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**Department of English**



**Investigating Students' Lexical Ambiguity Resolution  
Strategies**

Case Study: Second Year Students at the Department of  
English, Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of the Degree of  
Master in Didactics of Foreign Languages**

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### **Declaration**

We hereby that the dissertation entitled “Investigating students’ lexical ambiguity resolution strategies” is our own work and all the sources we have used have been acknowledged by means of references. We also certify that we have not copied or plagiarized the work of other students or researchers partially or fully. In case any material is not documented, we shall be responsible for the consequences.

**Signature**

**Date**

## Dedication

*“In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.”*

*Praise to be to Allah, the cherisher and sustainer of the world*

*I lovingly dedicate this work*

*To the queen of my heart for her endless love, motivation, encouragement, and patience, my beloved **Mother**.*

*To the most precious and gentle soul in the world, my **Father**.*

*To my beloved sister **Nissia** for her encouragement, love, and support.*

*To my beloved brothers **Mohammed** and **Salim** who were there for me whenever I needed help and provided me with the motivation that I needed to carry on the present research.*

*To my litter son **Bibicho***

*To my adorable work partner **Imane***

*To the sunshine of my life who supported me during hard times and raised my confidence that I can finish this study, my special friends: **Fatma, Lina, Narimen, and Naila**.*

*Ranya*

***“In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful”***

*I dedicate this humble work*

*To my precious **parents** for their encouragement and support*

*To my beloved brothers **Mohammed** and **Zakaria***

*To my beloved sister **Rania***

*To my lovely work partner **Ranya***

*To all my **friends***

*To my relative and best friend **Amir** for his endless support and encouragement*

*To everyone who has inspired me*

*Thank you from the bottom of my heart*

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## **Abstract**

The present study is concerned with presenting the different forms of lexical ambiguity and exploring the strategies to solve such ambiguities among Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University students. Polysemy was hypothesised to be the most troublesome form of lexical ambiguity for students, it was also hypothesised that if students are aware of ambiguity resolution strategies, namely, part-of-speech tagging, theme, rheme, neighbouring words, cohesion, and selection restriction, they are more likely to succeed at disambiguating the meaning of words. To test these two hypotheses, two research tools have been adopted. A test has been distributed to 101 second-year students in the department of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University of Jijel. Besides, an interview was conducted with the same sample of students for the purpose of identifying their use of resolution strategies. The results obtained from the test have shown that second-year students are highly competent at resolving English homographs and homophones, but have struggled immensely with polysemous words. Moreover, the interview results showed that students are aware of the available lexical ambiguity resolution strategies, and relied mainly on the strategies of theme, selection restriction and part-of-speech tagging strategies.

**Key words:** Lexical Ambiguity, Resolution Strategies, Homonymy, Polysemy, Homographs, Homophones.

## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

**L1: First Language**

**L2: Second Language**

**EFL: English Foreign Language**

**FL: Foreign Language**

**POS: Post of Speech**

**EA: Error Analysis**

**N: Number**

**Q1: Question One**

**&: And**

**%:Percentage**



## **List of Tables**

<b>Table 1.1</b> Difference between Polysemy and Homonymy.....	15
<b>Table 2.1</b> Students' Correct Responses in the Homophones Task.....	37
<b>Table 2.2</b> Students' Correct Responses in the Homographs Task.....	38
<b>Table 2.3</b> Students' Correct Responses in the Homonyms Task.....	39
<b>Table 2.4</b> Students' Correct Responses in the Polysemes Task.....	39
<b>Table 2.5</b> Students' Use of Strategies in Disambiguating Homophones.....	42
<b>Table 2.6</b> Students' Use of Strategies in Disambiguating Homographs.....	43
<b>Table 2.7</b> Students' Use of Strategies in Disambiguating Homonymy.....	44
<b>Table 2.8</b> Students' Use of Strategies in Disambiguating Polysemy.....	45
<b>Table 2.9</b> Students' Use of Strategies in Disambiguating the Test.....	46

## **List of Figures**

<b>Figures 2.1</b> Summary of Students' Correct Responses in Answering the Test of Lexical Ambiguity.....	40
<b>Figures 2.2</b> Students' Use of Strategies with Different Types of Lexical Ambiguity.....	46

## Contents

<b>Declaration.....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Dedication.....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>Dedication.....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>List of Abbreviations and Acronyms.....</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>List of Tables.....</b>	<b>VII</b>
<b>List of Figures.....</b>	<b>VIII</b>
<b>Contents.....</b>	<b>IX</b>

## General Introduction

Introduction.....	1
1. State of the Art.....	12
2. Statement of the Problem.....	4
3. Aim and Significance of the Study.....	4
4. Research Questions.....	5
5. Research Hypotheses.....	5
6. Means of Research.....	6
7. Structure of the Study.....	6

## **Chapter One: Theoretical Framework on Lexical Ambiguity Resolution Strategies**

### **Section One: Lexical Ambiguity in English**

Introduction.....	9
1.1.1. Definition of Lexical Ambiguity.....	9
1.1.2. Lexical Ambiguity vs. other Types of Ambiguity.....	10
1.1.2.1. Lexical Ambiguity vs. Structural Ambiguity.....	10
1.1.2.2. Lexical Ambiguity vs. Phonological Ambiguity .....	11
1.1.3. Forms of lexical Ambiguity.....	11
1.1.3.1. Polysemy.....	11
1.1.3.1.1. Definition of Polysemy.....	12
1.1.3.1.2. Types of Polysemes.....	12
1.1.3.1.2.1. Metaphorical Polysemy.....	12
1.1.3.1.2.2. Metonymic Polysemy.....	13
1.1.3.2. Homonymy.....	13
1.1.3.2.1. Definition of Homonymy .....	13
1.1.3.2.2. Types of Homonyms.....	14
1.1.3.2.2.1. Homophones.....	14
1.1.3.2.2.2. Homographs.....	14
1.1.4. Main Difference between Polysemy and Homonymy.....	15
1.1.5. Polysemy and Homonymy in Lexicography.....	16
Conclusion.....	17

### **Section Two: Strategies for Resolving Lexical Ambiguity and Ambiguity-Induced Errors**

Introduction.....	19
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1.2.1. Lexical Ambiguity-Induced Errors.....	19
1.2.1.1 Form-Related Errors.....	19
1.2.1.2 Meaning-Related Errors.....	20
1.2.2. Lexical Ambiguity Resolution.....	21
1.2.3. Sources of Lexical Ambiguity-Induced Errors.....	21
1.2.4. Lexical Ambiguity Resolution Strategies.....	22
1.2.4.1. Part-of-Speech Tagging.....	22
1.2.4.2. Theme.....	23
1.2.4.3. Rheme.....	24
1.2.4.4. Neighbouring Words.....	25
1.2.4.5. Lexical Cohesion.....	25
1.2.4.6. Selection Restriction.....	26
1.2.5. Using Dictionaries for Disambiguating Words.....	26
1.2.6. Ambiguity Tolerance in Language Learning.....	27
1.2.7. Applications of Words Sense Disambiguation.....	30
Conclusion.....	30
 <b>Chapter Two: Field of Work</b>	
Introduction.....	33
2.1. Data Collection Procedures.....	33
2.2. Population and Sampling.....	34
2.3. Students Test.....	34
2.3.1. Description and Administration of the Students Test.....	34
2.3.2. Analysis of the Students Test.....	37
2.3.2.1. Results on the Homophones Task.....	37
2.3.2.2. Results on the Homographs Task.....	38

2.3.2.3. Results on the Homonyms Task.....	39
2.3.2.4. Results on the Polysemy Task.....	39
2.3.3 Interpretation of the Students Test.....	40
2.4 Students Interview.....	41
2.4.1 Description and Administration of the Students Interview.....	41
2.4.2 Analysis of the Students Interview.....	42
2.4.2.1. Students' Strategies for Disambiguating Homophones.....	42
2.4.2.2. Students' Strategies for Disambiguating Homographs.....	43
2.4.2.3. Students' Strategies for Disambiguating Homonymy.....	44
2.4.2.4. Students' Strategies for Disambiguating Polysemy.....	45
2.4.3 Interpretation of the Students Interview.....	45
2.5 Interpretation and Discussion of Overall Results .....	47
Conclusion.....	48

## **General Conclusion**

1. Putting it all together.....	50
2. Limitations of the Study.....	51
3. Suggestions for Further Research.....	51

## **References**

## **Appendix**

## **Résumé**

## **ملخص**



## **General Introduction**

### Introduction

1. State of the Art
2. Statement of the Problem
3. Aim and Significance of the Study
4. Research Questions
5. Research Hypotheses
6. Means of Research
7. Structure of the Study



## **Introduction**

Lexical ambiguity is an omnipresent issue in all languages that piques the curiosity of philosophers and linguists. The majority of words are ambiguous in that a single term form might refer to various meanings, thus creating '*lexical ambiguity*'. The term is also referred to as 'semantic ambiguity' to highlight the uncertainty of the word's meaning rather than its form. In English, over 80% of common words have more than one dictionary entry; the more frequently a word is used and the longer it has been part of the language, the more meaning it has (Rodd, Gaskell, & Marslen-Wilson, 2002, p.250).

### **1. State of the Art**

Researchers worked on developing a solution or a model for mapping between word forms and word meanings, the matching process under which the form is matched against its meaning. Cyma Van Petten (2002, p.867) concluded that ambiguity resolution research focused on a fundamental feature of comprehending how readers and listeners recognize the appropriate senses of words.

In order to look at some possible sources of lexical ambiguity in English, Ovu (2011) examined lexico-semantic concepts that result in ambiguity in daily communication, namely homographs, homonyms, homophones, and polysemy. Ovu suggested that simple English words and utterances used in everyday communication are considered a great guide for removing ambiguity. Furthermore, the researcher affirmed that when there are insufficient contextual details, words will be confusing. Thus, in order to determine the intended meaning of ambiguous expressions, readers and listeners must rely on context or previous information (p.1).

In a bid to examine syntactic ambiguity in the Thai language, Chaicharoen (2015, pp. 29-30) analysed ambiguity in four registers of Thai, namely legal, political, media, and academic. The study specifically aimed at highlighting ambiguous syntactic patterns and determining the most difficult of them. In order to collect the necessary data, Chaicharoen analysed eighty pages of Thai texts from the above mentioned registers. The results indicated that four ambiguous syntactic patterns are found, namely: modification construction, which refers to the syntactic relationship between two grammatical units, one of which is the head (obligatory) and the other, is the dependent (optional). A coordination construction connects two or more syntactic components at the same level. The connection is termed as a coordinator, and the parts that are linked are known as conjunctions, modification coordination construction in this pattern is caused by neither the modification nor the coordination structure. Rather, uncertainty arises only when both constructions run in parallel. Anaphora ambiguity occurs when it is unclear to which element an anaphoric expression refers, resulting in an indeterminable referent of the anaphoric statement in question. The results reveal that modification construction is the most confusing syntactic pattern, followed by modification coordination construction. It was also determined that media register has the most instances of ambiguity.

To shed light on the structural ambiguity interpretations, Khawalda and Al-saidat (2012) conducted a study about how Arabic native speakers of English comprehended ambiguous sentences. The study included sixty individuals; the majority of them were university students majoring in English. The subjects were given 18 ambiguous sentences that include prepositional phrases, adverbial phrases, ellipsis, coordinating clauses, non-finite clauses, and relative clauses. Participants were directed to translate the sentences in order to provide multiple interpretations of those sentences. The study's findings indicated that Arab English learners have trouble resolving in all the given types of ambiguous sentences; participants

comprehend just the surface meaning of a statement; the deeper meaning is beyond their comprehension (pp. 1-6).

In an effort to investigate lexical and structural ambiguity, Rahman&Nurjannah (2017, p.59) explored both types of ambiguity in texts containing local wisdom in Indonesia, with the primary goal of determining the role of a word's syntactic category in disambiguating meaning. The results revealed that nouns and adjectives were the most ambiguous word in disambiguating meaning, accounting for 46.6% and 33.33% of instances, respectively. In a similar vein, Charina (2017, p.120) carried out a study to analyse lexical and structural ambiguity in the creation of humour. The author suggested that humour can be a result of lexical ambiguity, which arises when a word has multiple meanings. Humour can also take place from the structure of words in a sentence or from context, both of which play an important role on the understanding of the sentence. The data were elicited from 25 ambiguous sentences, 12 sentences were lexically ambiguous due to their multiple possible meanings, while the other 13 sentences were structurally ambiguous as a consequence of their numerous underlying structures. The study's findings indicated that lexical and structural ambiguity were used to generate patterns of humour such as puns.

Ambiguity is not only found in daily conversation but also on the media such as newspapers. A study of election news was suggested by Ilham (2018, p. 4) in the purpose of examining the type of ambiguity and to investigate the causal element of ambiguity. The study's finding suggested that there are two causal factors of lexical ambiguity that are polysemy (75%) which is the most common and homonymy (6.25%). Meanwhile, there is no data based on other lexical ambiguity causal factors such as homophone and homograph. Then there are two accidental variables of structural ambiguities that appear that are equivocal phrasing (12.5%) and contextual ambiguity (6, 25%).

