

Translation Difficulties of Polysemous Words from English into Arabic: A Case Study of Yemeni EFL University Students

Adnan Saeed Thabet Abdulsafi¹ & Ali Salim Awadh Al-Sa'adi²

¹Department of English, Faculty of Education-Yafea, University of Aden;

² Department of English, Faculty of Education-Yafea, University of Aden.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Adnan Saeed

Thabet Abdulsafi,

E-mail: adnan72_2012@hotmail.com

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Abstract

This research paper aims to shed light on one of the Arabic-speaking EFL learners' lexical problems, concerning translating words used in context from English into Arabic. It focused on translating polysemous words when they are used both in their direct core and indirect secondary meanings. In order to investigate this problem, a translation test was administered to a sample comprised 28 male and female students studying English at the Faculty of Education- Yafea, University of Aden, Yemen. The test consisted of 10 English sentences used to collect quantitative data from the participants. Each five sentences tested one polysemous word (break and sound,). The meanings of the polysemous words in the first sentence in each five sentences is direct, core meaning; whereas their meanings in the other 4 sentences are indirect secondary meanings. Based on the results of the study, it was found that Arabic-speaking EFL learners were unable to a great extent to translate the words well, especially when those words were used in their indirect secondary meanings. Based on the results, this research suggested that polysemous words should be given much attention in ELT B.educational courses at all stages of English language learning and teaching because of students' drastic incompetence in understanding the different meanings of polysemous words.

Keywords: Polysemous words, Arabic-speaking EFL Learners, core meaning, secondary meaning, translation

Introduction

There are many translation difficulties. One of these difficulties is the ambiguity found in the lexical words and sense relations (polysemy, homonymy, hyponymy, and synonymy). When a word has more than one related senses, it is considered ambiguous. According to Quiroga-Clare (2003) (Cited in Ali et. al. (2014, p. 38) "Something is ambiguous when it can be understood in two or more possible senses or ways. If the ambiguity is in a single word, it is called lexical ambiguity. In a sentence or clause, it is structural ambiguity." Polysemy is considered one reason of lexical ambiguity. Taylor (1995) defines polysemy as "the association of two or more related senses with a single linguistic form." (p. 99). Similarly, Palmer (1996) indicates that "polysemy is a case in which the same word may have a set of different meanings." (p. 100).

The phenomenon of polysemy has long been taken into account by both translators and linguists. In translation, the main problem of too many English words is that their meanings can vary from one context to another. In some contexts, they have core meanings and in others they have secondary indirect meanings. The aim of this paper is to investigate to what extent students master polysemous words within the field of translation. First a number of scholars' definitions of translation will be presented. Secondly, problems of translation will be presented in general. In addition to this, the paper will review briefly the literature related to polysemy: definitions, types, using polysemy in linguistic context, the translation problems related to polysemy from English into Arabic. The significance of this study is that each polysemous word is put in five sentences with different meanings. Hence, this instrument identifies the students' ability in understanding many meanings for the polysemous words in different linguistic contexts.

Statement of the problem

When a translator renders a text from a source language (SL) into a target language (TL), he / she encounters many translation problems that arise at all linguistic and cultural levels. Within the linguistic level, one of the translation problem faced is at word level, and one of these problems is the translation of the polysemous words used in context. Therefore, when Arab translation students try to translate an English source text into Arabic, they also encounter this problem, since English is a polysemous language at the word level. Thus, for students to understand the message of the English text clearly which is in this case the source text, they need to understand the meaning of words, especially key words so to translate them successfully to produce a coherent target text in Arabic.

The translation problem of polysemous words used in linguistic context can be stated as that Arab students of English are unable to well translate polysemous words used in linguistic context, since those words have both primary direct core meaning and indirect secondary peripheral meaning, which is the source of translation difficulties. Therefore, when the Arabic-speaking EFL learners have polysemous words with their secondary peripheral meanings, they face a translation difficulty by using unsuitable Arabic equivalent.

Research objectives

1. To identify to what extent the students can use the linguistic context in helping them in translating polysemous words successfully, when those words are used in their direct core meanings.
2. To identify to what extent the students can use the linguistic context in helping them in translating polysemous words successfully, when those words are used in their indirect secondary meanings?

Research questions

1. To what extent does the linguistic context help students in translating polysemous words successfully, when those words are used in their direct core meanings?

2. To what extent does the linguistic context help students in translating polysemous words successfully, when those words are used in their indirect secondary meanings?

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to find out the Arabic-speaking EFL learner's ability in understanding the English polysemous words used in sentences, and then translating them into Arabic.

Literature Review

Definition of translation

According to Munday (2008), the term translation itself has several meanings: It can refer to the general subject field, the product (the text that has been translated) or the process (the act of producing the translation, otherwise known as **translating**). The **process of translation** between two different written languages involves the translator changing an original written text (the **source text** or **ST**) in the original verbal language (SL) into a written text (the **target text** or **TT**) in a different verbal language (TL) (p. 5). [Emphasis in the original].

