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Homograph in English and Arabic

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Abstract: This research is a survey of homograph in Arabic and English. In English, homograph is partial homonymy. There are many definitions of homograph, yet it can be defined as a word similar to another word in spelling and different in pronunciation and meaning. In Arabic, homographs are words shaped similarly with different meanings and pronunciation.

Absence of vowel points make the homographic words ambiguous. So, homograph may create a problem in Arabic. This problem is due to many reasons.

1. Introduction

This research is a survey of homograph in Arabic and English. In English, homograph is partial homonymy. There are many definitions of homograph, yet it can be defined as a word similar to another word in spelling and different in pronunciation and meaning.

In Arabic, homographs are words shaped similarly with different meanings and pronunciation.

Absence of vowel points make the homographic words ambiguous. So, homograph may create a problem in Arabic.

This problem is due to many reasons.

Aims of the study:

1-This study tries to investigate homograph in Arabic and English.

2- Making a comparison between the two languages.

1-1 Homograph in English

-Definitions of Homograph

Hartman and Stroke (1976:105) and (Crystal 2012:230-231) agree that homograph is a type of spelling in which there is one to one correspondence between graphic signs and sounds. Such homographic systems are the phonetic transcription, or the alphabets of some languages, which have a phonetic alphabet.

‘Heterography’ is the opposite to the term homograph. Heterography is the spelling system of languages like English and French.

Lyons (1982:71), Crystal (2003:220) and Dictionary of Literary Terms (:9) state that homographs are words with identical spelling and different meanings. Examples,

(1) wind (blowing) and wind (verb- clock). According to this definition ambiguity may occur between homograph and polysemy, because the element of pronunciation is ignored.

Yule (2006:120) defines polysemy as one form with several meanings. For example.

(2) foot (of person, of bed, of mountain).

Greenbaum and Nelson (2009:257) define homographs as words share the same spelling but not necessarily the same pronunciation. For example, (3) row ('line of objects') when it rhymes with no or 'quarrel' when it rhymes with how.

Homographs are words with the same spelling and pronunciation but differ in meaning and etymologies. There is no confusion between homographs and homonymy.

(Donald A. Drury:146-147) JOURNAL OF REFERENTIAL AND LINGUISTICS

1-2 Homographs and Heteronyms:

Heteronyms are words with identical spelling but differ in meaning and pronunciation. For example, (4) dove /dʌv/ (a bird) and /dəʊv/, the past tense of the verb dive. (Fromkin et al,2003:180).

Crystal (2012:227) states that heteronym is a term used in semantic analysis to refer to lexemes that display the homonym, i.e. they have the same form in one medium only (viz, speech or writing), but differ in meaning. The examples of heteronym would be the Homograph, (5) row (a boat) and row (noise).

Heteronym is a relatively seldom term designating words with the similar spelling but different meanings, pronunciation and derivations. Heteronyms are non-homophonic homographs. For example, (6) lead (the verb) and lead (the metal). (Donald A. Drury, 146-147) THE JOURNAL OF REFERENTIAL LINGUISTICS.

2- Homonymy in English: Definitions and Scope:

Homonyms: words share the same pronunciation with another word but different meanings and spelling. There is a difference between homonymy and near homonym, Examples, there and there, whereas near homonyms are not exactly alike, e.g.,

(7) loose and lose. (Watkins et al,2001:269).

Richards and Schmidt (2002:24) claim that homonyms are words which share the same written form and pronunciation but differ in meaning. For example, (8) bat (flying creature) and bat (used in sports).

Yule (2003:120) states that homonyms are words (spoken or written) have the similar form but separate meanings. Examples, (9) pupil (at

school) and pupil (in the eye). Homonym is a word has a similar sound as another word but differs in meaning. For example, (10) bare and bear. According to these examples, homonyms are two words differ in meaning and form, the similarity in pronunciation only. (Dictionary of Literary Terms:91).

Crystal (2008:231) claims that homonymy is a term used in semantic analysis to refer to lexical items that have the same spelling but different meanings.