In the field of translation research, Catford (1965, p.72) proposed polysemy as a source of ambiguity, which poses challenges for learners when translating sentences where a single word has more than one interpretation. Furthermore, he claimed that it is not the case that one word has several meanings, but rather one item has a broad or general contextual meaning that encompasses a wide variety of distinct situational aspects Catford (1965, p.74). To support his argument, he used the Russian word ‘verxu,’ which means from or of a higher place in English. The meanings of this word may vary based on the conditions faced in a given context. These definitions include from above, from upstairs, and from upriver. As a consequence, he reasoned that the ambiguity will be eliminated if the previous word appears in a certain situational or linguistic context that gives it a contextual meaning.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

One of the major issues that confused psycholinguistics researchers in the field of foreign language instruction is how pupils deal with ambiguity. Thus, lexical ambiguity research is concerned with determining the appropriate meaning of a word having many senses. In general, lexical ambiguity is a universal phenomenon in all languages, and it becomes problematic for EFL learners, including those who majored in English. The problem is common for beginners and intermediate students because they do not consider the context in which a word is used and if they jump using the most common sense of the word, they are likely to fail to attain the meaning of the word.

## **3. Aim and Significance of the Study**

The present work is designed for the purpose of investigating students' lexical ambiguity resolution strategies on the basis of six strategies with a sample of students studying English at department of English Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel. In order to explore such an issue, our study is conducted with second-year students at the

department of English. Moreover, this study intends to achieve two objectives: the first one is to explore different forms of lexical ambiguity, and the second one is to investigate strategies used by second-year students for the resolution of lexical ambiguity.

Most importantly, the significance of this investigation lies in the fact that it is the first exploratory research at the level of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel that focuses on lexical ambiguity. It assists students in empower student about the strategies that can be used to resolve lexical ambiguity.

#### **4. Research Questions**

These are the fundamental questions that the researchers aim to answer through this study:

- Which forms of lexical ambiguity are troublesome for second-year students?
- What are the most frequent strategies used by student to resolve lexical ambiguity?
- Are students aware about the potential strategies that can be used in disambiguating words?

#### **5. Research Hypotheses**

In an attempt to answer the research questions, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- If students encounter polysemous words, they are more likely to fail at comprehending them than they would with homonymy.
- If students are aware of the available strategies for lexical ambiguity resolution, they are more likely to succeed at disambiguating the meaning of words.

## **6. Means of Research**

Two research instruments are used to confirm the validity of our research hypotheses and to answer the questions of our study to achieve the intended outcomes. The instruments are a test and an interview that seem appropriate to find out which strategies second-year English language students use while facing lexically ambiguous words. The participants were selected randomly from the second-year population.

The test consists of three activities. Students were allowed to solve the task during their classes. After that, they were kindly required to conduct an interview about which strategy they used during each sentence in the whole task.

## **7. Structure of the Study**

The present study revolves around two main chapters; the first chapter is devoted to the theoretical part of lexical ambiguity, while the second chapter is dedicated to the fieldwork of the study. In addition to that, a general introduction is included to provide an overview of the topic at hand, as well as a general conclusion, which serves to sum up the main findings of the present research.

The first chapter consists of two sections; the first section, entitled 'Lexical Ambiguity in English', focuses on defining lexical ambiguity and its forms. Subsequently, the second section, entitled 'Strategies for Resolving Lexical Ambiguity and Ambiguity-Induced Errors', defines and presents lexical ambiguity induced errors the main strategies used by students while resolving the puzzle of ambiguity.

The second chapter includes the necessary descriptions of the participants of the study, the instruments used to collect the data, and the procedures that were followed to carry out the

fieldwork. Data were presented, analysed, interpreted, and discussed in light of attempting to answer the earlier proposed research question.

# **Chapter One: Theoretical Framework on Lexical Ambiguity Resolution Strategies**

## **Section One: Lexical Ambiguity in English**

### Introduction

#### 1.1.1. Definition of Lexical Ambiguity

#### 1.1.2. Lexical Ambiguity vs. other Types of Ambiguity

##### 1.1.2.1. Lexical Ambiguity vs. Structural Ambiguity

##### 1.1.2.2. Lexical Ambiguity vs. Phonological Ambiguity

#### 1.1.3. Forms of lexical Ambiguity

##### 1.1.3.1. Polysemy

###### 1.1.3.1.1. Definition of Polysemy

###### 1.1.3.1.2. Types of Polysemes

###### 1.1.3.1.2.1. Metaphorical Polysemy

###### 1.1.3.1.2.2. Metonymic Polysemy

##### 1.1.3.2. Homonymy

###### 1.1.3.2.1. Definition of Homonymy

###### 1.1.3.2.2. Types of Homonyms

###### 1.1.3.2.2.1. Homophones

###### 1.1.3.2.2.2. Homographs

#### 1.1.4. Main Differences between Polysemy and Homonymy

#### 1.1.5. Polysemy and Homonymy in Lexicography

### Conclusion



## **Chapter One: Theoretical Framework on Lexical Ambiguity Resolution Strategies**

### **Section One: Lexical Ambiguity in English**

#### **Introduction**

Lexical ambiguity is a pervasive phenomenon in natural language processing. Most of the words that people use can refer to more than one possible meaning although levels of lexical ambiguity can differ across languages (Bates, Devescovi, & Wulfeck, 2001, p.389). This section examines the notion of lexical ambiguity. It begins with basic definitions of lexical ambiguity, and then proceeds to present the other two categories of ambiguity, namely syntactic (structural) ambiguity and phonological ambiguity. Next, it provides a detailed discussion of the forms of lexical ambiguity which are polysemy and homonymy followed by presenting the differences between them. Last, it sheds light on the issue of polysemy and homonymy in lexicography.

#### **1.1. Lexical Ambiguity**

Communication is an interactive tool that individuals use to engage with one another. Whether it is spoken or written speech, language has a meaning. Sometimes people do not convey the meaning effectively, and as a result, the listeners or readers perceive our meaning differently. This misinterpretation is referred to as ambiguity.

Lexical ambiguity is one of the most likely reasons of ambiguity in language; hence the issue is undeniably essential. Lexical ambiguity is defined as a situation in which a word “expresses more than one meaning” (Crystal, 2008, p.22). As a result, an ambiguous word has several meanings. Stated differently, the occurrence of one word that may be interpreted in two or more different senses inside a single composition causes lexical ambiguity (Ovu, 2011, pp.2-3). Another precise definition of ambiguity stipulates that it is “the existence of potential alternative choices at particular points in the processing of a sentence” (Parisi & Castelfranchi

1988. p, 129). According to the definitions given above, what makes a word or a statement ambiguous is the availability of numerous interpretations for each utterance in the language, which makes understanding a very tricky problem. For example, the word ‘bolt’, when used as a noun, refers to a type of metal fastener, a single ray of lightning (a lightning bolt), and as a verb, it means to run extremely fast.

## **1.2. Lexical Ambiguity vs. other Types of Ambiguity**

Ullmann (1962, p.21) divided ambiguity into three types; these are lexical, structural and phonological ambiguity.

### **1.2.1. Lexical Ambiguity vs. Structural Ambiguity**

A word, phrase or sentence is said to be ambiguous if it has more than one possible interpretation. If lexical ambiguity is caused by a word with more than one meaning, structural ambiguity is caused by the structure of the words when they are combined even though those words exactly have only one meaning.

Structural ambiguity, also known as syntactical or grammatical ambiguity is defined by Crystal (2008, p. 458) as a situation whereby a single sentence has different meanings because of the sentence structure. To illustrate the concept of structural ambiguity, the sentence ‘the chicken is ready to eat’ has two meanings; the first one is ‘the chicken is the one who is ready to eat its food’ and the second meaning is ‘people are ready to eat the chicken served on the table’.

According to Kreidler (2002, p. 169), there are two types of structural ambiguity which are surface structure and deep structure ambiguities. He suggested that surface structure of a sentence is when words might group together to form different possible constructions; for example, ‘John and Mary or Pat will go’ it may be understood as ‘[John] and [Mary or Pat] will go’ while the second sense is ‘[John and Mary] or [Pat] will go’. Deep structure of the sentence, on the other hand, is when the word sequence has different meanings because of

ellipsis or the deletion of what is understood, which are permitted by the principles of sentence building. For example, 'I like Mary better than Joan' it may be understood as 'better than I like Joan' or 'better than Joan likes Mary'.

### **1.2.2. Lexical Ambiguity vs. Phonological Ambiguity**

Phonological ambiguity refers to the sound of language, which generates two or more interpretations by listeners; in written form, phonological uncertainty does not appear; however, the sound of words pronounced end up causing ambiguity at the level of phonology (Irawan, 2009, p. 117). In other words, a spoken utterance typically consists of multiple words that are not recognized. More often than not, speakers talk too rapidly, allowing others to question the sense or message of their words, letting them be interpreted in a variety of different ways. As an example of phonological ambiguity, /aɪskri:m/ may be interpreted as 'Ice cream' or 'I scream'. When listeners hear the preceding words, they may understand it differently depending on whether 'I scream' relates to the verb 'to scream' or 'ice cream', meaning 'the sweet frozen food made with milk and cream'.

### **1.2. Forms of Lexical Ambiguity**

According to Ullmann (1962), ambiguity arises due to the lexical factors, which are polysemy and homonymy. In both situations, the meaning is vague. The distinctions are found in the word form and the interrelationship of the several meanings.

#### **1.3.1 Polysemy**

The most widespread type of lexical ambiguity seems to be between semantically related word senses, often known as polysemy (Rodd, 2018). Polysemy can be metaphorical or metonymic.

### **1.3.1.1. Definition of Polysemes**

Polysemy is a multiple meaning situation that happens when a word has two or even more meanings (Wiyanto, 2022, p. 84). Ullmann (1962, p. 81) defined a polyseme “as a word that has multiple but related meanings.” According to Ullmann (1962, p. 81), a polyseme denotes speech in the form of words or a word that has different meanings, but there are still relationships and interrelationships between variants of its meaning. This indicates that while the term has a new meaning, it is nevertheless interconnected to previous meanings. As a result, the transformation of a single meaning into two or more related meanings is known as polysemy.

The word ‘run’ for example is a polysemous term having a huge number of related dictionary definitions. For example, ‘the athlete runs down the track,’ ‘the mayor runs for election,’ and ‘the film runs at the cinema’. These several definitions of the word ‘run’ vary slightly in their meanings, but in order to properly grasp any statement using the word ‘run,’ the reader/listener must determine which definition was meant by the writer/speaker (Rodd, 2018, p.5)

### **1.3.1.1 Types of polysemy**

Apresjan (1974, p. 10) suggested that polysemy can be further divided into two types that are metaphorical and metonymic polysemy.

#### **1.3.1.2.1. Metaphorical Polysemy**

Jejunum (2003) claimed that a metaphor is a word or phrase utilized to portray somebody/something else, in a way that is diverse from its typical use, in arrange to appear that the two things have the same qualities and to create the portrayal more effective. Klepousniotou (2002) argued that the primary sense of metaphorical polysemy is literal, with no exaggeration or metaphor; however, the secondary sense is figurative, with a symbolic. To

reinforce his idea, Klepousniotou suggested the following ambiguous word ‘eye’ which has the literal basic sense ‘organ of the body’ and the figurative secondary sense ‘hole in a needle’. There are cases where the essential and the subordinate meanings keep an adequately part in common, but there are too many cases where the relatedness in meaning is not so obvious (p. 206).

#### **1.3.1.2.2. Metonymic Polysemy**

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which one word or expression is substituted for another with which it is closely related. Both the main and secondary senses are strongly connected and literal in metonymy; for example, "*rabbit*" designates ‘the animal’ or ‘the meat’. Metonymic polysemy is by far the most common form of ambiguity that reflects language users’ tendency to use existing words to describe novel albeit conceptually related actions, concepts, and objects (Rodd, 2018, p. 10). That is to say, metonymical polysemy is the ability of a word to have several distinct but related meanings.

#### **1.3.2. Homonymy**

Homonymy means lexemes with different meanings that happen to have the same sound, form or spelling (Löbner, 2013, p. 43). Homonyms come in the forms of homophones and homographs.

##### **1.3.2.1. Definition of Homonyms**

According to Crystal (2008, p.231), homonymy is a term referring to lexical items with the same form but different in meaning. Similarly, Yule (2020, p.143) defined homonymy as a term used for lexical items that have the same spelling and the same pronunciation but unrelated meaning. In other words, homonymy refers to two or more words sharing similar phonetic forms but different interpretations (Fromkin& Rodman, 2013, p. 122).

Löbner (2013, p. 43) distinguished between total homonyms and partial homonyms. The former involves two lexemes that share all distinctive properties (grammatical category, grammatical properties, and the set of grammatical forms, sound, form, and spelling) yet have unrelated meanings. For example, the two adjectives 'light' and 'light' have two distinct meanings: 'opposite of dark' and 'opposite of heavy'. The latter involves two lexemes having unrelated meanings that are similar in some but not all grammatical forms. For example, the verb "*lie 1*" (lay, lain) and "*lie 2*" (lied, lied) can give rise ambiguity in some context (don't lie in bed), but can be distinguished in others (he lay /lie in bed).

