CHAPTER 1: Introduction

In this chapter, I propose to give a brief introduction to the language under investigation and the study of polysemy in language and linguistics. I also introduce the purpose of the present study.

The main purpose behind the present study is the analysis of the polysemy that exists in the semantic fields of body part terms, motion verbs and perception verbs in Ladakhi language. Words in this language not only convey the actual core meanings (i.e. the prototype meanings) but they are used to express other meanings as well (e.g. таt фээ ‘to knit’ and also ‘to plait’). The aim is, therefore, to find out not only the different semantic extensions, but also to show as to why and how these polysemous senses happen in the language under investigation.

In this thesis, the focus is on the analyses of different senses of body part terms, motion verbs & perception verbs and shows how the study of polysemous categories plays important role in linguistic analysis in terms of prototypes, metonymy and metaphor that are central to cognitive linguistics.

1.1. Ladakhi language, origin and development

1.1.1. Ladakhi language

The principal language of Ladakh region is Ladakhi more generally called Western Archaic Bhoti. According to 2001 Census, Ladakhi has 104,618 speakers approximately which is less than the ground reality and is one of the non-
scheduled languages of India. Ladakhi is different enough from Tibetan. Ladakhis and Tibetans often speak Hindi or English when they need to communicate. Educated Ladakhis usually know Hindi/Urdu and often English. Within Ladakh, there is a range of dialects. The language of the Chang-pa people may differ markedly from that of the Purig-pa in Kargil, or the Zangskaris, but they are all mutually intelligible. Due to its position on important trade routes, the racial composition as well as the language of Leh is enriched with foreign influences. Traditionally, Ladakhi had no written form distinct from classical Bhoti, but recently a number of Ladakhi writers have started using the Bhoti script to write the colloquial tongue.

1.1.2. Dialect variations

Ladakhi has several dialects but researchers differ in the number of dialects. For instance, G.A. Grierson mentions three sub-dialects in ‘Linguistic Survey of India’. The classification of sub-dialects seems to be based on the earlier work done by Mr. Francke who had written a grammar on Ladakhi.

1. The Sham dialect spoken from about Hanu in the west to a line midway between Saspola and Basgo in the east;

2. The Leh dialect, to the east of Sham, and stretching eastwards almost so far as Sheh;
3. The Rong dialect to the east of the Leh dialect. The Zanskar variety agrees with Rong, only the north-western districts show traces of the Sham dialect.

According to Sanyukta Koshal (1979), there are five regional varieties of Ladakhi:

1. Zangskar Ladakhi
2. Nubra Ladakhi
3. Upper Ladakhi or Stodpa
4. Lower Ladakhi or Shamma
5. Central Ladakhi (also known as Leh Ladakhi)

Upper Ladakhi is spoken in the higher altitude regions, i.e. in the east of Leh—Upshi, Sakti, Chushul etc. and its boundaries extend upto the Tibetan border. This variety shows a marked influence of Tibetan on its phonology. Lower Ladakhi is spoken in the north-west of Leh, in places like Khaltse, Skyurbucan, Tikmosgang etc. Nubra variety is spoken in the north of Leh, mostly in Nubra Tehsil. Nubra variety also attests differences between its upper sub-variety and lower sub-variety. The lower sub-variety is more akin to Shamma variety than to any other form of Ladakhi. The upper sub-variety is close to Leh variety. Zangskar variety is spoken in the west of Leh and is spread all over the Zangskar Tehsil. Upper Ladakhi and lower Ladakhi are much closer to the Leh variety than Zangskar and Nubra Varieties. The central Ladakhi is spoken in Leh
and in neighboring areas is accepted as the standard form and is hence considered prestigious. Koshal has done her linguistic research on the standard form spoken in and around Leh.

Ladakhi is much closer in pronunciation and vocabulary to written Bhoti than most other Bhoti dialects. For instance, Ladakhis pronounce many of the prefixes, suffixes and head letters that are silent in contemporary Tibetan. For example, a Tibetan would pronounce *stari* 'axe' as [tari], but a Ladakhi would say [stari]. While a Tibetan would pronounce the Bhoti word *bras* 'rice' as [dreb], Ladakhis say [bras].

