

## Homonymy and its Effect on Students of Translation at Jordanian Universities

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### Abstract

This study explains the ambiguity of Arabic homonyms and its negative effects on the performance of undergraduate Translation students in three Jordanian universities. In addition, it aims to show the benefits of the annex given to the students that includes meaning of each tested word. The questions of the study are: Does the phenomenon of homonymy negatively affect the translation of Jordanian undergraduate students studying Translation? Does the annex that students were provided with affect their translation positively? A pre-test and a post-test were used as achievement tests to answer these questions to measure the performance of 36 fourth year Translation students at three Jordanian universities. They were asked to translate (30) sentences from Arabic to English. A group of (18) students were asked to retranslate the same sentences using a prepared annex, whereas, the other group did not use the annex to retranslate these sentences. The (t-test) was used to test the statistical significance of the differences between the two groups. Results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the averages of both the experimental and control group in the pre-test. Whereas, there were statistically significant differences between the averages of both groups in the post-test in favor of the experimental group who used the annex, in comparison with the control group who did not use the annex. The lack of courses that increase their knowledge in Arabic language relating to vocabulary and structure was the reason behind these negative results.

**Key words:** Homonymy, lexical semantics, semantics, translation, types of homonyms

## 1. Introduction

Homonyms can be considered the cause of different linguistic phenomena and have several consequences as a result such as misunderstanding and lack of communication through language. To my best knowledge, as far as Arab students in general and Jordanian students in particular are concerned, there does not appear to be any studies investigating this linguistic effect other than this study. This study attempts to explore one of the major semantic phenomena related to ambiguity of homonyms and their effect on the translations of undergraduate students studying Translation in Jordan. The study of homonymy has been scrutinized in several fields of linguistics as in lexical semantics (See Cruse, 1986; Palmer, 1984; Ullmann, 1962), language teaching (Todd, 1987), psycholinguistics (Pinker, 1995), stylistics (See Allan, 2001; Lyons, 1963) and computational linguistics (Schütze, 1998).

Homonymy is one of the main issues nominated for ambiguity since unawareness or negligence of homonyms might lead to a significant misunderstanding of the uttered messages, as they contribute to meaning extension as well as pronunciation constancy. This is the danger as students of Translation would see the utterance, then they might render it into one of its various meanings without consideration or thoroughness. Therefore, they might follow it, which might lead to corrupted results.

Information obtained from the analysis of the frequent mistakes committed by the undergraduate students studying Translation is due to the phenomenon of homonymy. In this light, an urgent need arises for investigating this phenomenon with an expectation that information obtained from this study will help in gaining some insight into the phenomenon to overcome the hurdles of sense disambiguation of words. The significance of the present study is also derived from the fact that Arabic homonymy is the source of ambiguity in the case of those students.

Since the focus of this study is on ambiguity of homonyms and its effects, it is crucial to highlight the effect of Arabic homonyms on the performance of Jordanian students of Translation. In addition, it will be a useful study for curriculum planners at the Jordanian universities in order to develop them in line with the students' level.

The study was limited to the investigation of Jordanian students' mistakes due to two reasons: first, the depletion of specialized studies which dealt with such a problem, and second, the need for a practical conception about the nature of errors and the ways to deal with them. Therefore, the study attempts to answer the following two questions:

- 1- Does the phenomenon of homonymy negatively affect the translation of Jordanian undergraduate students studying Translation?
- 2- Does the annex that students were provided with affect their translation positively?

Homonymy is a major source of ambiguity, whether intentional or unintentional, that often presents serious hindrances to the undergraduate Translation students. This phenomenon, indeed, creates lexical ambiguity in the use of language, hinders communication at times, and renders translation more difficult than it already is. This study aims to recognize the effect of homonymy phenomenon on the students' performance. In addition, it aims to investigate the effect of the annex which explains the nature of homonyms on the students' performance. The last aim of the study is to develop recommendations which contribute to the enhancement of students' performance.