### **1.3.2.2. Types of Homonymy**

Homonymy can be related either to the sound forms of the lexemes or to their spellings. Homonymy with respect to the written form gives homographs; if two lexemes with unrelated meaning have the same sound form, they constitute a case of homophony (Löbner, 2013, p. 43).

#### **1.3.2.2.1. Homophones**

Homophones are units that are similar in sound, but differ in their spelling and meaning; for example: air/ heir; buy/ by; knight/ night; not /knot; peace/ piece; steel/steal; write/ right (Mamedova, 2019, p. 3). When words have the same pronunciation but different spelling and different meaning, they are said to be homophones. In the examples: 'I prefer *meat* with rice' and 'I will *meet* you tomorrow, the words '*meat*' and '*meet*' are pronounced the same in both sentences but their spelling is different.

#### **1.3.2.2.2. Homographs**

Homographs are words that are identical in spelling, but different in meaning and pronunciation (both in terms of sound composition and the place of stress in the word), as in the examples of bow [bou]/ bow [bau]; lead [li:d]/ lead [led]; row[rou]/row[rau]; sewer [sou]/ sewer[sju]; wind [wind]/ wind [waind] (Mamedova, 2019, p. 3). When words have the same

spelling but different pronunciation and different meaning, they are said to be homographs. For instance, the word ‘close’ in the sentences ‘Sara and Aya are close friends’ and ‘Please, close the door’ conveys the meaning of ‘intimacy’ and the action of ‘shutting’, respectively.

**1.4 Main Difference between Polysemy and Homonymy**

In linguistics, polysemy and homonymy are two related concepts as they are related to words with numerous meanings. When two words that are spelled or spoken the same during reading or listening have distinct meanings, they are most likely examples of homonymy or polysemy. The main differences between polysemy and homonymy are summarized in the table below.

**Table 1.1:**  
*Difference between Polysemy and Homonymy*

<b>Differences</b>	<b>Polysemy</b>	<b>Homonymy</b>
Definitions	Coexistence of many possible meanings for a word or phrase.	The existence of two or more words having the same spelling or pronunciation but different meanings and origins.
Meanings	Has a different, yet related meaning.	Has a completely different meaning.
Origins	Has related word origins.	Has a different origin.
Dictionaries	Words are listed under one entry in dictionaries.	Words are listed separately.
Guessing Meanings	Words can be understood if you know the meaning of one word.	Words cannot be guessed since the words have unrelated meanings.

### **1.5. Homonymy and Polysemy in Lexicography**

The problem of polysemy and homonymy in practical lexicography is seen as a serious one which causes confusion and ambiguity. According to Tarp (2009, p. 289), the terms are established and used in relation to linguistic theory and need to be developed in order to be utilized in dictionaries. Hence, it is necessary to briefly examine the interconnections between lexicography and linguistics.

According to Kirness (as cited in Davis & Elder 2004, p. 54), lexicography aims to meet the needs of written communication between members of human communities using different languages or different dialects. Certain types of dictionaries may benefit from the knowledge and information gathered through linguistic research to instruct people about how they should use language, In this regard, Atkins and Rundell (2008) posited that “We have to understand the needs of our target audience if we are going to produce a language description that is accessible and relevant to the people who will use it” (p.2). Therefore, in compiling dictionaries lexicographers should produce the language that is useable, suitable, and related to need of its users.

Tarp(2009, pp. 296-7) claimed that the use of polysemy and homonymy in dictionaries should be helpful and addressed to the specific types of users’ needs in specific situations, which must be addressed and taken into consideration before the dictionary consultation process. Lexicographers need to be aware of the communicative and cognitive functions of words and include them in the dictionary in order to clarify the word meaning and avoid any misunderstanding and confusion that are caused when users encounter polysemous and homonymous words. In order to solve communicative problems related to text reception, dictionaries should offer explicative lexicographical data (definitions, synonyms, paraphrases) to clarify the word meaning in specific context because users are unaware of the other possible meanings in other contexts and ignore the possible polysemous and homonymous



relations that exist between words. Also, explicative lexicographical data is needed to solve problems associated to text production. It allows users to determine whether the given word can be used to express the given meaning.

### **Conclusion**

Lexical ambiguity is a natural phenomenon in human languages. It can take the form of polysemy, which consists in the multiplicity of word meanings, or homonymy, which occurs when two words sound identically and have the same spelling, but have different meanings. Polysemous and homonymous words are given special attention in dictionaries which clarify the different meanings and aim to avoid misunderstanding and confusion.

## **Section Two: Strategies for Resolving Lexical Ambiguity and Ambiguity-Induced Errors**

Introduction

1.2.1. Lexical Ambiguity-Induced Errors

1.2.1.1 Form-Related Errors

1.2.1.2 Meaning-Related Errors

1.2.2. Sources of Lexical Ambiguity-Induced Errors

1.2.3. Lexical Ambiguity Resolution

1.2.4. Lexical Ambiguity Resolution Strategies

1.2.4.1. Part-of-Speech Tagging

1.2.4.2. Theme

1.2.4.3. Rheme

1.2.4.4. Neighbouring Words

1.2.4.5. Lexical Cohesion

1.2.4.6. Selection Restriction

1.2.5. Using Dictionaries for Disambiguating Words

1.2.6. Applications of Words Sense Disambiguation

Conclusion

## **Section Two: Strategies for Resolving Lexical Ambiguity and Ambiguity-Induced Errors**

### **Introduction**

The English as a foreign language learner must employ specific methods and strategies to overcome ambiguity of polysemes and homonyms. This section is devoted to define and investigate lexical ambiguity induced errors as well as to review and define the main strategies used by students while resolving the puzzle of ambiguity, namely part of speech tagging, theme, use of neighbouring words, rheme, lexical cohesion and selection restriction. Finally, this section sheds light on applications and approaches to word sense disambiguation.

#### **1.2.1. Lexical Ambiguity Induced Errors**

All lexical errors are instances of incorrect form choice, whether in terms of grammar, spelling or word choice. For the sake of convenience, Thornbury (2004) divided errors into two categories: form-related errors and meaning-related errors.

##### **1.2.1.1. Form-Related Errors**

Mis-selection, misformation, misspelling, and pronunciation errors are elements of errors (Thornbury, 2002, p. 29). A mis-selection occurs when an existing word form that is similar in sound or spelling to the correct form, the equivalent to a native speaker is malapropism which is the mistaken use of an incorrect word in place of a similar sounding word, resulting in an incomprehensible speech. For example, in the sentence, 'my friend was very hungry with me', the word 'hungry' is mis-selected instead of 'angry'.

Misformation is frequently caused by incorrectly applying word formation principles, resulting in non-existent terms. The students may rely on his mother language to help them interpret the meanings of some words in target language. Some words in the mother language

become similar to their equivalents in the target language, which facilitates learning. Idioms and fixed phrases are particularly susceptible to this type of misunderstanding. Students may find difficulty in understanding the sentence ‘A strike could kill the golden eggs goose and cause the ruin of a country’ because of the idiomatic expression golden eggs goose.

A spelling error is caused by the incorrect use of a letter (letter ‘e’ in shell for shall), the omission of letters (omission of ‘y’ studing for studying), or the incorrect arrangement of letters (littel for little).

Pronunciation problems can occur as a consequence of incorrect sound selection (leave for live), sound addition (eschool for school), sound deletion (produk for product), or incorrect word stress (com FORT able) for comfortable (Thornbury, 2002, pp. 27-28).

#### **1.2.1.2. Meaning-Related Errors**

Thornbury (2002, p. 29) noticed that errors often arise when words with similar or related meanings are mixed up and the incorrect choice is used. He supported his ideas using the following examples: ‘I hope ... I shall not have a free time’, (where the speaker meant ‘I expect’ instead of ‘I hope’), and ‘I like watching flowers and inhaling their lovely smell’ (‘watching’ is one of the verbs associated with seeing, and it is improper for use with relatively static objects such as flowers; similarly, ‘inhaling’ is typically used for smoke or gas, rather than scent, implying that inhaling does not collocate with smell). Hence, many wrong-word errors are actually erroneous collocates.

Meaning-related wrong-choice errors may arise as a result of the learner's mother tongue (L1) because the use of an equivalent L1 word may not perfectly match its second language (L2) counterpart. This type of errors occurs mainly because of the interrelation between words that is stored in our mind (Thornbury, 2002, p. 30).

### **1.2.2. Lexical Ambiguity Resolution**

The resolution of ambiguity is crucial to both language comprehension and natural language processing applications. We resolve lexical ambiguity as language speakers by looking at the context. The context does not have to be immediate. Distance context or the topic of talk may also aid in the resolution of ambiguity. The selection of an acceptable meaning is a difficult task since several rules are required to pick the proper sense by context, collocation, or co-occurrence (Rajandren & Vidyapeetham, 2014, p. 278).

### **1.2.3. Sources of Lexical Ambiguity-Induced Errors**

L1 interferes L2 in the sense that L2 or foreign language learners use their knowledge of L1 to understand issues in the target language. Anyone who has acquired an L2 knows that some words appear to be simpler to learn than others. According to Thornbury (2002, pp.27-28), the simplest are those that are almost similar in meaning and form to their L1 counterparts. This means that words with different meanings cause confusion and misunderstanding. With regard to spelling, sound spelling mismatches are problematic especially in words with silent letters. In terms of grammar, when the grammar of L1 differs from its equivalent in L2, it makes words difficult to understand. Furthermore, long and complex words create more difficulties than short ones. In addition, range and connotation make certain words more ambiguous than others. When words that are used in a narrower range of contexts, they are likely to be more ambiguous than those which are used in a wider range of contexts. Similarly, words having negative connotations suggest different meanings than the literal sense.

#### **1.2.4. Lexical Ambiguity Resolution Strategies**

Rajendran & Vidyapeetham (2014, p. 279) suggested six strategies to resolve the issue that challenges a lot of learners in the comprehension of ambiguous words. These are part of speech, theme, rheme, neighbouring words, cohesion, and selection restriction.

##### **1.2.4.1. Part-of-Speech Tagging**

There are eight parts of speech in English that are noun, pronoun, adjective, adverb, verb, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjection. A part of speech is a category into which a word is placed depending on how it functions in a sentence. The same word may represent different parts of speech, depending on the word's use in the sentence. For example, the English word "set" can be a noun referring to a group or collection of things that belong together, an adjective meaning fixed or arranged in advance, or a verb meaning the existing of something in a specified place or position.

In corpus linguistics, part-of-speech tagging (POS tagging) is also called grammatical tagging or word-category disambiguation. Tagging parts of speech is a fundamental challenge in natural language processing (NLP) which is a subfield of linguistics that has the ability of a computer program to understand human language as it is spoken and written. POS tagging may or may not be the solution to a specific NLP challenge. It is, nevertheless, done as a prerequisite to simplifying a huge range of ambiguities (Awwalu, Abdullahi, & Ewwiekpaefe, 2020, p.714).

POS attempts to classify (or label) each word in a sentence with the appropriate part of speech. The majority of POS taggers have two issues: identifying the precise tags for each word and selecting from the available tags. The first issue can be simple if the term is in a word tag lexicon, but it can be difficult if the word is unfamiliar. Also, the second issue is known as syntactic disambiguation, we disambiguate meaning with the help of a words'

structural meaning, and it must be solved for each word with an uncertain POS (Awwalu, Abdullahi, & Ewwiekpaefe, 2020, p 716).

#### **1.2.4.2. Theme**

Each sentence has a structure that allows listeners or readers to interpret the sentence differently. According to Brown and Yule (1985, p.126), each simple sentence contains a theme, which is “the starting point of the utterance.” Hence, the theme dictates the meaning of the sentence itself. Similarly, Butt (2006, p.135) referred to the first clause element as a theme. In other words what occurs first in a phrase represented a significant and distinct meaning.

A lot of researchers suggested that the term context and theme can be used interchangeably. Guessing from theme is the most commonly utilized strategy for dealing with vocabulary problems that students confront when reading and listening. As a result, it has a significant influence on the comprehension of ambiguous words. McCarthy (1990, p. 125) examined inferring meaning from context and guessing the most essential strategy used by learners to cover the meaning of new words.

Anything that is selected to begin a text, be it adverbial, prepositional or verbal phrases, will influence the hearer/reader’s interpretation of everything that will come after it in the discourse. In writing, the word at the beginning point of the sentence or clause will become the centre or main topic the writer wants to point out. It also allows organizing and developing text elements grammatically to make them hold together and give the text meaning. For the reader, the initial word guides him to interpret and successfully understand the message being communicated. (Rahardjo, Hidayat, & Alek, 2021, p. 123-124).

