

## COGNITIVE-DISCURSIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF SYNTACTIC HOMONYMS IN THE UZBEK LANGUAGE

Sayidiraximova Nasiba Sayidmaxamadovna

*O'zbekiston xalqaro islomshunoslik akademiyasi, O'zbek va xorijiy tillar kafedراسي dotsenti,  
filologiya fanlari nomzodi Email: sayidiraximova@gmail.com*

**Abstract:** *This article investigates the cognitive-discursive characteristics of syntactic homonyms in the Uzbek language. The phenomenon of syntactic homonymy encompasses structural forms that allow a sentence to be interpreted in multiple ways. The study examines the causes underlying the emergence of syntactic homonyms, their cognitive functions within discursive environments, and the interpretive mechanisms operative at the textual level. The research employs an integrated methodology drawing on cognitive linguistics and discourse analysis. The findings contribute new insights to the theory of Uzbek grammar and language use.*

**Keywords:** *syntactic homonymy, cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis, semantic structure of the sentence, Uzbek syntax, polysemy, context.*

### INTRODUCTION

Among the various phenomena of language, homonymy occupies a distinctive position, as it creates the possibility for a single form to convey multiple meanings within the process of communication. Although syntactic homonymy has received comparatively less scholarly attention than lexical homonymy, it is nonetheless of considerable significance from a linguistic perspective. Syntactic homonymy refers to a situation in which the structure of a single sentence, or a part thereof, is amenable to multiple syntactic interpretations.

This phenomenon exhibits distinctive characteristics within the syntax of the Uzbek language. Its agglutinative structure, the particular forms of subordinate and compound sentences, as well as the language's high degree of context-dependence, collectively render syntactic homonymy in Uzbek a uniquely compelling object of inquiry.

The cognitive-discursive approach requires that language be studied not merely as an abstract system, but in relation to human cognitive processes and the conditions of communication. This approach makes it possible to analyse syntactic homonyms not only in formal terms, but also from semantic, pragmatic, and cognitive perspectives.

The aim of this article is to analyse syntactic homonyms in the Uzbek language from the standpoint of their cognitive-discursive characteristics and to determine their role in the process of communication.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Syntactic homonymy first began to receive systematic scholarly attention within the framework of structural linguistics. Z.Harris and N.Chomsky explicated this phenomenon through transformational analysis within the framework of transformational-generative grammar [1]. The example "Flying planes can be dangerous", cited in Chomsky's Syntactic

Structures, entered the linguistic literature as a classical instance of syntactic homonymy [1].

The phenomenon of homonymy has been examined from various perspectives in Uzbek linguistics. Scholars such as A.Hojiyev [5], Sh.Rahmatullayev [7], and M.Mirtojiyev [6] have undertaken extensive investigations of lexical homonymy. Syntactic homonymy, by contrast, has remained a relatively underexplored area of inquiry.

The principal characteristics of syntactic homonymy may be identified as follows: first, structures sharing an identical phonological-morphological composition express different syntactic relations; second, the accurate interpretation of such structures depends to a considerable extent upon context; and third, they are cognitively processed on the basis of distinct schemas and frames.

Cognitive linguistics approaches language as a product of the human mind and as an instrument through which the world is perceived and conceptualised. The metaphor theory of G. Lakoff and M. Johnson [8], frame semantics as developed by Ch. Fillmore, and the cognitive grammar of R.Langacker collectively constitute the theoretical foundations of this field [2]. Within cognitive linguistics, syntactic structures are understood to reflect the mental schemas of language users.

Discourse analysis, in turn, aims to study language within the context of actual communicative interaction. T. van Dijk [4] and other scholars conceptualise discourse as the unity of a text and its socio-cultural conditions of production. The discursive approach makes it possible to examine the communicative contexts in which syntactic homonyms are employed, the purposes they serve, and the users who deploy them.