Similarly, Ghazala (2008) indicates that "translation is generally used to refer to all the processes and methods used to convey the meaning of the source language into the target language as closely, completely, and accurately as possible" (p.1). In his definition, Ghazala considers the concept of meaning as an important element in translation, i.e. the translator should first understand the exact meaning of the ST in order to be able to change it accurately into the TT. By the same token, Newmark (1988) emphasized the importance of rendering meaning in translation, he states that translation "is rendering the meaning of a text into

another language in the way that the author intended the text" (p. 5).

Definitions of polysemy

In linguistic literature, polysemy is defined similarly by the scholars. From the huge number of polysemy definitions, a few of them are mentioned in this paper.

Polysemy (or polysemia) is a compound noun for basic feature. The name comes from Greek poly (many) and semy (to do with meaning as in semantics). According to Kovács (2011) the term *polysemy* was first introduced by the French semanticist Michel Bréal in his *Essai de Sémantique* in 1897. Polysemy is also called radiation or multiplication. This happens when a word acquires a wider range of meanings (Quiroga-Clare, 2003). (Riemer, 2010) defines polysemy as "the possession by a single phonological form of several conceptually related meanings" (p. 161). Polysemy (or imperfect ambiguity) means that "the meaning of one lexeme is metaphorically extended on the basis of some similarity, cf. *leg* (of a man) vs. *leg* (of a table)." (Varga, 2010, p.71).

Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2017) give a similar definition for polysemy "a situation in which a lexical item has a range of different and distinct meanings, or senses (e.g. *plain* = (i) 'clear', (ii) 'unadorned', (iii) 'tract of flat country'." (p. 295).

Almanna (2016) defines polysemy as "a lexeme that has two or more related meanings." (p. 107). He distinguishes polysemy from homonymy in dictionary entry through assigning a single entry with a numbered list of the distinguishable meanings for the word if a word has several related meanings, that is, polysemy; whereas there will be two separate entries when the two words are treated as having two unrelated meanings, that is, homonymy. For example, the noun *eye* has multiple related meanings, such as an *eye* of a person, an *eye* of a needle, and so on, so it is an example of a polysemic

lexeme. The same holds true for words like *head*, *shoulder* and *foot* as in:

- *head* ~ a *head* of a person
 - ~ a *head* of a department
 - ~ a *head* of a nail
 - *shoulder* ~ a *shoulder* of a person
 - ~ a *shoulder* of a roadway
 - *foot* ~ a *foot* of a person
 - ~ a *foot* of a mountain
- (p. 107)

From the above-mentioned definitions, one can define polysemy as a case in which a single word has multiple related meanings; each of these meanings has to be learnt separately in order to be understood.

Types of Polysemy

According to Pustejovsky (1995), there are two types of polysemy: **complementary polysemy** and **contrastive polysemy**. Complementary polysemy is where "the senses of a word are overlapping, dependent or shared" (p. 28). For example, the word *hammer*, which means both a physical object and an action, where the first sense is a noun, whereas the second sense is a verb.

A more specific type of complementary polysemy is **logical polysemy**, in which there is no change in lexical category. The noun *door* can refer to an opening and to a physical object (1995, p. 31). Here the word *door* has two related senses, that can be represented in a single sentence without any problem: *He walked through the red door*. The phrase *walked through* evokes the opening sense, while the adjective *red* evokes the physical object sense.

Contrastive polysemy is represented by lexical items, whose senses are distinct and unrelated. For examples; the word *plane* means both an airplane and a tool used by architects, and *bar* means a metal object and an establishment that sells alcoholic beverages (1995, p. 27). This type is called by others homonymy.

Polysemy and context

What is context? Widdowson (2000, p. 126) defines context as "those aspects of the circumstance of actual language use which are taken as relevant to meaning." Cook (1999) indicates that context can be used from a broad and narrow sense: "In the narrow sense, context refers to factors outside the text under consideration. In the broad sense, context refers to knowledge of these factors and to knowledge of other parts of the text under consideration, sometimes referred to as co-text." (p.24).

There are three types of context:

Linguistic context: refers to the context within the discourse, that is to say, the relationship between the words, phrases, sentences, and even paragraphs. According to Naziha (2009) "When a lexical unit with different meanings occurs with one cluster of words, it may have a different meaning from that it appears with another cluster of words." (p. 19). For instance the English word *bank* has several meanings quite different from each other. If it occurs with such words as *river* and *water*, it can have the meaning "land along the side of a river". Therefore, linguistic context is quite important and complicated and translators should be aware of the context in which a lexical unit appears so as to correctly transfer the meaning from the SL into the TL.

Situational context: plays an important role to reach the meaning of an expression. It always refers to the relevant features of the situation in which a text has meaning, the environment, time, and place, etc. in which, the discourse occurs, and also the relationship between the participants. Therefore, the translator should take into account the context of situation in order to find the acceptable equivalence in the target language. For instance, the imperative 'Go break a leg!' mentioned by Ghazala (2008, p. 100) cannot be understood without making it in

a situational context as 'Are you nervous because of the exam? Do not worry, go break a leg!' Hence taking into account the context of the examination and its atmosphere, and people wishing good luck to one another in the exam, it can be translated into (حظاً سعيداً).