McCarthy specified a set of steps that help students to practice guessing from theme which is the central idea of the sentence (1990 p. 162). According to him, guessing the meaning starts by looking closely at the unknown word, then looking at the clause containing

this word, and finally looking at the relationship between the entire clause with other clauses, phrases and paragraphs. For example, in the following quote from ‘The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Twain’,

“The Widow Douglas she took me for her son, and allowed she would sivilize me; but it was rough living in the house all the time, considering how dismal regular and decent the widow was in all her ways; and so when I couldn't stand it no longer I lit out”. It is possible to not have immediately recognized the word 'sivilize' by sight, but if you read it aloud you might notice that it sounds like 'civilize,' which matches the Widow Douglas' plans for Huck. If the meaning of the word 'dismal' was ambiguous, it is preferable to look at the theme of the sentence - 'rough living,' 'couldn't stand it any longer' - and know 'dismal' wasn't a good thing (2003, p.14).

#### **1.2.4.3. Rheme**

Rheme indicates the other words that appear in the sentence which consists of what the speaker states about, or in regard to, the initial point of the utterance (Brown and Yule, 1983, p. 126).

Rheme is the new information where the topic expands, so rheme is the kernel part of new information (Liu and Zhang, 2018, p. 277). Rheme functions as the most important part in the sentence it provides readers with new information and adds explanations about the topic. When readers fail to guess what the sentence talks about in the starting word, rheme adds more clarification and disambiguates the meaning of the whole sentence by adding new information to what already know.

To reinforce the idea, in the example ‘the wind (blue/ blew) hard during the storm’, from the rest of sentence (hard during the storm) we can understand the meaning and choose the correct word (blew). The right meaning is identified using the rheme of the sentence according to words ‘the wind’ and ‘the storm’. Similarly, in the example: ‘after yelling so



much my voice is very (hoarse/ horse)', the words 'voice' and 'yelling' reveal the correct word (hoarse).

#### **1.2.4.4. Neighbouring Words**

Neighbouring words are considered as an effective way for determining the word senses in context. The occurrence of nearby words in a single sentence or text may help the reader to guess the meaning of the ambiguous words he faces; the learner basically relies on his knowledge of existing words and employs this knowledge to understand ambiguous word.

According to Rajendran & Vidyapeetham (2014, p. 281-2), the meaning of an ambiguous word in a single context can be captured by the reliance using its nearby words which occur in the same context and are semantically related. The topic of the text or the domain of the text in general can be a useful clue. The challenge is determining the semantic relationship and selecting the correct sense based on these clues. For example, when it comes to choosing between the three homophones in the sentence 'the boy is terrified to fall off the coin-op horse, so he clutches the (rein/rain/reign)', the neighbouring words allow us to understand that the correct word is 'rein'.

#### **1.2.4.5 Lexical Cohesion**

One of the appropriate ways in determining the word meaning and disambiguate uncertainties is lexical cohesion. Cohesion is the process of linking and connecting sentences together. "Lexical cohesion is the cohesion that arises from semantic relationships between words. All that is required is that there be some recognizable relation between the words" (Morris and Hirst, 1991, p. 21). In other words, lexical cohesion is a set of similar words that allow for meaning continuity. According to Morris and Hirst (1991, p. 21), a text or discourse is more than just a collection of phrases about various topics. Rather, the sentences and phrases in any reasonable work will tend to be about the same subjects, giving the text a sense of unity.

To establish cohesion in the text, back-reference, conjunctions and semantic word connections are utilized. Back reference refers to the process of linking items to preceding items in the text. Conjunctions are used to coordinate words and connect clauses or sentences (e.g., and, but, if)", while semantic word connections refer to linking words in the text (like firstly, secondly, in addition.). Cohesion is not a guarantee of textual unity, but rather a tool for achieving it. Similarly, lexical cohesion occurs not simply between pairs of words but over a succession of a number of nearby related words spanning a topical unit of the text. These sequences of related words will be called lexical chains. There is a distance relation between each word in the chain, and the words co-occur within a given span. Furthermore, words tend to occur in the same lexical contexts because they describe things that tend to occur in related situations or contexts in the world (Morris and Hirst, 1991, p. 22-23).

#### **1.2.4.6. Selection Restriction**

The learner chooses from the several definitions accessible in the dictionary or uses prior knowledge to disambiguate meanings of words. Prior knowledge is the information and educational background that a student possesses prior to learning new material. By utilizing existing knowledge before dealing with new content, a learner's grasp of instructional material can be increased.

#### **1.2.5. Using Dictionaries for Disambiguating Words**

A dictionary is a reference book that contains information on the forms, pronunciations, functions, meanings, etymologies, spellings, and idiomatic uses of words in a language. It is well-known to be a key learning tool for L2 learners in the development of all four language abilities. A dictionary is frequently located in the library's reference section for the benefit of the readers. As a result, the dictionary is viewed as a reference book, and it is thought that intelligent people utilize the dictionary for reference reasons. The usage of dictionaries has a

significant impact on students' language skills. Because of these considerations, it is critical that students be taught specific procedures and strategies for using both electronic and print dictionaries in a language learning setting.

Thus, when we teach students how to use dictionaries, we should train them to look up a word that sounds familiar when it occurs in a difficult-to-understand sentence. For example, language students who have learnt the word 'furniture' will recognize the word 'chair': but, for some, the term will create difficulties in sentences such as 'He was appointed to the "*chair*" of maths at the university' or 'He will "*chair*" the conference.' It is likely that the students' knowledge of the term "*chair*" does not include these definitions. Students typically think that they already know the meaning of a common term and do not attempt to find another meaning for it. As a result, in language classes, the ability to utilize a dictionary should not be taken for granted.

### **1.2.6. Ambiguity Tolerance in Language Learning**

People often encounter a variety of ambiguous situations. "Ambiguity tolerance refers to the way an individual (or group) perceives and processes information about ambiguous situations or stimuli when confronted by an array of unfamiliar, complex, or incongruent clues" (Furnham and Ribchester, 1995, p. 179). It serves as a guide for people of how to behave when they face unusual situations to minimize their level of frustration and anxiety. According to Furnham and Ribchester (1995, p. 179) the one with low ambiguity tolerance feel anxious, frustrated, react quickly and avoid ambiguous situation as much as possible while the one with high ambiguity tolerance feel interested, motivated and perform more effectively in ambiguous situations.

Foreign language learning is a difficult process where learners are required to deal with new information through analysis and assimilation of elements which are different from the

mother tongue in terms of lexis, structure and phonetic properties (Kazamia, 1999, p. 69). Most EFL learners face uncertainties when dealing with other languages. Similarly, Başöz (2015, p.53) stated that learning a new language means dealing with a large number of unclear and ambiguous situations that are common in language learning.

“Tolerance of ambiguity is the quality that aids learners of other languages in overcoming the natural uncertainties of language learning”, as defined by Kazamia, (1999, p. 69). It is also defined by Johnson (2001, p. 141) as the uncertainty about what will occur in future events. Ambiguity tolerance is a term identified and developed as the consequence of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and his identification of the term uncertainty avoidance (Merkin, 2006, p. 214). The degree to which people become anxious in situations that appear ambiguous, unplanned, or unexpected, and the degree to which they adopt behavioural rules and absolute truths to avoid uncertainties.

However, Ely (1989) as cited in Kamran (2011, p. 25) stressed the origin of uncertainty in the context of language learning seen as uncertainty which occurs when learners are unable to understand the meaning of vocabulary or language items or the failure in using the tenses or the mispronunciation of words and teachers need to be tolerant with the students specially when they are learning new information because intolerance may affect negatively the learner's learning process and the learning process by causing stress and anxiety.

According to Brown (2000, p. 114) ambiguity tolerance is one of the styles that are identified in second language acquisition and considered the main reason in successful acquisition. Ehrman (1996, p. 177) asserted that “effective language learning is very much a process of reinterpreting one’s view of reality using alternative perspectives.” An individual should be aware of the ambiguous situations that he may encounter in his learning and need to understand those using different ways and strategies.

Ely (1995, p.88), on the other hand, identifies three situations in which ambiguity tolerance has a negative impact on language learning: learning individual linguistic elements (phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic); practicing language learning skills; and adopting those skills as permanent strategies. The mere reliance on the rules of each individual element will kill the sense of creativity and investigation. The learners must develop new strategies rather than use old ones. The learner will focus on mastering the phonological, syntactic and semantic elements of each word, this will distribute his learning of new words quickly, the process of learning words will be more difficult and occurs slowly because it depends merely on the mastering of linguistic elements of a word and learner feel obliged to learn all these to avoid ambiguity. Practicing language skills which are listening, speaking, reading and writing; the learner must practice them to learn a language deeply and make meaningful insights , the learner need to master the language trough listening by taking notes when listening to help to retain information later, and learning the sounds of the language , practice speaking may be trough a memorization of a poem or speech than repeating it , also the learner may record himself speaking and have a discussion with himself also so useful to learn better, reading can easily be improved by reading books, novels, articles or journals while writing need to be overall of the aforementioned skills; the mastery of grammar, styles is essential elements in writing. The mastery of language skills takes a long time and learner who want to perceive information about language need to practice the four language skills perfectly to avoid ambiguous situations.

### **1.2.7. Applications of Words Sense Disambiguation**

Pal and Saha (2015, p.3) suggested that human languages are characterized by ambiguity of word meanings depending on context. A typical human being is born with the ability to distinguish between many meanings of an ambiguous word in a certain context, whereas machines merely follow instructions where different rules are input into the system to carry out a certain task. Word sense disambiguation provides effective ways for determining the actual meaning of an ambiguous words, phrases and texts in a given situations.

Three applications of word sense disambiguation can be distinguished: machine translation, information extraction& text mining, and information retrieval (Pal and Saha, 2015, p. 3). The use of machine translation is useful to disambiguate complex words which have several translations depending on context. Hence, the system contains rules and a set of words in their different contexts in order to elicit the word meaning in particular cases; for example, in the sentences: ‘He scored a goal’, ‘it was his goal in life’, the word ‘goal’ has different meanings and the translation shows all possible meanings the word ‘goal’ may have. Information extraction is the process of extracting information from different sources like documents and text mining is the process of analysing the text data. Both processes are effective and help learners to extract the meaning and disambiguate any ambiguity. Information retrieval refers to the process of calling back the stored data in computers that is relevant to the existing text needed disambiguation. (Pal and Saha, 2015, p.3)

#### **Conclusion**

Lexical ambiguity is a very pervasive phenomenon in language. There is a definite requirement to employ strategies that offer profound insights in order to deal with this uncertainty. Students can use a variety of strategies to resolve misunderstandings. They could rely on the sentence main theme, the context that adds fresh details, labelling the part of speech of the word. They can also exploit the cohesion of the provided sentence to elicit the

meaning of a word and relationships between nearby words to learn more about a concept. Last, students can always look up the precise definition of a word in dictionaries and rely on previous knowledge in the process of resolving lexical ambiguity.

## **Chapter Two: Field of Work**

### Introduction

#### 2.1. Data Collection Procedures

#### 2.2. Population and Sampling

#### 2.3. Students Test

##### 2.3.1. Description and Administration of the Students Test

##### 2.3.2. Analysis of the Students Test

###### 2.3.2.1. Results on the Homophones Task

###### 2.3.2.2. Results on the Homographs Task

###### 2.3.2.3. Results on the Homonymy Task

###### 2.3.2.4. Results on the Polysemy Task

##### 2.3.3 Interpretation of the Students Test

#### 2.4 Students Interview

##### 2.4.1 Description and Administration of the Students Interview

##### 2.4.2 Analysis of the Students Interview

###### 2.4.2.1. Students' Strategies for Disambiguating Homophones

###### 2.4.2.2. Students' Strategies for Disambiguating Homographs

###### 2.4.2.3. Students' Strategies for Disambiguating Homonymy

###### 2.4.2.4. Students' Strategies for Disambiguating Polysemy

##### 2.4.3 Interpretation of the Students Interview

#### 2.5 Interpretation and Discussion of Overall Results

### Conclusion



## **Chapter Two: Field Work**

### **Introduction**

After reviewing the related literature on the topic of investigating students' lexical ambiguity resolution strategies from a theoretical perspective, this chapter attempts to explain and discuss the practical work that has been carried out to investigate the students' lexical ambiguity resolution strategies. Thus, this chapter provides a description of the research methodology adopted in the collection of data, beginning with a description of the research tools used in the dissertation as well as the population and the sample. Then, it presents the description and administration of each research tool, followed by an analysis, discussion, and interpretation of the results.

### **2.1. Data Collection Procedures**

The present study is based on both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis as an attempt to explore the students' lexical ambiguity resolution strategies. This is consistent with mixed-method research which involves different combinations of qualitative and quantitative research either as data collection or at the analysis levels (Dörnyei, 2007, p.25).

Two research tools were deemed appropriate to be exploited to collect adequate data, namely the test and the interview. First, a test of vocabulary was designed for second-year students. Second, an interview is conducted with the same sample of students who were asked to answer the test. The purpose behind using more than one research instrument is to carry out an in-depth study of the issue of resolving lexical ambiguity.

## **2.2. Population and Sampling**

The targeted population of this study is second-year students enrolled in the department of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel. The sample selected for this research work consists of 101 students chosen on an immediate convenience sampling basis from a population of 270 EFL students. They are all supposed to have studied vocabulary in their previous years and have reached at least a pre-intermediate level in comprehending meanings of words.