### 1.1.3. Historical origin and development of Ladakhi

Sino-Tibetan

Siamese-Chinese Sub-family

Tibeto-Burman Sub-family

Bodic branch

Rung branch

Tibet-Burman branch

Burmese-Lolo branch

Tibetan Group

Tamang-Gurung

Tshangla-Takpa

Sherdukpen-Lishpa

Central

Western

Western Archaic

Innovative

Southern

Kham

Amdo

-U-Tsang

-Lhasa

-Sherpa

-Ladakhi

-Kagata

-Balti

-Lahauli

-Spiti

Dialects spoken in Sikkim and Bhutan

-Khams

-Amdo

Introduction
1.1.4. **Diglossic situation**

In a classic article on the subject, fifty years back, Charles Ferguson (1959, Word) expounded the term and the concept:

DIGLOSSIA is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language [which may include a standard or regional standards], there is a very divergent, highly codified [often grammatically more complex] superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any section of the community for ordinary conversation.

Further discussion in the article indicates, the speech community with diglossia has two related but clearly differentiated varieties with different names, which are often called the **High** and the **Low**, and are functionally differentiated, each with its own spheres of usage, and hence their modes of acquisition are also different.

As Koshal (1979) rightly observes that the Ladakhi speech community attests a diglossic situation. Ladakhis use Classical Bhoti for literary compositions. The religious writings of Buddhist including the Tripitaka are in Classical Bhoti and all the religious rituals are done in this language. The pressure of the diglossic situation is such that the plays being written at present are in the Classical Bhoti but when they are staged, the language is converted into the colloquial Ladakhi language. Unlike the mother tongue Ladakhi, the Classical Bhoti is learnt and is
not acquired. Bhoti is learned through formal schooling, Monasteries or at home with special coaching.

1.1.5. **Script and Literary Tradition**

Ladakhi is written in Bhoti (Tibetan) script invented by Thonmi Sambhota which is ultimately derived from Brahmi and made its way in Tibet in the 7th Century A.D.

In Ladakh, this script is called *yi-ge*. Being a Brahni derivative it is syllabic in nature. It has thirty letters (twenty eight consonant symbols and two vowel symbols), which are called ka-na-sum-chu ‘from ka thirty’. Besides these symbols, there are four matras. The script marks the syllable boundary by a raised dot placed in the linear position.

Buddhist Ladakhis feel a strong attachment towards this script as they consider it to be a marker of their cultural and religious identity. The same is not true of non-Buddhist Ladakhis. Muslim Ladakhis do not write in Bhoti script. If ever they have to do so, they use Perso-Arabic for the same. Ladakhi has hardly developed its own literary tradition, as the literary and religious writings have all along the history been done in Classical Bhoti. Nowadays some poems and songs are being written in Ladakhi. However, Ladakhi has a rich folk literature which is handed down to people by oral tradition.
1.2. The Ladakh Region, Religion, History and Culture

1.2.1. The Region

Ladakh literally means ‘many passes’ is a region in the Indian state of Jammu & Kashmir located between the Kunlun mountain range in the north and the main Great Himalayas to the south. Ladakh, which is inhabited by people of Indo-Aryan and Mongolian descent, is one of the most sparsely populated regions in the area. Ladakh has been a focal point of conflict during the numerous wars between India and Pakistan and during the Sino-Indian war of 1962. The Saltoro ridge in the Siachen glacier region is an active military zone even today. The largest town in Ladakh is Leh.

Ladakh is renowned for its remote mountain beauty and culture. It is sometimes known as ‘Little Tibet’ as it has been strongly influenced by Tibetan culture. In the past Ladakh gained importance from its strategic location at the crossroads of important trade routes, but since the Chinese authorities closed down the borders with Tibet and Central Asia in the 1960s, international trade has dwindled except for tourism. Fortunately, since 1974 the Indian Govt. has successfully encouraged tourism in Ladakh.

Ladakh region was a district of the Jammu & Kashmir state of India until 1 July 1979 when it was divided into Leh district and Kargil district. Each of these districts is governed by a Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council. These councils were created as a compromise solution to the demands of Ladakhi people
to make Leh district a Union Territory because of its religious and cultural differences with predominant Muslim Kashmir.

1.2.2. The Religion

Historically, Ladakh was a Buddhist kingdom which included Baltistan and Aksai Chin which are now administered by Pakistan and China respectively. A majority of Ladakhis are Mahayana Buddhists and the rest are mostly Shia Muslims. The Muslim mother-tongue speakers of Ladakhi are mostly in Leh although some speakers are spread in the neighboring villages. The Muslim variety shows a higher incidence of Perso-Arabic borrowings due to the religio-cultural reasons (Sanyukta Koshal 1979). There are a few families of Ladakhi Christians, who converted in the 19th century. Among descendants of immigrants, there are small numbers of followers of Hinduism, Sikhism, and the Bon religion, in addition to Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. Most Buddhists follow the Tantric form of Buddhism known as Vajrayana Buddhism. Shias are mostly found among the Balti and Purig people.

