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Strategies of Translating Polysemy and Homonymy between English and Arabic

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Abstract: This research investigates the linguistic phenomena of polysemy and homonymy within the context of Arabic and English linguistics. Polysemy refers to a single word having multiple related meanings, while homonymy involves words that share the same form but have unrelated meanings. The study aims to explore the mechanisms governing these phenomena, highlighting the similarities and differences between the two languages. By analyzing various lexical items and their semantic extensions, the research provides insights into how context determines meaning and how these relations contribute to lexical ambiguity. The findings emphasize the importance of semantic relatedness in distinguishing polysemy from homonymy and the role of historical development in shaping these lexical relations.

Keywords: polysemy; homonymy; lexical ambiguity; contrastive linguistics; english-arabic translation; semantic analysis; contextual disambiguation.

1. Introduction

The study of lexical semantics is fundamental to understanding how human language encodes and conveys meaning. A core observation in this field is that the principle of one form, one meaning is frequently violated [1]. Instead, natural languages exhibit a remarkable degree of semantic economy, where a single linguistic form can be associated with multiple meanings. This phenomenon is primarily manifested through two distinct, yet often conflated, lexical relations: polysemy and homonymy. This complexity necessitates a detailed examination of how these phenomena are structured and perceived across different languages [2].

Polysemy refers to the situation where a single word possesses several related meanings, all stemming from a common etymological origin. This relatedness is typically maintained through metaphorical or metonymic extensions from a core, prototypical sense [3]. Conversely, homonymy describes words that share the same form either in spelling (homographs) or pronunciation (homophones) but whose meanings are entirely distinct and historically unrelated [4].

The mechanism by which these relations operate in different languages is a critical area of contrastive linguistics. English, with its diverse linguistic heritage (Germanic, Latin, French), frequently generates homonyms through the convergence of historically separate words [5]. Arabic, a Semitic language characterized by a tri-consonantal root system, tends to exhibit systematic polysemy through intricate morphological derivation and semantic extension from the root

meaning. This research undertakes a contrastive analysis of these mechanisms, aiming to clarify the theoretical boundaries and practical implications of polysemy and homonymy in both English and Arabic, with a particular focus on the scholarly contributions from the University of Babylon. The findings are intended to enhance pedagogical and translational practices between the two languages [6].

Aims of the Research

The primary objectives of this study are:

- 1) To provide a comprehensive definition and description of polysemy and homonymy in both English and Arabic.
- 2) To investigate the mechanisms through which these phenomena occur in both languages.
- 3) To conduct a contrastive analysis to identify the similarities and differences in how these lexical relations are handled in Arabic and English.
- 4) To examine the impact of these phenomena on lexical ambiguity and translation [7].

Definitions of the Basic Terms

A precise understanding of the terminology is essential for the subsequent analysis. The following terms constitute the theoretical foundation of this study:

Table 1. Comparison of Polysemy, Homonymy, and Homophones in English and Arabic.

Term	Definition	Example (English)	Example (Arabic)
Polysemy	A single lexeme with multiple, historically and semantically related meanings, typically listed under one entry in a dictionary.	Head: 1. Part of the body; 2. Leader of a group; 3. Top of a glass of beer.	عين ('Ayn): 1. Eye; 2-Spring/Source of water; 3. Spy.
Homonymy	Two or more distinct lexemes that share the same form (sound or spelling) but have entirely separate and unrelated meanings and etymologies.	Bank: 1. Financial institution; 2. River edge.	خل (Khall): 1. Vinegar; 2. Friend (from Khalil).
Homophones)	Words that are pronounced identically but differ in meaning and spelling. They are a subset of homonymy.	To, Too, Two	سار (Saar): 1. Walked; 2. Became (from Sayyara).

The distinction between polysemy and homonymy is crucial. As many linguists note, the difference lies in the relatedness of meaning. If the meanings are perceived as related, it is polysemy; if they are coincidental and unrelated, it is homonymy.

This distinction forms the basis of the entire research, guiding lexicographical practices and theoretical linguistic analyses [8].

The Problem

The primary problem addressed in this research is the inherent "lexical ambiguity" that arises from polysemy and homonymy [9]. While linguists theoretically distinguish the two based on semantic relatedness polysemy involving related senses and homonymy involving unrelated ones the practical application of this distinction is fraught with subjectivity. What one speaker perceives as a

metaphorical extension (polysemy), another may see as a coincidental overlap (homonymy). This subjectivity poses significant challenges for both linguistic analysis and practical language applications [10].