## **2.3. Students Test**

The first instrument in this study was the test. The test attempted to investigate the ability of students to comprehend words characterized with ambiguity. In other words, the aim of the test was to examine the students' recognition, understanding, and guessing of the meanings of words.

### **2.3.1. Description and Administration of the Students Test**

The test was administered to 101 second-year students at the department of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University. It was aimed at investigating the students' lexical ambiguity resolution strategies. Students were invited to sit for a twenty-minute test. It took the researchers five days to get an adequate number of students to participate, from May 15th to May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The researchers were present at the time of testing to answer any potential question by respondents.

The test was made up of 26 questions, which are divided into three tasks. The first task deals with homophones; it consists of five sentences, and each sentence contains a gap to be filled in by one appropriate homophone among the options supplied. The second task which elicited homographs was composed of five pairs of sentences. In each pair, the homograph is used in both sentences to refer to different interpretations in each single sentence. The third

task consisted of underlined homonyms, i.e., words having multiple interpretations. In turn, it was divided into three sub-parts: part one was an original text taken from Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare, Act 01 Scene 01; the second part was a poem by Thomas Hood titled Faithless Sally Brown, whereas the third part was devoted to interpreting the sense of six metaphorical sentences. Finally, it was worthwhile to mention that each correct answer receives one (1) mark, which made the total score of the test twenty-six (26) marks.

As far as the model and correct answers were concerned, task one asked the students to choose from the given options the appropriate words between brackets (homonyms) in each of the five examples. Example number one should be answered with "*blew*." In the second example, the student should pick up the first choice, which is "*hoarse*." The third example should be replied to with "*knead*." The fourth example should be responded to with "*rain*.", and in the last example, students should choose the second choice, which is "*coward*."

Task two demanded that the students fill in the blanks with the meaning of the underlined words. In the first couple of sentences, "*I am feeling blue today*" and "*his new car light is blue*", the homograph word that was presented in the two sentences was "*blue*". The first interpretation is 'a gloomy day'; whereas the second interpretation is 'the blue colour'. In the second couple of sentences, "*the writer has written a new book*" and "*Paula is going to book four seats for Friday's concert*," the homograph that was presented is the word "*book*". The first sentence means 'a printed literary composition', and the second sentence means 'reserving a seat at a concert'. The third pair of sentences was "*she can swim fast*" and "*he drank a can of Coca-Cola half an hour ago*." The homograph word that was mentioned in those two sentences was the word "*can*". The first meaning is 'the ability of doing something', while the second is referring to 'a tin'. The fourth couple of examples were "*Frank was the last in a race*" and "*these shoes may look fine but they do not last*." The word that was represented here in the homographs was the word "*last*". The first interpretation is 'the final/the

end’, whereas the second means ‘to continue’. The last couple sentences were "*she is still in school*" and "*we could see a school of salmon.*"The homograph word here is "*school.*"The first word means ‘college’, but the second refers to ‘a large number of fish swimming together’.

The last third task contained two original texts and six metaphorical sentences; the first one was from act 01 scene 01 of *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare:

*Sampson*: Gregory, o’ my word, we’ll not carry coals.

*Gregory*: No, for then we should be *colliers*.

*Sampson*: I mean, and we be in *choler*, we’ll draw.

*Gregory*: Ay, while you live, draw your neck out of the *collar*.

The text contained three homophones: "*colliers*", "*choler*," and "*collar.*"

The three interpretations are: coal worker; anger; and necklace, respectively. The second was a poem by Thomas Hood titled *Faithless Sally Brown*:

His death, which happened in his berth. At forty odd he fell.

They went and *told* the sexton, and the sexton *tolled* the bell.

The text contains two homographs "*told*", meaning ‘said’ and "*tolled*", meaning ‘knocked’.

The last part of the task was a form of six sentences, each of which contains the word "*mouth*," used in polysemous manner. The first sentence, "*John has his mouth full of food,*" uses the word "*mouth*" to describe ‘the opening in the lower part of the human face surrounded by the lips’. The second sentence, "*He is got a lot of mouth, said Miranda.*" uses the word *mouth* to refer to ‘Her/his words hurts’. In the third sentence, "*Watch your mouth,*" the word "*mouth*" means ‘to tell someone not to speak in a rude way’. In the fourth sentence, "*The mouth of the wine was dry*"; the meaning of the word "*mouth*" was ‘the taste of the wine’. The fifth sentence was "*I have three mouths of feed,*" where "*mouth*" refers to ‘three

people who must be fed'. In the last sentence, "You can see the mouth of the river from here", the word "mouth" is used to describe 'the place where a river enters the sea'.

### 2.3.2. Analysis of the Students Test Results

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the 26 examples answered by 101 second-year EFL students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia are to be analysed. Results on each task are presented below.

#### 2.3.2.1 Results on the Homophones Task

**Table 2.1**

*Students' Correct Responses in the Homophones Task*

<u>Homophone</u>	<u>Correct Answer</u>	<u>%</u>
1. Blew	91	90.09
2. Hoarse	89	88.11
3. Knead	33	32.67
4. Rein	33	32.67
5. Coward	75	74.26
<b><u>Average</u></b>	<b>64.2</b>	<b>63.56</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above represents the correct answers to the meanings of homophones. The results show that, generally, more than half the students (63.56%) succeeded in identifying the meanings of the homophones suggested. The meanings of three of the five words were easily distinguishable: blew (90.09%), hoarse (88.11%), and coward (74.26%). However, each of the remaining two words (knead and rein) proved difficult to interpret by the majority of students.

### 2.3.2.2 Results on the Homographs Task

**Table 2.2**

*Students' Correct Responses in the Homographs Task*

<u>Homograph</u>	<u>Correct Answer</u>	<u>%</u>
1. a. Blue= Gloomy	86	85.14
b. Blue= Colour	84	83.16
2. a. Book= Printed literary composition	75	74.25
b. Book= Reserve	82	81.18
3. a. Can= Able to	87	86.13
b. Can= Tin	81	80.19
4. a. Last= Final	71	70.29
b. Last= Continue	51	50.49
5. a. School= College	82	81.18
b. School= Large number of fish swimming together	71	70.29
<b><u>Average</u></b>	<b>77</b>	<b>76.23</b>
<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100</b>

The table shows the right answers of the meanings of homographs. The findings reveal that, generally, a high number of students (76.23%) successfully determined the meanings of the given homographs, with more than 80% success in six sentences: two homographic adjectives for the words 'blue/blew', the homograph verbs for 'book', both the auxiliary verb and the noun form, and the first homograph noun of the word 'school' (81.18%). However, around 50% of the students were not able to identify correctly the second meaning of the verb form of the word 'last'.

### 2.3.2.3 Results on the Homonyms Task

**Table 2.3**

*Students' Correct Responses in the Homonyms Task*

<u>Homonym</u>	<u>Correct Answer</u>	<u>%</u>
1) Colliers= Coal workers	36	35.64
Choler= Angered	63	62.37
Collar= Necklace	53	52.47
2) Told= Said	75	74.25
Tolled= Knocked	64	63.36
<u>Average</u>	<b>58.2</b>	<b>57.62</b>
<u>Total</u>	<b>101</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above represents the students' correct identification of the meaning of homonyms. The average percentage of correct responses in this task was 57.62%, suggesting some difficulty in understanding homonyms. The items 'choler', 'told', and 'tolled' proved somehow easy for the students. Second, the homonym 'collar' was problematic for almost half of the participants. However, for the homonym 'colliers,' most of the respondents did not identify its meaning.

### 2.3.2.3 Results on the Polysemes Task

**Table 2.4**

*Students' Correct Responses in the Polysemes Task*

<u>Polysemy</u>	<u>Correct Answer</u>	<u>%</u>
1. Mouth= part of the human face	52	51.48
2. Mouth= Her/his words hurts	30	29.70

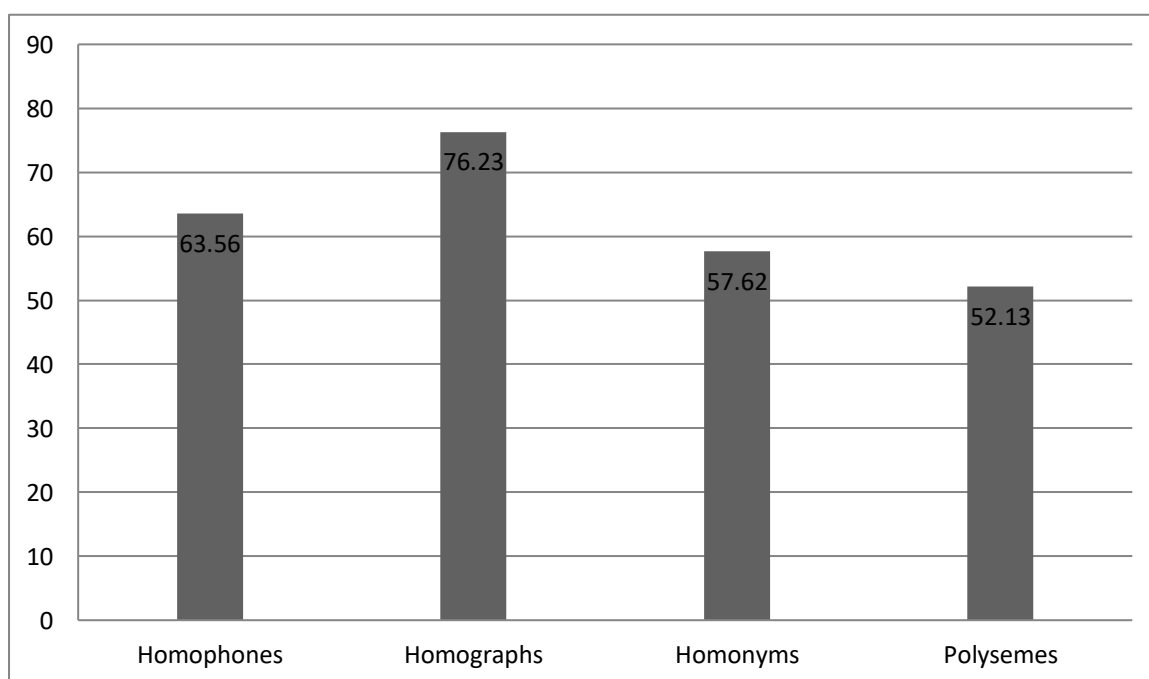
3. Mouth= Dirty talk	74	73.26
4. Mouth= Taste of the wine	32	31.68
5. Mouth= Persons that need to be feed	61	60.39
6. Mouth= The place where a river enters the sea	67	66.33
<b><u>Average</u></b>	<b>52.66</b>	<b>52.13</b>
<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100</b>

The table portrays the correct answers of the meanings of polysemous sentences. The results revealed that a little more than half of the students (52.13%) correctly identified the meanings of polysemous sentences; the meanings of the word ‘mouth’ in sentence three was relatively easy to identify; however, the word in sentences two, and four proved hard to answer correctly for most students.

### 2.3.3. Interpretation of the Students Test Results

**Figure 2.1**

*Summary of Students' Correct Responses in Answering the Test of Lexical Ambiguity*





This chart is a summary of all types of lexical ambiguity types that have been used in the three tasks. The most problematical types are ordered from the easiest to the highly problematic: in the situation of homophonic words, most students succeeded in disambiguating their meanings (77; 76.23%); homographs were the second easiest with more than half of the respondents understanding them (64.2; 63.56%); third, for homonymous words, 58 students correctly answered the meaning of the words; and last, polysemous words proved hard to understand for almost half of the students.

## **2.4. Students Interview**

Apart from the test, an interview was also implemented as a second research instrument in this study. The purpose of this instrument is to attempt an analysis of the strategies used in each case to solve the meaning of ambiguous words. A detailed analysis of the results is presented through a set of tables, and then comes a discussion and interpretation of the results obtained.

### **2.4.1. Description and Administration of Students Interview**

The interview was distributed to 101 second-year students. Since the interview is related to the test, it took place immediately after the test, and lasted around ten minutes for each student. A structured interview was used since we asked the same predetermined questions to all the participants in the same order. When each student ended up with answering the test, they were requested to give an interview about how they answered the 26 examples that are presented in the form of a table. For each example, the student is presented with six ambiguity resolution strategies, and students were asked to choose the one they employed, if any, in dealing with the meaning of the word given.

The six potentially-used strategies are: part of speech, theme, rheme, neighbouring words, cohesion, and selection restriction. The meaning of each was explained to the student if they found it ambiguous. Part of speech strategy refers to the word category (noun, verb, adjective,

adverb...) to solve the ambiguity in the sentence, theme strategy refers to the unifying idea expanded in a discourse or discussion, rheme strategy refers to the constituent of sentence that adds most new information, in addition to what has already been said in the discourse, neighbouring words capture the meaning by means of nearby words in the text, cohesion strategy refers to the relationship that exists between lexical items in the text such as words and phrases to interpret the word sense, and selection restriction refers to selection from the multiple meanings available in dictionary or just they use their previous knowledge.

