

**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**  
**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**  
**Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University-Jijel**  
**Faculty of Letters and Languages**  
**Department of English**



**The Translation of Polysemous Words from English into Arabic**  
**The Case of Third-Year EFL Students at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia**  
**University-Jijel**

**Dissertation submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master Degree**  
**in Didactics**

**Submitted by:**

Hinda HADDAD

Soumia GUECHI

**Supervised by:**

Prof. Ammar BOUKRIKA

**Board of Examiners:**

**Chairperson:** Dr. Samia AZIEB

Mohammed Seddik BenYahia University-Jijel

**Supervisor:** Prof. Ammar BOUKRIKA

Mohammed Seddik BenYahia University- Jijel

**Examiner:** Mrs. Salma BOUHALI

Mohammed Seddik BenYahia University- Jijel

**Academic Year: 2018-2019**

# *Dedication*

*To my great parents “Abd El-Hak “and “Habiba”*

*Those who gave me their spirits and devoted their life to make me reach this position, I would thank you for your unconditional and never-ending love, for the support that you always give me. Thank you for everything.*

*I love you*

*To my beautiful sisters: ‘Nedjoua’ and ‘Mira’*

*For having always being by my side*

*To my lovely brothers: ‘Yassine’ and ‘Mohammed’.*

*For their continuous moral support*

*To all **my family members, relatives, and friends***

*Who helped and supported me even with a smile*

*To all whom I love and love me*

*From my deep heart,*

*I Dedicate this work....*

*Soumía*

## *Dedication*

*I dedicate this work to:*

*The most precious people to my heart, the ones who can never be thanked enough, for the overwhelming love and care they gave me. To the candles who always enlighten my path, the ones who were the source of motivation during moments of despair and discouragement.*

*My dear mother **Saliha** and beloved father **Farhet***

*My beloved brothers: **Hamza**, **Bassem**, **Fouad**, and **Zakaria** for their endless love, motivation and constant support.*

*My lovely sister **Bouba**.*

*My daughter's aunt **Marwa** for providing me with strength, hope and help*

*My closest friends: khawla, Nawal, Rokia, Afaf*

*A special dedication for **Ahmed** for his patience, help, and encouragement during the whole period of this work every one with a red line under their names in Microsoft word.*

*All those who were there for me, believed in me and prayed for my success.*

**HINDA**

## *Acknowledgements*

*In the name of Allah, the most Merciful, the most Gracious. All praise be to Allah*

*The Sustainer of the world*

*First and foremost, we would like to thank God Almighty who supplied us with the strength, guidance and courage to undertake this research. Without His blessings, this work would not have been possible.*

*Special appreciation and sincere gratitude go to our supervisor, Proffesor Ammar BOUKRIKA for his guidance, constant advice, patience and invaluable help from the early stages of this research.*

*We would like to thank deeply the examiner Mrs. Selma BOUHALI and Dr. Samia AZIEB for accepting to evaluate this piece of research.*

*We would like to thank the third-year students for their participation and collaboration in filling in the questionnaire and to be tested in the translation task*

*We would also like to express our sincere thanks to Mr. BOUKAZOULA, Mr. BOUKHENTACH and Mr. NAILI.*

*Our acknowledgement would be incomplete without thanking the biggest source of our strength, our families for their love and endless support.*

*We are grateful to all people who indirectly contributed in this dissertation*

## **Abstract**

The present study attempts to investigate the translation of polysemous words by EFL third year students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia of polysemous words from English into Arabic, shedding light on the difficulties encountered by these students in the rendition of this kind of words. It was assumed in this study that the difficulties third year EFL students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia faced in translating polysemous words were due to both comprehension and rendition problems, that they relied on the primary meaning in translating polysemous words from English into Arabic to the detriment of context, and that they disregarded the extended meanings of the polysemous word in translation. The data were collected by means of a questionnaire and a translation test administered to EFL third year students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia. The findings of the study demonstrated that the difficulties that third year EFL students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia faced were mainly due to comprehension problems of the extended meanings of the source polysemous words, and sometimes to rendition problems. The findings also showed that the students generally relied on the primary meaning of the target polysemous words to the detriment of the context, even though this did not convey the meaning intended from the polysemous word in question, which in turn resulted in none-sense translations, and that they often disregarded the extended meanings of the polysemous word, rushing to interpret it in its core meaning, which led them to erroneously translate it.

## **List of Abbreviations**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**Q:** Question

**Sb:** Somebody

**SL:** Source Language

**ST:** Source Text

**Sth:** Something

**TEFL:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language

**TL:** Target Language

**TT:** Target Text

## **List of Tables**

**Table 1:** First Translation of the Word “Break”

**Table 2:** Second Translation of the Word “Break”

**Table 3:** Third Translation of the Word “Break”

**Table 4:** First Translation of the Word “Make”

**Table 5:** Second Translation of the Word “Make”

**Table 6:** Third Translation of the Word “Make”

**Table 7:** First Translation of the Word “Alive”

**Table 8:** Second Translation of the Word “Alive”

**Table 9:** Third Translation of the Word “Alive”

**Table10:** First Translation of the Word “Take”

**Table 11:** Second Translation of the Word “Take”

**Table 12:** Third Translation of the Word “Take”

**Table 13:** First Translation of the Word “Go”

**Table 14:** Second Translation of the Word “Go”

**Table 15:** Third Translation of the Word “Go”

**Table 16:** Students’ Opinions about Translation Tasks

**Table 17:** Students’ Levels in Translation

**Table 18:** The Direction of Translation that is Difficult for Students

**Table 19:** Students’ Difficulties in Translation

**Table 20:** Difficulties of Translating Sentences in the Test

**Table 21:** The Stage of Difficulty in Translating Polysemous words

**Table 22:** Factors Relied on for Translating Polysemous words in the Test



## **List of Figures**

**Figure 1:** Example of Hyponymy

**Figure 2:** Example of Meronymy

**Figure 3:** Meronymy of Body Parts Terms

## Table of Contents

Dedication 1.....	01
Dedication 2.....	02
Acknowledgement.....	03
Abstract.....	04
List of Abbreviations.....	05
List of Tables.....	06
List of Figures.....	08
Table of Content.....	09
<b>General Introduction</b> .....	12
2. Statement of the Problem.....	12
3. Aims of the Study.....	12
4. Research Questions.....	13
5. Research Assumptions.....	13
6. Research Tools.....	13
7. Structure of the Study.....	14
<b>Chapter One: Polysemy as a Lexical Relation</b>	
<b>Introduction</b> .....	15
1.1 Lexical Relations.....	15
1.1.1 Homonymy.....	16
1.1.2 Hyponymy.....	17
1.1.3 Synonymy.....	19
1.1.4 Meronymy.....	20
1.1.5 Monosemy.....	22
1.1.6 Polysemy.....	22
1.2 Origin of Polysemy.....	25
1.3 Aspects of polysemy.....	25
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	26
<b>Chapter Two: Polysemy in Translation</b>	
<b>Introduction</b> .....	27
2.1. Theoretical Views about the Translation of Polysemy.....	27
2.1.1. J. C Catford's.....	27
2.1.2. Nida's View.....	28

2.1.3. Pergnier’s view.....	29
2.1.4. Seleskovich and Lederer’s view.....	29
2.2. Polysemy in Translation: A Lexical Problem to Cope With.....	30
2.2.1. Lexical Problems in Translation.....	31
2.2.2. Coping with Polysemy in Translation.....	32
2.2.2.1. Linguistic Context.....	32
2.2.2.2. Situational Context.....	34
2.2.2.3. Parts of Speech.....	35
2.2.2.4. Capital Letters.....	38
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>39</b>
<b>Chapter Three: Field Work</b>	
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>41</b>
3.1. Research Methods.....	41
3.2. Population and sampling.....	42
3.3. Research tools.....	42
3.3.1. The test .....	42
3.3.1.1. Description of the Test.....	42
3.3.1.2. Administration of the Test.....	43
3.3.1.3. Analysis procedure.....	43
3.3.2. Questionnaire.....	43
3.3.2.1. Description of the Questionnaire.....	43
3.3.2.2. Administration of the Questionnaire .....	44
3.4. Data analysis and interpretation.....	44
3.4.1. Analysis of the Results of the Research Tools.....	44
3.4.1.1. Analysis of the Students’ Test Results .....	45
3.4.1.2. Analysis of the Questionnaire’s Results.....	60
3.4.2. Discussion and interpretation of the research tools.....	66
3.4.2.1. Discussion and interpretation of Results from the Students’ Test.....	66
3.4.2.2. Interpretation and Discussion of Students’ Questionnaire Results.....	70
3.5. Limitations of the Study.....	71
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>71</b>
<b>General Conclusion</b> .....	<b>72</b>
<b>Pedagogical Recommendations</b> .....	<b>73</b>

**Suggestion for further research.....**

**73**

**References**

**Appendices**

**ملخص.**

**Résumé**

## **General introduction**

### **1. Statement of the Problem**

Translation plays an important role in conveying messages from a source language into a target language. In the EFL context, EFL students who perform translation tasks from English into Arabic have to take into consideration several aspects such as grammar and lexis. The translation of the lexical aspect might look an easy task demanding from students a mere finding of equivalents in the target language to the source words. However, some words have more than one meaning and to translate them one has to decide on one of these meanings. Known as polysemous words, these words have extended meanings besides their core meaning, which would require in translation not only the determination of the meaning intended from the source word but also the supplying of the suitable equivalent of that particular meaning in the target language, a task that is not as easy as it may first appear. The tendency of students to rush to render the words in their core or primary meaning while disregarding the context in which the word appears leads them often not to cope successfully with their rendition. This is often seen in the translation tasks that the students are called to do in the translation course classes during the second and third years of the Bachelor at the Department of English, Mohammed Seddik Ben-Yahia Univeristy. Jijel.

### **2. Aims of the Study**

This study aims to investigate the translation of polysemous words from English into Arabic by third-year EFL students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia. More precisely, the study seeks to shed light on the difficulties they face in translating such kinds of words while attempting to raise their awareness of the importance of some factors that should be taken into account in translation.

### **3. Research Questions**

- Are the difficulties third-year EFL students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia encounter in translating polysemous words due to comprehension problems or to rendition problems?
- Do third-year EFL students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Benyahia rely on the primary meaning or on the context in translating polysemous words?
- Do third-year EFL students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben yahia disregard the extended meanings of polysemous words?

### **4. Research Assumptions**

Based on the three research questions asked above, three assumptions are formulated respectively:

- The difficulties third-year EFL students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia face in translating polysemous words would be due to both comprehension and rendition problems.
- Third- year EFL students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben yahia would rely on the primary meaning in translating polysemous words from English into Arabic to the detriment of context.
- Third-year EFL students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben yahia would disregard the extended meanings of the word.

### **5. Research Tools**

To test the assumptions, a questionnaire and a test are adopted as tools for collecting data. Both the questionnaire and the test were administered to a sample of 40 third-year EFL students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia. In the questionnaire, some questions will inquire about the translation background of the students, the difficulties they

encounter in translating polysemous words, and the factors they rely on producing their translation. The test involved a translation task in which the students will be invited to translate 15 English sentences containing source polysemous words. The use of two different instruments allows comparing the results and offering insights about the theme under investigation.

## **5. Structure of the study**

The present research consists of three chapters. The first two chapters are theoretical and the third is practical.

Chapter One, entitled ‘polysemy as a lexical relation’, provides a theoretical background about the main kinds of lexical relations with a focus on the notion of polysemy as a lexical relation in language. Then it addresses the origin of polysemy and reviews its aspects as a linguistic phenomenon.

Chapter Two entitled ‘polysemy as a lexical problem in translation’ is devoted to review polysemy in a translational context. This chapter starts by shedding light on the various theoretical views given by different scholars about polysemy and the translation of polysemy. Then, it discusses the main lexical problems in translation, with a focus on polysemy as a lexical problem in translation. Finally, it highlights some factors that should be taken into account in translating polysemous words.

Chapter Three ‘Fieldwork’. It is devoted to the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from the questionnaire and the test administered to students.