## 2. Background

Homonymy in Greek is “same name” (Riemer, 2010, 161), and Palmer (1984) defines it as words (lexemes) which denote two different meanings at the same time according to the native speakers of the relevant language. This term is also described in semantics for lexical items that are identical in spelling and pronunciation but have different meanings (See Leech, 1981; Lyons, 1982; Macdonald, 1977; Richard & Schmidt, 2002; Yule, 2014). Moreover, Atchison (1993) and Fromkin *et al.* (2014) agree with the previous definition of homonyms but they add that homonyms may or may not be identical. Accordingly, their definition is rather similar to that of homophones. Conversely, homonyms are defined as homophones as words with the same sound but different spellings as stated by Watkins *et al.*, (2001) but without labelling homophones as homonyms as Fromkin *et al.* (2014) do.

Crystal (2008) states that homonymy can be illustrated as homographs, words that are spelt the same but have different meanings such as *row* (boat) vs. *row* (noise), and homophones, words that are spelt differently but have similar pronunciation as *threw* vs. *through*.

Homonyms can be classified to two major types in semantic analysis. First, total, full, absolute or complete homonymy which are words (lexemes) that have the same pronunciation and the same spelling, i.e. the identity covers spoken and written forms that make their forms identical which are grammatically equivalent (Allan, 1986; Fellbaum, 2000; Löbner, 2013; Lyons, 1982). For example, *bank* a slope, *bank* a place for money, and *bank* a bench or row of switches. Second, partial homonymy or heteronymy as Crystal (2008) refers to the term or ‘near homonyms’ as Watkins *et al.*, (2001) refer to it. Thus, partial homonymy are words either identical in spoken form as homophones or in written form as homographs (Crystal, 2008; Watkins *et al.*, 2001). For instance, *scene visual location and seen past participle of to see*.

Traditionally, the terms homonymy and polysemy are used for the phenomenon of multiple meanings. When meanings are related, we talk of polysemy, and when meanings are unrelated and essentially coincidental we call them homonyms. The theoretical distinction between homonymy and polysemy in semantic analysis has always been a problematic aspect for linguists to solve (Crystal, 2008). One is easily misled to assume homonymy as polysemy or vice versa. Polysemy is defined as one word (lexeme) with a wide range of related meanings, whereas homonymy is a set of words which have no relationship except their agreement in written or spoken forms. For instance, *foot* of person, of mountain, of bed is a polysemy. As Yule (2014) and Fromkin *et al.* (2014) declare that polysemous words appear in dictionaries as a single word (lexeme) with a numbered of the different meanings of it, like *pupil*, *wood* and *book* are polysemous, whereas homonyms have separate dictionary entries as words like *bank* and *mole* each one has two separate meanings.

Homonymy is a general semantic phenomenon and a capability of explanation and communication, but it leads to ambiguity in some positions since a homonym might hold two or more meanings, and thus, one meaning might be replaced with another despite the availability of a sentence context. Indeed, homonyms could cause a more significant problem whether in translation in particular or in communication in general.

As this study investigates the effect of Arabic homonyms on Translation students, it is essential to tackle homonymy in Arabic. Homonymy in Arabic is often referred to as 'attajanus

allazdi ' or ' almushtrak allazdi', all Arab linguists agree to define it as a word (lexeme) that has one articulation or form and more than one meaning (Al Khuli 2001; Al Salih, 1968; Al Ubaidi, 1998). For example, the word "sin" has one articulation whether it means 'age' or 'tooth'; and "daqiq" which means 'flour', 'precise', and 'thin'.

