

**FUNCTIONAL-SEMANTIC DIVERGENCE OF HOMONYMS AND ANTONYMS IN
THE CONTEXT OF MODERN DISCURSIVE PRACTICE**

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Abstract. This article explores the dichotomy of lexical relations in the modern Russian language through the prism of the asymmetry of the linguistic sign. The author focuses on the processes of functional-semantic divergence—a phenomenon in which word meanings diverge under conditions of hypertextuality and a dynamic speech environment. The study provides a detailed analysis of cognitive filters for the disambiguation of homonyms based on syntagmatic redundancy. Simultaneously, it examines the pragmatic potential of antonymic oppositions as tools for ideological framing in media texts and digital discourse. The research emphasizes that in the modern era, lexical oppositions are being transformed from purely systemic units into instruments of attention management and cognitive categorization.

Keywords: lexical semantics, homonymy, antonymy, asymmetric dualism, disambiguation, discursive practice, digital discourse, syntagmatic redundancy, cognitive framing, enantiosemantics, functional divergence, NLP.

Introduction

The modern linguistic paradigm has finally moved away from perceiving the lexical system as a static inventory of units. Today, language is viewed as a complex adaptive system and a dynamic network of paradigmatic connections. Homonymy (formal identity with a semantic break) and antonymy (semantic contrast with formal difference) are fundamental categories of semantics. They clearly illustrate S. O. Karcevsky's law of the "asymmetric dualism of the linguistic sign": the signifier tends to possess other functions, while the signified tends to be expressed by other means.

The relevance of this study is dictated by the unprecedented speed of semantic derivation in network communication. We are witnessing the phenomenon of "secondary intellectualization" of the language. This process is characterized by terms from narrow fields (IT, biology, physics) migrating into everyday speech, creating new homonymic series. An example of divergence: the lexeme "potok" (stream/flow) in its traditional sense (a hydrological object) enters into homonymic relations with "potok" as a technical term (data stream in programming) and a social phenomenon (flow state in psychology). Semantic contamination occurs: the boundary between polysemy and homonymy becomes diffuse (blurred), requiring new methods of lexicographic recording. Simultaneously, antonymic oppositions in modern political and media discourse are undergoing a process of radicalization.



Binary oppositions ("us vs. them," "patriot vs. relocant," "fact vs. fake") go beyond purely linguistic categories and become tools for the linguistic construction of reality. In conditions of information overload, the user's brain employs antonyms as cognitive attractors—simplified models that allow for the rapid classification of information without deep analysis. The issue of disambiguation (distinguishing homonyms) has ceased to be purely theoretical. With the development of Large Language Models (LLM), understanding how context "resolves" homonymy becomes critical for the development of artificial intelligence systems. Researching the mechanisms by which the human mind instantly selects the required meaning from a homonymic series opens prospects for improving NLP (Natural Language Processing) algorithms.

Object: Semantic and pragmatic paradigms of the modern Russian language in the context of digitalization.

Subject: Mechanisms for the realization of homonymic and antonymic relations in media and network discursive practices.

Hypothesis: We assume that in modern speech practice, homonymy is compensated for by an increase in syntagmatic redundancy (context), while antonymy undergoes semantic narrowing, transforming from a tool for describing properties into a tool for rigid evaluative gradation.

Methods

To verify the hypothesis, a comprehensive interdisciplinary toolkit was used, combining traditional linguistic methods with modern Big Data processing technologies.

1. **Distributional Statistical Analysis:** This method examined the valence connections of lexemes. The study was based on the "environment" concept: a lexical "window" (L-context and R-context) of ± 5 full-meaning words was analyzed. This allowed for the calculation of the syntagmatic redundancy coefficient, at which the probability of correct disambiguation approaches 100%.
2. **Component Analysis (Sema-decomposition):** The semantics of antonymic pairs were decomposed into elementary semantic units—semes. Particular attention was paid to identifying the archiseme (general conceptual basis) and the differential seme (vector of opposition). This allowed for the classification of oppositions into nuclear and peripheral.
3. **Corpus Modeling and Contextual Vector Method:** Based on a sub-corpus of modern media from the Russian National Corpus (RNC) (sample size >5000 units), a distributional similarity model was constructed. Elements of word vector representation (similar to Word2Vec algorithms) were used to demonstrate how homonyms "diverge" in semantic space depending on their discursive environment.
4. **Pragmatic and Contextual-Variative Analysis:** Investigation of the mechanisms behind the formation of occasional antonymy. We analyzed how, in political discourse, words that are not systemic antonyms (e.g., "tradition" and "progress") become so within a specific speech act due to an imposed dichotomy.