## **Chapter One: Polysemy as a Lexical Relation**

### **Introduction**

This chapter is concerned with the notion of lexical relations, focusing on polysemy, which is considered as one of such lexical relations in language. Thus, the chapter firstly presents the main kinds of lexical relations, namely Synonymy, Hyponymy, Homonymy, Meronymy, and Monosemy, and then narrows down to center on the concept of Polysemy, which is, as mentioned earlier, the focus of the chapter. The origins and the aspects of this linguistic phenomenon will be addressed in the chapter.

#### **1.1.Lexical relations**

The vocabulary of a language is organized in a way so that words and their meanings do not exist in isolation. Words are related to each other based on their meanings under the concept of lexical relations (also called semantic relations or sense relations). According to Finch (2000), lexical relations or sense relations are “the semantic relationships which words contract with each other within the linguistic system on the basis of their SENSE” (p.180). The main area of interest that is devoted to the study of lexical relations, or in other words to the study of meanings of words and their relationship with each other, is lexical semantics. In this sense, Trask (1999) pointed out that “lexical semantics deals, not just with the meanings of individual words, but also with the way in which the meanings of different words are related” (p. 36).

Many lexical relations exist between words and their meanings. The main types of lexical relations are synonymy, hyponymy, homonymy, meronymy, monosemy, and polysemy, the point of departure of the theme of this research.



### 1.1.1. Homonymy

Homonymy is a lexical relation between words which have distinct meanings but similar form either phonetically or orthographically or both. Many scholars provided several definitions of the concept of homonymy. For instance, Finch (2000) defines it as “a relation which exists between words with the same form but unrelated SENSES (p.165); in other words, homonymy is a relation between words that are identical in pronunciation or in written form but have different meanings. Yule (2010) holds the same view when he clarified the matter more when he said that “we use the term homonymy when one form (written or spoken) has two or more unrelated meanings” (p.120). Moreover, in the same line, Cruse (2006) explained that “homonymy occurs when unrelated meanings are signaled by the same linguistic form” (p. 80). In order to illustrate the concept of homonymy, the following examples will serve as instances of this phenomenon:

- bank (of a river) – bank (financial institution)
- bat (flying creature) – bat (used in sports)
- mole (on skin) – mole (small animal)
- pupil (at school) – pupil (in the eye)
- race (contest of speed) – race (ethnic group)

(Yule, 2010, p. 120)

As far as the relation between homonymy and the use of dictionary is concerned, dictionary is regarded as a reference whereby one can identify whether a target word is a homonym or not because homonyms are usually signaled by different entries or headings in a dictionary (Palmer, 1976, p.67).

In fact, there are two categories under the concept of homonymy: Homography and Homophony. In explaining homography and homophony, Löbner (2002) pointed out that

“Homonymy can be related either to the sound forms of the lexemes or to their spellings: homonymy with respect to the written form is Homography; if two lexemes with unrelated meaning have the same sound form, they constitute a case of Homophony” (p.43). That is to say, homophony is the case in which words with different meanings are pronounced identically; for example: “no” and “know”, “lead” and “led”. On the other hand, homography is the case of words which are spelled in the same way and might be pronounced in the same way or differently but have different meanings; for example: “bear” (animal) and “bear” (to bravely accept something difficult).

In short, homonymy is a phenomenon that holds between two or more words that have the same pronunciation or spelling or both, but the most important thing is that they do not have the same meaning.

### **1.1.2. Hyponymy**

The vocabulary of a language is structured in a way so that lexical items are organized into classes, sub-classes, and sub-sub-classes and so on. The phenomenon which is related to such structure under the concept of lexical relations in a language is called hyponymy. There are many definitions to the concept of hyponymy. By relating hyponymy to semantics, Crystal (2008) regarded hyponym as a “term used in semantics as part of the study of the sense relations which relate lexical items”. He added, “Hyponymy is the relationship which obtains between specific and general lexical items. He gave the examples of “cat”, which is a hyponym of “animal”; “flute”, which is a hyponym of “instrument”; “chair”, which is a hyponym of “furniture” (p. 233). In the words of Finch (2000), hyponymy is “a hierarchical SENSE RELATION which exists between two terms in which the SENSE of one is included in the other. He pointed out that in hyponymy, the more general term is called “hypernym” and the more specific term is called “hyponym”. For example, the terms “daisy”, “daffodil” are hyponyms of the hypernym “flower”. (p. 166). In the same line, Yule (2010) described

hyponymy as the case where the meaning of a word is embedded in the meaning of a general word. For example, the meaning of “dog” is included in the meaning of “animal”, meaning that if a dog is necessarily an animal, not an object or a human being, so the meaning of dog is included in the meaning of animal (p. 118). Besides, Löbner (2002) gave a detailed definition of hyponymy when he explained that “A is a hyponym of an expression B if the meaning of B is part of the meaning of A and A is a subordinate of B” (p. 85).

Furthermore, Cruse (1986) gave nearly the same definition when he referred to the phenomenon as “the lexical relation corresponding to the inclusion of one class in another is hyponymy” (p. 88). In short, hyponymy is a relationship that exists between the meanings of words in which the meaning of a word is included in the meaning of another word.

In addition, under the concept of hyponymy, there is another concept related to it, known as co-hyponym. Co-hyponyms are lexical items that share the same general lexical item which is the hypernym. For example, the words “yellow”, “black”, and “red” are co-hyponyms of the hypernym “color” because they are on the same level or related to the same general concept which is color (Finch, 2000, p. 166). Co-hyponyms are not only related to the classification of things but also to actions. For instance, the words “punch”, “shoot”, and “stab” are co-hyponyms of the hypernym “injure” (Yule, 2010, p. 118). The following figure is a detailed illustration of the phenomenon of hyponymy.

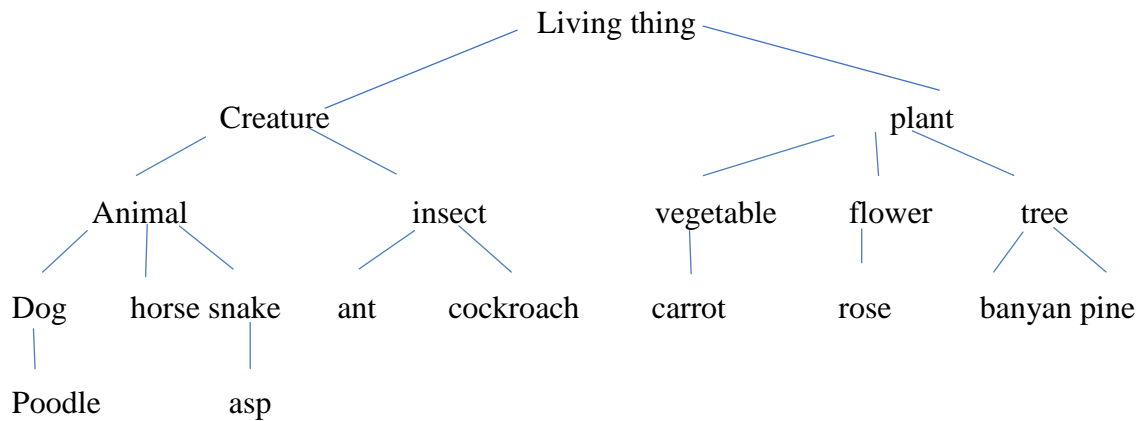


Figure 1: *Example of hyponymy* (Yule, 2010, p.118)

### 1.1.2. Synonymy

The vocabulary of a language is rich in words with the same or nearly the same meaning. This semantic feature that exists in words constitutes what is referred to as synonymy. Synonymy comes to existence in order to create cohesion between lexical items, and enrich the language. It is a common feature in the vocabulary of any language. It is generally regarded as the case of one meaning with many written forms. Palmer (1976) gave a simple definition to synonymy when he regarded it as “sameness of meaning” (p. 59). Finch (2000) defined it as “a SENSE RELATION which exists between words which have a similar meaning or SENSE”. He provided these examples, “drunk” is a synonym of “intoxicated”, “mad” is a synonym of “insane” (p. 184).

In a slightly similar manner, Crystal (2008) defined synonymy as “a term used in semantics to refer to a major type of sense relation between lexical items” he added, “lexical items which have the same meanings are synonyms.” (p. 470). Löbner (2002) stated that “Two lexemes are synonymous if they have the same meaning” (p.46). Moreover, Yule (2006) stated that “Two or more words with very closely related meanings are called synonyms” (p. 104). He gave some examples of synonyms such as the words (almost/nearly), (big/large), (broad/wide), (buy/purchase), (cab/taxi) ... etc.

Many researchers (Trask, 1999; Yule, 2006; Crystal, 2008) concluded that the idea of exact synonyms or absolute synonymy is rare and sometimes might not be applied in all circumstances or contexts. The following contexts are a good illustration of their view:

- a. What a nice — of flowers
- b. Her — of knowledge is enormous

In the first context, all of the lexical item's "range", "selection", "choice" can be used. whereas, in the second context we cannot use all of them, we can use only the lexical item "range" because even though the lexical items "selection" and "choice" are synonyms they are not appropriate in the second sentence because if they will be used, the sentence will be odd (Crystal, 2008, p.470). However, exact or absolute synonymy might occur out of context that might make a change in meaning when substituting one word with another. (Cruse, 2006, p. 176).

Furthermore, there are three criteria under which synonyms may differ from each other, which are: regional variation (dialect of a language), style, and collocation range. Firstly, some synonyms are different according to dialects. For example, "autumn" and "fall" are used in different regions. Secondly, other synonyms differ according to stylistic features. For instance, the synonyms "father" and "dad"; the first is formal whereas the second is informal. Thirdly, some synonyms are "collocationally restricted". That is to say, some words must occur together with other words. For example, "win" and "gain" look interchangeable and have the same meaning. However, we say win confidence not gain confidence (Palmer, 1976, pp. 60-62).

### **1.1.3. Meronymy**

In semantics, some words may denote a constituent part or a member of something. This phenomenon is a lexical relation that is used to describe Meronymy. In his words, Finch

(2000) described meronymy as “A sense relation which describes a part-whole relationship between the senses of words”. For example, the words “Cover” and “page” are regarded as meronyms of the word “book”. (p.169). Similarly, Crystal (2008) held the same view and defined meronymy as “A term used in semantics as part of the study of the sense relations which relate lexical items”. He added that “Meronymy is the relationship which obtains between ‘parts’ and ‘wholes’ (p.302). Cruse (2000) seems to be on the same line when he regarded meronymy as a relation of including a part in a whole, for example, the word “finger” is a part of “hand”, “engine” is a part of “car”. In these examples, the parts are referred to as “meronyms” or “paronyms” whereas the wholes are referred to as “holonym” (p.153). Another concept related to meronymy which is the group of parts that is related to one basic whole is referred to as “co-meronyms” (Cruse, 2006, p. 105). The figures below are illustrative examples of the phenomenon of meronymy:

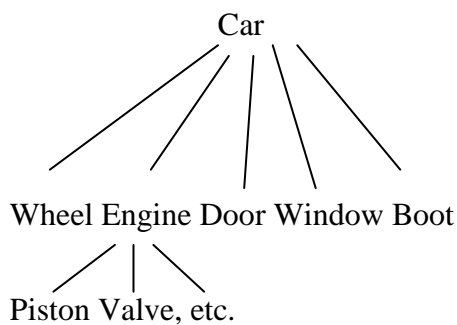


Figure 2: *Example of Meronymy* (Finch, 2000, p169)

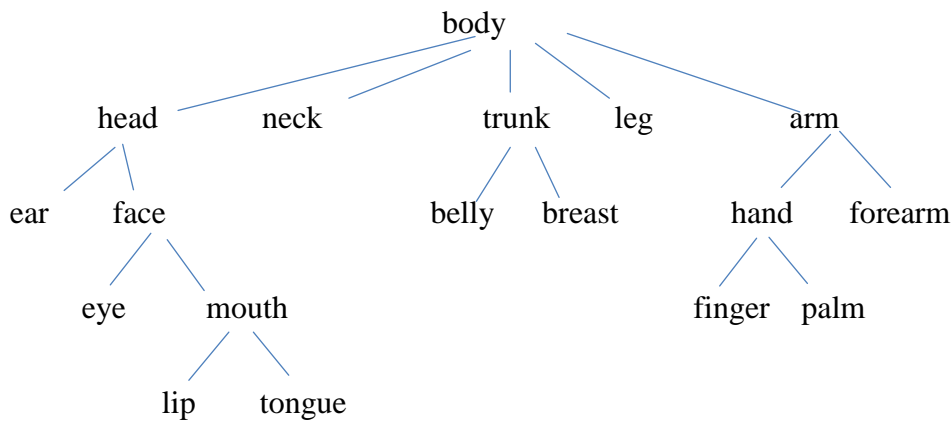


Figure 3: *Meronymy of body parts terms* (Löbner, 2002, p. 97)

### 1.1.5. Monosemy

The concept of Monosemy is associated with the work of Ruhl (1989) in his book “On monosemy: a Study in Linguistic Semantic”. In general, Monosemy is the case of one word that exhibits only one meaning. One simple definition was given to the term Monosemy by the Oxford Dictionary of English (2010), “the property of having only one meaning”. Another detailed definition with an example was given by Collins English Dictionary, “the phenomenon where one linguistic form has only one meaning ... the word mountain for example which has the meaning of “a natural upward projection of the earth’s surface higher and steeper than a hill often having a rocky summit” (as cited in Touplikioti, 2007, p.22).