Types of syntactic homonyms in the Uzbek language:

#### 1. Morphosyntactic homonyms

In the Uzbek language, certain morphological forms are capable of fulfilling a variety of syntactic functions. For instance, word forms derived by means of the suffix “-ish” may function as a noun in one sentence and assume a verbal function in another:

- (1) Uning yurishi chiroyli. His/her manner of walking is graceful. (noun – subject)
- (2) U asta-sekin yurishni boshladi. He/she began walking slowly. (noun – object)
- (3) Yurib ketdi. He/she walked away. (participial structure)

In the above examples, an identical morphological form performs different functions depending on its syntactic position. From a cognitive standpoint, the listener activates different mental schemas upon processing each of these sentences.

A similar phenomenon is observable with converb forms such as –gan, –ib, –b, and –a, which may admit of two distinct interpretations. For instance, in the noun phrase “O‘qib chiqqan kitob” (the book that has been read), the form “o‘qib” may be analysed as either a converb or a participle – a case that constitutes a typical instance of syntactic homonymy in the Uzbek language.

#### 2. Homonymy at the level of sentence constituents

The boundaries between sentence constituents namely, subject, predicate, object, attribute, and adverbial modifier are at times indeterminate. This ambiguity is particularly pronounced in attributive and predicative constructions:

(1) "Yaxshi o'qigan bola" A child who has studied well. (participial phrase functioning as attribute)

(2) "Bola yaxshi o'qigan" The child has studied well. (predicated sentence)

Although these two structures are grammatically distinct, they may become homonymic in spoken discourse when differences in stress and intonation are absent. In written text, the meaning of such structures is determined by the context, including the preceding and following sentences.

### 3. Homonymy at the level of complex sentences

Homonymy is also observed in subordinate clauses and the manner in which they are connected to the main clause. The polysemous nature of subordinating devices in the Uzbek language amplifies this phenomenon:

(1) "U keliboq, ishlaydigan odam" - This phrase may be interpreted as either (a) "a person who works after he arrives" or (b) "a person who works if he comes".

In constructions of this type, the listener's semantic choice is conditioned by his or her background knowledge, familiarity with the topic under discussion, and the situational context of the utterance. Psycholinguistic research in cognitive linguistics demonstrates that, when processing such ambiguous structures, the brain 'activates' the first available interpretation; should the context subsequently generate a contradiction, a process of reanalysis is initiated.

4. Cognitive mechanisms and their discursive manifestations. Analysis from the perspective of frame and schema theory.

According to Ch. Fillmore's frame semantics, each linguistic unit activates a corresponding knowledge structure a frame. Syntactic homonyms, by their very nature, possess the capacity to activate two distinct frames simultaneously [2]. This situation increases the cognitive load during speech comprehension and may result in a deceleration of processing speed.

To illustrate: the phrase "Rahmatning o'qishi" (Rahmat's studying/performance), depending on intonation and co-text, may be interpreted either as (a) "the process of Rahmat's studying" (a nominal phrase) or as (b) "how well Rahmat studies" (an evaluative noun phrase). Each interpretation activates a distinct frame - the 'educational process' frame or the 'evaluation/characteristic' frame, respectively.

### 5. The role of context in the interpretive mechanism

From the perspective of discourse analysis, several types of context play a crucial role in the accurate interpretation of syntactic homonyms: the linguistic context (preceding and subsequent sentences), the extralinguistic context (the setting of the conversation, the topic, and the interlocutors), the pragmatic context (the communicative purpose and conditions of interaction), and the cultural-cognitive context (shared knowledge within a given community).

For instance, in interpreting the sentence "Otam keldi deyishdi" (They said father has come / Father said they came), context is the decisive factor. This sentence may be construed as: (a) "They said that father had arrived"; (b) "There is talk of father's arrival"; or (c) "Father said that..." - each yielding a substantially different reading. In written

discourse, quotation marks and other clarificatory markers serve a crucial disambiguating function; in spoken discourse, this role is performed principally by intonation.

