Da3 as homonymy or polysemy in Chinese?


Abstract
As words are presented in forms, it is hardly defined whether they are different words (i.e., with different meanings) presented as the same form or they are the same word with related meanings. Homonym is that those different words are presented in a single form, and polysemy is that words with related meanings are shown as one form. From different perspectives, scholars have interests to distinguish words between them. As da3 in Chinese presented as one form seems consist of various meanings. In the present paper, da3 is examined for determining whether it is homonym or polysemy. Data is collected from Academia Sinica Balanced Corpus of Modern Chinese. From the perspective of cognition in which Lakoff’s (1987) prototype effect is applied, da3 is analyzed into seven categories: (1) the prototypical da3, (2) the extended imaging action da3, (3) the extended imaging path da3, (4) the extended imaging effect da3, (5) the extended imaging method da3, (6) the extended whole image da3, and (7) other da3. Among these seven categories, they are developed from either the basic (i.e., central) or the extended (i.e., the noncentral) models. Words extended from the basic model are grouped as the same word. Thus, although da3 seems have various meanings, it is a polysemous word shown with many related meanings.