### 1.1.6. Polysemy

Polysemy is a common feature of all natural languages. “A large proportion of language’s vocabulary is polysemic (or polysemous)” (Crystal, 2008, p.374). In fact, over 40% of English vocabulary is polysemic (McCarthy, 1997; Durkin & Manning, 1989(as cited in Alnamer, 2017), and therefore, it plays a vital role in the development of vocabulary.

Polysemy is regarded as one of the main issues that were tackled by scholars in a different manner. Therefore, they held distinct views with regard to its definition. Some of

them considered it as the case of one word with more than one meaning. On the other side, others added the criterion relatedness of meaning in the set of several senses associated with a single word. Thus, they regarded polysemy as one word with several interrelated senses. Here are some simple definitions of the term polysemy. For Ghazala (1995) polysemy is “a word that has more than one meaning” (p. 98). Palmer (1976) held the same view and defined it as “the case that the same word may have different meanings” (p. 65). Furthermore, Cruse (1986) seems to be on the same line when he regarded polysemy as “a lexeme which has a number of senses” (p. 80).

A slightly different view about polysemy was held by Löbner (2002) who added the criterion of “relatedness of meaning” in the definition of polysemy, saying that “a lexeme constitutes a case of polysemy if it has two or more interrelated meanings” (p. 44). For instance the word ‘leg’ is a polysemous word which has the meaning of ‘a part of the human body’, ‘a part of a table’ are these two meanings are physically and conceptually interrelated as they have the same function in the real world which is the function of support ( Ozturk, 2018, p. 84). Moreover, Finch (2000, p.173) gave an adequate definition with an example to the term polysemy when he qualified it as “a sense relation in which a word or lexeme, has acquired more than one meaning; for instance, the word “flight” has the following meanings: ‘the power of flying’, ‘an air journey’, ‘series of steps’. From the previously mentioned meanings of the word flight, it can be noticed that they are clearly related to each other.

One more narrow definition of polysemy was presented by Yule who described it as “one form (written or spoken) having multiple meanings that are related by extension” (p. 120). In other words, polysemy exists both in spoken and written language, and it is the case in which a word expands in meaning. Consequently, it acquires secondary related meanings besides its core or primary meaning. For example, the polysemous word “head” has the primary meaning of “the upper part of the body” and other extended secondary meanings,



including “someone who is responsible for something or someone”, “froth on top of a glass of beer”, etc.

As far as the extension of meaning in polysemy is concerned, Blank (2003) claimed that polysemous sense extension can be generated through metaphorization, which is regarded as one of the main sources of polysemous words. He clarified his view by providing the example of the polysemous word “mouse” which means “a computer device” besides its primary meaning or literal meaning “a small rodent” (as cited in FenkOczlon & Fenk, 2010, p. 106). In order to clarify the idea of metaphorization in the generation of polysemous words, Cruse (2000, p. 112) suggested the only relevant feature in metaphor is a resemblance between the primary meaning of a word and its extended meanings. For example, the word “chain” has the primary meaning of “length of metal rings joined together”. The other extended meaning of this word via metaphor is “a group of linked events”, which is a meaning similar to the physical image of the word “chain”. Moreover, Mayor (2009) illustrated Cruse's view by providing the following examples:

- Fox: fox 1 (animal), fox 2 (person as crafty as a fox)
- Snake: snake 1 (an animal), snake 2 (someone who cannot be trusted) (as cited in Kovács, 2011, p. 11).

To sum up, since what matters in translation is the fact that a word has different meanings and not the original of words or the relatedness or not of their meaning, the word polysemy will, for the purposes of this research, be used to refer to any word with more than one meaning.

## 1.2. Origin of Polysemy

Originally, “the term *polysemy* is derived from the Greek *poly-* meaning ‘many’ and *sem-* meaning ‘sense’ or ‘meaning’. Thus, the roots of the study of the complex relations between words and meanings lie in Greek philosophy” (Kovács, 2011, p.6).

The term polysemy was first used by Bréal in 1897. It appeared in his work “*Essai de Sémantique*” in the following passage:

Le sens nouveau, quel qu’il soit ne met pas fin à l’ancien. Ils existent tous Les deux l’un à côté de l’autre. Le même terme peut à tour au sens propre ou au sens métaphorique (...) au sens abstrait ou au sens concret ... à mesure nouvelle est donnée au mot, il a l’air de se multiplier et des exemplaires nouveaux, semblables de forme, différents. Nous appelons ce phénomène de multiplication la polysémie” (Bréal as cited in Kovacs, 2011, p 6).

From the previous passage, it can be noticed that Bréal coined the term polysemy to refer to the case of multiplicity in the meaning of a single word. The latter acquires new senses besides its primary one. The new sense may acquire a metaphoric sense as in the word “alien” in this context (he is an alien) or an abstract sense as in the word “thesis” in this context (I agree with your thesis) (Finch, 2000, p. 173). Later on, the work of Michel Bréal’s “*Essai de Sémantique*” (1897) was converted from French into English to be entitled “*Semantics: Studies in the Science of Meaning* (1900)”.

## 1.4. Aspects of Polysemy

Polysemous words constitute an abundant area in vocabulary (Löbner, 2002, p. 44). This abundance can be explained by the economic function it has in language for the sake of using available words for new objects, notions, and concepts instead of looking for words for every notion, objects and so on. This view is in line with the view of Ullmann (1959) who

stated that “Polysemy is an indispensable resource of language economy. It would be altogether impractical to have separate terms for every referent.” (As cited in Kovács 2011, p.3). Additionally, Ullmann (1956) indicated that polysemy“(…) affecte toute l’économie du langage. Si nous avons des termes séparés pour chaque notion, le fardeau mémoriel deviendrait insupportable” (as cited in Boukrika, 2003, p. 19), a view that Ricoeur (1975) stressed when he said “Une langue sans polysémie violerait le principe d’économie, car elle étendrait à l’infini de vocabulaire” (As cited in Boukrika, 2003, p. 20). This means that polysemy plays an important role in language economy: without polysemy the burden of remembering an infinite number of words would be incredibly unbearable.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter attempted to review the main common lexical relations that exist in language, namely, synonymy, hyponymy, homonymy, meronymy, monosemy, and polysemy. The focus, however, was placed on polysemy as it is the linguistic phenomenon of interest in this study. Besides defining the concept and giving examples of it, the chapter also attempted to trace back the origin of the phenomenon and to contour its aspects. Addressing polysemy from the linguistic angle was a must in order to move to the translation of polysemous words, the concern of the next chapter.

## **Chapter two: Polysemy as a Lexical Problem in Translation**

### **Introduction**

This chapter explores polysemy in a translational context. It starts by shedding light on the various theoretical views given by different scholars about the translation of polysemy. Then, it discusses the main lexical problems in translation in general, while focusing on polysemy as a translation lexical problem in particular. The chapter ends with some discussing factors that should be taken into account in translating polysemous words.

### **2.1. Theoretical Views about the Translation of Polysemy**

The existence of polysemy in all natural languages has drawn several linguists and theorists' attention to the issue of translating polysemous words from one language to another. Thus, many theoretical views about the translation of polysemy have been voiced, and we see it fit to start with such views as a point of reference to address the issue of polysemy from a translational perspective.

#### **2.1.1. J.C Catford's view**

Catford (1965) in his book "A Linguistic Theory of Translation" regarded polysemy as a source of ambiguity in translation that cause difficulties in translation when he claimed that "the second type of ambiguity is due to what would usually be called polysemy; that is, not to the fact that two or more items have the same exponent, but that one single item has more than one meaning" (p.95).

Moreover, he clarified more his view about the phenomenon of polysemy in translation practice when he claimed that "It is not the case of one item having several meanings, but of one item having a wide or general contextual meaning covering a wide range of specific situational features" (p.95-96). To illustrate this view, he gave an example of the Russian

word “s verxu”, which means in English “from or of a higher position”. The meanings of this word can vary according to the variations in situations found in a given context. Those meanings might include “from above”, “from upstairs” and “from upriver”. So, he concluded that if the previous word appears in a given situational or linguistic context that gives it a contextual meaning, its ambiguity will be eliminated.

### **2.1.2. Nida’s view**

Another view provided by Nida (1964, p.101) about polysemy in which he indicated that “In isolation, an utterance may have a number of readings (or meanings)”. That is to say, a word which occurs out of context might have several interpretations. In order to illustrate this view, he gave the word “degree” which has the following meanings:

- Step or stage in an ascending or descending scale
- The 360<sup>th</sup> part of a complete angle or turn
- A unit of measurement of temperature
- A geographical unit of measurement

Concerning the role of linguistic context in the polysemy, the words that surround polysemous words has the significant function of guessing the intended meaning of such kind of English words, as Nida (1964) argued that “In general, the linguistic context provides the basis for determining the specific terminal meaning” (p. 40). For instance, in the previous word “degree”, we can keep only one meaning and eliminate the others, when we put it in the linguistic context: “He has three degrees but his temperature is not likely to rise”. Here, the word “degree” acquires the meaning of (a unit of measurement of temperature).

In addition, Nida argued that sometimes the linguistic context cannot provide enough contextual information that specifies the meaning of a given polysemous word in a sentence; therefore, he claimed that the meaning of a given polysemous word can be specified in the

presence of the total discourse or text that relates the word to a given theme. In this context, he stated "... the clue to the proper meaning of a term is not to be found within the same sentence, but rather in the total discourse". In order to clarify this idea, he gave the example of the polysemous word "table"; its intended meaning will be specified if a given theme is provided for instance, if the topic is about mathematics then its meaning in Arabic is "جدول" (As cited in Boukrika, 2003, p.51-53).

### **2.1.3. Pergnier's view**

The term polysemy refers to a specific sign that denotes several meanings. As Pergnier (1993) stated "Le terme polysémie désigne la capacité qu'ont la plupart des signes de désigner plusieurs notions différentes, ou, comme dit la langue commune « d'avoir plusieurs sens" (as cited in Boukrika, 2003,p.59).

The translation of polysemous words from a SL into a TL, Pergnier (1993) pointed out that some words could not be polysemous in a source language, while, the same words might turn polysemous only when envisaged a translational context in a target language. He gave the example of the word "mouton", which is not a polysemous word in the French language, but which turns so when translated into the English language, because the translator will have to render it either as "ram" (the animal) or as "mutton" (the flesh of that animal).(as cited in Boukrika, 2003, p.60).

### **2.1.5. Seleskovich and Lederer' view**

In her words, Lederer (1994) viewed polysemy as "Etat d'un significant recouvrant plusieurs significations ..." (As cited in Boukrika, 2003, p. 68)

Polysemous words occurring in sentences out of context cause a kind ambiguity for the translator because isolated sentences or sentences that appear out of the context sometimes do not represent the exact intended meanings of this kind of words, but just offer a way in which

the constituents of the sentence are combined. For that reason, guessing the appropriate meaning will be difficult in this case. This idea was pointed out to by Seleskovich and Lederer (1993) who stated:

“Bien sûr, au plan de la langue, de la phrase isolée qui est agencement syntaxique mais non message, les mots sont polysémiques et les énoncés ambigus mais si la linguistique y voit un problème pour la traduction c’est celle qui conçoit la traduction au plan de la langue ; le traducteur, lui, constate qu’il ne traduit pas une langue mais toujours un message” (p.16).