2-1 Homonyms categorization in English

The Divisions of Homonymy in English:

Complete (full, absolute) homonymy: words share the same spelling and pronunciation, but different meanings. Examples, (11) 'ear' the organ of hearing and 'ear' refers to the top part of a plant which produces grain. (Lyons,1982,27, Allan ,1986:150 and International Journal of English Language and Linguistics Research,2017:40-49).

Partial Homonymy: Homograph and homophone are considered partial homonymy. Homograph refers to words spelt similarly but have different sound and meanings. Homophones are words with the same sound but differ in spelling and meanings. For instance, (12) 'meat' /mi:t/, the flesh of an animal and 'meat' /mi:t/ a verb relates of the act of coming. (Ibid)

Lobner (2002:43) divides homonym into two formal types:

Total Homonym: two lexemes have unrelated different meanings, but they share all distinctive properties, grammatical category and grammatical properties, the set of grammatical form, sound form and writing system.

Partial homonymy: if two words have different separate meanings concord in some but not all of their grammatical forms. For example, the verb (13) lie (1) (lay, lain) and lie (2) (lied, lied). Partial homonymy may cause ambiguity in some context, e.g., (don't lie in bed!), but can be recognized in other contexts (he lay /lied in bed).

Farghal (1998:130) states that homonymy could be a major source of problem in translation or in communication.

3- Definitions of Homonymy in Arabic:

Al-Dhamin(1990:66) claims that in the Glorious Qur'an homonym is called 'al wju:h walnada'er'

Al-Khuli(2001:141) and (Mansour ,2009:1) Homonymy is a word or sentence with identical spelling and multiple meanings, e.g.,

﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ﴾ **قال تعالى:** ﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ﴾
 الرَّحِيمِ **صدقة الله العظيم** ﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ﴾ **قال تعالى:** ﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ﴾
 (14) (البقرة:216)

(15) (الْحَبْءُ الْمَرْمَلُ ﴿٨٣﴾ آل عمران: 83)

﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ﴾ **بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ** قال تعالى : ﴿

الرَّحِيمِ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿

﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ﴾

(16) (الأحقاف:15)

(Ibid.:685) (كُرْهَا) (with hardship)

﴿الْبُورِ، الْقَمَاحِ، السَّجْدَةِ، الْإِنْبَاءِ، سُبْحَةَ، وَقِيلَ، يَسَّ، الصَّافَاتِ، هَٰذَا الْبَيْتِ، عَافِي، عَافِي، فَصَلِّ، الشُّوْرِ﴾

(against their will) (كُرْهَا) (Ibid.:109) (الزَّخْرَفُ الدُّجَانُ الْجَانِيَةُ الْاِحْقَافُ) (النساء:19) (17)

النَّصْلُ الْقَصْرُ الْعَبَكِيُّ الْفُفْرُ الْفَسَانُ السَّجْدَةُ الْإِخْرَاقُ سَمَكُ قَطْلُ بَيْنَ الصَّافَيْنِ قَلْبُ

(مریم: 59) (18)

In Arabic, pun (aljenas) is defined as two words share the same pronunciation but differ in meaning. Pun is very beautiful art in literature.

It is divided into two parts: verbal pun(jenaslafdi), which is the concern of our topic and lexical pun (jenas lafdi).

-The first part is (Verbal pun), it consists of two kinds, the first is called 'complete pun' (jenas tam) two words are identical in letters, number, their vowel points and in arrangement. This type is similar to the homonymy. For example,

﴿الْأَعْرَافُ﴾ الْأَنْفَالُ الْبَنَاتِ يُونُسَ هُودَ يُوسُفَ الرَّحْمَٰنَ ﴿البقرة: 42﴾ (19)

(Al-Sakaki,1987:141, Matloob and Al-Baseer Mansour,1999:450 and Lashin,1999:158).