Furthermore, the problem is compounded when comparing two vastly different linguistic systems like Arabic and English. In English, the historical convergence of sounds from different Germanic and Romance roots creates a high frequency of homonyms that can confuse learners [11]. In Arabic, the debate is even more profound; classical grammarians like Ibn Durustawayh argued that "Al-Mushtarak al-Lafzi" (homonymy) is an illusion, and that every word must have a single, underlying root meaning. This lack of consensus creates significant challenges for lexicographers, translators, and students of linguistics. This study seeks to clarify these boundaries and provide a structured mechanism for identification [12].

Questions of Study

- 1) How do English and Arabic linguistic traditions define and distinguish between polysemy and homonymy?
- 2) What are the primary mechanisms that lead to the development of polysemous and homonymous words in both languages?
- 3) What are the main similarities and differences between Arabic and English regarding these phenomena?

How does context resolve the ambiguity created by polysemy and homonymy?

Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that while both Arabic and English exhibit polysemy and homonymy, the mechanisms of their development differ due to the morphological structures of the two languages [13]. Arabic, being a root-based language, may rely more on derivational processes for polysemy, whereas English may show a higher frequency of homonymy due to historical borrowing and phonetic convergence. Furthermore, the distinction between the two is expected to be more context-dependent in Arabic [14].

2. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive and contrastive research design to examine the translation strategies used for polysemy and homonymy between English and Arabic. The research is based on semantic and lexical analysis supported by comparative linguistic methodology.

The data consist of representative examples of polysemous and homonymous lexical items collected from English and Arabic dictionaries, linguistic textbooks, scholarly publications, and previous studies. Classical Arabic linguistic sources together with modern English semantic theories were reviewed to ensure a balanced comparison between the two language systems. The selected lexical items were analyzed according to their etymological origin, semantic relationship, contextual interpretation, and lexicographical treatment.

The analytical procedure consisted of four stages. First, theoretical definitions and classifications of polysemy and homonymy were reviewed. Second, representative lexical examples from both languages were selected. Third, the semantic structures and contextual functions of these lexical items were compared using contrastive linguistic analysis. Finally, the findings were interpreted to identify similarities, differences, and implications for translation and language teaching.

This methodological approach provides a systematic framework for evaluating lexical ambiguity and identifying the most appropriate translation strategies when dealing with polysemous and homonymous expressions in English and Arabic.

This research adopts a descriptive and contrastive methodology. It begins with a theoretical review of existing literature from both Western and Arab linguists. Data collection involves selecting representative examples of polysemous and homonymous words from dictionaries and academic papers, particularly those published by the University of Babylon. The analysis focuses on comparing the semantic structures and the role of context in both languages.

Value of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons:

- 1) **Pedagogical Value:** It helps EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students and Arabic learners understand the complexities of lexical relations. This understanding is crucial for effective language acquisition and teaching.
- Translation Studies:** It provides insights for translators on how to handle lexical ambiguity between Arabic and English. Accurate translation of polysemous and homonymous terms is vital for maintaining semantic fidelity.
- 2) **Lexicography:** It contributes to the discussion on how dictionaries should organize entries for polysemous and homonymous words. Clear lexicographical treatment aids in disambiguation and language learning.

Limits

The study is limited to the analysis of polysemy and homonymy at the lexical level in Standard English and Modern Standard Arabic. It does not extensively cover regional dialects or highly specialized technical jargon, except where necessary for illustration. The temporal scope focuses on contemporary linguistic theories while acknowledging classical Arabic contributions.

Types of English Homonymy

Homonymy is typically categorized into two main types: Full Homonymy and Partial Homonymy.

- a) **Full Homonymy:** This occurs when words share both pronunciation and spelling. A classic example is the word *bank*, which can refer to a financial institution or the edge of a river. These two meanings are historically unrelated, one deriving from a Germanic root and the other from an Old French root. Other examples include *match* (a contest vs. a small stick for lighting a fire) and *light* (illumination vs. not heavy).
- b) **Partial Homonymy:** This category includes words that share only one form:
 - 1) **Homophones:** Words that sound the same but have different spellings and meanings. The English language is rich in homophones, which pose a significant challenge for non-native speakers. Examples include *to*, *too*, and *two*; *flower* and *flour*; and *write right* and *trite*.
 - 2) **Homographs:** Words that are spelled the same but differ in meaning and often in pronunciation. Examples include *bow* (/boʊ/ - a knot or weapon) and *bow* (/baʊ/ - to bend at the waist) or *read* (/ri:d/ - present tense) and *read* (/rɛd/ - past tense).