## 2.4.2. Analysis of the Students Interview Results

### 2.4.2.1. Students' Strategies for Disambiguating Homophones

**Table 2.5 Homophones**

*Students' Use of Strategies in Disambiguating Homophones*

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Part of Speech	103	20.39
Theme	160	31.68
Rheme	42	8.31
Neighbouring Words	52	10.29
Cohesion	53	10.49
Selection Restriction	89	17.62
Unidentified	06	1.18
Total of Strategies	499	98.81
<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b>505</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above showed that almost all students used strategies in disambiguating meaning of homophones. The strategy of theme is the most frequently used in eliciting the meanings of homophones (31.68%), in which the students rely on general idea of a sentence to capture the

meaning. The strategy of part of speech also marked a high position (20.39%), and only few students use strategies of selection restriction, neighbouring words, cohesion and rheme to disambiguate meaning.

#### 2.4.2.2. Students' Strategies for Disambiguating Homographs

**Table 2.6 Homographs**

*Students' Use of Strategies in Disambiguating Homographs*

<b><u>Strategy</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b>
Part of Speech	164	16.23
Theme	265	26.23
Rheme	74	7.32
Neighbouring Words	69	6.83
Cohesion	117	11.58
Selection Restriction	223	22.07
Unidentified	97	9.60
Total of Strategies	913	90.40
<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b>1010</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above showed that the majority of students (90.40%) used strategies in capturing the meaning of homographs. The most frequently used strategy in disambiguating homographs in this task is theme (26.23%). 22.07% used selection restriction. Part of speech was also used to disambiguate meaning by 16.23% of the students while cohesion, rheme, and neighbouring words were used minimally by students.

### 2.4.2.3. Students' Strategies for Disambiguating Homonymy

**Table 2.7 Homonymy**

*Students' Use of Strategies in Disambiguating Homonymy*

<b><u>Strategy</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b>
Part of Speech	58	11.48
Theme	86	17.02
Rheme	25	4.95
Neighbouring Words	43	8.51
Cohesion	41	8.11
Selection Restriction	114	22.57
Unidentified	138	27.32
Total of Strategies	367	72.67
<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b>505</b>	<b>100</b>

The table showed 72.67% of the students used of strategies in disambiguating homonyms. Specifically, the strategy of theme (17.02%) and selection restriction (22.57%) were the most frequent strategies used. In disambiguating the meaning of homonyms, students are likely to depend on the unifying idea of sentence and the use of dictionary and previous knowledge. Next in degree of use are the use of part of speech strategy, cohesion, rheme, and neighbouring words.

#### 2.4.2.4. Students' Strategies for Disambiguating Polysemy

**Table 2.8 Polysemy**

*Students' Use of Strategies in Disambiguating Polysemy*

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Part of Speech	67	11.05
Theme	104	17.16
Rheme	35	5.77
Neighbouring Words v	38	6.27
Cohesion	62	10.23
Selection Restriction	152	25.08
Unidentified	148	24.42
Total of Strategies	458	75.57
<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b>606</b>	<b>100</b>

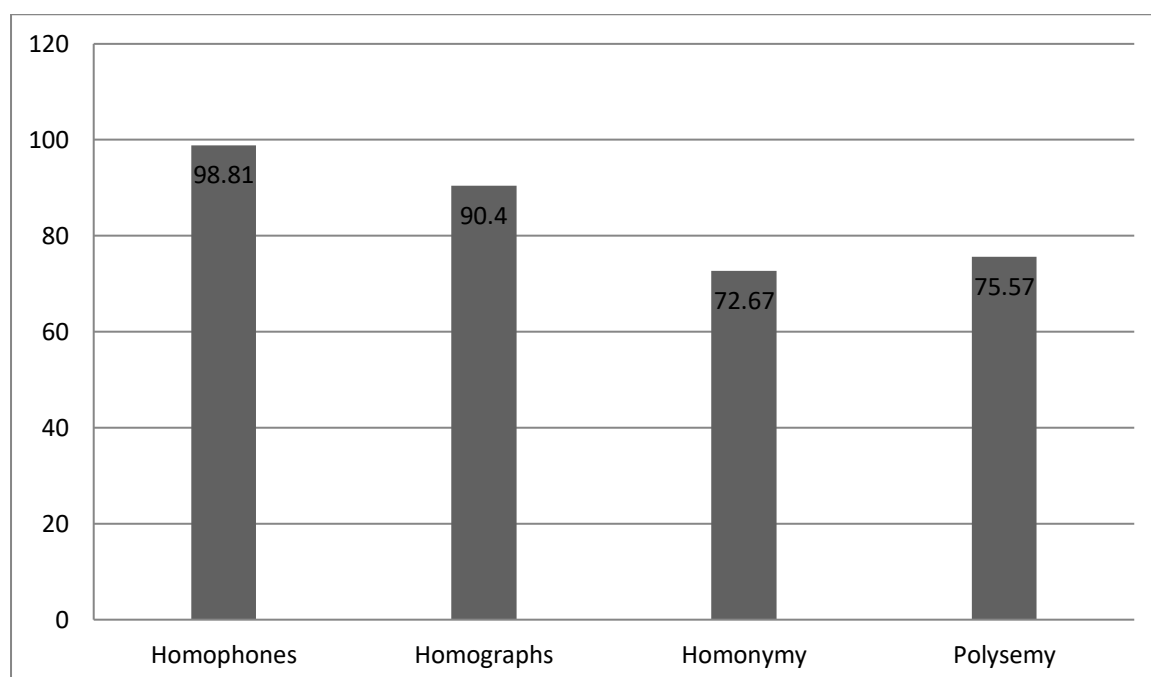
The table showed 75.57% of students used of strategies in determining the meaning of polysemous words. The findings reveal that 25.08% of the students used the strategy of selection restriction, and 17.16% of them relied on theme strategy in indicating meaning. Cohesion, part of speech, neighbouring words and rheme were minimally used in determining the meaning of polysemes.

#### 2.4.3 Interpretation of the Students Interview

The results from the interview are summarised below, first, in terms of the number and percentage of students who mobilised lexical resolution strategies with each type of lexical ambiguity, and second, with respect to the average frequency of use of each strategy

**Figure 2.2**

*Students' Use of Strategies with Different Types of Lexical Ambiguity*



This chart is a summary of the percentage of students who used lexical resolution strategies with different types of ambiguous words. In the homophones task, almost all students used disambiguation strategies. The percentage of students who used the resolution strategies when dealing with homographs is also very high (90.40%). In dealing with homonymy and polysemy, the percentages of students using strategies is relatively lower, which suggests that these types of ambiguity are more difficult to understand.

**Table 2.9**

*Percentage of Students' Use of Strategies in Disambiguating the Test*

<u>strategy</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>%</u>
Part of Speech	15.07	14.9
Theme	23.6	23.3
Neighbouring Words	7.7	7.6
Rheme	6.7	6.6

Cohesion	10.3	10.1
Selection Restrictions	22.2	21.7
<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above shows the percentages of the most frequent strategies used in disambiguating meanings in the three tasks. The top rank (23.3%) refers to the strategy of theme as the most frequently used strategy, followed by the strategy of selection restriction with a percentage of 21.7% and part-of-speech tagging at 14.9%. Cohesion, neighbouring words, and rheme are less frequently used as lexical ambiguity resolution strategies.

## **2.5 Interpretation and Discussion of the Overall Results**

The data gathered from the test and interview analysis allow answering the research questions specified at the beginning of the study, which are:

- Which forms of lexical ambiguity are troublesome for second-year students?
- What are the most frequent strategies used by student to resolve lexical ambiguity?
- Are students aware about the potential strategies that can be used in disambiguating words?

### **a) The problematic forms of lexical ambiguity**

According to the test findings, homonymy and polysemy stand out as the most challenging forms of lexical ambiguity that make students struggle in comprehending their meanings due to their multiple interpretations. These results are consistent with those reported by Ilham (2018, p.4), which revealed that homonymy and polysemy are the two main causal factors of lexical ambiguity.

### **b) The frequent strategies used by students to resolve lexical ambiguity**

The study's findings revealed that the participants were more or less conscious of what they were doing when answering the test, utilizing lexical ambiguity resolution strategies with varying frequencies. The majority of the strategies employed throughout the responding process were unique to each student; in other words, each individual answered differently and employed distinct strategies. However, three strategies were used at the high level; these are: part of speech, theme, and selection restriction.

### **2.5.3. Students' awareness of the potential strategies that can be used in disambiguating words**

Most students claimed that they used almost all strategies. This is especially true for the use of strategies in dealing with homophones and homographs where almost all students reported having used a lexical resolution strategy. Students also showed more use of three strategies which are theme, selection restriction and part-of-speech tagging.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the results obtained from the analysis of the forms of lexical ambiguity and the strategies used to disambiguate meaning. The analysis of students' test and the students' interview showed that polysemy is the most problematic form of lexical ambiguity as more students could not resolve ambiguity when they encountered polysemous words. Homophones and homonyms seem to be less problematic for students while homographs are considered distinguishable for students.



## **General Conclusion**

1. Putting it all together
2. Limitations of the Study
3. Suggestions for Further Research

## **1. Putting Italtogether**

This research aimed to investigate, review, and extract the resolution strategies used by EFL learners to solve the lexical ambiguity puzzle. The study is composed of two parts: a theoretical one and a practical one. The former includes one chapter, which is itself divided into two sections, while the latter is based on one chapter.

The first section was devoted to forms of lexical ambiguity. It starts with some definitions of lexical ambiguity stating that ambiguity may arise in both written and spoken language and cause vagueness and confusion and then mentions other types of ambiguity, namely, structural ambiguity and phonological ambiguity. Lexical ambiguity may be caused by the several interpretations a single word has structural ambiguity is caused by the multiple interpretations for the sentence structure while phonological ambiguity is caused when two words sound similar yet their meaning unrelated. Furthermore, the section discussed the forms of lexical ambiguity (polysemy and homonymy) which indicate multiplicity of word meaning and unrelated meaning of two identical words. It also shed light on the need of lexicographers to take into consideration polysemous and homonymous words when compiling the dictionaries to avoid misunderstanding and confusion. Besides that, a brief discussion about the main differences between polysemy and homonymy was made.

The second section was concerned with the resolution strategies of lexical ambiguity and ambiguity-induced errors, starting with lexical ambiguity-induced errors which are related to the different errors created either to form or meaning. After that, the sources of lexical ambiguity-induced errors were explained. Then, the strategies for resolving lexical ambiguity were presented. These consist in part of speech tagging (label the part of speech of words), theme (the unifying idea), rheme (the expanding idea of the sentence that gives more insights and information about the topic), neighbouring words (the reliance of the knowledge of existing words in the text), lexical cohesion (which is the semantic relationship between

words), and selection restriction (the use of dictionaries and previous knowledge). The use of dictionaries for disambiguating words was explained. Finally, the section discussed some applications of word sense disambiguation.

Chapter two shed light on the practical side of this work in terms of the results revealed from the data collected using the test and interview. To analyse the data gathered, a mixed method approach was selected; quantitative and qualitative procedures were considered suitable in the process of data analysis. Findings revealed that polysemy is the most problematic form of lexical ambiguity faced by learners while learners are competent in solving English homographs. The results of the interview showed that the most frequently strategies used by second year students are the theme and selection restriction strategies.

## **2. Limitations of the Study**

The most important limitations to this study are presented here to draw the attention of future research.

- a. Students were not given enough time to reflect on the strategy they used.
- b. Suitable environment for testing and students' busy agenda were not perfect conditions for accurate results.

## **3. Suggestions for Further Research**

- a. Future researchers should consider the gap between the students' levels and the resolution strategies they used to decide which strategies are used by students with different language and achievement abilities.
- b. Researchers may conduct studies to investigate the most ambiguous words that exist in the field of teaching.

- c. It is preferable to conduct a study about the integration of the three types of ambiguity in English texts.

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**Appendix (A)**

**Appendix (B)**

**Appendix (C)**

**Appendix (D)**

## **Appendix (A)**

### **Students Test**

Dear student,

We kindly invite you to answer this questionnaire which aims at investigating attitudes and current practices of exemplar feedback in essay-based assessment.

Your responses shall be treated anonymously and remain completely confidential.

Please tick the appropriate answers or write full statement answers where necessary. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and for the time devoted to answering this questionnaire.

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Miss. Imane FREIKH

Supervised by: Mr.Redouane NAILI

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### **Task One:**

**Part One:** Read each sentence; write the correct word in the blank.

- 1) The wind..... [blue/ blew] hard during the storm.
- 2) After yelling so much my voice is very..... [hoarse/ horse].
- 3) You..... [knead/ kneed/ need] dough with your hands to make bread.
- 4) The boy is terrified to fall the coin-op horse, so he clutches the .....  
[rein/rain/reign].

5) A..... [cowherd/ coward/ cowered] turns away, but a brave man's choice is danger\_ "Euripides".

**Part Two:** Give the meaning of the underlined words:

1) I am feeling blue today.

.....

His new car light is blue.

.....

2) The writer has written a new book.

.....

Paula is going to book four seats for Friday's concert.

.....

3) She can swim fast.

.....