1.2.3. History of Ladakh

Rock carvings have been found in many parts of Ladakh, showing that the area has been inhabited from Neolithic times. Ladakh's earliest inhabitants consisted of a mixed Indo-Aryan population of Mons and Dards, who find mention in the works of Herodotus, Nearchus, Megasthenes, Pliny, Ptolemy, and the geographical lists of the Puranas. Around the 1st century, Ladakh was a part
of the Kushana empire. Buddhism came to western Ladakh via Kashmir in the 2nd century when much of eastern Ladakh and western Tibet was still practising the Bon religion. The 7th century Buddhist traveler Xuanzang also describes the region in his accounts.

In the 8th century, Ladakh was involved in the clash between Tibetan expansion pressing from the East and Chinese influence exerted from Central Asia through the passes. Suzerainty over Ladakh frequently changed hands between China and Tibet. In 842 Nyima-Gon, a Tibetan royal representative annexed Ladakh for himself after the break-up of the Tibetan empire, and founded a separate Ladakh dynasty. During this period Ladakh underwent Tibetanization resulting in a predominantly Tibetan population. The dynasty spearheaded the "Second Spreading of Buddhism" importing religious ideas from north-west India, particularly from Kashmir.

Faced with the Islamic conquest of South Asia in the 13th century, Ladakh chose to seek and accept guidance in religious matters from Tibet. For nearly two centuries, till about 1600, Ladakh was subject to raids and invasions from neighbouring Muslim states, which led to the weakening and fracturing of Ladakh, and partial conversion of Ladakhis to Islam.

King Bhagan reunited and strengthened Ladakh and founded the Namgyal dynasty which survives even today. The Namgays repelled most Central Asian raiders and temporarily extended the kingdom as far as Nepal, in the face of
concerted attempts to convert the region to Islam and destroy Buddhist artifacts. In the early 17th century efforts were made to restore destroyed artifacts and gompas, and the kingdom expanded into Zangskar and Spiti. Ladakh was, however defeated by the Mughals, who had already annexed Kashmir and Baltistan, but it retained its independence.

In the late 17th century, Ladakh sided with Bhutan in its dispute with Tibet, which resulted in an invasion by Tibet. Kashmiri help restored Ladakhi rule on the condition of that a mosque be built in Leh and that the Ladakhi king convert to Islam. The Treaty of Tikmosgang in 1684 settled the dispute between Tibet and Ladakh, but severely restricted Ladakh's independence. In 1834, the Dogras under Zorawar Singh, a general of Ranjit Singh invaded and annexed Ladakh. A Ladakhi rebellion in 1842 was crushed and Ladakh was incorporated into the Dogra state of Jammu and Kashmir. The Namgyal family was given the *jagir* of Stok, which it nominally retains to this day. Starting from the 1850s, European influence increased in Ladakh — geologists, sportsmen and tourists started exploring Ladakh. In 1885, Leh became the headquarters of a mission of the Moravian Church.

At the time of the partition of India in 1947, the Dogra ruler Maharaja Hari Singh was undecided whether to accede to the Indian Union or to Pakistan. Eventually, the ruler signed the Instrument of Accession to India. Pakistani raiders had reached Ladakh and military operations were initiated to evict them.
The wartime conversion of the pony trail from Sonamarg to Zoji La by army engineers permitted tanks to move up and successfully capture the pass. The advance continued and Dras, Kargil and Leh were liberated and Ladakh cleared of the infiltrators.

1.2.4. Ladakhi culture

Ladakhi culture is very rich and distinct from other neighboring cultures. The most prominent Ladakhi foods being $t\,^h\,^u\,^k\,^p\,^a$, noodle soup; and $s\,g\,a\,^m\,p\,^h\,e$, roasted barley flour. A dish that is strictly Ladakhi is $s\,k\,^d\,u$, a heavy pasta dish with root vegetables. As Ladakh moves toward a cash-based economy, foods from the plains of India are becoming more common. Like in other parts of Central Asia, tea in Ladakh is traditionally made with strong green tea, butter, and salt; it is mixed in a large churn and known as $t\,^f\,\,a\,\,k\,^h\,^a\,n\,\,t\,e$ or $t\,s\,^h\,a\,t\,\,f\,\,a$. Most surplus barley produced is fermented into $t\,^f\,\,a\,\,h\,\,a\,\,n\,\,p$, an alcoholic beverage drunk especially on festive occasions.