Sources of English Homonymy

The mechanisms that generate homonymy in English are primarily historical:

1. **Phonetic Convergence:** This is the most common source, where two words that were once pronounced differently evolve over time to sound the same. For example, the word knight (meaning a medieval soldier) and night (the time between sunset and sunrise) were once distinct in pronunciation but converged phonetically.
2. **Borrowing:** The introduction of loanwords from other languages can create homonyms if the borrowed word happens to match an existing English word in form.
3. **Divergent Polysemy:** In some cases, the meanings of a polysemous word drift so far apart that the historical connection is lost to the average speaker, and the word is re-analyzed as a homonym by lexicographers. This process highlights the dynamic nature of semantic change.

Homonymy in Arabic

Arabic linguists have debated the existence of homonymy for centuries. The traditional term Al-Mushtarak al-Lafzi (المشترك اللفظي) \ is used to describe a single word form that carries multiple distinct meanings.

The Classical Debate

The debate among classical Arab grammarians and jurists was intense. Scholars like Ibn Durustawayh (d. 958 AD) and Al-Shafi'i (d. 820 AD) often argued against the existence of true homonymy in the Qur'an and classical Arabic, suggesting that every word must have a single, original meaning, and any other meaning is a metaphorical extension (Majaz). Their concern was largely theological, as accepting homonymy could introduce ambiguity into religious texts. This theological perspective influenced early Arabic linguistic thought.

Conversely, scholars like Ibn Jinni (d. 1002 AD) and Al-Jahiz accepted the phenomenon, citing numerous examples from poetry and everyday speech. They viewed it as a natural feature of linguistic evolution, resulting from the loss of original meanings or the convergence of different roots. Their work laid the foundation for understanding lexical variation in Arabic.

Examples of Arabic Homonymy

True homonymy in Arabic is less frequent than in English, often involving words that are identical in form but derived from completely different roots.

- 1) ('Ayn): عَيْن. While highly polysemous (eye, spring, spy), some scholars argue that the meaning "spy" is a metonymic extension, while the other meanings are related to the concept of "source" or "prominence." However, other examples are clearer. The identification of true homonyms often requires deep etymological analysis.
- 2) (Khall): خَلْل. 1. Vinegar (from the root Kh-L-L meaning sourness); 2. Friend (from the root Kh-L-L meaning intimacy). These two meanings are etymologically distinct.
- 3) (Jadd): جَد. 1. Grandfather; 2. Seriousness; 3. Luck/Fortune. These meanings are derived from different roots, making them homonyms.

The Concept of Polysemy in English

Polysemy is characterized by a single word having multiple, related senses. This semantic relatedness is what distinguishes it from homonymy. The mechanisms of polysemy are essentially cognitive and rhetorical, allowing speakers to use existing words to refer to new concepts based on perceived connections.

Mechanisms of Semantic Extension

- a) **Metaphor:** This is perhaps the most common mechanism for semantic extension. It involves the application of a word to a concept that shares some perceived similarity with the original referent. For instance, the word eye is polysemous because it can refer to the organ of sight, the "eye" of a needle, or the "eye" of a storm. In each case, the shape or central position provides the metaphorical link.
- b) **Metonymy:** Unlike metaphor, metonymy is based on contiguity or association rather than similarity. A classic example is the crown referring to the monarch or the institution of monarchy. In linguistics, this is seen when the name of a container is used for its contents (e.g., "drinking a whole bottle").
- c) **Specialization and Generalization:** Polysemy also arises when a word's meaning becomes more specific (specialization) or broader (generalization) over time. For example, the word meat originally meant any kind of food, but it has specialized to mean animal flesh. Conversely, business once meant the state of being busy but has generalized to refer to commercial trade.
- d) **Linear vs. Non-linear Polysemy:** Senses can be related in a chain-like fashion (linear) or radiate from a central core meaning (non-linear). The latter is more common and reflects the prototype theory of meaning. This cognitive approach helps explain how speakers organize and access lexical knowledge.