Cultural context: refers to the history, culture, customs, and values of a speech community. It is helpful to the reasoning process of the participants in a speech event. For example: when you say "you have lost weight"; in America and China, it will have different implications. In America, people will think it favorable because many of the Americans are overweighted. But in China, people think it as a warning and an advice to go to the doctor.

Therefore, polysemy is described by linguists as an ambiguous phenomenon, since a polysemous word refers to different things, that cannot be understood out of context. Therefore, context plays an important role in overcoming the degree of ambiguity of meaning (Miller, 1999). Context is understood by the words that surround the polysemous word. For example, Yarowsky (1993) found that one aspect of context is using a lexical item in a collocation, which gives its specific meaning. For example the word *head* in the collocation pattern noun + of + noun has distinct but related senses as follows:

- *head* ~ a *head* of a person
- ~ a *head* of a department
- ~ a *head* of a nail

Moreover, the different syntactic places of the polysemous words play an important role in determining their specific meaning, (Gilquin, 2010).

Context plays an important role in disambiguating to some extent the polysemous words. When they are used in language, they are rarely ambiguous (Miller, 1999, p. 12).

Corpora studies have found that the context very often determines the sense that is being used. For example, Yarowsky (1993) found that polysemic items only

exhibit one sense per collocation, with over 90% accuracy. The different senses of a word tend to appear in different syntactic environments and with different collocates (Gilquin, 2010, p. 197).

With respect to research problem related to polysemous words, a number of researchers investigated this problem from different perspectives (Ali, 2014; Alnamer, 2017; Hamlaoui, 2010; Mohammed, 2009; Naziha, 2009; Salem, 2014). A study carried out by Naziha (2009) in Algeria was about the role of context in translating polysemy from English into Arabic and to analyze the procedures adopted by the students to achieve the equivalence at word level. She examined how the four polysemous words *break*, *sound*, *fair*, and *hold* were translated into English by using a test, in which these words were put in both linguistic and non-linguistic (situational) contexts, and given to 30 First Year Master students. The findings of the study showed that there are potential problems in the process of translation from English, and the results indicated that the English polysemous words are far from being translated into their Arabic equivalents depending on the words themselves without taking into consideration the other linguistic and situational features of their contexts.

A study carried out by Mohammed (2009) in Al-Mosul University, Iraq about the students' ability in understanding polysemous words used in linguistic context. He chose 20 polysemous words from dictionaries and put them in sentences. Those sentences were translated from English into Arabic by "20" fourth year students at the translation Dept., College of Arts. University of Mosul. The students were asked to pay attention to the underlined words in the sentences. the study concluded with the following findings: The following points are concluded:(1) Most of the subjects did not give an attention to the co-text in their attempt to translate the polysemic words,

so they failed to translate them correctly; (2) The majority of the subjects resorted to the "central or core" meanings of the polysemous words regardless of other associated meanings or "meaning variants". (3) Most of the subjects treated the polysemous words as monosemic ones, consequently, they committed serious mistakes.

Another study was carried out in (2010) by Hamlaoui. She concentrated on translating ten polysemous words put in twenty sentences among second year students of English, at the Department of English, University of Constantine. That is, each word was put in two sentences with two different meanings. The main goal of this study was to discover the role of the linguistic context in helping students to disambiguate the meaning of the polysemous words. She used a test and a questionnaire. She found that from both research tools used most of them succeeded in understanding most of the words and translated them successfully, because of the linguistic context, and that most of the subjects failed in translating some words, such as: *redeem*, *roast* and *alive* because they did not know these words.

A study conducted by Salem (2014) at Fadhel Centre for English and Translation Studies, Aden university, Yemen, investigated the role of context in solving the problems of translating polysemous English words into Arabic among MA translation students. He chose 15 students randomly. He used two instruments for the students: two translation tests and a questionnaire. The focus of his study was how the context helped in translating polysemous words. In the first test, he put ten polysemous words in ten sentences to be translated into Arabic; in the second he test used five polysemous words in ten sentences to be translated into Arabic. That is, he did not use each word in different sentences. The

analysis of the collected data revealed that the MA students faced difficulties in using the suitable equivalent in translating polysemous words.

A study conducted by Ali (2014) was about how far three translators of the Quran (Yusuf Ali, Arberry and Abdel Haleem) succeed to render the intended meaning of some Arabic polysemous words into English. The aim of his paper was to shed light on translating polysemy in the Holy Quran. The study attempted to explain and determine the strategies that the translators follow in translating polysemy in the Holy Quran. Ali indicated that the translators of the Holy Quran did not adopt workable strategies to overcome the problem of translating polysemic words. The result of this study showed that most samples under the study were translated literally. Yusuf Ali and Arberry adopted literal translation to translate most of the samples, whereas in some cases Abdel Haleem used communicative or paraphrase translation strategies to convey the polysemic senses in the Quran. This study observed that the translators, under the study, did not depend on the sound knowledge in the science of the Holy Quran and numerous interpretations to grasp the intended meanings of the verses precisely. Additionally, the translators seemed unaware of that many words in the Holy Quran could be interpreted in different way according to the given context.