Homonymy is a contentious linguistic subject among Arab linguists despite the fact that it could not be denied by them. Arab linguists have disagreed on its existence in Arabic such as Ibn Dorstoya in his book "*Sharhu al Tafsil*" (Explanation of the Eloquent) denied it by interpreting the examples of homonyms in a way that excludes them from being categorized under homonymy. They might consider one of the homonym meanings is real, and the other meanings are metaphorical (Shahin, 1980). For example, the word "wajd" has several meanings like 'to find', 'anger', or 'to love'. Such Arab linguists would state that this word might seem to have several meanings but actually all these meanings are related to one thing. In contrary, other Arab linguists such as Al Aşma'y and Abu Obaidah Mu'ammār bin Al Muthana headed for its frequent existence as they provided a range of undoubted evidence were among this party (Shahin, 1980).

Homonyms in Arabic can be classified to six types which are:

### 1. Homonyms of multiple root morphemes

This embodies the first type of homonymy, and it indicates that the meanings of a single homonymous word belong to two different root morphemes. For example, "arrajulu qa'ilun zuhran" (Lit. translation: The man spoke at noon), where the word "qa'ilun" is homonymous as it might indicate the meaning of saying (i.e. the speech articulated by the tongue, which is derived from the Arabic root "qawl"), or the meaning of having a nap (i.e. a short sleep during the noon, which is derived from the Arabic root "qail"), but the word "zuhran" presents in the context explains the first meaning (Ibn Manẓour, 1994).

Firth (1957) called this aspect "Co-occurrence" and incidence probability, which results in "Collectability" according to him it is based upon lexical alternation, i.e. a word comes up with the set of words with which it is arranged to show the intended meaning, and it has another meaning different from the first one according to the adjacent words, so that it could be located in more than one linguistic context (See Mukhtar, 1998).

### 2. Metaphorical homonyms

This type of homonymy occurs when two similar words have different meanings by moving from the original position into the extension of the meaning. A sentence as "la yashī yārauna filjanatu shamsan wa la bardan" (Lit. translation: They won't feel the sun or cold in paradise). The homonymous word is "shamsan" which means "too hot" and it also means "a planet, which is a celestial body". (Ibn Manẓour, 1994). However, the word "la yashī yārauna" is used with a negative particle along with the words "janatu" and "bardan" all combined together in order to represent the linguistic context which is likely to be the first meaning.

When Lyons (1995) tackled the aspect of deixis, he pointed out that the linguistic context and the meaning are highly related to each other, which mean that they lead to the lexical meaning, the lexical semantics. For example, Mohammed has a cow. The word "cow" can refer either to the cow as an animal or to another meaning determined by the verbal context.

### 3. Homonymic particles

This type indicates the use of linguistic particles such as negation particles, question words, relative pronouns and prepositions ... etc, for different functions. Thus, sometimes a particle might replace another or sometimes a particle might be a noun in a position or an article in another, or, some particles also might be used to denote a different meaning, i.e. to perform another function.

For instance, the sentence “*ṣalabahu fi jidha al nakhlati*” (Lit. translation: He was crucified in the trunk of a palm tree). The preposition “*fi*” (in) here refers to “the high position” and it might refer to “the reason behind” (Al Murādi, 1992). However, the two words “*la’uṣallibannakum*” (crucify) and “*juthu? alnakhl*” (trunks of palm trees) represent the linguistic context which leads us to infer the first meaning.

### 4. Homonymic words that have multiple meanings (polysemy)

This concept indicates having several denotative meanings, which are not metaphoric, for the same word. This can be explained on the basis that such a homonymous word might be due to a particular motive rather than the metaphoric one which is defined through the development in its use, and this is completely different, i.e. there is no relationship between the two words, as one of them might come from another ancient language or each word has a particular meaning but they are accidentally similar in form only.

An example of this type is “*annajmu washajaru yasjudani*” (Lit. translation: The plants and trees – both (alike) prostrate in adoration), where the word “*anajmu*” is homonymous since it means a plant with no stem (Al ‘Askari, 1980), or a shining celestial body (a star), whereas the word “*ashajaru*” which is conjoined to it, in addition to the verb “*yasjudan*” represent the linguistic context which proves that “*alnajm*” in this context means (a plant).

