

Review of: "A Corpus Analysis of Polysemy in CEFR-based English Textbooks"

Yu Li¹

¹ State University of New York at Buffalo

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This paper conducts a quantitative study on the frequency and polysemy patterns of polysemous words in two English textbooks. The aim of this paper is to identify the most frequently used words in those textbooks and to determine to what extent polysemy is manifested on the words used in textbooks.

The research questions are carefully drawn with a detailed description of the research background. However, those “big” questions are not properly modeled into a study. The methods implemented are fairly simple, and the results are all expected. Hope the author come up with a better model to delve into those questions.

Two general comments on the structure of the paper:

1. the introduction is too long for a short article like this. The author should consider narrowing the theoretical perspective that is adopted by the paper. There are many places where the author talks about metaphors and metonymy in lexicon learning (but these concepts are not mentioned again in the result and discussion), which from my view is unnecessary and distracting and should be deleted to make the discussion more compact.
2. the division between the introduction and the literature review is not clear-cut. In fact, the two sections are not necessarily independent. In the current organization of the paper, the two parts are to a large extent mixed together. I suggest to incorporate the content in the literature review to the introduction and therefore to make explicit the research background in the very beginning of the paper.

The points from the previous research that are directly related to the research questions need to be re-considered and re-presented. The current formulation of the significance of studying polysemy in English textbooks are repetitive and sometimes confusing. This is because the author wanted to explain every key word but failed to focalise on the concepts that are central to this paper.

One of the most important points that should be developed more in introduction is the position of the networks of word senses in building up learners' lexical knowledge, the problems in learning polysemy, and its implication for L2 acquisition.

The other issue that is not addressed in the paper is why English textbooks are so important in answering your research question? Teaching methods, other learning materials, media, language inputs are all important in lexical learning, why this article picks textbooks as the objective of examination? the rationale behind this choice needs to be explained

explicitly.

I suggest to move the two paragraphs describing textbooks and polysemy to the front the introduction, which serve as the starting point of the entire paper.

The polysemy patterns in Figure 2 and 3 are interesting and should be elaborated more. Is it possible the low density of senses in textbooks is due to the sample size? if longer texts and more textbooks are being investigated, I guess a higher number of senses will be identified.

Some minor points:

In interpreting the results of the frequency test, the author claims that there is a trend of prioritising high-frequency words in language education. This statement is problematic. Those high-frequency words are also the top-ranked words in any genres of texts, not just textbooks. So they are not prioritized in education but rather this frequency distribution is quite expected and nothing special.

It will be useful if examples with context can be provided to for illustration. Readers need to know how those words are actually used in the textbooks. Many factors, including the topic of the text, may affect the occurrence of different senses of a word. However, those factors are not discussed in this paper.