A study conducted by Alnamer (2017) aimed at measuring the extent to which Arabic-speaking EFL learners are aware of polysemy in English. It also investigated whether the English proficiency level of Arabic-speaking EFL learners played a role in their ability to distinguish between the various meanings of English polysemous words, and whether they faced problems when they encountered these words in unusual contexts. The researcher used a translation test in which the participants were asked to

give full Arabic translation for fifteen English sentences. The words *open*, *run*, and *make* were the target polysemous words in this study. The results showed that Arabic-speaking EFL learners had little awareness of polysemy in English. They had no problems guessing the primary meaning of the English polysemous words. However, they faced difficulty guessing the extended meanings of polysemous words in unusual contexts.

Therefore, our study aims to contribute to the body of research literature by investigating the acquisition of English polysemous words by Arabic-speaking EFL learners. It concentrates only on using the linguistic context in helping the students in translating two polysemous words (*break* and *sound*) in 10 sentences, that is, each word was put in five sentences with different meanings: one meaning is core and the other four are polysemous.

Polysemy and translation

Ghazala (2008) presented a detailed discussion of polysemy and its problems that face L2 learners when they translate polysemous words from English into Arabic. Before that he defined a translation problem as:

any difficulty we come across at translating, that invites us to stop translating in order to check, recheck, reconsider or rewrite it, or use a dictionary, or reference of some kind to help us overcome it and make sense of it. It is anything in the SL text which forces us to stop translating. (p. 17).

He indicated that the polysemous word has a 'core' meaning and other secondary meanings, but they are related. He gave an example 'sound', which has the core meaning صوت and the secondary meanings 'firm', 'wise', 'valid', 'narrow channel' and 'inlet on the sea'. He summarized the students' problem in translating the polysemous words from English into Arabic as follows:

The students of translation may know only the common meaning of the polysemous word, and are usually used to translate it into Arabic, regardless of any of its other possible meanings. This means that they understand it as a monosemic word, having one meaning only. (p. 98).

In order to clarify this, Ghazala (2008) gave two polysemous words: *break* and *sound*. He used them in different sentences with different but related meanings. Here we can give some examples about the word *break*:

- 1- The boy *broke* the window.
- 2- The thief *broke* the car.
- 3- This job *breaks* the back.
- 4- The dawn *breaks* at 5 o'clock today.
- 5- Please, do not *break* your promise. (pp. 98-99) [*italics added*].

In the first two examples the verb *break* has a core, direct, denotative primary meaning, whose equivalent in Arabic is the past simple verb كسر [kasara]. This meaning does not make any translation difficulty for English learners. The translation difficulty exists in the other examples, since the verb *break* has infrequent secondary meaning, which make students commit translation errors:

- 3- هذا العمل يقسم الظهر.
- 4- يبرز فجر عند الساعة الخامسة اليوم.
- 5- من فضلك، لا تخلف وعدك.

When the students use the core meaning of the word *break* كسر, they produced strange translations of these sentences, although it can be used in the third examples يكسر الظهر since يكسر is a synonym of يقسم. In other examples it is odd to produce the following sentences, since their meanings are not clear-cut and their translations are unconvincing:

- *يكسر الفجر عند الساعة الخامسة اليوم.
- *من فضلك، لا تكسر وعدك.

As a result of these translation difficulties, Ghazala (2008) presented some guidelines for solution. One solution, he mentioned, was that the students should consult a good dictionary that lists the different meanings of the polysemous

word. Another solution is that the students should pay attention to the text in which the polysemous word is used. For example, in the first two examples:

1- The boy *broke* the window, and

2- The thief *broke* the car,

the verb *broke* has the core meaning of 'cutting something into pieces'. On the other hand, using the word *break* in a text about 'rising up of the dawn', the word *breaks* is expected to mean يبرز. The third solution is to think of the context in which the polysemous word is used (i.e. the previous and following sentences of the word). For instance:

The runner fell down in the race. He *broke* his leg. So he was taken immediately to hospital.

In this sentence, the hints that make the learner can translate the word *broke* into كسر are the words *runner*, *fell down* and *race* in the previous sentence, *leg* in the second sentence and *hospital* in the third. The fourth solution is to translate the polysemous word into its common meaning and see whether it makes sense in Arabic or not. For example, does translation of the word *break* in the following sentences into يكسر make sense?: This medicine will *break* you of smoking.

سوف يكسر ك هذا الدواء من التدخين

The dawn *breaks* at 5 o'clock today. يكسر

الفجر في الساعة الخامسة هذا اليوم

In Arabic these translations do not make sense, because 'medicine' cannot break someone and 'the dawn' does not break the night dark into pieces. However, some medicine will keep someone away from smoking and the dawn rises up at 5 o'clock. Therefore, when these translations do not make sense in Arabic, it is advisable to think of other suitable ones. The fifth solution is to look at the grammatical class of the polysemous word (verb, noun, adjective ...etc.), since changing of the grammatical class leads to the changing of the meaning. One of Ghazala's (2008) examples is the polysemous word *sound*. Look at the following two examples:

Your suggestion *sounds* reasonable.

Muslims have *sound* beliefs.