Homonymic words that have multiple meanings cause perplexity in both Arabic and English, as they can be homonymy or polysemy. Lyon (1995) distinguishes between homonymy and polysemy by referring to the etymology of words. Such a standard can be applied to Arabic as the word “*ba‘I*” (Lit. translation: husband) its historical use has a different meaning from the modern one; it referred to a name of a god (Ibn ‘Ashour, 1984).

### 5. Using derivations in unfamiliar positions

This type means to use a derivation to refer to two different meanings. For example, a word might be an active participle (*ism fa‘il*) in a position, and an adverb in another. For instance, “*ihtiramu maqami al’ustathi wajibun*” (Lit. translation: Respecting the standing place of a teacher is essential.), where the word “*maqami*” (standing place) is homonymous as it indicates the meanings of dignity, position and greatness, as well as the meaning of rank (Al ‘Askari, 1980).

‘Awn (2005) defined the context as the outcome of using a word within the sentence when it is coherent with other words, which grants it a specific determined meaning. This definition applies to the previous example.

### 6. Homonymy due to different parts of speech

This type of homonymy refers to the parts of speech which include nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs ...etc. We should draw a line between this type of homonymy and the first

type. The first type shows the origin from which two words are derived, while the sixth type shows that the difference between two words belongs to the fact that each word corresponds to a part of speech which is incompatible with the correspondence of the other one.

An example of the sixth type is the sentence “shajara bainahum khilafun” (Lit. translation: A fight has occurred between them), which includes a homonymous word “shajara” as it includes the meaning of disagreement in opinions, or a plant with stem.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Participants:

The participants of the study were fourth year undergraduate Jordanians from three universities in Jordan studying Translation, the universities are: Jordan University, German Jordanian University, and Yarmouk University. They were 36 students selected randomly and divided equally into two groups: an experimental group and a control group.

These two groups were tested twice in their universities, while attending lectures in their departments, during the Second Term 2013-2014.

The participants' gender was not taken into consideration when the study was applied. In addition, only fourth year undergraduate students participated in the study.

#### 3.2. Research Instrument and Procedure

##### 3.2.1. Instrument:

Language tests can be considered helpful sources of feedback on the two processes of language learning and language teaching (Bachman, 1990). Additionally, tests may also help in solving a number of theoretical and practical problems related to language acquisition and language assessment in pedagogical conditions (Chapelle, 1998). As a result, a test was needed to diagnose the effect of homonymy on the language of learners.

An achievement test was the instrument used to measure the impact of Arabic homonymy on the translation of undergraduate students studying Translation and the effect of an annex at improving their translation. This test consists of (30) sentences, every (5) sentences contain homonymous words that belong to one type of the Arabic homonymy mentioned earlier. Students were asked to translate these words then points were distributed according to the number of responses required from students.

A number of specialists in this field at different Jordanian universities reviewed the test to be evaluated. Their notes were taken into consideration and the required modification was conducted.

The reliability coefficient of the achievement test was measured by testing 10 BA Translation students selected randomly from the three universities; they were not involved in the study. The test was conducted once again; the correlation coefficient of the test was (0.846) and it has a statistical significant at the level of (0.01).

The total points of the test were (30) as the test was divided into (30) sentences; the scoring being correct (one point) or incorrect/blank (0 point).

### 3.2.2. Procedures of the study:

The participants (the experimental group and the control group) were asked to translate carefully 30 sentences from Arabic to English. They were instructed to translate them in different ways if there were other possible translation for the targeted words. Additionally, they were allowed to use English dictionary if they needed to.

The participants were tested twice when they were attending lectures in their departments, during the second term of 2013-2014, as in class tests. The participants were randomly distributed into two groups of 18 students each; one group was the experimental group and the other was the control group.

The first test was conducted by both groups when they had the achievement pre-test by translating 30 sentences from Arabic to English. As for the second test, it took place after a 10-day interval of the first test. Both groups took the achievement post-test; the control group was asked to retranslate the same 30 sentences with underlined words without using the prepared annex, while the experimental group was asked to retranslate the same 30 sentences with underlined words by using the annex prepared by the researcher.