The second type of verbal pun is known as incomplete pun (jenas naqis). In Arabic, this type has many names. It is defined as two words differ in one major factor, letter, number, arrangement and diacritics. This type of pun is similar to homograph in English. Examples,

﴿ هُوَ يُؤْتِيكَ الرِّسَالَاتِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْحَجَرِ الْبَقَاةِ الْكَلِمَاتِ مَرْيَمَ طَلَّةَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ الْحَجَرِ الْمُؤْتَمِنِينَ
الْمُؤْتَمِنِينَ الْفُرْقَانِ الشَّجَرَةِ النَّبَاتِ الْبَصَرِ الْعَبَكُوتِ الْبُرُوقِ لَيْسَانَ السَّبْعَةِ الْأَجْنَائِ سَكَنًا قَطْرًا سِرًا
الصَّافَاتِ حُونَ الْبَرِّزِ عَنَافِئَ فَضْلَتِ الشُّوَرِ الْخُرُوفِ الدُّجَانِ ﴾ (النساء: 36)(20)

The first (الجنب) means the neighbour who is far of you .The second (الجنب) means the friend in travel or business.

(Al- Sakaki,:435 and Abu-Haltam et al,2009:412).

Abu-Rabia (2002:305) points out that homograph in Arabic is identical words shaped carry multiple meanings and pronunciation if they are not vowelized.

Nasir Ad-Deen (2010:1-2) states that, pun is classified into verbal pun, that is subdivided into complete, incomplete, absolute, tail, present, successive and etc.

Pun is classified as following:

1-Tam (تام)

In this type of pun, the words have the same form and spelling but of different meanings. Homonymy is this pun's counterpart in English. For example,

﴿ الْإِغْرَافُ الْأَمْسَالُ الْيَوْمُ يُؤْتِيكَ الرِّسَالَاتِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْحَجَرِ الْبَقَاةِ الْكَلِمَاتِ مَرْيَمَ طَلَّةَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ الْحَجَرِ الْمُؤْتَمِنِينَ ﴾

﴿

(الروم: 55)

2-Naqis (ناقص)

In this kind of pun, two similar words differ in the number of letters, extra letters are added to one of the two words, the position of these letters are either in the beginning, middle or at the end. Examples, (البحر، الير).

3-Modarii (مضارع)

This type of pun can be defined as identical words differ only in one letter in each word. This type appears when the place of articulation of the two different letters is almost the same, for example, (خيل , خير) .

4-Lahik (لاحق)

This type of pun occurs when similar words are differentiated both by one letter in each word and in their place of articulation. For example,

﴿ اللَّهُ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ ﴾ (الهمزة: 1)

5-Moharraf (محرف)

Similar words differ in diacritics of the two words for example,

﴿ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ قَالَ تَعَالَى : ﴿﴾ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴾

﴿ الرَّحِيمِ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمِ ﴾ (آل عمران: 92)

﴿ الْحَبَشَةُ الْمُنْتَحَنَةُ الصَّنْفُ الْجَمْعَةُ الْمَنَافِقُونَ النَّجَابُ الطَّلَاقُ الرَّجْعُ الْمَلِكُ الْقَبْلَةُ ﴾ (الطور: 28)

This type of pun is similar to the homograph in English.

6-Mosahhaf (مصحف)

Two similar words differ in dots position which may be above or below the letters. Examples, (يحسبون, يحسنون).

7- Kalb (قلب)

Two words receive reversion of the letters, which is either in the whole or one part of the structure of one of the two words. For example, (فكيه, كفيه).

8-Mostawi (مستوي)

This type of pun is usually found in phrases or sentences in which they can be read from backwards or forwards. For example,

﴿ رَبِّكَ فَكْبِرْ ﴾

(المدثر: 3).

9- Ishtikak (اشتقاق)

This type can be defined as the derivation of two different words from the same root, e.g., (مسلم و مسلمون) ..

10-Shibh Ishtikak (شبه اشتقاق)

The derivation of identical words from different roots, e.g., (قال و قالين) (Hathat and Hemim, 2015:27-28).

Pun usage in Arabic: It is used in riddles, jokes, humour, hiding truth, literature, and Holy Quran

(Ibid:30-31).