The word *sounds* in the first example is a linking verb, which is translated into يبدو, whereas in the second example is an adjective, which is translated into معتقدات راسخة. The sixth solution is to know the collocates of the polysemous word, since those collocates help students to guess the meaning of the polysemous word. Ghazala (2008) presents the different collocates of the word *break*: 'Break' is expected by the students to combine with physical objects like: 'window, door, hand, leg, head, car, wood, etc.' So when it occurs together with abstract, nonphysical words like: 'promise, law, lunch, dawn, weather, etc.', it has different meanings that need some efforts by them to spot. (pp. 103-104).

Methodology

Participants

The participants of this study were fourth year English male and female students at the Faculty of Education - Yafea, Aden University, Yemen in the first semester of the academic year 2019-2020. They are between 22- 25 years old. They all live in the areas near to the Faculty. They are doing their B.A. in English. They have been learning English as a class subject for nine years as a foreign language. The sample includes all the (28) students in the fourth year. They were chosen since they studied two semesters translation courses in the third year, and according to Griffiee (2012), if the whole population is between five and sixty, it should be chosen as a sample to a study. Moreover, Dörnyei (2003) indicates that a study sample can be convenient when "if the researcher has a good relationship with the same class, they share many geographical proximities and they can be available in need" (p. 72). Therefore, all these features are available in our sample.

Research Instrument

Test

Two frequent target polysemous words were carefully chosen from Ghazala (2008). They are: *break* and *sound*. Each word was used in five sentences with two types of meanings: core meaning and secondary peripheral meaning. Each word has different grammatical classes in the sentences: *break* is a verb in the first four sentences and a noun in the fifth; *sound* is a noun in sentence six, a linking verb in sentence seven, and an adjective in sentences eight, nine and ten. The focus of this test was on the content of the sentences produced by the participants. The form, translation rules, Arabic grammatical rules, and the structure of the sentences were not as important as the Arabic equivalent of the English polysemous words provided by the participants. With respect to validity of the test, the ten items were used as exercises in Ghazala (2008). All these ten items examined the students' ability in translating polysemous words used in linguistic context from English into Arabic. All these items were in simple sentence structure with simple words. The participants were asked to translate them from English into Arabic.

Procedures

After taking an acceptance from the respective and students, the test was distributed by the researchers themselves to 28 male and female fourth year students. The purpose of the test was explained to the students. One hour was given for the test. Some difficult words, rather than the polysemous words, were clarified to some of the students. Although the test consisted only of 10 sentences, the participants' answering time took from 30 minutes to one hour, because according to Nation (2001), translation requires production, and hence is more difficult than some other tasks, such as a multiple-choice task. When they finished the test answers, the test papers were collected.

Analysis of Results

As mentioned previously, this study aims to test the ability of 28 Arabic-speaking EFL learners to provide the translation of English polysemous words into Arabic. Each word in the five sentences was analyzed, presenting each time the meaning of the polysemous word used in each sentence. The participants' incorrect translations for the polysemous words were typed in **bold**. Here are the analyzed words, the sentences in which they were illustrated and the findings of the analysis:

1- Break

1. The boy broke the window.

In this sentence, the polysemous verb *broke* is a verb and used in one of its core meaning which is "to make something separate into two or more pieces" (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDCE, 2000, p. 151). The target Arabic translation of this sentence is: كسر / حطم الولد النافذة. The participants' correct/acceptable and incorrect translations are shown in the following table:

Table 1: First translation of the word 'Break'

Translation	Number	Percentages
Correct/acceptable	28	100%
Incorrect	0	0%
Total	28	100%

As it is shown in Table 1, all the participants (100%) were able to produce the correct translation for the verb *broke*. The semantic features of *break* here combines with the physical object *window*, which gives it a core meaning, that made the participants able to understand it well and translated it into Arabic using two synonyms. Twenty seven of them used the Arabic equivalent word كسر, while one participant used حطم, which is a synonym of كسر.

2. Why did you break his face?

The verb *break* is not used in its literal core meaning in this sentence. It is used in its indirect secondary meaning, although it is followed by the concrete word *face*. Here

its meaning depends on the context. It means: "to damage a part of your body, especially a bone, and make it split into two or more pieces" (ibid, p.151). The correct equivalent Arabic translation of the sentence is: لماذا هشمت وجهه؟. The participants' correct/acceptable and incorrect translations and blanks are shown in the table below:

Table 2: Second translation of the word 'Break'

Translation	Number	Percentages
Correct/acceptable	8	28.57%
Incorrect	19	67.86%
Blanks	1	3.57%
Total	28	100%

Although the eight participants whose answers are considered correct, they did not brought the accurate translation for the verb *break* 'هشمت'. They produced acceptable dialectal translations: four participants translated it into جرحت, two produced خدشت, شقيت, and two participants used the verbs حطمتك, شوهك, which are constructed according to the local dialect syntactic structure by using the Arabic pronoun ك instead of the standard pronoun ت. Since the word *break* in this sentence was used in its indirect secondary meaning, here are 19 incorrect translations for it. The participants depended on the context, but their translations were incorrect: three participants translated the verb *break* into أخرجته; one used خذلته; another used صفعته; and a third used خالفت شوره; two participants used present tense verb تغطي; one used the negative question لماذا لا تغزيه?; three others translated it into adjectives not verbs: one participant used مكسور, عابس, and the third used غاضب; one participant translated it into a noun فطور. two participants used ضربت وجهه; one used تنظر لوجهه; another used هربت من وجهه; another used لماذا أخلجته?; and another used لماذا أهنته? Finally, one participant left the sentence without translation.