Moreover, Seleskovich and Lederer (1993) also commented on the translation of polysemous words once inserted in a context:

“Polysémie et ambiguïtés ont caractéristique de tout assemblage de mots hors contexte; elles disparaissent lorsque la phrase est placée dans le fil de son discours. Seule l’intention de communiquer qui construit la parole libère des mots de la polysémie les phrases de leur ambiguïté est la charge de sens” (p.17).

From the previous passage, it can be noticed that the problem of ambiguity about polysemous words will only be solved when embedding them in a text which provides them with the necessary contextual information for interpreting their intended meaning.

To conclude, it can be noticed from the previous theorists’ views about polysemy and its translation that it is considered as a source of ambiguity that causes a problem in translation and they all agreed on the idea that the context has a significant role in eliminating the ambiguity and clearing up the intended meaning.

## **2.2. Polysemy in Translation**

In this part, polysemy is going to be addressed as a phenomenon present in translation practice, with a focus on the factors that help with the rendition of polysemous words. Before

doing so, lexical problems in translation are going to be reviewed as polysemy is primarily regarded as a lexical problem in translation.

### **2.2.1. Lexical Problems in Translation**

During the translation process, students might be encountered by several kinds of problems. The most problematic for students is related to lexis or words. Ghazala (1995) indicated that lexical problems are those which occur when words or expressions in a SL text cannot be rendered in the TL text because of the inability to comprehend them or because of the misunderstanding or the total unfamiliarity with those words. The main lexical problems in translation are:

- a.** Literal translation of meaning
- b.** Polysemy and Monosemy
- c.** Collocations
- d.** Idioms
- e.** Proverbs
- f.** Metaphors
- g.** Technical, Proper names, political terms, geographical terms, and acronyms (Ghazala, 1995, pp.19-20□).

The previous mentioned lexical problems such as proverbs idioms, metaphor, proverbs and, polysemy seem to be more problematic than the other lexical problems for EFL students at the level of translation. For that reason, students should not deal with words as if they are isolated words nor adopt a literal translation. Besides, they should take into consideration the differences that exist between a source language and the target language in order to avoid mistranslation. Moreover, students should develop their vocabulary knowledge in order to deal with the problem of translating acronyms political terms and so on.



### 2.2.2. Copying with Polysemy in Translation

As mentioned earlier in this research, polysemy is among the lexical problems in translation that need to be given more interest in order to find out solutions that might help in solving this problem in the process of translation. In fact, there are some factors that can be taken into account by EFL students in order to cope with the problem of translating polysemy, namely the linguistic context, the situational context, parts of speech, capital letters, etc.

#### 2.2.2.1. Linguistic Context

The translation of any lexical unit from a SL into a TL depends firstly on understanding its meaning. To reach this understanding, students have to take into account the surrounding words that interact with the target word that students want to translate in a given sentence. In other words, students have to take into account the linguistic context in which the word occurs. (Zhu, 2006, p. 79). In stressing the importance of linguistic context Palmer (1976) stated that “by looking at the linguistic context of words we can often distinguish between different meanings” (p.95).

As far as using the linguistic context in solving the problem of translating polysemous words, Ghazala (1995) suggested that what proceeds and follows a target polysemous word has a significant function in recognizing its intended meaning that can be used later in translation practice. To show the role of the linguistic context in determining the exact meaning of polysemous words, he provided the following example, which we will reproduce here with the aim of clarification:

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

Here the previous expression “the runner fell down in the race” and the contextual clue “hospital” that follows the target polysemous word “break” all together help in guessing its

intended meaning. Besides, the word “Break” is a verb that is combined in the previous context with the physical object “ leg”. Thus, it must be translated in this context as (كسر) (Ghazala, 1955, pp. 103-104).

In addition, Ghazala (1995) provided the following example of the verb “break”, used in a different context that gave a different meaning from the previous one which is (كسر) in the Arabic language.

- “ The boy broke with his mates yesterday”.

Students in this sentence might adopt a literal translation of the word “broke” into its primary common meaning in Arabic (كسر) which makes no sense in this context. Therefore, the student has to pay attention to the surrounding lexical unit (with) which interact with the source polysemous word “broke” to form a phrasal verb. Ghazala suggested that “the use of a word as phrasal verb is an indication of its polysemic nature”. In other words, if a word occurs in a context as a phrasal verb it acquires a new meaning besides its common or primary meaning. Thus, the phrasal verb “break” has the meaning of “to separate” which is translated into Arabic as “انفصل” (pp.101-105).

In addition, Ghazala (1995) provided other examples of the verb “break”, used in different contexts:

- “ This medicine will break you of smoking”:

• سوف يخلصك هذا الدواء من التدخين

- “ The storming weather has broken at last”:

• انتهى الجو العاصف أخيرا

- “ She will break the news soon”:

• سوف تفشي الأخبار قريبا

To sum up, students must take into account the linguistic clues embedded in the linguistic context, which constitute contextual information that help resolve ambiguity and determine the meaning intended before translating it into the TL.

#### **2.2.2.2. The Situational Context**

The interpretation of a given lexical unit or expression in a SL text does not depend only on the linguistic context but goes beyond it to include non-linguistic elements or factors which can be used to interpret the intended meaning when the linguistic context is not sufficient.

The situational context, also termed the non-linguistic context, refers to the factors of “the environment, time and place, etc. in which the discourse occurs, and also the relationship between the participants” (Song, 2010, p.877).

In clarifying more the concept of situational context and in addition to the factors included in situational context that was indicated by Song, Zhu (2006) in turn pointed out that background knowledge and extra linguistic factors are among the factors that can be included in the non-linguistic context which help in comprehending the meaning of a given expression. In contrasting the situational context with the linguistic context, Zhu (2006) makes the following interesting remark with an illustrative example:

Situational context may be more difficult to recognize than linguistic context. As is known to all, the same expression or statement which is used in different situations may have quite different meanings. To understand a conversation, the practical situational context is often of great importance. For example, the statement “Do you think this is bringing rain?” only makes sense when the speaker is pointing to a dark cloud in the sky (pp.80-81).

Concerning the role of situational context in the translation of polysemous words, the context of the situation is important in guessing the meaning of a given polysemous word in case the linguistic context does not clear up its meaning; for example, the polysemous word “break” in the sentence “Go break a leg!” In this case, the linguistic context is not enough to render its meaning because this word cannot be translated into Arabic as (اكسر) for the reason that the sentence would be rendered ridiculously as (اذهب و اكسر ساق). But if we give extra information by putting this sentence in a specific situation as in “.... are you nervous because of the exam? Do not worry...”, students will be able to guess the intended meaning from the situation: a person feeling nervous about an exam and someone else wishing him good luck. Here, they can guess the meaning of “go break a leg” which is a synonym of “good luck”, which would then be rendered into Arabic as (حظا سعيدا). (Ghazala, 1995, p.101 - 102).

To sum up, students should take into account the situational context in translation because a change in a situation makes, in turn, a change in the meaning of the expression in general, and polysemous words within it in particular.

### **2.2.2.3. Parts of Speech**

In the Grammar of English, the part of speech which are; articles, nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions are the building block of sentences. The part of speech (grammatical class of words) can be used as a factor in determining the different meanings that word expresses. In this sense, Ghazala (1995) stated that “The grammatical class of the word (i.e., verb, noun, adjective, etc.) can be a guide to its polysemy” (p.103). Here, we have some examples about some parts of speech that can help students in interpreting the intended meaning of a given polysemous word:

### ➤ Noun/Verb

In the English language, if a word is used as a noun it has a specific meaning whereas its meaning can be changed when used as a verb and this helps students to guess the appropriate meaning for a given polysemous word. As in the following examples:

- “ You may have a break”. (Ghazala, 1995,p.104)
- “ The thief broke the car”. (Ghazala,1995,p.99)

In the first sentence, the word “break” is used as a verb which means “كسر” in Arabic. This meaning is the common one for students. While, in the second sentence, it was used as a noun to the meaning of (راحة/استراحة) in Arabic, Hence, the translator can easily choose the appropriate meaning and to translate the two sentences as follow:

- يمكنك أخذ استراحة
- كسر اللص السيارة

Another example that might be mentioned here is the polysemous word “ease” in the following sentences:

- “She answered the questions with ease”. (Oxford,2010,p.253)
- “What can I take to ease this headache?” (Oxford,2010,p.253)

In the first sentence above, the word “ease” is used as a noun to mean “سهولة” in Arabic, while, in the second one, it is used as a verb and has the meaning of “يخفف”. The two sentences would thus be translated in Arabic as follows:

- أجابت على الأسئلة بكل سهولة.
- ماذا يمكنني أن افعل لتخفيف هذا الصداع؟

### ➤ Noun/ Adjective

In the previous examples, we have seen that a word can be polysemous when it is used as a verb and a noun. In the coming examples, we are going to discuss polysemous words that can be used as an adjective or a noun at the same time which has different meanings. For instance, the polysemous word “key” has different meanings in the following sentences:

- " A good education is the key to success". (Oxford,2010, p.442)
- " NewYork is one of the key towns". (Karami,1995, p.470)

The word key in the first sentence is used as a noun and has the meaning of "مفتاح", whereas, in the second sentence, it is used as an adjective. Thus, it has a different meaning, which is "رئيسي". The translation of the two sentences would thus probably look like these two in Arabic:

- التعليم الجيد مفتاح النجاح
- نيويورك هي واحدة من المدن الرئيسية

Another example of the polysemous word "right" in the following sentences:

- freedom of speech is one of the basic human rights.(Oxford,2010,p.674)
- I hope I've made a right decision.(Oxford,2010,p.673)

In the first sentence, the word "rights" is a noun and its meaning is "حقوق", and in the second sentence is used an adjective that mean "صائب" in the target language Arabic. Hence, the previous sentences can be rendered into Arabic as follow:

- حرية التعبير واحدة من حقوق الإنسان الأساسية.
- أمل أنني قد اتخذت القرار الصائب.

#### ➤ Adjective/Adverb

The use of a given word either as an adverb or an adjective can be a sign of its polysemic nature. Here, we have the following examples of polysemous words that can be used both as adjectives and adverbs:

The first example is the word "even":

- The game must be played on an even surface. (Oxford,2010, p.272)
- It isn't warm here even in summer. (Oxford,2010, p.272)

In the first sentence, the word "even" is used as an adjective that clarified the noun “surface”, and its meaning in this case is “مستو” or “منبسط”. Whereas, in the second sentence, it occurs as an adverb and acquire the meaning of “حتى”. So, depending on these meaning the previous sentences can be rendered as follow :

- يجب أن تلعب اللعبة على سطح مستو
- الجو ليس دافئا هنا حتى في فصل الصيف

#### 2.2.2.4. Capital letters

Capital letters are usually used as the initial letters of particular proper names, months, days.... etc. However, there are instances where the capital letters of the previous words might be dropped or not be used. Thus, they can be an indication of the polysemous nature of words in the English language. With regard to the role of capital letters in the translation of polysemy, they can be considered as a useful factor in choosing the appropriate meaning of the polysemous word. Here, we have some examples that illustrate this point:

##### ➤ March / march

The word ‘march’ without capitalization has the meaning of ‘يسير’, but when we put the capital letter at the beginning of the word, its meaning will be changed to be ‘آذار\مارس’ which is a month in the Gregorian calendar.

##### ➤ Fall /fall

The word ‘fall’ has the meaning of ‘سقط\السقوط’, but it has the meaning of autumn ‘فصل الخريف’ when it is capitalized

##### ➤ Flood / flood

The word ‘flood’ has the meaning of ‘فيضان’ but when it is capitalized it has the meaning of ‘الطوفان’

➤ **Turkey / turkey**

The word ‘turkey’ with lower case “t” means ‘ديك رومي’, but with the capital letter “T”, its meaning is ‘تركيا’.

➤ **Pentagon / pentagon**

In the first case it has the meaning of “البنطاقون الأمريكي” which refers to the Defence Department building in the United States. While in the second case it has the meaning of ‘خماسي الأضلاع’

➤ **Congress/ congress**

In the first case, the word “Congress” denotes the meaning of ‘الكونغرس الأمريكي’, whereas, in the second case, the word ‘congress’ has the meaning of ‘مؤتمر’

(As cited in Boukrika, 2003, p.118-119)

To conclude, guessing the intended meaning of polysemous words that include capital letters can be difficult because when students lack background knowledge about words with capital letters, they may fail in rendering it in the target language.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has attempted to review the various theoretical views about the translation of polysemous words, exposing their various attitudes to such a linguistic phenomenon. It has also sought to address polysemy in a practical context, presenting it as a lexical problem while particularly enumerating the main factors that should be taken into consideration in the translation of polysemous words. Such factors as the linguistic context,



the situational context, parts of speech, capital letters are of prime importance, not only for the expert translator, but also to EFL learners in their translation tasks.