The architecture of Ladakh contains Tibetan and Indian influences, and monastic architecture reflects a deeply Buddhist approach. The Buddhist wheel, along with two dragons, is a common feature on every Gonpa (including Lamayuru, Likir, Thikse, Hemis, Alchi and Ridzong Gompas). Many houses and monasteries are built on elevated, sunny sites facing south, and in the past were
made of rocks, earth and wood, but are now more often concrete frames filled in with stones or adobes.

The music of Ladakhi Buddhist monastic festivals, like Tibetan music, often involves religious chanting in Bhoti or Sanskrit, as an integral part of the religion. These chants are complex, often recitations of sacred texts or in celebration of various festivals. Religious mask dances are an important part of Ladakh's cultural life.

Weaving is an important part of traditional life in eastern Ladakh. Both women and men weave, on different looms. Typical costumes include gontjas of velvet, elaborately embroidered waistcoats and boots, and hats. The Ladakh Festival is held every year from 1st to September 15. Performers adorned with gold and silver ornaments and turquoise headgear throng the streets. Monks wear colourful masks and dance to the rhythm of cymbals, flutes and trumpets. The Yak, Lion and Tashispa dances depict the many legends and fables of Ladakh. Buddhist monasteries sporting prayer flags, display of 'thankas', archery competitions, a mock marriage, and horse-polo are the some highlights of this festival.

Archery is a traditional sport in Ladakh, and many villages still hold archery festivals, which are as much about traditional dancing, drinking and gambling as about the sport. The sport is conducted with strict etiquette, to the accompaniment of the music of surna and daman (shenai and drum). Polo, the
other traditional sport of Ladakh is indigenous to Baltistan and Gilgit, and was probably introduced into Ladakh in the mid-17th century by King Singge Namgyal, whose mother was a Balti princess.

A feature of Ladakhi society that distinguishes it from the rest of the state is the high status and relative emancipation enjoyed by women compared to other rural parts of India. Fraternal polyandry and inheritance by primogeniture were common in Ladakh until the early 1940s when these were made illegal by the government of Jammu and Kashmir, although they still exist in some areas. Another custom was known as \( k^h \text{agbu} \), or 'little house', in which the elders of a family, as soon as the eldest son has sufficiently matured, retire from participation in affairs, and taking only enough of the property for their own sustenance, yield the headship of the family to him.

Tibetan medicine has been the traditional health system of Ladakh for over a thousand years. This school of traditional healing contains elements of Ayurveda and Chinese medicine, combined with the philosophy and cosmology of Tibetan Buddhism. For centuries, the only medical system which was accessible to the people have been the 'amchi' who are traditional doctors following the traditional medical system. 'Amchi' medicine is still an important component of public health to this day, especially in remote areas.
1.3. Linguistic studies on Ladakhi

Some scholars have attempted several linguistic studies on Ladakhi language in the past. Sankyukta Koshal has worked on Ladakhi and has the following books on her credit:

- Ladakhi Phonetic Reader (1976) published by CIIL
- Ladakhi Grammar (1979) published by Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi,
- Conversational Ladakhi (1982) published by Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi,
- Conflicting Phonological Patterns.

for the study of languages and cultures of Asia and Africa. George Grierson has given a short introduction on Ladakhi in ‘Linguistics Survey of India’.

Grierson’s survey devoted around 20 pages (Vol-III, Part-I, pgs from 51-70) to Ladakhi language. He considered Ladakhi as a dialect of Tibetan under the Tibeto-Burman language family, having three sub-dialects (Sham, Leh, & Rong) as mentioned under sub-section 1.1.2 above.

1.4. Polysemy in language and linguistics

The term semantics is used broadly to refer to the study of meaning. It is also central to the communication (Leech, 1981). Though the ‘meaning’ or the information one wants to communicate can be conveyed through a number of means like gestures, pictures, signals, etc., language is the main tool of communication of the human beings. According to what has long been the most widely accepted theory of semantics, meanings are ideas or concepts, which can be transferred from the mind of the speaker to the mind of the hearer by embodying them, as it were, in the forms of one language or another (Lyons, 1981: 136).

