. Khojialiyeu, 2023: 524].

Associate Professor, linguist Nargiza Akhmedova, in her article "Associative field of polysemantic words in the Uzbek language", expressed her views on the fact that associative analysis of polysemantic words (on the example of the word "baş") helps to reveal the linguistic host possibilities of a lexical unit, the essence of paradigmatic, syntagmatic, syntactic relationships between lexical units, and also helps to determine the lexical possibilities of a lexical unit that are not recorded in explanatory dictionaries [N. Akhmedova, 2022: 115].

To determine whether children have mastered polysemous words, two methods were used: statistical, observational, and pictorial. For this purpose, the three most frequently used polysemous words were selected.

1. Ko'z; (eye)
2. Oyoq; foot()
3. Quloq. (ear)

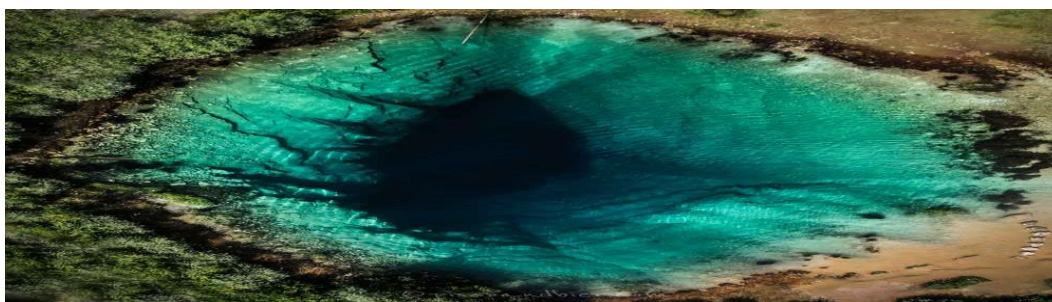
Example 1. 25 (2.5-3 years old) pupils of the private preschool educational institution "Teremok" of Yashnabad district were selected as respondents.

The eye is the eye of a person; the eye of a ring; the eye of a window, the eye of a spring, the eye of work.

a) Observations show that only the primary meaning of the multi-meaning word "eye" is mastered. When children from 1 and a half to 2 years old were prompted to "show your eye", all the children showed their eyes. When asked "show the eye of a tree", the children hesitated.

b) In our next stage of the experiment, when we showed the figurative form of the eye, the children gave answers in the form of "the eye of a farmer", "the eye of water", "the eye of the window".





The word "eye" In children under 3 years of age, only 1 primary meaning (body part) of the 4 meanings given in the explanatory dictionary is mastered.

Example 2.

"Leg" - a person's leg; a table leg; a chair leg...

a) When the children were asked to "show the leg of the table," they hesitated, not knowing what to show. When asked, "Now show your leg," all the children quickly showed their legs.

b) At the next stage, the children were shown the images and asked the above questions:



"Show me the table leg"

All the children looked at the picture and pointed to the left leg. And the teacher pointed to the wooden leg of the table in the room, emphasizing that this was also the leg of the table. When asked again, all the children pointed to the leg of the table in the room. When the

same question was repeated 2 days later, 16 of the children were able to correctly point to the leg of the table. 9 children hesitated for a while. This process indicates the state of the child's individual attention and memory. As a result of the 9 children who could not complete the task, they were asked to repeat the task together with all the children in a game in the form of who would complete the task first, and in the following days the figurative meaning of the multi-valued word "leg" was mastered without error.

Of the 6 meanings of the word "foot" in the explanatory dictionary, children under 3 years of age have mastered only 1 primary meaning.

Example 3.

"Ear" – a person's ear; a pot's ear; a wall's ear.

a) When the children were asked by their teacher to "show me your ear," all the children quickly showed their ears without making a mistake. At the next stage, when a small toy pot made of glue was shown and asked to "show me the pot's ear," 2 participants thought about the pot's ear for a while. The remaining participants could not find it. The figurative meaning of "pot's ear" was not yet fully mastered by the participants who completed the task relatively well.

b) When the children were next approached with a visual activity, they quickly mastered the figurative meaning of "the ear of a cauldron".



The word "ear", along with other polysemantic words, is mainly understood by the main meaning.

RESULTS

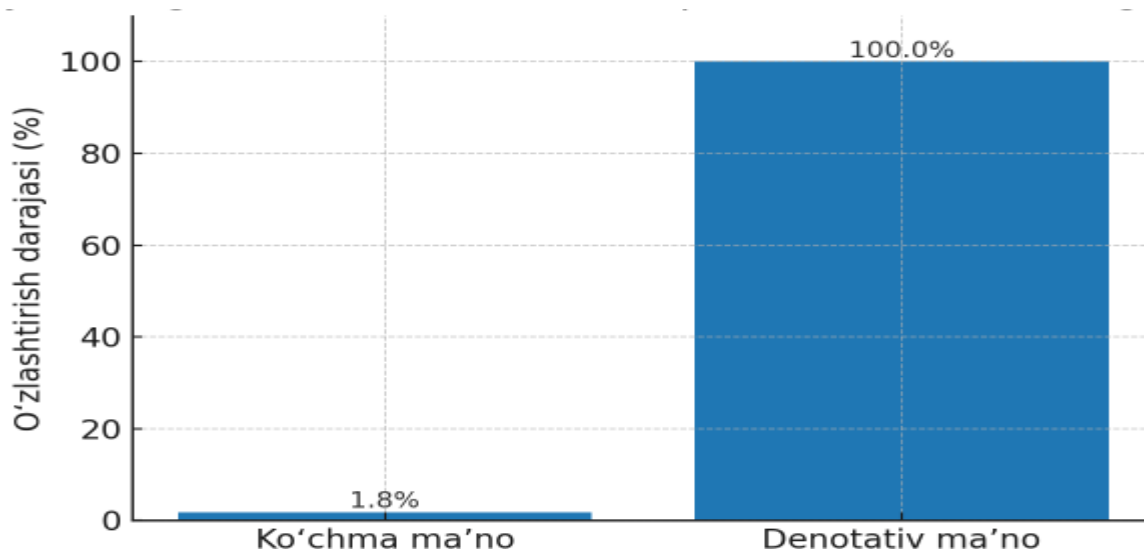
The data collected during the study were statistically

analyzed and the following results were obtained:

1. 98.2% of 25 preschool children of Uzbek nationality, whose first language is Uzbek, and whose general development is normal, aged 2.5-3.5, selected as respondents, did not understand the literal meanings

of the given lexemes. (see table)

2. The denotative meaning of the given polysemantic words was understood by 100%. (see table).



These results indicate the need for a deeper psycholinguistic study of somatic polysemy and its role in speech. Because the semantic extensions of words present in children's speech help to assess and develop their cognitive development.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study aimed to study the level of mastery of polysemy words in preschool children. The results of the study showed that, although denotative meanings are mastered 100%, the level of mastery of figurative meanings is very low (98.2% not mastered).

These results make an important contribution to understanding the development of metaphorical thinking and semantic expansion processes in children. Nevertheless, the study sample was limited to 25 participants, and further research is needed that covers a wider range of age groups. Polysemy words are mastered relatively late. Therefore, when we use figurative language in conversations with children, if they do not understand, we should not blame them, but rather provide them with figurative images, explanations, and lively teaching, and repetition when necessary. This is because children all have different intelligences. In the future, social and cognitive factors that affect language development can also be studied in more depth in this area.

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