## **Chapter Three: Field Work**

### **Introduction**

The chapter attempts to investigate third-year students' translation of polysemous words from English into Arabic at the Department of English, Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University of Jijel, with the aim of testing the students' capacity in translating polysemous words. The overall aim is to identify the difficulties that they encounter in translating such kind of English words and the factors that may lead to students' mistranslation in order to suggest potential solutions. This chapter will introduce the research methods and tools, and the population and sample of the study will also be identified. Besides, the process of data analysis will be described and discussed. Finally, the data analysis will be presented and the obtained results from both tools will be interpreted.

### **3.1. Research Methods**

This study is descriptive and exploratory in nature; it adopts a descriptive research design to collect data in order to answer the research questions in this study. Singh (2006) claimed that descriptive research "is concerned with the present and attempts to determine the status of the phenomenon under investigation" (p.104). This is due to the nature of the problem under investigation in the present study which attempts to investigate third year EFL students' capacity in the translation of polysemous words from English into Arabic at the Department of English, Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University of Jijel. In the study, we employed a mixed (quantitative and qualitative) method to data collection. The quantitative data is derived from the questionnaire administered to third-year EFL students. Whereas, the qualitative data is obtained from the test. Results obtained from the two research instruments permits to get clear information about the topic under study.

### **3.2. Population and sampling**

Within a population of two hundred and eighty (280) third-year EFL students at the Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University-Jijel during the academic year 2018/2019, a sample of forty (40) subjects have been randomly selected.

The choice of this population was based on the fact that those students are supposed to have been taught the translation course for two years. Besides, this population should normally be acquainted with issues of linguistics, particularly semantics, which justifies our choice of it for the present study.

### **3.3. Research Tools**

In this study, two research tools were used for collecting data: a questionnaire and a test.

#### **3.3.1. Student Test**

##### **3.3.1.1. Description of the Test**

The aim of the test is to investigate the students' recognition, understanding, and translation of the suggested English polysemous words. In the test, the students were requested to translate 15 sentences from English into Arabic. It is designed in a form of a group of samples; in each sample, there are three sentences containing polysemous words used in different contexts. In those sentences, polysemous words were arranged from the primary meaning in the first sentence to the other extended meanings in the second and the third sentences. The sentences of the test were selected with reference to Ghazala's textbook of "translation as problems and solutions" (1995), "Oxford dictionary" (2010), and an English - Arabic dictionary "Al Monir- El Baalbaki" (2004). The five target polysemous words are: break, make, alive, take, and go. The reason behind choosing these words was that, based on observation, students tend to use these polysemous words more frequently than any other polysemous words, yet sometimes incorrectly. Thus, it is important to identify the

difficulties that third-year EFL students encounter when translating these words from English into Arabic. In addition, it will be an area worthy of investigation to assess third-year EFL students' capacity to identify the different meanings these words hold.

### **3.3.1.2. Administration of the Test**

The test was delivered by the researchers to EFL third-year students of English in the classroom. The test takes one hour and a half.

### **3.3.1.3. Analysis procedure**

Concerning the analysis procedure, each sentence in English language will be compared to its equivalent in the target language. Before distributing the test, some instructions about the test were given. During the translation of the sentences; students were not allowed to consult dictionaries. Students were asked to translate 15 English sentences into the target language which is Arabic. The students were given unlimited time to complete the task but after 30 minutes all the participants had already handed in the translations. The evaluation of the test will focus mainly on the rendition of the meaning of the polysemous words, not the rendition of the entire sentence.

## **3.3.2. Questionnaire**

### **3.3.2.1. Description of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is made up of seven (7), which are arranged into two distinct categories of questions as follows:

The first category includes five questions. This group aims at investigating the students' background in translation. Question (1) is a closed question that is devoted to ask whether students like translation or not. Question (2) is designed to assess students' capacities in translation tasks, the students were asked to tick one of the given choices "excellent", "very

good”, “good”, “average”, “bad” or “very bad”. In Question (3), the students were asked to indicate whether they find difficulties in translation from English into Arabic or from Arabic into English. Question (4) seeks to know the level at which students find difficulties in translation. Students were asked to tick either the box “grammar” or the box “vocabulary”.

The second category consists of three questions. They are designed to investigate students’ problem in translating polysemous words. Question (5) is intended to know whether students found difficulties in translating the sentences in the test. In Question (6) students are requested to specify whether they encountered problems in translating polysemous words at “the comprehension level” or at “the rendition level”. Question (7), which is the last one, aims at knowing whether the students relied on “the primary meaning”, “the context of sentences”, or on “other factors” in translating polysemous words.

### **3.1.2.2. Administration of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was handed in at nearly the end of the second semester of the academic year 2018-2019. The questionnaire was distributed in the classrooms on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of April 2019.

## **3.4. Data analysis and interpretation**

In this part we are going to present, analyze, interpret and, discuss the findings which are obtained through using two different tools. These tools are a questionnaire and the test.

### **3.4.1. Analysis of the Results of the Research Tools**

This part provides the data obtained from the students’ questionnaire and the test. The findings are presented in tables followed by a detailed analysis.

### 3.4.1.1. Analysis of the Students' Test Results

The data obtained from the test are presented in the fifteen (15) tables below on the basis of an analysis of each polysemous word in each sentence included in the samples suggested in the test.

#### ➤ Sample One

In sample one, the polysemous word “break” was embedded in three different contexts in the form of three sentences. The respondents were asked to translate these sentences from English into Arabic. These sentences were arranged and analyzed as follows:

**Sentence 1:** The boy broke the window.

**Table 1**

*First Translation of the Word “Break”*

Options	frequency of occurrences	percentage%
Accurate	39	97.5%
Acceptable	00	00 %
Inaccurate	01	2.5%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%

In the first sentence indicated in sample one, the word “**break**” is used as a verb to mean “to separate, or make *sth* separate into two or more pieces” (Oxford Dictionary, 2010, p. 90). This meaning is regarded as the core meaning. Its equivalent in Arabic is “كسر”.

As shown in Table (01), the data obtained from respondents' translation of this word revealed that almost all the respondents (39) had no problem in comprehending the primary meaning of

the English polysemous word “break”, and then producing its accurate Arabic equivalent either with “كسر” or “حطم”, which are two synonyms that can be used interchangeably, at least when used to denote the act of destruction. This means that the respondents are familiar with the primary meaning of the word “break maybe because they thought that if the word break is combined with the physical object window it gives the meaning of “كسر”. Therefore, they rendered it successfully into Arabic. However, only one respondent gave an inaccurate translation using the Arabic equivalent “فتح”. Here the respondent misunderstood the intended meaning in the given context therefore he rendered the whole sentence as “فتح الصبي النافذة”. One possible interpretation of the respondent’s decision could be that the respondent thought that the act readily associated with the word window has necessarily to do with the meaning of “to open” “تفتح”, and not “كسر” as intended in the given sentence.

**Sentence 2:** We must break for lunch

**Table 2**

*First Translation of the Word “Break”*

Options	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage %
Accurate	13	32.5%
Acceptable	04	10%
Inaccurate	23	57.5%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%

In the second sentence and as a part of speech, the word “**break**” is used as a verb to convey the meaning of “a short period of rest” (Oxford Dictionary, 2010, p.91). Its equivalent in Arabic is “استراحة”.

The respondents gave several kinds of translations to the word “**break**” in Arabic. The results are demonstrated in Table 02 which indicate that thirteen respondents (13) gave the accurate equivalent of the word “**break**” in Arabic which is “الاستراحة”. This indicates that those respondents were aware of the extended meanings of the polysemous word break. For that reason, they did not resort to the literal translation of the common meaning of this word but relied instead on the context in which the word occurred. One more acceptable rendition of word “break” was given by four respondents (4) who rendered it as “نتوقف”. On the other hand, out of the forty respondents, twenty-three respondents (23) failed in translating the word “**break**” and gave this set of inaccurate equivalents in Arabic “ننظم, نحضر, نخرج, نذهب”. This shows that maybe the respondents relied on the whole meaning that the sentence might convey not on the meaning of the polysemous word in the context of the sentence. One of the respondents who gave inaccurate translations rendered the word “**break**” literally, giving it its common meaning of “نكسر”. This means that the respondent did not rely on the context of the sentence or maybe because that student was unfamiliar with the variant meanings that the word “**breaks**” might denote. That is why they relied on its primary meaning

**Sentence 3:** The prisoner broke the jail.

**Table 3**

*Third Translation of the Word “Break”*

Options	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage %
Accurate	10	25%
Acceptable	00	00%
Inaccurate	30	75%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%



For sentence three, the word “**break**” has the meaning of “to escape from prison” (Oxford, 2010, p. 91). Its equivalent in Arabic might be “فر” or “هرب”.

As it is demonstrated in table (3) above, ten respondents (10) provided an accurate translation for the polysemous word “**break**” by rendering it into Arabic using the two synonyms “هرب” and “فر”, which might be used interchangeably in this context, though in the language of the media the word “فر” is much more commonly used. This result can be interpreted by respondents’ recognition that the adoption of the primary meaning will make the sentence meaningless which is an indication of their awareness of the extended meaning of the word break that was understood with the help of the linguistic context. However, thirty students (30) gave inaccurate translations in which some of them translated the word “**break**” into its literal meaning “كسر” and “حطم” in the target language. This can be an indication of their unfamiliarity with the extended meaning of the word break in this sentence for that reason they stick to the primary meaning although it is not appropriate in the given sentence. Whereas the other respondents gave irrelevant equivalents such as “طعن, دخل, استأنف”. This occurred maybe because respondents related the word break to different situations that they imagined or guessed as being relevant, defaulting in probing the linguistic context surrounding the polysemous word “**break**”.

#### ➤ **Sample two**

In the second sample of the test, the polysemous word “**make**” was embedded in three different sentences. The respondents were asked to translate these sentences from English into Arabic. The sentences were arranged and analyzed as follow:

**sentence1:** Can you make me a cup of tea?

#### **Table 4**

##### *First Translation of the Word “Make”*

Options	frequency of occurrences	percentage%
Accurate	18	45%
Acceptable	08	20%
Inaccurate	14	35%
Total	40	100%

In the first sentence above, the word “**make**” was used as a verb that denotes the primary meaning “to prepare something, especially something to eat” (Oxford, 2010, p. 482). Its equivalent in Arabic is “تحضر” or “تعد”.

The results in table (4) show that most of the respondents (18) have translated this sentence accurately using the Arabic synonyms “تحضر” and “تعد”. This means that they have understood the intended meaning of the polysemous word from its linguistic context. On the other hand, eight respondents (8) translated the word “**make**” as “تصنع” which is an acceptable translation in this sentence. The rest of the respondents (14) gave the following inaccurate renditions: “أعطيني، أخذت □ تقدم □ تضع”. These inaccurate translations explain that not only did the respondents in question ignore the linguistic context of the sentence, but they also did not even recognize the primary meaning of the verb.

**Sentence 2:** The house is made of stone.

**Table 5**

*Second Translation of the Word “Made”*

Options	frequency of occurrences	percentage%
---------	--------------------------	-------------

<b>Accurate</b>	11	27.5%
<b>Acceptable</b>	00	22.5%
<b>Inaccurate</b>	29	50%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%

Unlike the meaning of the verb “**make**” in the first sentence taken from sample two, “make” in sentence two has a different meaning which is “to produce something, often using a particular substance or materials” (Baalbaki, 2004, p.552). Its equivalent translation in Arabic is “بني” or “شيد”.

On the basis of the data illustrated in table (5), it can be noticed that eleven respondents (11) out of fourteen translated this sentence successfully, using the equivalent word “بني” in the target language. This means that they have understood the context of the sentence. However, twenty-nine (29) other respondents failed in rendering the meaning of the target polysemous word in which they use words like: “يتكون, معين”. This indicates that even though students took into consideration the context where the word “**made**” occurred, they failed in giving exactly the appropriate equivalent in Arabic.