3. Some people break the law.

The verb *break* is used in this sentence in its indirect, secondary and abstract meaning, because the following noun object *law* is an abstract word. It is translated into Arabic using many synonyms: ينتهك/ يخرق / يخترق/ يخالف/ يتخطى. "to disobey a rule, law etc." (ibid, p. 151). The participants' correct/acceptable and incorrect translations are as follows:

Table 3: Third translation of the word 'Break'

Translation	Number	Percentages
Correct/acceptable	20	71.43%
Incorrect	8	28.57%
Total	28	100%

Twenty of the total number of the participants (71.43%) were able to translate the verb *break* used in its secondary abstract meaning, because the Arabic collocation ينتهك / يخالف ... القانون is frequent. Nine participants used يخالف; seven used يخرق/ يخترق; 3 used يتعدى; one used the acceptable translation يتخطى. All these translations are synonyms in Arabic and they collocate with the noun *law* القانون. Here these participants transferred the Arabic synonyms into English. Eight participants translated it incorrectly. Five participants used the core meaning of *break*, so they translated the verb *break* literally يكسر in this context, since *law* is not a concrete noun to be broken into pieces. One participant used queer translation, since s/he did not know the meaning of the noun *law*; s/he translated it into إلى الأسفل, since s/he may have considered it *low*. Then s/he translated the verb *break* into يسقطون. One student translated the verb *break* into an adjective: بعض الناس محطمين قليلا; and one another used the noun استراحة.

4. Please, do not break your promise. من فضلك, لا تخلف موعدك.

The verb *break* is used in this sentence in its indirect, secondary and abstract meaning يخلف

'Break a promise' is a collocation. It means "to not do what you have promised to do" (ibid, p. 151). The equivalent accurate Arabic translation of the English collocation is لا تخلف الموعد. The participants' correct/acceptable and incorrect translations are displayed as follows:

Table 4: Fourth translation of the word 'Break'

Translation	Number	Percentages
Correct/acceptable	24	85.71%
Incorrect	4	14.29%
Total	28	100%

The majority of the participants (24) used the accurate and correct translation of the verb *break* لا تخلف الموعد, since this phrase is a frequent collocation in Arabic. One participant used the acceptable affirmative verb أوف بوعدك. Only four participants who could not produce the correct translation: one use لا تقطع وعدك; another one used من فضلك لا تأخذ; another used من فضلك لا تغضب; and another could not understand the whole sentence, because s/he translated it into في الامكن لا تستطيع كسر الحواجز.

5. You can have a break after the lecture. بإمكانك أخذ قسطاً من الراحة/ أن تستريح بعد المحاضرة

In this sentence the word *break* is a noun object for the verb *have*, which can be translated into قسطاً من الراحة, راحة, استراحة. It means "a period of time when you stop what you are doing in order to rest" (ibid, p. 153). The following table displays the participants' correct/acceptable and incorrect translations and blanks:

Table 5: Fifth translation of the word 'Break'

Translation	Number	Percentages
Correct/acceptable	17	60.72%
Incorrect	9	32.14%

Blanks	2	7.14%
Total	28	100%

Seventeen participants (60.72%) were able to translate the noun *break* in this sentence into its correct Arabic equivalent: راحة, راحة, استراحة, قسطاً من الراحة because the phrase after the lecture helped them much and the phrase *have a break* is a frequent collocation. Nine participants could not produce the correct translations. Three of them used the verb تغادر; two used the noun المغادرة; one translated it literally as the noun فاصل, one used خلاف, one used the literal translation by using the noun كسر; one used هل يمكنك تأتي بعد المحاضرة and there are two blanks.

2- Sound

6. I like the sound of birds. أحب صوت / زغردة / شدة / تغريد الطيور.

The second polysemous word in the test is *sound*. It means in this sentence "something that you hear, or what can be heard" (ibid, p. 1374). It has a concrete core meaning, since it collocates with the physical object *birds*. Its equivalents in Arabic are صوت, زغردة, شدة, تغريد. The participants' correct/acceptable and incorrect translations are shown in the following table:

Table 6: First translation of the word 'Sound'

Translation	Number	Percentages
Correct/acceptable	28	100%
Incorrect	0	00%
Total	28	100%

As it is seen from Table 6, all the participants gave accurate and acceptable translations for the noun *sound*, since it is a very frequent word and used in its core meaning and is collocated with the word *birds*. In Arabic, when it is used with *birds*, it can have the synonyms: صوت, تغريد, شدة. Twenty two participants used صوت and 6 used زغردة, تغريد.