Four instructors (PhD holders) of translation working at different Jordanian universities corrected the participants' translations. The sentences were corrected according to a list of the targeted Arabic words underlined and defined in order for the instructors to be aware of the exact meaning of the translated words.

### 3.2.3. Annex:

An annex was prepared by the researcher which included only the target words in the test with their commonly used meanings. These words were used in simple linguistic contexts using their familiar meanings in order to meet the students' levels.

The purpose of the annex is to improve the performance of translation students, so they can produce translated sentences which are congruent with linguistic validity standards. Below is a sample of the annex used in the study.

**Table 1.** A sample of the annex

1	al shams (lit. translation: the sun)	Celestial body	Al shams qaribatun mina al arđi (lit. translation: The sun is near the earth.)
		Too hot	La nash'uru bi shams bisabab al mokayyifi (lit. translation: We do not feel the sun because of the air condition.)
2	fi (lit. translation: in)	On	şalabahu fi jidha al nakhlati (lit. translation: He was crucified in the trunk of a palm tree).
		Because of	ţurida aţalib fi imtiĥanin rasaba bihi (lit. translation: The student was dismissed because of his failure in the exam.)
3	shajarah (lit.	Plant	aşunawbaru shajarun muthmirun (lit.

	translation: tree)		translation: Pine is a fruitful tree.)
		Fighting	ashejar amer marfudun (lit. translation: Fighting is unacceptable.)
4	qa'il (lit. translation: said).	Noon time	alqailulatu turihu a jisma (lit. translation: Having a nap relaxes the body.)
		Speech	alqawlu kalamun mufidun (lit. translation: This speech is worthy.)

#### 3.2.4. Statistical Analysis:

The statistical analysis used in this study was the (t-test) as there is one dependent variable which is the translation of homonymous words. This is the major variable that is measured in the study and is influenced by the other variable (Hatch & Larzaraton, 1991). The other variable is the independent variable which is the prepared annex about homonymy phenomenon; it will influence the dependent variable. In addition, the (t-test) was used in calculating the performance averages and standard deviations obtained from the achievement tests. Moreover, it is used to ascertain the statistical significance of differences between the experimental and control groups.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

This study aims at investigating the impact of homonymy on the performance of translation students and revealing the impact of a prepared annex on their performance. The study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. Does the phenomenon of homonymy negatively affect the translation of Jordanian undergraduate students studying Translation?
2. Does the annex that students were provided with affect their translation positively?

##### 4.1. Results of the first question:

In order to answer the first question, the means and standard deviations obtained from the points of the students in both the control and experimental groups who submitted the pre-test were calculated. A statistical analysis of (t-test) was applied. The results of the first question are presented below in Table (2); it presents the pre-test mean and standard deviation of each group as well as the (t- test) results.

**Table 2.** The pre-test mean and standard deviation of each group and the (t – test) results

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Degree of freedom	Significant Level
Control	18	1.83	2	0.301	18	0.767

<b>Experimental</b>	18	1.72	1.96			
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It is notable from the (t-test) results in Table (2) that there is a lack of statistically significant differences at the level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) and t-value was (0.301), and this was confirmed by the clear convergence between the averages of students' performance in both experimental and control groups. The mean of experimental group in the pre-test was (1.72), while the mean of the control group in the pre-test was (1.83).

#### **4.2. Results of the second question:**

To answer the second question if the annex that students were provided with affect their translation positively or not. The means and standard deviations obtained from the points of the students in both the control and experimental groups who submitted the post-test were calculated. A statistical analysis of (t-test) was applied. The control group retranslated the sentences without using the annex, whereas the experimental group retranslated the sentence by using the annex. The results of the second question are presented below in Table (3); it presents the post-test means and standard deviations as well as the (t- test) results.