**Sentence 3:** She was made a minister of health.

**Table 6***Third Translation of the Word “Make”*

Options	frequency of occurrences	percentage%
Accurate	08	20%
Acceptable	04	10 %
Inaccurate	28	70%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%

The word “**made**” in the third sentence is used as a verb, which means, “to give somebody a job or elect sb to a position” (Oxford, 2010, p. 482). Its equivalent in Arabic is “يعين”.

As far as the results obtained from the table (6) are concerned, an accurate translation of the word “**made**” was provided by eight respondents (8) who managed to provide the equivalent “عينت”. This result seems to indicate the respondents’ awareness of the context of the sentence that gives the word “**made**” an extended meaning different from its common meaning. Only four respondents (4) gave acceptable equivalent “نصبت” which is also used in Arabic to denote appointments to positions or assignments with posts. However, most of the respondents (28) failed in supplying the right translation, using irrelevant renditions such as “تحضر”. This failure can be explained by the fact that respondents lack knowledge of the meaning of some words surrounding the target polysemous word because they translate the whole sentence as “هي تحضر للوزارة”. Thus, they provide an irrelevant translation.

➤ **Sample Three**

In sample three, the polysemous word “**alive**” was embedded in three different sentences. The respondents were asked to translate these sentences from English into Arabic. These sentences were arranged and analyzed as follow:

**Sentence 1:** We don’t know whether he is alive or dead.

**Table 7**

*First Translation of the Word “Alive”*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency of occurrence</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>Accurate</b>	39	97.5%
<b>Acceptable</b>	00	00%
<b>Inaccurate</b>	01	2.5%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%

In the first sentence, the word “**alive**” is used as an adjective and has the meaning of “not dead; living, continuing to exist” (Oxford, 2010, p. 37). Its equivalent in Arabic is “حي”.

The statistics in table (7) indicates that almost all the respondents (39) succeeded in translating this word by giving its accurate equivalent “حي” in the Arabic renditions. This indicates that the majority of the respondents definitely knew the core meaning of the word “**alive**”. However, only one respondent failed in providing the accurate rendition of the word by using the Arabic word “جميل”. This can be interpreted by the respondent’s misunderstanding of the whole meaning of the sentence, maybe because the respondent mixed up the word “**whether**” in the sentence with the word “**weather**” that refers to “الطقس” in Arabic, rendering it thus as “جميل”, not “حي” because the respondent’s rendition of the whole

sentence was “لا نعلم إن كان الجو جميلا أم لا”. This result reflects maybe the respondent’s lack of concentration.

**Sentence 2:** Before touching the electricity, you have to be alive to the danger.

**Table 8**

*Second Translation of the Word “Alive”*

Options	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage %
Accurate	07	17.5%
Acceptable	09	22.5%
Inaccurate	24	60%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%

In the second sentence, the polysemous word “**alive**” was also used as an adjective, but it has the meaning of “to take prudence from something” (Baalbaki, 2004, p.38). Its equivalent in Arabic in this context is “واع”.

An examination of the table (8) shows that the majority of the respondents (24) did not translate the word “**alive**” accurately by using false Arabic words such as “مسؤول”, “تعيش” maybe because they did pay attention to the context in which the target polysemous word was embedded. On the other hand, seven respondents (7) succeeded in giving the exact equivalent of the word “**alive**” using the Arabic equivalent “واع”. This result shows that those students clearly took the context of the sentence into account and because they use the contextual clues in the surrounding words which are “electricity” and “danger” which helped them in recognizing the extended meaning of this word. Nine respondents (9) tried to give acceptable equivalents instead of using the exact meaning by rendering it in Arabic as “على علم”.

**Sentence 3:** The Lake was alive with fish.

**Table 9**

*Third Translation of the Word “Alive”*

Options	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage %
Accurate	05	17.5%
Acceptable	06	25%
Inaccurate	29	62.5%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%

In sentence three, the polysemous word “**alive**” was again used as an adjective. Its intended meaning in the context of the sentence was “being full of something” (Baalbaki,2004,p. 38).

Table (9) illustrates that only five respondents (5) succeeded in guessing the accurate meaning of this word, using the Arabic equivalent “تعج”. This means that they have successfully used the linguistic context in which the word “**alive**” appeared. While six respondents (6) gave slightly similar equivalents of the word alive in this sentence to the word “تعج” when they used the Arabic equivalents “ملينة”. However, a huge number of respondents (29) provided inaccurate translations in the given context. Some of them used the Arabic word “تعيش”. Whereas, others adopted a literal translation by using the primary meaning of “alive” which is “حي”, a possible explanation for adopting literal translation might be to imitate the form of the original sentence. On the other hand, one respondent mistook the word ‘lake’ for ‘lack’. This contradicts the appropriate meaning of the sentence that leads to the translation of the polysemous word alive as “حاضرا مع” in their Arabic translation model “كان الحظ حاضرا مع السمكة”. Thus, the respondents did not only fail in giving the accurate translation at the word

level but also at the sentence level. The inaccurate translation of the word “alive” in this case might reflect the respondent’s lack of concentration.

➤ **Sample Four**

In sample four the respondents were asked to translate three English sentences containing the polysemous word “**take**” into Arabic. These sentences were arranged and analyzed as follow:

**Sentence 1:** Who’s taken my pen?

**Table 10**

*First Translation of the Word “Take”*

<b>Options</b>	<b>frequency of occurrences</b>	<b>percentage%</b>
<b>Accurate</b>	40	100%
<b>Acceptable</b>	00	00%
<b>Inaccurate</b>	00	00%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%

In the first English sentence, the word “**take**” appeared as a verb and it had the core meaning of “to remove sth without permission” (Oxford, 2010, p. 802). Its equivalent in Arabic is “أخذ”.

From the results shown in Table (10), we noticed that all of the respondents succeeded in translating the word “**take**” by providing the equivalent word “أخذ” in the target language, which means that they all knew that the primary meaning of the English word “**take**” was the one intended in that context.

**Sentence 2:** What size shoes do you take?



**Table 11*****Second Translation of the Word “Take”***

<b>Options</b>	<b>frequency of occurrences</b>	<b>percentage%</b>
<b>Accurate</b>	09	22.5%
<b>Acceptable</b>	00	00%
<b>Inaccurate</b>	31	77.5%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%

In the second English sentence, the word “**take**” appeared as a verb and it has the meaning of “to have a certain size of shoes or clothes” (Oxford, 2010, p. 802). Its equivalent in Arabic is “تلبس”.

As can be observed in the table (11), only nine respondents (9) out of fourteen succeeded in guessing the appropriate meaning of the polysemous word “**take**” which is “تلبسها”. The majority of the respondents (31) failed in translating this word into its extended meaning and they provided inaccurate translations like “أعجبك” in which they translate the whole sentence as “ما مقياس الحذاء الذي أعجبك”. This can be interpreted by the respondent’s thinking of a situation where someone is asking a person to choose a shoe that that person liked among a collection of shoes which means that the respondents relied on the situational context instead of the linguistic context maybe because they were well aware that the linguistic context is not enough to guess the intended meaning in this particular instance. But unfortunately, they failed in guessing the exact intended meaning both in the presence of the linguistic situation and their thinking of a situational context.

**Sentence 3:** I will take this to be your final offer.

**Table 12***Third Translation of the Word "Take"*

Options	frequency of occurrences	percentage%
Accurate	07	20%
Acceptable	00	00%
Inaccurate	33	80%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%

In the third English sentence, the word "**take**" is used in an extended meaning which is "to consider something" (Baalbaki, 2004, p. 946). Its equivalent translation in Arabic is "اعتبر".

The results in the table (12) show that the polysemous word "**take**" was translated accurately into Arabic by eight (7) respondents who used the Arabic equivalent "اعتبر" while thirty-three respondents (33) failed in providing the exact meaning of this word, their translations can be divided into two groups. The first group provided the Arabic word "سأخذ", and this clearly shows that those respondents followed the primary meaning of this polysemous word which means maybe that they are not aware of its extended meaning. The second group, which, gave the irrelevant translation of "سأقبل". This can be interpreted by the respondents' misunderstanding of the intended meaning of the word "take".

➤ **Sample Five**

In sample five, respondents were asked to translate three sentences that included the polysemous word "**Go**" from English into Arabic. The English three sentences are reproduced below, followed by their analysis.

**Sentence 1:** She always goes home by bus.

**Table 13**

*First Translation of the Word “Go”*

Options	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage %
Accurate	32	80%
Acceptable	00	00%
Inaccurate	08	20%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%

The word “go” in the first sentence was used as a verb to carry the meaning of “to move or travel from one place to another” (Oxford, 2010, p. 343). Its equivalent in the target language is “تذهب”.

As shown in the table (13), the majority of the respondents (32) gave the exact translation of this word in Arabic, using the equivalent word “تذهب”. However, the rest of the sample (8) provided inaccurate renditions in the suggested context by giving this set of Arabic renditions: “تأتي, , تعود, تنتقل, تأخذ” This maybe an indication of their misunderstanding of meaning that the word denotes.

**Sentence 2:** Where does this road go to?

**Table 14***Second Translation of the Word “Go”*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency of occurrence</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>Accurate</b>	10	25%
<b>Acceptable</b>	02	05%
<b>Inaccurate</b>	28	70%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%

In the second sentence, the polysemous word “go” was used in the meaning of “to lead or to reach a place or time” (Oxford, 2010, p. 343). Its equivalent in Arabic language is “يؤدي”.

As illustrated in table (14), only two respondents (2) gave an acceptable translation using the word “يوصل”. Ten respondents (10) succeeded in giving the accurate equivalents of the word go in Arabic using the word “يؤدي”. While, the twenty-eight (28) respondents failed in guessing the exact meaning, giving renditions like “يأخذ, يعود”, and “يذهب”, which is the primary meaning of the verb “go” not intended in this sentence. Which makes the sentence meaningless. This maybe because those respondents know only the primary meaning of this word.

**Sentence 3:** The clock doesn't go.

**Table 15: Third Translation of the Word "Go"**

Options	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage %
Accurate	10	25%
Acceptable	04	10%
Inaccurate	26	65 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

In the third sentence, the intended meaning of the polysemous word "goes" is "to work correctly" (Oxford, 2010, p.343). its equivalent in Arabic is "تعمل".

As illustrated in table (15) above, ten respondents (10) translated the word accurately as "تعمل". Only four respondents (4) provided an acceptable translation which is "معطلة". However, the majority of respondents (26) gave inaccurate translations with Arabic verbs like "ينفذ, تمضي, تمشي, تنتهي", and "يذهب", which merely conveys the primary meaning of the verb "go". These mistranslations may be because respondents could not understand the meaning of the word in the context and in some cases depend on their interpretation of the whole sentence.

### 3.4.1.2. Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire Results

The data obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire are presented in seven (7) tables below.

**Q1: Do you like translation tasks?**

a. Yes

b. No

**Table 16*****Student's Opinions about translation***

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>a. Yes</b>	30	75%
<b>b. No</b>	10	25%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%

This question is designed to know respondents' attitude about translation tasks. Here, we notice that the majority of respondents 75% (30 students) affirmed that they like translation. On the other hand, only 25% (10 respondents) asserted that they do not like translation tasks. This result seems to indicate that most of the respondents are interested in translation tasks and in improving their translation accuracy. However, the minority, which does not like translation, may have reasons for holding such an attitude to translation tasks. Maybe, because they have difficulties at the level of translation.

**Q 2: How do you assess your capacity in translation tasks?**

- a. Excellent**
- b. Very good**
- c. Good**
- d. Average**
- e. Bad**
- f. Very bad**

**Table 17***Student's Levels in Translation*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>a. Excellent</b>	01	2.5%
<b>b. Very good</b>	02	05%
<b>c. Good</b>	10	25%
<b>d. Average</b>	22	55%
<b>e. Bad</b>	04	10%
<b>f. Very bad</b>	01	2.5%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%

From the table (17) above, it can be noticed that 22 respondents believe that their level in translation is “average”, accounting for 55% of the respondents. The level “good” was ticked by 10 respondents (25%), a percentage that is consistent with the respondents’ performance in the test because the majority of the respondents managed to produce an acceptable or even an accurate translation. On the other hand, only one respondent claimed that his level in translation is “excellent”, accounting for (2.5%), 4 respondents confessed that their level is “bad”, accounting for (10%), and one respondent confessed that his level is “very bad”, accounting for (2.5%). respondents who said that their levels are “bad” and “very bad” is proven by the number of mistakes found in the respondents’ translation of the sentences in terms of grammar the test.