The word "semantics" itself denotes a range of ideas, from the popular to the highly technical. It is often used in ordinary language to denote a problem of understanding that comes down to word selection or connotation. This problem of understanding has been the subject of many formal inquiries, over a long period of time. The word is derived from the Greek word *semantikos*, "significant", from
semaino, "to signify, to indicate" and that from sema, "sign, mark, token". In linguistics, it is the study of interpretation of signs or symbols as used by agents or communities within particular circumstances and contexts. Semantics is the subfield that is devoted to the study of meaning, as inherent at the levels of words, phrases, sentences, and larger units of discourse (referred to as texts).

A distinction is generally drawn between the meaning of words/lexemes and the meaning of sentences: between ‘lexical meaning’ and ‘sentence-meaning’. It is now recognized that one cannot account for the one without accounting for the other. Therefore, the meaning of a sentence depends upon the meaning of its constituent lexemes; and the meaning of some lexemes depends upon the meaning of the sentences in which they occur.

Lexical semantics is a subfield of linguistic semantics. It is the study of how and what the words of a language denote (Pustejovsky, 1995). Words may either be taken to denote things in the world, or concepts, depending on the particular approach to lexical semantics. The units of meaning in lexical semantics are lexical units. One can continually add new lexical units throughout one's life, learning new words and their meanings.

Lexical semantics covers theories of the classification and decomposition of word meaning, the differences and similarities in lexical semantic structure between different languages, and the relationship of word meaning to sentence meaning and syntax. One question that lexical semantics explores is whether the
meaning of a lexical unit is established by looking at its neighborhood in the semantic net (by looking at the other words it occurs within natural sentences), or if the meaning is already locally contained in the lexical unit. Another topic that is explored is the mapping of words to concepts. As tools, lexical relations like synonymy, antonymy (opposites), hyponymy and hypernymy, polysemy and to a certain degree homonymy as well - are used in this field.

Polysemy has been a central concern in lexical semantics, lexicography, translation studies, and natural language processing. Its study has been particularly prominent in so-called Cognitive Linguistics. Taylor (1995: 99) defines polysemy as “the association of two or more related senses with a single linguistic form”.

Polysemy is a sub-area in the broader problem of meaning and its analysis. The study of polysemy, or of the ‘multiplicity of meanings’ of words, has a long history in the philosophy of language, linguistics, psychology, and literature. Words often have several meanings in all the human languages of the world. Polysemy is at the centre of current semantic research, a phenomenon whereby a single linguistic form is paired with a number of distinct but related meanings or senses. In another words, it is a state of meaningfulness in which a given word expresses more than one meaning. Therefore, it is intimately linked with the problem of ambiguity. In some sense polysemic analysis tends to become an exercise into disambiguation of a sentence.
The term polysemy was popularized by Breal in 1887. Presently, the term is used both in semantic and lexical analysis with a special connotation where it implies a word with multiple meanings or senses. The English term *polysemy* is of Greek origin and it can be split into two morphemes as *poly* and *semy*. *Poly* refers to 'many' and *semy* refers to 'meaning.' Thus the term *polysemy* means 'multiple meanings' or 'many meanings' but all the meanings come from the same etymology. For example, the word 'mouth' (of a river vs. of an animal) is a case of *polysemy*. 'The two senses are clearly related by the concepts of an opening from the interior of some solid mass to the outside, and of a place of issue at the end of some long narrow channel' (Hurford, 1983: 123). Apresjan (1973: 5) defines *polysemy* as 'the similarity in the representations of two or more senses of a word'.

Surprisingly, all the very polysemous words are rarely a problem in communication among the speakers of the language. We are so adept at using contextual cues that we select the appropriate senses of words effortlessly and unconsciously. Although it is rare problematic in language use in day-to-day life, but it poses a problem up to great extend in semantic theory and in semantic applications, such as translation or lexicography and also in pedagogy.

**1.4.1. Polysemy vs. Homonymy**

When it comes to the issues of polysemy, one point meriting our note is the distinction between homonymy and polysemy. Homonymy refers to
the relation between different lexical entries which have unrelated meanings but accidentally exhibit an identical linguistic form, orthographic or phonetic (Ravin & Leacock 2000). A polysemous word, in contrast, is one single lexical item which bears different, but etymologically related, meanings (Lyons 1995, Ravin & Leacock 2000). ‘There are two kinds of lexical ambiguity, one of which depends on homonymy and the other on polysemy’ (Lyons, 1977: 550). ‘It is commonplace to describe a lexeme which has a number of senses as polysemy (or as manifesting the property of polysemy), and a lexical form which realizes lexical units belonging to more than one lexeme as homonymy’ (Cruse, 1986: 80). ‘Homonymy refers to a situation where we have two or more words with the same shape. Although they have the same shape, homonyms are considered distinct lexemes, mainly because they have unrelated meanings and different etymologies (Jackson & Amvela, 2000: 61).