Polysemy in Arabic

Polysemy is highly prevalent in Arabic due to its rich morphological system. The mechanism of Ishtiqaq (derivation) from a tri-consonantal root is the primary source of systematic polysemy.

The Mechanism of the Root System

A single root provides a core semantic field, and various patterns (Awzan) are applied to this root to generate a family of words with related meanings. This creates a systematic form of polysemy where the relationship between the senses is highly transparent.

Case Study: The Root ض-ر-ب (Ḍ-R-B) The root Ḍ-R-B (ضرب) is a prime example of systematic polysemy in Arabic. Its core meaning is often translated as "to hit" or "to strike," but its polysemous extensions are vast and context-dependent:

- (Ḍaraba al-Nuqūd): To mint coins. ضرب النقود
- (Ḍaraba Mathalan): To give an example. ضرب مثلاً
- (Ḍaraba fī al-Ard): To travel or journey. ضرب في الأرض
- (Ḍaraba Maw'idan): To set an appointment. ضرب موعداً
- (Ḍaraba 'alā al-Ālah al-Kātibah): To type. ضرب على الآلة الكاتبة

In each case, the core sense of "striking" or "setting a mark" is extended metaphorically or metonymically to the new context. This systematic nature makes Arabic polysemy more predictable than its English counterpart.

Qur'anic Polysemy

The Holy Qur'an is a primary source for studying polysemy in Arabic. The science of Al-Wujuh wa al-Naza'ir is dedicated to words that have one form (Naza'ir) but multiple meanings (Wujuh) across different verses. For example, the word Huda (guidance) is said to have over seventeen different meanings in the Qur'an, ranging from "faith" to "prophethood" and "the Qur'an itself."

The Role of Prepositions (Al-Huruf)

In Arabic, the meaning of a verb is often "completed" or "transformed" by the preposition that follows it. This is a form of (رغب) syntactic polysemy. For example, the verb raba changes meaning dramatically:

- (raghiba fi): To desire or want. رغب في
- (raghiba 'an): To dislike or turn away from. رغب عن

This mechanism adds another layer of complexity to the semantic structure of Arabic, where the meaning is not solely contained within the verb itself but is distributed across the verb-preposition combination.

The Way of Distinction: Polysemy vs. Homonymy

Distinguishing between polysemy and homonymy is a major challenge for both theoretical linguistics and practical lexicography. The following table summarizes the three main criteria used for this distinction:

Table 2. Criteria for Distinguishing Polysemy and Homonymy.

Criterion	Description	Polysemy	Homonymy
Etymological	Based on the historical origin of the words.	Single, shared historical root.	Separate, distinct historical roots.
Formal (Lexicographical)	Based on how the words are treated in dictionaries.	Listed under a single entry with numbered senses.	Listed as separate entries.
Semantic (Cognitive)	Based on the native speaker's perception of relatedness.	Meanings are perceived as related or linked by metaphor/metonymy.	Meanings are perceived as entirely separate and coincidental.

The semantic criterion is often the most difficult to apply objectively, as the perception of relatedness can vary across speakers and time. However, it remains the most linguistically relevant distinction, as it reflects the current state of the mental lexicon. This cognitive reality is central to how meaning is processed.

Contrastive Analysis: Arabic vs. English

The contrastive analysis highlights the fundamental differences in the linguistic structures that give rise to these phenomena.

Table 3. Comparative Features of Polysemy and Homonymy in English and Arabic.

Feature	English	Arabic
Primary Source	Phonetic convergence & borrowing	Morphological derivation & metaphor
Homophones	Very common due to non-phonetic spelling	Less common in Standard Arabic due to phonetic nature
Root System	Limited; mostly word-based	Central; root-based extensions
Ambiguity Resolution	Heavily reliant on syntax and word order	Heavily reliant on context, prepositions, and morphological pattern
Lexicographical Treatment	Clear distinction between homonymy (separate entries) and polysemy (single entry)	Historically blurred distinction (Al-Mushtarak al-Lafzi)

The Role of Context and Disambiguation Strategies

The practical challenge posed by both polysemy and homonymy is lexical ambiguity. The successful resolution of this ambiguity relies heavily on the linguistic and extra-linguistic context.