7. Your suggestion sounds reasonable. يبدو اقترحك معقول.

The polysemous word *sounds* in this sentence is a linking verb; its Arabic translation is يبدو. Here it is used in its secondary abstract meaning. It is a state verb and needs an adjective complement to clarify its meaning, its English synonyms are *seem* and *appear*. It means "if something or someone sounds good, bad, strange etc., that is how they seem to you when you hear or read about them." (ibid, p. 1375). The participants' correct/acceptable and incorrect translations and blanks are shown in the following table:

Table 7: Second translation of the word 'Sound'

Translation	Number	Percentages
Correct/acceptable	6	21.43%
Incorrect	10	35.71%
Blanks	12	42.86%
Total	28	100%

Only six participants (21.43%) could bring the correct answer يبدو. Twelve participants (42.86%) omitted the translation of the verb since a linking verb in English can be omitted when translated into Arabic, giving acceptable sentence. Ten participants presented incorrect translations; they translated the verb *sound* literally. They used the words: صوت, يهمننا, يجلب, تصويت with different syntactic representations as follows:

- اقترحك يكون بصوت معقول.
- اقترحك يهمننا.
- اقترحك يجلب الاقتناع.
- أعتقد توجد أصوات معقولة.
- أصواتك المقترحة مقبولة.
- اقترح من أجل أن يصل صوتك.
- صوت اقترحك معقول.
- اقترحك صوتك.
- التصويت لا اقترحك معقول.

8. Thank you for your sound advice. شكرا على نصيحتك الحكيمة / السليمة .

The targeted word *sound* in this sentence is an adjective. It means "sensible and likely to produce the right results" (ibid, p. 1375).

Its Arabic equivalent is حكيمة, سليمة. The participants' correct/acceptable and incorrect translations and blanks are shown in the following table:

Table 8: Third translation of the word 'Sound'

Translation	Number	Percentages
Correct/acceptable	6	21.43%
Incorrect	3	10.71%
Blanks	19	67.86%
Total	28	100%

With respect to the accurate translation, only three participants could produce it by using the word نصيحة سليمة/ حكيمة; three others used acceptable translations: نصيحة صحيحة/ مؤثرة/ جيدة / قيمة advice, which is not understood by the students. Three others translated it literally by using the word صوت in different syntactic representations as follows:

- شكرا لك لأجل مقطع الصوت.
- شكرا لك على النصيحة الصوتية.
- شكرا جزيلاً لنصيحة الصوت.

9. Children sleep a sound sleep. ينام الاطفال نوما عميقا.

The polysemous word *sound* in this sentence is an adjective. It has an indirect secondary meaning. It makes a collocation with the abstract noun *sleep*, which means *sleep deeply*. It means "sound sleep is deep and peaceful" (ibid, p. 1375). Its accurate Arabic translation in this sentence is عميق. The participants' correct/acceptable and incorrect translations and blanks are as follows:

Table 9: Fourth translation of the word 'Sound'

Translation	Number	Percentages
Correct/acceptable	5	17.86%
Incorrect	21	75.00%
Blanks	2	7.14%
Total	28	100%

Only five participants translated the collocation *sound sleep* correctly: نوم عميق. Twenty one participants used different incorrect translations with different syntactic representations; some are literal and others are ambiguous as follows:

- الطفل ينام في المهد.
- الاطفال ينامون نوما مزعجا.
- الاطفال ينامون في المهد.
- الاطفال يحبون سماع القصص أثناء النوم.
- ينام الاطفال بهدوء.
- الاطفال ينامون بأغاني النوم.
- الاطفال ينامون بالهدوء والهنوء.
- يصدر الاطفال صوتا أثناء النوم.
- الاطفال ينامون ويصدرون صوت شخص.
- ينام الاطفال على ذكر النوم.
- الاطفال ينامون والاصوات تختفي.
- ينام الاطفال نوما جيدا.
- ينام الاطفال على الدندنة.
- صوت الاطفال ناموا.
- الاطفال ناموا بهدوء.
- نام الاطفال, لا صوت لهم
- عندما تهدأ الاصوات, ينام الاطفال.
- ينام الاطفال نوما هنيئا.

10. Muslims have sound beliefs.
لدى المسلمين اعتقادات راسخة / سليمة.

In this sentence the polysemous word *sound* is also an adjective. It means "physically or mentally healthy" (ibid, p. 1375). Its Arabic translation in this sentence is راسخة. The participants' correct/acceptable and incorrect translations and blanks are shown in the following table:

Table 10: Fifth translation of the word 'Sound'

Translation	Number	Percentages
Correct/acceptable	5	17.86%
Incorrect	15	53.57%
Blanks	8	28.57%
Total	28	100%

Only two participants produced the accurate translation for the word *sound* سليمة, راسخة. Other three used acceptable

translations: Eight participants omitted the translation of the word. Those who produced incorrect translation, they used different words with different syntactic structures; most of them translated it literally by using the word صوت:

- المسلم لديه اعتقادات خاصة.
- المسلم يملك صوت خيالي.
- المسلمون يمتلكون معتقدات مؤثرة.
- المسلمون لديهم أصوات معتقدات.
- المسلمين لديهم معتقدات جيدة.
- لدى المسلمين معتقدات واضحة.
- يملك المسلمين صوت الايمان.
- لدى المسلمين معتقدات غيبية.
- المسلم لديه صوت العقيدة.
- لدى المسلمين معتقدات رائعة.
- المسلم يملك صوت عقيدة.
- المسلمون لديهم دين واحد.
- المسلمون لديهم أصوات حقيقية لعقيدتهم.