The issue of lexical ambiguity has been of great interest because it addresses foundational issues regarding the nature of the mental lexicon and lexical access. There exist rich behavioral and theoretical linguistic literatures on ambiguity and the nature of the lexicon. Ambiguity can arise in different ways, and by far, the least common type of ambiguity is the type that is based on unrelated meanings which traditionally known as homonymy, where two words happen to share the same orthography and phonology. In contradictory, the ambiguity between related senses is known as polysemy. So ambiguous words can
be either homonymous or polysemous, and it is also possible for one or more meanings of homonyms to be polysemous. In addition, the number of polysemous senses a word may have can vary a great deal. The definition of homonym offered in WordNet can be stated as follows:

“Two words are homonyms if they are pronounced OR spelled the same way”.

For example, in the case of homonymy, the meanings of the same spelled word are etymologically unrelated in the sense that the term ‘\texttt{thi}’ (in Ladakhi) for instance of number ‘ten thousand’ does not have any relationship with that of the meaning ‘throne’ though a single term is used for both purposes. In the same way, the following words can also be stated as examples of homonymy in Ladakhi:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \texttt{mi} vs. \texttt{mi}
  \item \texttt{person} negative ‘not’
  \item \texttt{ts\textasciicircum{h}an} vs. \texttt{ts\textasciicircum{h}an}
  \item \texttt{night} name (honorific)
\end{itemize}

On the contrary, in the case of polysemy, go 'head of a person' and go 'peak of mountain' have etymological relationship since both the meanings refer to the top of the person and the mountain.
The ancient Indian grammarian Bhatrihari (AD 450), in his ‘Vaakyapadiya’ (dealing with the philosophy of grammar), he commented that (literal) meaning of a word could be shifted or extended or changed according to various contexts and that the meaning of a word is derived from its worldly usage.

According to Gergely Petho (2001), polysemy occurs when the same word (or lexeme) has different readings. The concrete, observable readings relate to the abstract, not directly observable lexeme in the same way as contextual (or, to put it more precisely, contextually determined) variants of abstract morphological or phonological units in actual utterances relate to these abstract units. Homonymy is then considered to be two or more words that happen to have the same form or an ambiguity of different kind. Differentiating polysemy with homonymy, he gives the following diagram:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polysemy</th>
<th>Homonymy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaning₁</td>
<td>Word₁ —— Meaning₁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Word form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning₂</td>
<td>Word₂ —— Meaning₂</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Figure 1
1.4.2. Polysemy vs. Dictionary

Dictionaries contain information about words. Most of the dictionaries generally include the possible polysemy of the particular language. Dictionaries became the main source of getting information about polysemy that lexical items contain in a particular language. It is said to be the treasure-house of information on polysemy. For example, according to Byrd et al. (1987) in Webster’s Seventh Dictionary, out of 60,000 lexical entries, 21,488 or almost 40 percent have more than one sense. It is observed that the most commonly used words tend to be the most polysemous. Thus, the verb ‘run’ in Webster’s Dictionary, for instance, has 29 different senses and further nearly 125 sub-senses.

Dictionaries differ in the number of senses they define for each word, the grouping into sub-senses and the content of definitions. There is little agreement among lexicographers as to the degree of polysemy and the way in which the different senses are organized.

Historical linguists and lexicographers became increasingly interested in the multiplicity of meaning from the point of view of etymology, historical lexicography or historical semantics. Figures of speech, such as metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche provided lexicographers with instant ways of charting the development of the multiple meanings of words (Nerlich, 2003: 60).
1.5. **Organization of the thesis**

This introductory Chapter has set out an introduction of the language under investigation explaining the purpose of the present study. It also introduces the concept of polysemy in language and linguistics.

Chapter 2 reviews various approaches to meaning extension. Chapter 3 provides the methodology of data collection and outlines the theoretical framework. Chapters 4 to 6 discuss the semantic extensions of various semantic fields such as body part terms, motion verbs and perception verbs respectively. In Chapter 7 I summarize the thesis.