He drank a can of Coca-Cola half an hour ago.

.....

4) Frank was the last in a race.

.....

These shoes may look fine but they do not last.

.....

5) She is still in school.

.....

We could see a school of salmon.

.....

**Task Two:** Give the following interpretations for the underlined words:

3) Sampson: Gregory, o' my word, we'll not carry coals.

Gregory: No, for then we should be colliers.

.....

Sampson: I mean, and we be in choler, we'll draw.

.....

Gregory: Ay, while you live, draw your neck out of the collar.

.....

(Romeo and Juliet by William  
Shakespeare act 01 scene 01).

4) His death, which happened in his berth.

At forty odd be fell.

They went and told the sexton, and the sexton tolled the bell.

.....

(Thomas Hood, Faithless Sally Brown).

**Task Three:** Interpret the meaning of the following words:

1. John has his mouth full of food.

.....

2. My mouth is sore

.....



3. Watch your mouth.

.....

4. The mouth of the wine was dry.

.....

5. I have three mouths of feed.

.....

6. You can see the mouth of the river from here.

.....

**Thank You for Your Contribution**

## Appendix (B)

### Students Interview

**Q1:** In each example, which strategy do you employ to resolve the lexical ambiguity encountered in the preceding test?

		Strategy Example	Part of Speech	Theme	Rheme	Neighbouring Words	Cohesion	Selection Restriction
<b>Task One: Part One</b>	1							
	2							
	3							
	4							
	5							
<b>Task One: Part Two</b>	1							
	2							
	3							
	4							
	5							
	1							
	2							
	3							
	1							
	2							
<b>T a</b>	1							

	2						
	3						
	4						
	5						
	6						

**Key Definitions:**

- **Parts of Speech:** The student relies on the word category (noun, verb, adjective, adverb...) to solve the ambiguity in the sentence.
- **Theme:** The unifying idea expanded in a discourse or discussion.
- **Rheme:** The constituent of sentence that adds most new information, in addition to what has already been said in the discourse.
- **Neighbouring Words:** The student captures the meaning by means of nearby words in the text.
- **Cohesion:** The student depends on the relationship that exists between lexical items in the text such as words and phrases to interpret the word sense.
- **Selection Restrictions:** The student makes a selection on the multiple meanings available in dictionary or just they use their previous knowledge.

## Appendix (C)

### Student Test Results

<b>Activities Students</b>	<b>Activity One</b>	<b>Activity Two</b>	<b>Activity Three</b>	<b>Activity Four</b>
<b>S1</b>	3	8	0	1
<b>S2</b>	1	1	0	0
<b>S3</b>	5	10	2	0
<b>S4</b>	4	4	2	0
<b>S5</b>	4	7	1	3
<b>S6</b>	4	8	1	4
<b>S7</b>	5	10	0	2
<b>S8</b>	3	10	0	3
<b>S9</b>	4	7	3	2
<b>S10</b>	4	9	2	1
<b>S11</b>	4	6	5	2
<b>S12</b>	1	4	4	0
<b>S13</b>	2	3	0	0
<b>S14</b>	3	0	5	0
<b>S15</b>	1	0	5	0
<b>S16</b>	4	10	5	3
<b>S17</b>	2	9	4	3
<b>S18</b>	3	10	2	3
<b>S19</b>	5	10	6	1
<b>S20</b>	3	5	6	4
<b>S21</b>	4	9	5	1
<b>S22</b>	4	10	5	4
<b>S23</b>	5	10	5	5
<b>S24</b>	5	9	4	2
<b>S25</b>	5	10	6	2
<b>S26</b>	3	10	6	4
<b>S27</b>	2	10	4	4

<b>S28</b>	5	10	5	5
<b>S29</b>	5	7	0	5
<b>S30</b>	5	9	1	4
<b>S31</b>	4	8	0	3
<b>S32</b>	4	6	0	0
<b>S33</b>	3	5	0	0
<b>S34</b>	1	5	2	0
<b>S35</b>	3	7	2	0
<b>S36</b>	3	2	2	1
<b>S37</b>	1	6	3	1
<b>S38</b>	3	5	4	2
<b>S39</b>	3	6	4	4
<b>S40</b>	4	8	6	2
<b>S41</b>	4	8	4	4
<b>S42</b>	5	8	5	5
<b>S43</b>	2	9	4	2
<b>S44</b>	4	9	5	3
<b>S45</b>	4	7	5	3
<b>S46</b>	3	9	6	3
<b>S47</b>	4	8	5	2
<b>S48</b>	4	10	5	5
<b>S49</b>	3	8	5	2
<b>S50</b>	4	7	5	5
<b>S51</b>	3	10	5	2
<b>S52</b>	3	8	4	4
<b>S53</b>	4	9	4	4
<b>S54</b>	3	9	4	4
<b>S55</b>	2	6	3	3
<b>S56</b>	3	10	0	3
<b>S57</b>	2	0	1	5
<b>S58</b>	3	6	1	4
<b>S59</b>	4	7	1	0
<b>S60</b>	2	9	3	0

<b>S61</b>	2	8	1	1
<b>S62</b>	3	7	4	2
<b>S63</b>	3	9	0	1
<b>S64</b>	3	5	6	0
<b>S65</b>	3	7	3	2
<b>S66</b>	3	6	2	3
<b>S67</b>	3	10	3	3
<b>S68</b>	0	3	3	3
<b>S69</b>	3	10	4	2
<b>S70</b>	3	8	5	2
<b>S71</b>	1	10	3	2
<b>S72</b>	2	6	4	5
<b>S73</b>	4	9	3	4
<b>S74</b>	3	10	5	4
<b>S75</b>	3	10	5	4
<b>S76</b>	4	10	2	3
<b>S77</b>	3	6	4	4
<b>S78</b>	2	8	5	3
<b>S79</b>	2	8	5	2
<b>S80</b>	2	8	4	4
<b>S81</b>	4	8	5	4
<b>S82</b>	2	9	5	4
<b>S83</b>	2	8	5	2
<b>S84</b>	3	8	3	3
<b>S85</b>	3	6	5	3
<b>S86</b>	2	10	4	4
<b>S87</b>	4	7	6	4
<b>S88</b>	3	9	6	3
<b>S89</b>	5	9	5	4
<b>S90</b>	3	8	5	3
<b>S91</b>	3	9	6	4
<b>S92</b>	3	10	3	4
<b>S93</b>	4	10	6	4

<b>S94</b>	3	7	3	5
<b>S95</b>	4	10	5	4
<b>S96</b>	3	9	6	4
<b>S97</b>	3	10	5	5
<b>S98</b>	3	10	1	5
<b>S99</b>	2	2	0	0
<b>S100</b>	3	8	1	0
<b>S101</b>	3	7	1	0

## Appendix (D)

### Student Interview Results

#### Task One:

#### Part One:

Examples Students	Ex1	Ex2	Ex3	Ex4	Ex5
S1	B	D	F	F	F
S2	X	B	C	B	B
S3	A	A	C	C	C
S4	B	B	B	B	B
S5	B	B	F	F	E
S6	B	F	F	F	B
S7	A	C	E	A	B
S8	A	B	A	B	A
S9	F	F	D	B	F
S10	B	F	E	F	B
S11	A	A	A	F	A
S12	A	B	A	A	B
S13	C	C	A	C	C
S14	B	B	D	X	E
S15	B	B	F	B	B
S16	B	D	F	F	E
S17	A	B	E	B	A
S18	E	C	B	B	A
S19	B	A	B	E	C
S20	D	C	B	B	A
S21	A	B	A	B	E
S22	B	D	F	B	B
S23	F	F	D	F	B
S24	B	C	B	C	D
25	B	C	B	B	B
S26	C	D	C	A	C
S27	C	A	X	X	X
S28	A	A	E	C	F
S29	A	B	B	A	A
S30	A	B	D	D	A
S31	E	C	B	B	A
S32	B	E	B	E	E
S33	A	C	D	C	B
S34	A	B	B	C	C
S35	A	C	B	A	A
S36	A	B	B	A	B
S37	B	A	E	B	B
S38	B	A	A	B	A
S39	A	B	F	A	D
S40	A	C	B	B	A
S41	A	B	D	E	E
S42	B	D	F	E	D
S43	A	C	E	B	C
S44	E	F	E	E	E
S45	F	F	F	B	F
S46	B	C	D	E	B
S47	B	B	C	C	B
S48	E	F	B	D	F



S49	A	B	B	E	C
S50	A	A	A	E	B
S51	F	E	F	F	B
S52	F	F	F	F	F
S53	D	B	B	B	D
S54	A	B	B	A	B
S55	A	B	A	A	E
S56	A	B	B	A	B
S57	B	F	F	D	B
S58	A	B	E	E	E
S59	D	B	B	D	X
S60	A	A	A	B	B
S61	A	B	C	B	B
S62	F	B	D	F	E
S63	B	E	F	E	F
S64	A	F	A	B	D
S65	C	E	F	F	F
S66	F	B	B	S	F
S67	F	D	E	F	B
S68	A	B	B	D	D
S69	A	F	B	E	A
S70	A	A	A	B	B
S71	A	B	A	B	A
S72	C	E	C	C	A
S73	E	E	B	B	B
S74	E	F	F	E	E
S75	A	A	A	B	A
S76	F	B	D	F	F
S77	A	E	A	F	F
S78	B	D	A	B	A
S79	A	E	A	A	B
S80	B	C	F	B	B
S81	B	D	D	B	B
S82	F	B	F	F	E
S83	F	F	F	F	F
S84	B	F	D	F	F
S85	F	B	D	F	F
S86	A	B	C	D	B
S87	F	F	D	F	B
S88	F	F	D	F	B
S89	A	A	A	A	C
S90	B	D	C	E	F
S91	A	D	C	C	B
S92	F	D	F	E	F
S93	B	B	B	E	E
S94	A	B	C	F	B
S95	A	D	F	E	D
S96	A	B	C	C	B
S97	B	B	B	B	B
S98	A	C	C	B	B
S99	A	F	C	B	B
S100	A	E	E	B	B
S101	A	A	B	B	B

Part Two

Examples Students	Ex1	Ex2	Ex3	Ex4	Ex5	Ex6	Ex7	Ex8	Ex9	Ex10
S1	E	D	C	C	F	F	F	E	D	F
S2	E	X	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
S3	A	A	B	C	B	X	A	B	A	B
S4	A	X	X	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
S5	B	E	E	E	E	B	B	X	X	X
S6	F	F	E	D	C	B	B	X	B	F
S7	F	F	F	D	A	F	F	F	D	D
S8	B	A	B	A	E	B	X	B	A	A
S9	B	A	A	B	E	D	X	X	B	X
S10	E	E	F	F	F	F	B	F	E	D
S11	E	F	F	B	E	F	F	E	F	X
S12	A	A	A	B	F	D	D	X	B	X
S13	A	A	X	B	D	D	X	D	B	B
S14	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
S15	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
S16	B	B	E	F	F	F	B	C	B	X
S17	B	F	F	E	F	F	F	F	B	C
S18	B	B	A	A	B	E	D	B	A	B
S19	A	B	A	A	A	D	E	E	C	C
S20	B	B	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B
S21	A	B	A	A	A	D	E	E	C	C
S22	B	B	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B
S23	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	A
S24	B	F	F	F	F	E	E	E	F	F
25	F	A	F	F	D	B	F	X	A	C
S26	D	D	B	D	B	D	B	D	B	D
S27	C	C	C	D	E	E	C	C	E	D
S28	A	E	A	C	E	E	E	E	C	E
S29	E	E	C	E	E	E	E	E	A	A
S30	F	F	F	F	A	F	C	E	F	F
S31	B	A	B	A	B	F	E	B	A	A
S32	A	B	D	D	D	B	X	X	B	B
S33	B	B	A	B	A	X	X	B	B	X
S34	E	X	B	B	B	B	X	X	X	X
S35	B	B	A	B	A	B	B	A	B	E
S36	B	B	C	C	C	C	B	X	B	B
S37	B	B	A	E	A	B	C	C	B	X
S38	B	B	A	B	B	B	A	B	X	B
S39	A	E	E	C	C	E	A	A	C	C
S40	B	B	E	E	B	E	A	A	B	A
S41	A	D	E	F	E	E	D	C	B	B
S42	A	B	B	A	B	A	C	C	B	A
S43	C	C	C	C	A	A	A	B	E	E
S44	B	F	F	E	F	D	F	F	B	F
S45	B	E	B	E	E	F	B	F	F	D
S46	F	F	E	F	E	F	E	E	E	E
S47	F	F	D	F	F	F	F	C	F	F
S48	A	A	A	F	F	E	F	D	A	A
S49	F	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
S50	F	F	B	A	A	D	C	B	F	F
S51	A	B	B	A	B	B	A	E	C	B
S52	A	A	B	B	E	E	E	B	A	A
S53	F	F	E	F	F	D	B	F	E	B
S54	B	B	B	F	C	F	F	B	B	D
S55	B	D	F	B	E	B	E	D	B	D