After presentation the participants' correct, incorrect translations and blanks for 10 test items, the total number of the correct, incorrect responses and blanks of the test can be shown in the following table:

Table 11: All correct, incorrect responses and blanks

Translation	Number	Percentages
Correct/acceptable	147	52.50%
Incorrect	89	31.80%
Blanks	44	15.70%
Total	280	100%

Table 11 indicates that more than 50% of the responses are correct.

But when the polysemous words *break* and *sound* are used in their secondary indirect meanings, the number of the incorrect responses and blanks is high. The following table summarizes the incorrect responses and blanks when the polysemous words *break* and *sound* were used in their indirect secondary meanings. There are 8 sentences x 28 students = 224 responses:

Table 12: Incorrect responses of the polysemous words when used in their indirect meanings

Word	Incorrect	Blanks	Total
Break	40	3	43
Sound	49	41	90
Total	89	44	133

Table (12) shows that there are (133) incorrect responses and blanks out of (224) responses, with a percentage of (59.38%), which indicates that the linguistic contexts did not help the participants much to understand the indirect secondary meanings of the polysemous words.

Discussion

From the above results, it can be said that most of the participants have not succeeded in translating the polysemous words, especially when these words were used in their indirect secondary meanings. Some of the findings of this study accorded with previous studies. Naziha's (2009) study in Algeria about the role of context in translating polysemy from English into showed that there are potential problems in the process of translation from English, and the results indicated that the English polysemous words are far from being translated into their Arabic equivalents depending on the words themselves without taking into consideration the other linguistic and situational features of their contexts. On the contrary, Hamlaoui's (2010) study about translating ten polysemous words put in twenty sentences among second year students of English, at the Department of English, University of Constantine indicated that most of the students succeeded in understanding most of the words and translated them successfully, because of the linguistic context, while most of the subjects failed in translating some words, such as: *redeem*, *roast* and *alive* because they did not know these words. Moreover, this study findings accorded with Salem's (2014) study about the role of context in solving the problems of translating polysemous English words into Arabic

among MA translation students in Yemen. The analysis of the collected data revealed that the MA students faced difficulties in using the suitable equivalent in translating polysemous words. Likewise, Alnamer's (2017) study about the Arabic-speaking EFL learners' awareness of polysemy in English denoted that the learners had little awareness of polysemy in English. They had no problems guessing the primary meaning of the English polysemous words. However, they faced difficulty guessing the extended meanings of polysemous words in unusual contexts.

Here the research questions can be answered, depending on the findings, as follows:

1. To what extent does the linguistic context help students in translating polysemous words successfully when they are used in their direct core meanings?

Linguistic context helps in disambiguating many lexical problems: one of them is the understanding of the polysemous words. According to the results of this research paper, the degree of disambiguating of the polysemous words *break* and *sound* can be shown quantitatively. When these two words were used in their direct core meanings in the following sentences:

1- The boy *broke* the window.

6- I like the *sound* of birds.

all the (28) students could translate these words correctly into Arabic. That is all the (56) responses were correct with a percentage of (100%), since *beak* and *sound* are frequent and used in their direct core meanings, and they are understood even without linguistic context.

2. To what extent does the linguistic context help students in translating polysemous words successfully when they are used in their indirect secondary meanings?

When those words were used in their indirect secondary meanings, the following results were found:

There were 8 sentences with 224 responses in which the polysemous words *break* and *sound* were used in their indirect secondary meanings. 133 out of 224 responses were incorrect and blanks, with a percentage of (59.38%). It can be said that the linguistic context in those sentences helped the students to only a little extent in understanding the meanings and translating of those polysemous common words. Because of ignoring that such words have secondary meaning, many students resorted to use literal translation strategy and other strategies to translate them when they are used in their indirect secondary meanings in the linguistic context.

Conclusion

Translation at word level or lexical translation has been the focus of this research paper. The problem of polysemy has been tackled because of the major ambiguity it creates for fourth year students university in Yemen. In order to collect data about this problem a test was used. 28 fourth year students, Department of English, Faculty of Education-Yafea, University of Aden, had been asked to translate 10 sentences from English into Arabic. Each five sentences have the polysemous words *break* and *sound*, respectively. The polysemous words in the first sentence of each five sentence have direct core meanings, while in the other 8 sentences have indirect secondary meanings. The results obtained by the test revealed that 4th year students could really translated the polysemous words when they were used in their direct core meanings, and they could not do that well when the same words were used in their indirect secondary meanings. Quantitatively, out of (56) responses for 2 sentences, (56) responses were correct translations with a percentage of (100%), and out of (224) responses for 8 sentences, 133 responses were incorrect translations and blanks, with a percentage of (59.38%). This quantitative result

indicates that polysemous words, when used in their indirect secondary meanings, are problematic for students. Hence, the linguistic context may be of some help for Arabic-speaking EFL students in getting the translations of meaning of some words. On the basis of these results, it is recommended that Arabic-speaking EFL students should know about polysemy to recognize that words can have more than one meaning; they should depend on the linguistic context to focus on the overall meaning of the sentences; there should be a focus on lexical problems in order to improve students' translation.

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