**Q 3: In which direction of translation do you find difficulties?**

**a. From English into Arabic**

**b. From Arabic into English**

c. Both

**Table 18**

*The direction of translation that is difficult for students*

Options	Frequency	Percentage %
a. From English into Arabic	18	45%
b. From Arabic into English	17	42.5%
c. Both	05	12.5%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%

From table 18, we noticed that 18 respondents (45%) see, as an answer to the question three, that translation from English into Arabic is difficult, while 17 respondents (42.5%) see that it is translation from Arabic into English which is difficult. Only 5 respondents (12.5%) see that both directions of translations pose problems.

**Q4: At which level do you encounter translation difficulties?**

a. Grammar

b. Vocabulary

**Table 19**

*Students' difficulties in translation*

Options	Frequency	Percentage %
a. Grammar	11	27.5%
b. Vocabulary	29	72.5%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%



Based on the data obtained in 19, (29) respondents (72.5%) said that they encounter translation difficulties at the level of vocabulary. This result is consistent with respondents' inability to comprehend the meaning of some words within the sentences in the test by leaving blanks and sometimes giving inaccurate translations of polysemous words. This can be justified by their lack of vocabulary and their unfamiliarity with some English words. On the other hand, only 11 respondents (27.5%) indicated that they have problems at the grammatical level, a reality reflected in their inability to deal with the structure and tenses of the sentences when attempting to translate from English into Arabic.

**Q5: Did you find any difficulty in translating the previous sentences of the test?**

a. Yes

b. No

**Table 20**

*Difficulties of translating sentences in the test*

Options	Frequency	Percentage %
a. Yes	22	55%
b. No	18	45%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%

On the basis of the results presented in table 5, (22) students (55%) indicated that they found difficulties in translating the sentences in the test. However, almost half (45%) of the respondents claimed that they didn't find difficulties.

**Q6: At which stage did you encounter problems in translating polysemous words?**

a. At the comprehension stage

b. At the rendition level stage

**Table 21**

*The stage of difficulty in translating polysemous words*

Options	Frequency	Percentage %
a. At the comprehension level	32	80%
b. At the rendition level	08	20%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%

As table 6 above demonstrates, we notice that the overwhelming majority (80%) of respondents encounter difficulties in translating polysemous words in the comprehension stage. This means that they find it difficult to understand the intended meaning of polysemous words in the sentences. This might be explained by the answer given to question 5 in which the majority of respondents admitted that they have more problems at the vocabulary level due to the lack of such vocabulary. On the other hand, only (20%) claimed that they have problems with polysemous words at the rendition stage. This can be explained by their inability in finding the equivalents of the source polysemous words in the target language even though they understood the intended meaning of the polysemous words in question.

**Q7: On which factor did you rely in translating the polysemous words in the test?**

a. by sticking to the primary meaning of the word

b. by relying on the context of the sentences

c. Others

**Table 22***Factors relied on for translating polysemous words in the test*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>a. by sticking to the common meaning of the word</b>	06	15%
<b>b. by relying on the context of the sentences</b>	34	85%
<b>c. Others</b>	00	00%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%

From the results above, it can be noticed that almost all the respondents (34) regarded the context as the best factor to rely on translating polysemous words. This means that the surrounding words especially the contextual clues help students in translation. On the other, only six (6) respondents claimed that they relied on the primary meaning of the polysemous words. This can be regarded as a sign on the part of these respondents of their unawareness of the multiple meanings that a word might have.

### **3.4.2. Discussion and Interpretation of the Research Tools**

This part provides a discussion and interpretation of the results obtained by means of the students questionnaire and the test. Based on those results, one can extract several conclusions which are made up by making a correlation between the students' performance in the test and their responses in the questionnaire. The findings of the questionnaire and the test are interpreted below.

#### **3.4.2.1. Discussion and Interpretation of Results from the Students' Test**

The test is administered for the aim of revealing respondents' capacity in translating polysemous words from English into Arabic and to identify the difficulties that they face in doing such kind of words and interpret the reasons that may lead to their mistranslation of the

target polysemous words. On the basis of the results obtained from the analysis of the test, it can be noticed that nearly all of the respondents relied on the primary meaning when it comes to the translation of target polysemous words ‘make’, ‘take’, ‘go’, ‘alive’, and ‘break’ in the first sentence selected from each sample which results in turns in accurate translation in the target language Arabic. This indicates that the primary meaning of the polysemous words is easily acquired by respondents both in Arabic and English language. Moreover, EFL third respondents are more familiar with the primary meaning because of the fact that the primary meaning of polysemous words is more frequently used than their extended meanings.

However, almost all of the respondents failed in giving the accurate translation of the extended meanings of the suggested polysemous words in the second and third sentences from each sample. Thus, they interpreted each polysemous word by its primary or common meaning where the extended meaning is required. For example, some respondents translated the polysemous word break in ‘The prisoner broke the jail.’ by its primary meaning as ‘كسر’ and ‘حطم’, which is a wrong translation because it makes no sense in this context, since “break” in this context means ‘to escape from a prison’. Thus, the word must be rendered as “هرب” or “فر”. The same problem occurs with other polysemous words in this study. For example, some respondents relied on the primary meaning of the word “alive” where the extended meaning is required in the context of ‘The Lake was alive with fish’. Thus, respondents translate ‘alive’ as “حي” which have to be interpreted by the extended meaning “تبع” in the target language. Again, the same case occurred with the polysemous word “take” in the third sentence in sample four in which respondents translate it in Arabic as “سأخذ” where the extended meaning of this word which is “اعتبر” is required in the suggested context ‘I will take this to be your final offer’. The same problem of mistranslation occurs in the rendition of the polysemous word ‘go’ in the second sentence ‘Where does this road go to?’ in which they interpret it by its common meaning “يذهب” where the extended meaning

“يؤدي” have to be used. A similar case occurred with the polysemous word ‘make’ in the context of ‘The house is made of stone’ where normally respondents have to translate it in Arabic as “بني” or “شيد” not as “صنع” which is the primary meaning and it is wrong in this context. This problem of mistranslation in the previous polysemous words in which respondents gave the primary meaning of each polysemous word where the extended meaning is required can be due to the respondents’ inability to understand the context where the polysemous words were embedded or by their unawareness of the extended meaning of the suggested polysemous words which ends up by sticking to their primary meanings when translating them from English into Arabic.

Moreover, some respondents mistook some words for others, resulting in the misunderstanding of the whole context, and in turn, in the mistranslation of the polysemous words. For example, in the sentence ‘The lake was alive with fish’, some learners mistook the word ‘lake’ for ‘lack’ This contradicts the appropriate meaning of the sentence that leads to the translation of the polysemous word alive as “حاضرا” in their Arabic translation model “كان الحظ حاضرا مع السمكة” which did not convey neither the intended meaning of the polysemous word alive nor the intended meaning of the whole sentence. The same problem occurs with the polysemous word “alive” in the context ‘We don’t know whether he is alive or dead’ where respondents mistook the word “whether” with “weather” as these words have the same pronunciation. This problem may be due to respondents’ lack of concentration that results in an inaccurate rendition of the polysemous words in the suggested contexts

Furthermore, some respondents provided acceptable translations when they could not guess the accurate meaning of some polysemous words and translate them depending on their understanding of the context. For example, “break” in the sentence ‘We must break for lunch’ is translated as “نتوقف”. The same thing occurred when the respondents were asked to translate the polysemous word “make” in the context ‘The house is made of stone’ by giving

the Arabic word “مصنوع” which is an adjective derived from the verb “صنع”. The same thing with the word **alive**” in the context ‘Before touching the electricity, you have to be alive to the danger’ in which respondents tried to give acceptable Arabic equivalents instead of using the exact meaning by rendering it in Arabic as: and. “على علم” a similar case is that with the polysemous words **”alive”** in the context ‘the lake was alive of fish’. When they used the Arabic equivalents “ملينة”. again, the same thing occurred with the polysemous word ‘go’ in the context ‘the clock doesn’t go’ when they used the Arabic adjective “معطلة”. These acceptable translations can be explained by respondents understanding of the context even though they did not match exactly the accurate intended meaning of the target polysemous words with their equivalents in the target language Arabic.

As far as the irrelevant translations of the target polysemous words are concerned, a number of mistranslations have been counted. For example, in the following translations:

“المنزل معبى بالحجارة” and not “كسر الصبي النافذة”. Also, in the context “المنزل معبى بالحجارة” and “شيد المنزل بالحجارة” instead of “يتكون المنزل من الحجارة ما نوع الحذاء الذي”. The same thing with “أعجبك؟” instead of “ما مقاس الأحذية التي تلبسها؟”. Also, in “الوقت ينتهي, الوقت يمضي” instead of “قبل أن تلمس الكهرباء عليك أن تتنبه للعواقب ” instead of “أن تعيش الخطر عليك”. Again, in “الساعة لا تعمل”.

The mistranslations above may be explained by the respondents’ inability in understanding the exact meaning of the context and in some cases depend on their interpretation of the whole sentence. Besides, maybe because some respondents thought that the linguistic context was not enough to get the right meaning of the polysemous words for that reason they related the contextual cues available and surround the target polysemous words with different situations in which the addressed sentences might be uttered. Thus, they gave inaccurate renditions of the polysemous words.

### 3.4.2.2. Interpretation and Discussion of Student Questionnaire Results

The main aim of the questionnaire is to get a general idea about the respondents' background in translation and the kind of problem that they may face during translation in general and polysemous words in particular. Besides, it aimed at identifying the factors that they relied on when translating such kind of words in the test.

On the basis of the results obtained from the analysis of the student questionnaire, it can be noticed that there is a clear connection between the results of the question that was addressed to respondents about their translation level in which more than half of the participants in this study claimed that they had an average level of translation. Hence, their response to that question is consistent with the difficulties they face when translating polysemous words in the test because most of the respondents gave inaccurate translation when it comes to the translation of the extended meaning of the polysemous words. Moreover, the questionnaire revealed that a high number of respondents, representing 72.5%, consider that they find difficulties in translation at the vocabulary level more than at the grammar level and this is shown when analysing respondents' test because most of them lack vocabulary knowledge of some words that surround the target polysemous words in the test.

Concerning the difficulties in translating polysemous words, a high percentage of the respondents, accounting for 80%, agreed that the comprehension stage was the main difficulty that faced them in translating these kinds of words, as they found it difficult to guess the intended extended meanings of the polysemous words, which resulted in providing inaccurate translations. They sometimes stuck to the primary meaning of the target polysemous words as is shown in their translations.

As far as the factors that are used in translating polysemous words, most of the respondents, with a percentage of 85%, claimed that they relied on the context of the

sentences to translate those words. However, this percentage did not reflect the respondents' use of the context of the sentences because a high number of respondents stuck to the common meaning of the source polysemous words, producing nonsense translations.

### **3.5. Limitations of the Study**

This study was constrained by insufficient time allocated to the analysis of the translation of sentences in a deeper way. Besides, the special circumstances during this academic year in the Algerian university posed a problem with regard to the administration of the research tools because there were only a number of limited students that we could barely convince to participate in the study by answering the questionnaire and translating the sentences of the test.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter aimed to test the students' performance in translating polysemous words from English into Arabic in practice and to uncover the potential problems they faced during the translation of this kind of words. The analysis of the two research tools revealed that even though third-year EFL students were supposed to be aware of the phenomenon of polysemy in language; they found problems when it came to translating the English source polysemous words into Arabic. This was manifested particularly in the mistakes they committed in the rendition of some of the words given in the translation task.



### **General conclusion**

The current study was carried out to investigate third-year EFL students' problems of translating polysemous words from English into Arabic, particularly to uncover the potential problems they encountered in translating such kind of words.

The analysis and interpretation of data in the third chapter allows for answering the three questions raised in the general introduction and hence the confirmation or disconfirmation of the assumptions.

As an answer to the first research question, the analysis revealed that the difficulties that third year EFL students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben-Yahia faced were mainly due to comprehension problems of the extended meanings of the source polysemous words, and sometimes to rendition problems.