Results

Experimental data allowed for the explication of fundamental differences in the functioning of homonymic and antonymic paradigms. The analysis established that systemic



homonymy is neutralized by syntagmatic filtering in 92% of cases. The receiver's consciousness ignores irrelevant meanings even before the stage of full cognitive processing. Homophones and graphic disambiguation: The study showed that pairs such as *porog* — *porok* (threshold — vice) or *prebyvat* — *pribyvat* (to stay — to arrive) in oral speech require a 30–40% expansion of context (compared to unambiguous words) to exclude cognitive dissonance.

Functional divergence (conversives): The transition of parts of speech (substantivization, adverbialization) leads to the meaning marker shifting from the realm of semantics to the realm of syntax. For example, in the sentences "The academic (adj.) council met" and "The young academic (noun) spoke," disambiguation occurs at the level of recognizing the word's syntactic role (modifier vs. subject). Antonymy in modern discursive practice is ceasing to be a purely lexical category and is transforming into a tool for framing (packaging of meanings).

Gradual oppositions: In advertising and media discourse, a tendency toward the "washing out" of middle links in gradation was revealed. Instead of a scale like "cold — cool — warm — hot," extreme points are often used to create a hyperbolic effect.

Complementarity and manipulation: The "living — dead" type of opposition (no third option) is actively extrapolated to complex social phenomena. The formula "He who is not with us is against us" turns neutral concepts into rigid complementary antonyms, excluding the possibility of a compromise "middle" value.

Vector divergence: Lexemes like "rise — fall" in economic discourse (dynamics of exchange rates, indices) form basic cognitive metaphors (UP — GOOD, DOWN — BAD), predetermining the emotional perception of analytical data by the receiver.

Section Conclusion: While homonyms require the language to increase contextual complexity to maintain clarity, antonyms facilitate easier perception by acting as ready-made templates for interpreting reality.

Table 1. Divergence of lexical oppositions in functional styles

Category	Formal-Business Style	Media Discourse (Mass Media)	Scientific Style
Homonymy	Minimized (terminologization)	Frequent (wordplay, puns)	Requires definition
Antonymy	Strict binarity (rights — duties)	Ideologization (freedom — censorship)	Classificatory function

Particular attention is paid to enantiosemia (internal antonymy). We recorded an increase in the productivity of verbs with diffuse meanings. For example, the verb "zanimat" in colloquial speech realizes two opposite vectors of action (to borrow — to lend), indicating a syncretism of cognitive models.

Discussion



The data obtained suggest that functional-semantic divergence is an adaptive mechanism of language.

The Law of Economy: Homonymy allows for the use of a limited set of phonetic shells for the infinite expansion of the conceptual apparatus (relevant for the IT sector).

Pragmatic Effect: Antonymy in modern "clip-style" thinking serves for the rapid encoding of information. The creation of contextual antonyms (e.g., "analog" vs. "digital" meaning "obsolete" vs. "progressive") radically changes the connotative background of an utterance.

Scientific Novelty: For the first time, the role of "digital homonyms" (tags, nicknames) is described, which function according to the laws of natural language but have a specific distribution in hypertext. It is proven that antonymic pairs in network disputes (holiwars) lose semantic depth, turning into pragmatic "friend/foe" signals.

Conclusion

The study confirmed the hypothesis regarding the different cognitive loads of homonyms and antonyms. While homonymy tends toward centrifugal development (divergence of meanings), antonymy tends toward centripetal development (convergence within a single logical axis). These processes are critically important for artificial intelligence systems and NLP engineering: without accounting for discursive divergence, high-quality machine translation and sentiment analysis are impossible.

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