S56	A	B	A	A	B	B	A	A	B	A
S57	B	A	B	B	B	C	C	C	A	A
S58	X	A	B	B	B	X	X	A	B	A
S59	B	X	B	D	D	D	X	X	B	B
S60	B	C	X	X	C	C	X	X	A	A
S61	F	F	F	D	A	B	F	X	F	D
S62	B	B	B	E	B	E	A	A	B	E
S63	B	C	X	C	C	B	X	B	A	X
S64	D	F	B	X	F	D	F	F	F	F
S65	F	F	F	F	C	E	D	F	D	F
S66	B	A	A	F	E	F	B	F	F	F
S67	C	F	F	A	A	E	F	D	E	D
S68	C	F	F	A	A	F	E	F	F	B
S69	F	F	F	F	B	B	F	E	F	D
S70	B	B	A	A	B	B	D	D	B	A
S71	A	A	E	E	A	A	A	A	A	A
S72	B	A	E	F	F	F	E	E	E	B
S73	B	A	A	B	A	A	C	B	A	A
S74	A	F	D	F	F	C	E	E	A	B
S75	B	E	E	E	B	B	B	B	B	E
S76	B	D	B	F	F	F	D	D	E	F
S77	A	B	B	E	C	C	F	B	B	A
S78	F	F	E	E	A	F	F	D	F	C
S79	A	A	B	E	A	A	E	E	F	F
S80	B	B	X	B	A	A	A	F	B	A
S81	A	B	F	F	B	A	F	F	F	A
S82	B	B	B	F	B	B	B	B	B	F
S83	F	F	E	B	A	B	F	E	C	E
S84	D	F	F	A	A	D	F	F	F	D
S85	C	F	F	F	F	F	C	F	F	A
S86	B	F	X	X	A	F	B	B	F	F
S87	B	F	C	F	A	F	F	F	B	D
S88	B	B	B	C	A	A	A	B	A	B
S89	F	F	D	F	F	B	B	B	F	F
S90	F	F	E	F	F	D	F	F	F	D
S91	B	B	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	F
S92	F	F	F	B	A	B	F	E	F	F
S93	D	D	B	B	F	B	D	F	F	F
S94	B	F	F	A	A	E	A	F	F	B
S95	B	B	E	X	B	E	B	F	B	B
S96	A	B	C	F	F	C	C	B	B	B
S97	C	F	F	A	D	C	F	E	F	F
S98	C	F	F	A	D	C	F	E	F	F
S99	B	F	C	C	B	B	B	B	F	B
S100	B	B	B	B	B	B	F	C	B	F
S101	B	A	A	A	D	E	B	X	B	B

## Task Two

Examples	EX 1	EX2	EX3	EX4	EX5
S1	X	X	X	X	X
S2	X	X	X	X	X
S3	X	X	X	B	B
S4	B	B	B	A	A
S5	X	X	X	X	X
S6	F	F	X	F	X
S7	X	X	X	X	X
S8	B	X	X	X	E
S9	X	X	B	X	A

S10	F	X	E	X	X
S11	F	X	F	B	X
S12	X	X	X	X	X
S13	X	X	X	X	X
S14	X	X	X	X	X
S15	C	C	C	B	B
S16	E	F	F	F	F
S17	D	D	B	B	B
S18	B	B	B	A	F
S19	A	A	A	B	B
S20	B	C	C	A	A
S21	A	A	B	A	A
S22	B	F	B	B	B
S23	C	F	F	F	A
S24	C	C	E	E	E
25	C	C	B	C	E
S26	C	C	A	A	F
S27	E	E	E	A	A
S28	C	B	B	E	E
S29	C	C	C	A	B
S30	X	X	X	X	X
S31	X	B	X	A	A
S32	X	X	X	X	X
S33	X	X	X	X	X
S34	C	X	X	X	X
S35	X	X	X	A	A
S36	X	X	X	A	B
S37	X	X	X	B	E
S38	X	X	E	B	B
S39	D	F	B	B	C
S40	C	C	D	B	A
S41	E	A	B	A	B
S42	F	D	A	C	F
S43	C	F	F	A	F
S44	F	F	E	X	X
S45	F	E	E	F	F
S46	F	F	F	F	E
S47	X	X	X	X	X
S48	F	F	F	A	E
S49	B	A	A	B	A
S50	B	B	B	B	A
S51	B	B	B	F	F
S52	B	B	F	F	F
S53	D	F	D	B	D
S54	B	B	A	A	E
S55	B	A	B	A	A
S56	X	X	X	X	X
S57	X	B	X	X	X
S58	X	X	X	B	X
S59	X	X	X	X	X
S60	X	X	B	E	E
S61	B	B	C	A	X
S62	C	F	E	F	F
S63	E	A	F	F	F
S64	E	F	F	D	F
S65	E	E	F	F	C
S66	D	F	F	C	B
S67	D	F	F	C	B
S68	C	B	E	F	F
S69	D	D	D	B	B
S70	D	D	D	A	C
S71	B	F	C	F	F
S72	B	B	C	A	B
S73	F	F	F	F	E

S74	F	F	F	B	C
S75	C	E	F	F	E
S76	B	C	C	F	F
S77	F	D	D	B	B
S78	F	A	A	F	F
S79	A	A	A	B	B
S80	C	F	F	A	A
S81	F	F	D	B	B
S82	F	B	F	F	F
S83	F	C	A	F	B
S84	D	A	D	D	A
S85	X	X	X	F	F
S86	C	E	E	A	F
S87	A	A	A	B	B
S88	D	C	F	F	F
S89	A	F	F	F	E
S90	E	F	E	F	F
S91	F	E	F	F	F
S92	F	F	F	E	F
S93	X	X	X	F	F
S94	F	F	F	B	B
S95	X	X	X	B	A
S96	F	F	D	F	F
S97	C	F	F	B	B
S98	C	C	E	E	D
S99	X	X	X	X	B
S100	X	X	X	X	X
S101	B	C	X	X	X

### Task Three

<b>Examples Students</b>	<b>Ex1</b>	<b>Ex2</b>	<b>Ex 3</b>	<b>Ex 4</b>	<b>Ex 5</b>	<b>Ex 6</b>
S1	F	F	E	E	C	F
S2	X	X	X	X	X	X
S3	X	X	X	X	X	X
S4	E	X	X	X	X	F
S5	B	B	F	X	F	B
S6	F	E	F	F	F	F
S7	E	D	B	B	B	A
S8	B	B	A	X	X	B
S9	F	X	E	X	X	X
S10	B	F	E	X	F	B
S11	X	X	X	X	X	X
S12	X	X	X	X	X	X
S13	X	X	X	X	X	X
S14	X	X	X	X	X	X
S15	B	E	E	E	B	B
S16	D	D	D	F	F	F
S17	B	B	A	B	A	B
S18	A	A	E	C	C	C
S19	A	A	A	A	A	A
S20	C	C	B	B	E	E
S21	B	A	A	A	B	A

S22	F	F	F	D	F	F
S23	F	F	B	B	D	F
S24	C	C	B	B	E	C
S25	C	E	E	B	E	C
S26	A	B	E	A	A	E
S27	E	E	C	E	A	E
S28	B	A	F	D	B	F
S29	C	E	E	E	A	A
S30	X	X	X	X	X	X
S31	B	X	X	X	X	X
S32	X	X	X	X	X	X
S33	X	X	X	X	X	X
S34	X	X	X	X	X	X
S35	X	X	X	X	X	X
S36	A	B	A	X	X	B
S37	X	A	B	X	B	X
S38	C	E	C	C	B	B
S39	B	B	A	A	B	A
S40	B	C	C	F	A	F
S41	D	F	D	X	X	D
S42	B	B	F	A	A	A
S43	E	F	D	B	B	F
S44	D	A	F	F	F	F
S45	X	X	X	X	X	X
S46	F	F	B	X	C	F
S47	A	C	E	B	A	B
S48	B	A	A	B	A	A
S49	F	E	F	C	D	F
S50	D	D	B	B	B	F
S51	B	F	B	F	F	D
S52	B	B	A	B	E	E
S53	B	E	E	E	E	A
S54	X	X	X	X	X	X
S55	X	X	X	X	X	X
S56	X	X	B	B	X	B
S57	F	F	D	F	X	B
S58	X	X	B	X	X	A
S59	X	X	X	X	X	X
S60	F	F	D	C	D	E
S61	F	A	F	F	E	F
S62	F	F	D	F	B	C
S63	F	F	D	F	B	C
S64	F	B	E	F	F	F
S65	F	F	F	X	X	D
S66	E	C	C	C	F	F
S67	D	D	B	B	D	B
S68	B	B	B	B	B	B
S69	F	F	F	A	D	F
S70	B	B	A	A	B	A
S71	C	E	A	E	C	F

S72	E	E	E	D	D	E
S73	E	C	F	F	F	B
S74	E	E	E	E	C	B
S75	F	E	F	F	B	F
S76	F	F	A	F	F	F
S77	F	F	B	F	F	B
S78	F	B	A	F	F	B
S79	B	B	B	D	D	F
S80	F	F	F	F	F	B
S81	B	F	F	F	E	F
S82	A	A	B	A	D	A
S83	E	D	E	A	F	F
S84	F	F	F	F	F	F
S85	A	A	E	A	A	A
S86	F	F	D	B	B	F
S87	F	F	D	F	C	F
S88	F	B	F	F	F	F
S89	F	F	F	F	F	F
S90	C	C	B	A	B	C
S91	F	F	D	F	F	F
S92	F	B	C	C	F	F
S93	A	B	B	C	E	E
S94	E	F	F	F	F	F
S95	C	F	C	F	F	E
S96	C	F	C	F	F	E
S97	C	F	C	F	F	E
S98	B	B	E	F	F	F
S99	X	X	X	X	X	X
S100	X	X	X	X	X	X
S101	X	X	X	X	X	X

## Résumé

La présente étude porte sur les différentes formes d'ambiguïté lexicale et tente d'explorer les stratégies pour résoudre ces ambiguïtés chez les étudiants de l'Université Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia. On a posé l'hypothèse que les formes d'ambiguïté lexicale, c'est-à-dire la polysémie et l'homonymie, sont considérées comme des problèmes pour les étudiants, et pour résoudre ces types d'ambiguïtés. Pour tester cette hypothèse, deux outils de recherche ont été adoptés. Un test a été distribué à 101 étudiants de deuxième année dans le département de l'anglais de l'Université Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia de Jijel. En outre, une entrevue a été menée avec le même échantillon d'étudiants afin de déterminer leur utilisation des stratégies de résolution. Les résultats du test ont montré que les étudiants de deuxième année sont très compétents pour résoudre les homographies et les homophones anglaises et ont atteint la position la plus élevée, tandis que les positions les plus faibles sont occupées par la polysemie. En d'autres termes, la polysemie est la forme la plus problématique d'ambiguïté lexicale. Les résultats obtenus à partir du test ont montré que les étudiants de deuxième année sont très compétents pour résoudre les homographes et les homophones anglais, mais ont énormément lutté avec les mots polysémiques. De plus, les résultats des entretiens ont montré que les étudiants sont conscients des stratégies de résolution d'ambiguïté lexicale disponibles et s'appuient principalement sur les stratégies de thème, de restriction de sélection et de marquage de partie du discours. De même, les trois stratégies (thème, mots voisins et cohésion) ont été mises en dernière position puisque certains étudiants ont déclaré ne jamais utiliser ces stratégies.

*Mots clés : Ambiguïté lexicale, stratégies de résolution, Homonymie, Polysemie, Homographes, Homophones.*



## ملخص

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى عرض أشكال الغموض الدلالي و إستكشاف الإستراتيجيات المستعملة في حل هذا النوع من الغموض لدى طلاب جامعة محمد الصديق بن يحي جيجل. لقد تم الإفتراض أن تعدد المعاني هو النوع الأكثر إشكالا للغموض الدلالي لدى الطلاب وتم الإفتراض أيضا أنه إذا كان الطلاب على دراية بإستراتيجيات حل الغموض ألا وهي: الإشارة لأقسام الكلام، الموضوع، التعقيب، الكلمات المجاورة، التماسك النصي، تقييد الإختيار فإنهم أكثر عرضة للنجاح في حل الغموض. وللتحقق من صحة هاتين الفرضيتين تم إعتداد أداتين للبحث، تم توزيع إختبار على 101 طالب بجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحي جيجل بالإضافة إلى ذلك تم إجراء مقابلة مع نفس عينة الطلاب بغرض تحديد إستخدامهم لإستراتيجيات حل الغموض الدلالي. أظهرت النتائج المتحصل عليها من الإختبار أن طلاب السنة الثانية يتمتعون بكفاءة عالية في حل المتجانسات اللفظية و الخطية في حين أن تعدد المعاني شكل صعوبة للطلاب بينما أظهرت النتائج المتحصل عليها من المقابلة أن الطلاب على دراية بإستراتيجيات حل الغموض الدلالي المتاحة و إعتدوا بشكل أساسي على الموضوع، تقييد الإختبار، الإشارة لأقسام الكلام.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الغموض الدلالي، إستراتيجيات الحل، التجانس، تعدد المعاني، المتجانسات الخطية، المتجانسات اللفظية.