#### 6. Cognitive Load and Communicative Impediment

Syntactic homonyms give rise to a degree of cognitive difficulty for the listener or reader, particularly in complex discursive contexts. Psycholinguistic studies have established that the processing of ambiguous structures results in increased reading or comprehension time. This is associated with the phenomenon of semantic conflict commonly referred to as the 'garden path' effect.

In the Uzbek language, this effect is most pronounced in complex sentences composed of multiple subordinate clauses. In such constructions, the listener activates an initial interpretation which, upon reaching the end of the sentence, may prove incompatible with the syntactic requirements of the whole, thereby necessitating a comprehensive reanalysis of the entire utterance.

In literary texts, syntactic homonymy is frequently employed as a deliberate aesthetic device. By making use of constructions that admit of two interpretations, the writer or poet invites the reader to actively participate in the construction of meaning. This endows the text with an "open" character and enhances its artistic impact. Instances of syntactic homonymy functioning as a literary device can be identified in the works of Cho'lpon, Abdulla Qodiriy, and G'afur G'ulom, among others. Figurative and homonymic phrases and sentences serve to actively engage the reader in the interpretive process.

##### 1. Use in Scientific and Official Discourse

In scientific and formal texts, syntactic homonymy is, conversely, regarded as a phenomenon to be avoided. The requirement for clear and unambiguous expression in these domains necessitates the elimination of homonymic structures. For this reason, the conventions of academic style require the use of specifying lexical items, disambiguating punctuation, and other devices that ensure structural clarity.

##### 2. Use in Oral Communication

In oral communication, instances of syntactic homonymy tend to generate fewer difficulties than in written discourse, given that intonation, pause, stress, and gesture all serve as interpretive aids. However, in communicative situations that lack paralinguistic support such as telephone conversations oral syntactic homonymy may also give rise to misunderstanding.

#### CONCLUSION

The present study has succeeded in elucidating the cognitive-discursive characteristics of syntactic homonyms in the Uzbek language from the following perspectives: syntactic homonymy manifests itself in the Uzbek language at the morphosyntactic level, at the level of sentence constituents, and at the level of complex sentences; from a cognitive standpoint, it is appropriate to analyse syntactic homonyms in terms of frame competition and the garden path phenomenon; discursive context encompassing the linguistic, extralinguistic, pragmatic, and cultural-cognitive dimensions serves as the primary factor in the accurate interpretation of homonymic structures; syntactic homonymy fulfils different functions across different discourse types: it operates

as an enriching device in literary texts, while in scientific and formal discourse it is treated as a phenomenon requiring careful avoidance.

Future research might profitably explore the psycholinguistic investigation of syntactic homonyms in the Uzbek language through experimental methods, as well as the examination of their frequency and distribution in authentic texts by means of corpus linguistic approaches. Such investigations would make a further significant contribution to the fields of Uzbek grammar and discourse theory.

#### REFERENCES:

1. Chomsky N. Syntactic Structures. – The Hague: Mouton, 1957. – 117 p.
2. Fillmore Ch. Frame Semantics // Linguistics in the Morning Calm. – Seoul: Hanshin, 1982. – P. 111-137.
3. Langacker R. Foundations of Cognitive Grammar. Vol. 1. – Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987. – 516 p.
4. Van Dijk T.A. Discourse and Context: A Sociocognitive Approach. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. – 267 p.
5. Hojiyev A. O'zbek tilining izohli lug'ati [Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language]. – Tashkent: O'qituvchi, 1981. – 640 p.
6. Mirtojiyev M. O'zbek tilida polisemiya [Polysemy in the Uzbek Language]. – Tashkent: Fan, 1986. – 128 p.
7. Rahmatullayev Sh. O'zbek tilining etimologik lug'ati [Etymological Dictionary of the Uzbek Language]. – Tashkent: O'qituvchi, 2009. – 688 p.
8. Lakoff G., Johnson M. Metaphors We Live By. – Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980. – 242 p.
9. Fodor J.A. The Modularity of Mind. – Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983. – 145 p.