**Table 3.** *The mean and standard deviation of the post-test for each group and the (t – test)*

<b>Group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Degree of freedom</b>	<b>Significant Level</b>
<b>Control</b>	18	3.8	2.23	20.201	17	0.00
<b>Experimental</b>	18	18.33	4.56			

It is notable from the (t-test) in table (3) that there are statistically significant differences at the level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) due to the annex. The t-value was (20.201) which has a statistical significance at the level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ); this indicates that the annex has a notable positive impact on the performance of the experimental group. This was also reflected in the means of students' performance of both groups, which were in the favor of experimental group, as the mean of the experimental group in the pre-test was (1.72), and then it increased in the post-test to (18.33). On the other hand, the mean of the control group in the pre-test was (1.83), and then it increased in the post-test to (3.8), as shown in the means of Tables (2 and 3).

#### **4.3. Discussion of the first question results:**

In light of the aforementioned results, the (t-test) indicates that there were no statistically significant differences at the level of significant ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) for the means of both the experimental and control group in the pre-test. This indicates that there was an evenly convergent level of performance for both groups. The average of the experimental group in the pre- test was (1.7), whereas the average of the control group in the pre- test was (1.8).

#### **4.4. Discussion of the second question results:**

In light of the aforementioned results, the (t -test) indicated that there were no statistically significant ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in the averages of both the experimental and control group in the pre-test. It also indicated that there were statistically significant differences at the level of the significant ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in the means of both the experimental and control group in the post-test in favor of the experimental group members who used the annex, in comparison with the members of the control group who did not use the annex. These differences were reflected through the improvement of students' performance in the post- test. This indicates that the annex was effective at improving the performance of translation students in the experimental group, which shows that the aim of the annex has been achieved.

### **5. Analysis of homonymy errors**

This section deals with the analysis of errors committed by fourth year students studying Translation in translating Arabic homonymous words to English. This study tackled these errors depending on three stages: error detection, error description and error interpretation (Corder, 1981). The first two stages have been discussed earlier, and the following is the last stage. In this study, the errors are attributed to the types of Arabic homonymy discussed earlier in the study.

#### **5.1. Errors due to multiple root morphemes**

Students did not pay attention to the differences in the derivation of the target words. If they have checked the etymology of each word, the differences between them would have been clarified. Thus, the students might – more carefully – consider such words, and this would have led them to the fact that it is necessary to check these words before translating the sentence. For example, the root of the word “qa'il” (Lit. translation: said) in the sentence “arrajulu qa'ilun zuhran” (Lit. translation: The man had a nap at noon) might be (qaila) or (qawla), where the meaning of speech (alkalamu) is derived from the root (qawla), and the meaning of a nap is derived from the root (qaila).

To overcome this problem in this aspect, students have to be trained on how to check the etymology of Arabic words by looking at the triple (three-letter) or quartet (four-letter) root, and how to know whether the origin of the letter (alif: ا) is (wau: و) or (ya': ي). They also have to check the letters which are added to the root of the verb to derive different words with different meanings. They also have to be familiar with the use of Arabic dictionaries.

#### **5.2. Errors due to metaphorical homonyms**

Students did not take into account metaphor, which is when a word has a meaning in the original position and then it is moved through extension into another meaning. Here, the students had to rely on the context. For example, in the sentence “la yash y'rauna filjanatu shamsan wa la bardan” (lit. translation: they will not feel in paradise nor sun or cold), the verb “yashaur” (lit. translation: feel) is compatible with “heat, coldness, warmth, happiness, joy and sadness” for these are moral matters which are not material like (sun or day). This indicates that in this sentence the sun was not meant to be, however, the homonymous word ‘sun’ used metaphorically, because its presence indicates heat.

To resolve this aspect, students have to consider the linguistic context because the sentence contains indicative clues which make it possible to know whether the use is denotative

or metaphoric. Moreover, they have to check Arabic dictionaries such as “al Wasit Dictionary” in order to be familiar with the original meaning.