As an answer to the second research question, it was revealed that the students generally relied on the primary meaning of the target polysemous words to the detriment of the context, even though this did not convey the meaning intended from the polysemous word in question, which in turn resulted in none-sense translations.

As an answer to the third research question, the analysis also revealed that the students often disregarded the extended meanings of the polysemous word, rushing to interpret it in its core meaning, which led them to erroneously translate it.

Consequently, the research findings confirmed all the three assumptions.

**Pedagogical Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings of this study, it is recommended that extensive reading should be adopted by students in order to enrich their vocabulary in the English language as it helps in acquiring new vocabulary rapidly used in different meanings and different situations.

In addition, teachers should expose students to translation tasks by providing them texts that include polysemous words. Besides, they should draw the students' attention to the fact that reliance on the core meaning is not always the appropriate strategy comprehend the meaning of polysemous words in the source language. Moreover, they should expose students to unfamiliar contexts where polysemous words might be found. Furthermore, students have to learn new vocabulary in a variety of contexts, and they were even encouraged to productively use what they learnt through speaking and writing activities. This, perhaps, would enhance in turn their acquisition of newer English vocabulary, including polysemous vocabulary.

**Suggestion for further research**

Starting from the findings of this study, we believe that following avenues can be suggested:

- The role of reading in the acquisition of polysemous words by EFL students.
- The role of contextual clues in translating polysemous words.
- Investigating the role of polysemous words in enhancing EFL students' vocabulary.
- The effect of the mother tongue on the translation of English polysemous words.
- Investigating EFL students' strategies in translating polysemous words.

**References**

- Alnamer, S. A. S. (2017). On the Awareness of English Polysemous Words by Arabic-Speaking EFL learners. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 8(2), 112-121.
- Baalbaki, M. (2004). *El-Mawarid: A Modern English Arabic Dictionary*. Beirut and Lebanon: Dar El- Ilm Lil-Malayen
- Boukrkia, A. (2003). *tarjamatu al-alfaz al-muta'adidat al-ma'anī mina al-injliziyaiya ila al-'arabiya*, Unpublished Magistère Dissertation, University of Algiers.
- Catford, J.C. (1965). *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cruse, A. (2000). *Meaning in Language: An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Cruse, A. (2006). *A Glossary of Semantics and Pragmatics*. Finland: Edinburgh University Press.
- Cruse, D. A. (1986). *Lexical Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (2008). *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. (6<sup>th</sup> ed). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd
- Fenk-Oczlon, G., Fenk, A. (2010). Frequency Effects on the Emergence of Polysemy and Homophony. *International Journal of Information Technologies and Knowledge*, 4(2), 103-109.
- Finch, G. (2000). *Linguistic Terms and Concepts*. New York: Palgrave
- Ghazala, H. (1995). *Translation as Problems and Solutions. A Textbook for University Students and Trainee Translators*. Beirut: Dar El- Ilm Lil-Malayen
- Karami, H, S. (1995). *Al-MughniAl-Kabir*. Lebanon. Library of Lebanon.

## TRANSLATION AND POLYSEMOUS WORDS

- Kovács, É. (2011). Polysemy in Traditional vs. Cognitive Linguistics. *Eger Journal of English Studies*, XI, 3-19.
- Löbner, S. (2013). *Understanding Semantics*. London and New York: Routledge
- McArthur, T. (Ed). (1992). *The Oxford Companion to the English Language*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Murphy, M. L. (2003). *Semantic Relations and the Lexicon: Antonymy, Synonymy, and other Paradigms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nida, E.A. (1964). *Toward a Science of Translating*. Leiden: Brill
- Ozturk, M. (2018). Acquisition of Noun Polysemy in English as a Foreign Language. *Journal of Foreign Language Education and Technology*, 3(1), 83-109.
- Palmer, F. (1976). *Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ruhl, C. (1989). *On Monosomy: A Study in Linguistic Semantics*. USA: State University of New York Press.
- Seleskovich, D., & Lederer, M. (1993). *Interpréter Pour la Traduire* (3rd ed). Paris: Didier Erudition.
- Singh, Y. K. (2006). *Fundamental of Research Methodology and Statistics*. New Delhi : New Age International Publishers.
- Song, L. (2010). The Role of Context in Discourse Analysis. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 1(6), 876-879.
- Touplikioti, S. (2007). The Teaching of the Polysemous verbs 'make' and 'do' to Greek learners of English: a cognitive linguistic approach, (Doctoral dissertation), University of Thessaloniki.

## TRANSLATION AND POLYSEMOUS WORDS

Trask, R. L. (1999). *Language: The Basics*. (2<sup>th</sup> ed). London and New York: Routledge.

Yule, G. (2006). *The Study of Language*. (3<sup>th</sup> ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yule, G. (2010). *The Study of Language*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zhu, X. (2006) ‘‘No context, no text: The importance of context in Translation’’ (Nizee, Doris and Wendly,Ed.).PLA General Hospital. Retrieved from: [\[www.linguist.org.cn\]](http://www.linguist.org.cn)

**Appendix 01**

**Test**

You are kindly requested to translate the following sentences into Arabic.

**Sample One:**

1. The boy broke the window.

.....

2. We must break for lunch.

.....

3. The prisoner broke the jail.

.....

**Sample Two:**

1. Can you make me a cup of tea?

.....

2. The house is made of stone.

.....

3. She was made a minister of health.

.....

**Sample Three:**

1. We don't know whether he is alive or dead.

.....

TRANSLATION AND POLYSEMOUS WORDS

2. Before touching the electricity, you have to be alive to the danger.

.....

3. The lake was alive with fish.

.....

**Sample Four:**

1. Who's taken my pen ?

.....

2. What size shoes do you take?

.....

3. I will take this to be your final offer.

.....

**Sample five :**

1. She always goes home by bus .

.....

2. Where does this road go to?

.....

3. The clock doesn't go.

.....

## Appendix 02

### The Model Translation of the Test

#### Sample One:

1. The boy broke the window. (Ghazala, 1995,p.98).

كسر الصبي النافذة

2. We must break for lunch.(Ghazala, 1995,p.99).

علينا الاستراحة للغداء

3. The prisoner broke the jail. (Ghazala, 1995,p.99).

فر السجين من السجن

#### Sample Two:

1.Can you make me a cup of tea? (Oxford, 2010, p.482)

هل يمكنك أن تحضر لي كوبا من الشاي

2. The house is made of stone. (Baalbaki,2004,p.552).

بنى / شيد المنزل بالحجارة

3. She was made a minister of health.(Oxford,2010,p.482).

لقد عينت وزيرة للصحة

#### Sample Three:

1. We don't know whether he is alive or dead. (Oxford,2010,p.37).

لا ندري إن كان حيا أم ميت

2. Before touching the electricity, you have to be alive to the danger. (Baalbaki,2004,p.38).



## TRANSLATION AND POLYSEMOUS WORDS

قبل أن تلمس الكهرباء عليك أن تتنبه للعواقب

3. The lake was alive with fish. (Baalbaki,2004,p.38).

كانت البحيرة تعج بالأسماك

### Sample four:

1. Who's taken my pen ? (Oxford,2010,p.802).

من أخذ قلمي؟

2. What size shoes do you take?(Oxford,2010,p.802).

ما مقاس الأحذية التي تلبسها؟

3. I will take this to be your final offer. (Baalbaki,2004,p.946).

سوف اعتبر هذا عرضك الأخير

### Sample five :

1. She always goes home by bus (Oxford,2010,p.343).

هي تذهب للمنزل يومياً بالحافلة

2. Where does this road go to? (Oxford,2010,p.343).

إلى أين يؤدي هذا الطريق؟

3. The clock doesn't go. (Oxford,2010,p.343).

الساعة لا تعمل

**Appendix 03**

**University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia/jijel**  
**Faculty of Letters and Languages**  
**Department of English**

**Questionnaire**

Dear students,

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire, which is an attempt to gather information as a part of a research work . It aims at investigating the problems that EFL third year students might encounter in translating polysemous words from English into Arabic. We would be thankful if you could sincerely read and answer the following questions. Please tick in the appropriate corresponding box and give a full statement whenever necessary.

1. Do you like translation tasks?

Yes

No

2. How do you assess your capacity in translation tasks?

a. Excellent

d. Average

b. Very good

e. Bad

c. Good

f. Very bad

3. In which direction of translation do you find difficulties?

a. From English into Arabic

b. From Arabic into English

c. Both

4. At which level do you encounter translation difficulties?

a. grammar

b. vocabulary

## TRANSLATION AND POLYSEMOUS WORDS

5. Did you find any difficulty in translating the previous sentences of the test?

Yes

No

6. At which stage did you encounter problems in translating polysemous words?

a. At the comprehension stage

b. At the rendition level stage

7. On which factor did you rely in translating the polysemous words in the test?

a. By sticking to the common meaning of the word

b. By relying on the context of the sentences

c. Others.....

.....

Thank you in advance for your collaboration

### ملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في ترجمة طلاب السنة الثالثة في اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى للكلمات المتعددة المعاني من الإنجليزية إلى العربية، وتسلط الضوء على الصعوبات التي يواجهها هؤلاء الطلاب في ترجمة هذا النوع من الكلمات. وللإجابة على أسئلة البحث، افترضنا في هذه الدراسة أن الصعوبات التي يواجهها طلاب السنة الثالثة في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى في ترجمة الألفاظ المتعددة المعاني قد يرجع إلى كل من مشكلات الفهم والنقل، وأنهم قد ينجحوا إلى نقل المعنى الأساسي في ترجمتها على حساب السياق وأنهم قد يتجاهلوا معانيها الثانوية في الترجمة. وتم جمع البيانات عن طريق استبيان موجه لطلاب السنة الثالثة في اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى الذين تمت دعوتهم أيضاً إلى ترجمة جمل منتقاة تحتوي على ألفاظ متعددة المعاني في اختبار الترجمة. وأظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن الصعوبات التي واجهها طلاب السنة الثالثة في اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى كانت بشكل أساسي بسبب مشاكل الفهم للمعاني الممتدة الثانوية للألفاظ المتعددة المعاني، وفي بعض الأحيان إلى مشاكل النقل. كما أظهرت النتائج أيضاً أن الطلاب اعتمدوا عموماً على المعنى الأساسي للكلمات المتعددة المعاني على حساب السياق، على الرغم من أن هذا لم ينقل المعنى المقصود من الكلمة المتعددة المعاني المراد ترجمتها، مما أدى بدوره إلى ترجمات بلا معنى، بسبب تجاهلهم للمعاني الثانوية للألفاظ المتعددة المعاني، ومسارعتهم لتفسيرها في معناها الأساسي، مما دفعهم إلى ترجمتها بشكل خاطئ.

### **Résumé**

La présente étude tente d'examiner la traduction des mots polysémiques de l'anglais en arabe par les étudiants de troisième année d'anglais de l'Université Mohammed Seddik Benyahia- Jijel, mettant en vedette les difficultés rencontrées par ces étudiants pour la traduction de ce type de mots. Pour répondre aux questions de notre recherche, il a été supposé dans cette étude que les difficultés rencontrées par les étudiants de troisième année d'anglais à l'Université Mohammed Seddik Benyahia-Jijel pour traduire les mots polysémiques seraient dues à des problèmes de compréhension et de restitution, ce qui les pousserait à rendre le sens courant des mots polysémiques anglais vers l'arabe au détriment du contexte, tout en ignorant les sens étendus du mot polysémique en question. Les données ont été recueillies au moyen d'un questionnaire adressé aux étudiants de troisième année d'anglais à l'Université Mohammed Seddik Benyahia-Jijel, qui ont été également invités à traduire des phrases contenant des mots polysémiques lors d'un test de traduction. Les résultats de l'étude ont montré que les difficultés rencontrées par les étudiants de troisième année d'anglais à l'Université Mohammed Seddik Benyahia étaient principalement dues à des problèmes de compréhension du sens étendu des mots polysémiques sources, et parfois à des problèmes de restitution. Les résultats ont également montré que les étudiants s'appuyaient généralement sur la signification première des mots polysémiques cibles au détriment du contexte, même si cela ne transmettait pas le sens voulu par le mot polysémique en question, ce qui aboutissait à des traductions sans sens, et qu'ils ont souvent ignoré les sens étendus des mots polysémiques, s'empressant de les interpréter dans leur sens le plus courant, ce qui les a conduits à les traduire à tort.