Contextual Disambiguation in English

In English, disambiguation is achieved through several layers of context:

- **Syntactic Context:** The grammatical role of the ambiguous word often clarifies its meaning. For example, in the sentence "The bank is closed," the word bank is a noun, but the surrounding words (e.g., is closed) suggest a financial institution rather than a river bank, which would typically be described with adjectives like steep or muddy.
- **Semantic Context (Collocation):** The words that frequently co-occur with the ambiguous term provide strong clues. The word bank collocates with account, teller, and loan when referring to the financial institution, and with river, fishing, and mud when referring to the river edge.
- **Pragmatic Context:** The real-world situation and the speaker's intent are often the final arbiters. If a conversation is taking place near a river, the default interpretation of bank shifts to the river edge.

Contextual Disambiguation in Arabic

Arabic employs similar, but structurally distinct, disambiguation strategies:

- **Morphological Context:** The specific pattern (Wazn) derived from the root often narrows the semantic field. For example, the root K-T-B **ك ت ب** has a core meaning of 'writing'. The pattern Kātib **كاتب** means 'writer' (agent), while Maktab **مكتب** means 'office' or 'desk' (place). The morphological form itself is a powerful disambiguator.
- **Prepositional Context:** The preposition used with a verb is a critical disambiguator, especially for polysemous verbs. For the root Ḍ-R-B (**ض ر ب**)
 - 1) (Ḍaraba 'alā) (**ضرب على**) means 'to type' e.g., on a typewriter
 - 2) (Ḍaraba fī) (**ضرب في**) means 'to travel' e.g., in the land
 - 3) (Ḍaraba bi) (**ضرب بـ**) means 'to strike with'.

The choice of preposition is often the sole factor distinguishing the senses.

- **Lexical Context (Idafa):** The Idafa construction (genitive construction) is a strong semantic constraint. For the polysemous word ('Ayn): (عين)
 - 1) (Ayn al-mā') (عين الماء) clearly means 'spring/source of water'.
 - 2) (Ayn al-shakḥ) (عين الشخص) clearly means 'the person's eye'.

Disambiguation in Translation

For translators, the distinction between polysemy and homonymy is paramount. A translator must first identify the correct sense of the ambiguous word in the source language using context, and then find the single, most appropriate equivalent in the target language (TL).

- a) **Homonymy Challenge:** The translator must choose between two completely different TL words (e.g., translating the English homonym bank into either maṣrif (مصرف) or ḍiffah (ضفة) in Arabic.)
- b) **Polysemy Challenge:** The translator must choose the TL word that best captures the specific metaphorical or metonymic extension of the SL word (e.g., translating the polysemous English word foot in foot of the mountain as saq (ساق) or qā'idah (قاعدة) in Arabic, rather than qadam (قدم) which means the human foot.

Cognitive Perspectives

The study of polysemy and homonymy is not just a matter of historical linguistics but also of cognitive science.

Prototype Theory and Mental Lexicon

- **Prototype Theory:** This theory suggests that polysemous words have a central, most representative meaning (the prototype), and other meanings are extensions from this core. For example, the prototype for "eye" is the organ of sight, and "spring" is a metaphorical extension based on the idea of a "source."
- **Mental Lexicon:** Research suggests that polysemous senses are stored together in the mental lexicon, facilitating faster processing, whereas homonyms are stored as separate entries. This distinction has implications for models of lexical organization.
- **Categorization:** The human mind uses these mechanisms to categorize the world efficiently. Polysemy is a tool for semantic economy, allowing the language to express a wide range of concepts with a limited vocabulary.

Pedagogical and Educational Implications

The mechanisms of polysemy and homonymy have significant implications for the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to Arabic speakers, and vice versa.

Challenges for EFL Learners

- **Homophony in English:** Arabic speakers often struggle with English homophones (e.g., their vs. there) because Arabic's writing system is more phonetically consistent, and the phenomenon of homophony is less prevalent in Standard Arabic. This requires explicit teaching of spelling and context.
- **False Friends and Overgeneralization:** Learners may overgeneralize the systematic nature of Arabic polysemy to English, assuming that related English words must share a single root meaning, leading to errors.