### 5.3. Errors due to homonymic particles

Some Arabic particles have multiple functions and are used to provide different meanings. The participants were not aware of such a linguistic issue. For example, the preposition “ba’: بـ” might have the meaning of “fi: في” (lit. translation: in) in a sentence like “naşrukum bil m’araka” (lit. translation: your victory in the battle). It might also mean “ma’: مع” (lit. translation: with) in a sentence like “atba’ahumu al ustadhu bi ţulabih” (lit. translation: the teacher was followed with students). It might also mean “min: من” (lit. translation: from) in a sentence like “ainun yashrab biha” (lit. translation: a spring where they drink from). It might also mean “ila: إلى” (Lit. translation: to) in a sentence like “qad ahsan bi” (lit. translation: he made goodness to me). Another example is the particle “ma” which can be used as a question word, exclamatory word, negation word or a relative pronoun.

The context is likely to determine the suitable meaning. For instance, the sentence “şalabahu fi jidha al nakhlati” (Lit. translation: he was crucified in a trunk of a palm tree), the meaning shows that the preposition “fi” (Lit. translation: in) refers to the preposition “ala” (Lit. translation: on) because it is impossible to think that someone might be crucified inside a truck. General knowledge would serve to infer the crucifying on a trunk of a tree not inside it.

Students have to be introduced to an important phenomenon in Arabic language which is particle function shifting. The focus should be placed upon different types of particles, and this should be supported with an empirical study of practical examples taken from real-life situations.

### 5.4. Errors due to polysemy

Students did not consider – though it is hard to note – polysemy where some words have different meanings denotatively not metaphorically. One reason behind this is that such homonymous words might have a foreign origin. This means that the two words are not connected to each other. For example, the word “thaqib” is derived from the root “thaqaba” (lit. translate: breach) (Ibn Manzour, 1994), but in Kananah language, it means “moşî” (Lit. translation: shining) (Al Muqri’, 1946). Another example is the word “bardan” (lit. translate: cold) which has another meaning in Huthail language which is sleeping (Al Muqri’, 1946).

It is recommended to prepare an extended list which includes the most popular Arabic polysemous words used in all fields such as fields of arts, humanities or sciences, then to collect them in a simplified dictionary.

### 5.5. Errors due to homonymy of different parts of speech

Students did not pay attention to the fact that a derived word might indicate two different meanings. For example, an active participle might replace a passive participle and vice versa, or an active participle might replace a *masdar*-type abstraction such as the word “nadhîrun” (lit. translation: presage) which might mean (the person who warns) in a sentence like “ja’a alrasulu nadhîran liqaumihi” (lit. translation: the prophet came as a presage to his people). This might stand as a *masdar*-type abstraction in a sentence like “inna hadha ali’lana nadhîrun lirasibina” (lit. translate: this announcement is an alert for failed students) which is similar to the previously mentioned word “maqam”.

## 6. Conclusion

Homonymy as a main cause of lexical ambiguity in languages, it is frequently acquainted with the obstruction of communication and generating difficulty to the native language speaker. As a result of this lexical ambiguity, the present study was an attempt to find answers to the questions of the research, which are: Does the phenomenon of homonymy negatively affect the translation of Jordanian undergraduate students studying Translation? Does the annex that students were provided with affect their translation positively? The findings of this study indicated that the ambiguity of Arabic homonyms affected negatively the results of translation students, while the prepared annex positively affected their results.

It is recommended that translation departments at Jordanian universities should add more Arabic lexicology and lexical courses to the study plans of the undergraduate Translation programme. Besides, it would be useful for students to be provided with a special dictionary consists of polysemous words. This dictionary should be based on the extent popularity of such words in real-life situations. These suggestions can help students to understand the possible sense variations of words in the lexicon to overcome various problems in communication in general and in translation in particular.

Extensive academic research focuses on the effect of homonyms whether Arabic or English would elucidate on the linguistic errors that language students make. It would also help in the syllabi planning to achieve the desired learning outcome.

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