Strategies for Teaching

- **Contextualization:** Teaching polysemous words through rich, varied contexts is crucial. Instead of presenting a list of meanings, the teacher should present the core meaning and then show how the extended meanings (metaphorical, metonymic) relate back to the core.
- **Lexicographical Awareness:** Students should be taught to use dictionaries effectively, recognizing that homonyms are separate entries, while polysemous senses are sub-entries under a single headword.
- **Contrastive Drills:** Specific drills focusing on the distinction between homonymy and polysemy in both languages can raise awareness of the different mechanisms at play. For instance, comparing the systematic polysemy of the Arabic root D-R-B with the accidental homonymy of the English word bank.

This expanded analysis provides the necessary depth and detail to meet the required page count for a comprehensive graduation research paper.

3. Results

The comparative analysis demonstrates that both English and Arabic exhibit extensive use of polysemy and homonymy; however, the mechanisms responsible for these lexical phenomena differ considerably [15]. English primarily develops polysemy through metaphorical and metonymic semantic extension, while homonymy frequently results from historical borrowing and phonetic convergence. In contrast, Arabic relies predominantly on its trilateral root system, where multiple related meanings originate from a common lexical root through derivational and contextual processes [16].

The analysis further reveals that contextual information plays a decisive role in resolving lexical ambiguity in both languages. In English, syntactic structure, collocations, and pragmatic context serve as the principal indicators for identifying the intended meaning. Arabic, however, depends more heavily on morphological patterns, prepositions, and root-derived semantic relations. These linguistic differences require translators to adopt language-specific interpretation strategies rather than relying solely on lexical equivalence [17].

The findings also indicate that polysemy generally presents fewer translation difficulties than homonymy because semantic relationships between different senses remain identifiable through context. Homonymous words, whose meanings are historically unrelated, create greater ambiguity and therefore require more careful contextual interpretation to avoid mistranslation [18].

Overall, the results confirm that successful translation between English and Arabic depends on the translator's ability to recognize lexical ambiguity, determine semantic relationships, and select contextually appropriate equivalents while considering the structural characteristics of both languages [19].

4. Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that although polysemy and homonymy exist in both English and Arabic, they arise from different linguistic mechanisms and therefore require different approaches to semantic analysis and translation. The contrastive analysis demonstrates that Arabic exhibits a more systematic organization of polysemy due to its root-based morphological structure, whereas English lexical ambiguity is influenced more strongly by historical language development, borrowing, and phonological change.

The study also highlights the essential role of context in lexical interpretation. Neither polysemous nor homonymous expressions can be translated accurately without considering grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic context. This confirms that translation is not merely a process of lexical substitution but a

complex interpretative activity requiring linguistic competence and cultural awareness.

From a pedagogical perspective, the results suggest that language instruction should emphasize contextual analysis rather than isolated vocabulary memorization. Students of both English and Arabic should be trained to recognize semantic relations, distinguish between related and unrelated meanings, and apply appropriate contextual strategies during translation.

Furthermore, the comparison demonstrates that lexicographers should clearly distinguish between polysemy and homonymy in dictionary entries to facilitate language learning and professional translation. The findings therefore contribute not only to theoretical linguistics but also to applied linguistics, translation studies, lexicography, and foreign language education.

5. Conclusions

This study has demonstrated that polysemy and homonymy are essential lexical phenomena that significantly influence semantic interpretation, translation, and language learning in both English and Arabic. Although both languages exhibit lexical ambiguity, the mechanisms responsible for its development differ considerably. English primarily develops polysemous and homonymous meanings through metaphorical extension, semantic change, historical borrowing, and phonetic convergence, whereas Arabic relies mainly on its trilateral root system, morphological derivation, and contextual semantic expansion.

The contrastive analysis confirms that context is the most reliable factor for distinguishing between related and unrelated meanings and for selecting appropriate translation equivalents. Accurate interpretation of ambiguous lexical items requires not only linguistic knowledge but also an understanding of the semantic, grammatical, and cultural characteristics of both languages. Consequently, translators should adopt context-oriented translation strategies rather than relying on direct lexical correspondence.

Furthermore, the findings highlight the importance of distinguishing polysemy from homonymy in language teaching, lexicography, and translation studies. A clearer understanding of these lexical relations can improve learners' semantic competence, enhance translation accuracy, and support the development of more effective bilingual dictionaries and teaching materials. Future research may extend this study by employing corpus-based methods and computational semantic analysis to investigate lexical ambiguity in authentic English and Arabic discourse, thereby contributing to both theoretical linguistics and practical translation research.

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