5-Sources of ambiguity in Arabic -5

Attia (2008: 31-33) claims that homograph is one of the sources of ambiguity in Arabic, because there are many words in Arabic are homographic. These words have the same spelling though the pronunciation is different. So, in this case homographs create problem in Arabic .The elements of this problem are as following:

- Assimilation and deletion, these factors consecutively produce inflected forms which can belong to two or more different words. For example, (21)

يعد-1

يعد (أعد) , يعد (عد) يعد (عاد) يعد (وعد) يعد (أعاد)
{prepare} {count} {return} {promise} {bring back}

- Some words are identical in form and one of them has doubled sound which does not appear in writing, for example,

﴿ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴾ (البقرة: 31) (22)

﴿ شُورَى ﴾

(البقرة: 32) (23)

- Some inflectional operations ,such as (active, passive and imperative forms) underlie a change in pronunciation without any apparent orthographical effect because of lack of short vowel (diacritics). This phenomenon causes ambiguity.

﴿سُورَةُ الْفَاتِحَةِ﴾ الْبَقَرَةُ الْغَاثَةُ الْغَاثَةُ الْغَاثَةُ الْغَاثَةُ الْغَاثَةُ الْغَاثَةُ الْغَاثَةُ الْغَاثَةُ الْغَاثَةُ
الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ الْحَمْدُ الْحَمْدُ الْحَمْدُ الْحَمْدُ الْحَمْدُ الْحَمْدُ الْحَمْدُ الْحَمْدُ الْحَمْدُ الْحَمْدُ
الشَّجَرَةُ الْبَقَرَةُ الْغَاثَةُ الْغَاثَةُ الْغَاثَةُ

(البقرة: 91) (24)

﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ﴾ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الرَّحِيمِ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ قَالَ ﴿﴾
(المائدة: 114) (25)

The first (انزل) active, (has sent down).

The second (انزل) passive, (was sent down).

The third (انزل) imperative, (send).

- Homographic words may be created by prefixes and suffixes.
Prefix –t may be 3rd person feminine or 2nd person masculine.

Examples,

1- تدرس (you study) (26)

2- تدرس (she studies) (27)

Another recurring ambiguity is person suffix-t that is shared by four features:

- درست (she studied) (28)

- درست (I studied) (29)

- درست (you-female –studied) (30)

- درست (you –male –studied) (31)

- In the accusative case, the dual is always confused with the plural.
Example s, (32)

﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ﴾ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿﴾ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
(البقرة: 128) (dual form).

(الأحقاف: 15 part of Ayea) ﴿﴾ ﴿﴾ ﴿﴾ ﴿﴾ ﴿﴾

(33) (plural form).

- prefix and suffix may create a form that is homographic with the same spelling word. This is termed “coincidental identity”.

نصر → victory, نصر → we insist (34)

- Clitics can create a form which is homographic with another full word.

(نظري) → theoretical, (نظري) → my vision (35)

- There are also the usual homographs of uninflected words. These words may or may not have the same pronunciation.
ذهب → went , ذهب → gold (36).

Abu-Rabia (2002:305-306) states that the orthography of Arabic language is special and distinctive because of widespread homograph phenomenon in Arabic. Thus, there are two ways to disambiguate reading the Arabic script:

- 1- Vowels are fundamental facilitators in the process of word recognition.
- 2- The sentence context conveys the priming effect to facilitate word recognition when the text is not vowelised.

Reading un-vowelised text is a hard task for all types of readers (adult and skilled).(Ibid).

In everyday situations, Arabic texts are usually un-vocalized that create problems and ambiguity, especially with the homographic words. There is a pattern which is a sequence of vowels and consonants. The application of the pattern on the root of the word can expand into many different words. There are several patterns can affect the consonants of the root and only differ in the vowels they deploy.

Dropping out of the vowels in every day texts can produce a large number of homographs. These words have similar look, but are vocalized and pronounced differently. A good example of homographs related to the root the word /mlk/: /malikun/ (مَلِكٌ) king, /milkun/ (مِلْكٌ) (property), malaka (مَلَكَ) (he owns), mallaka (مَلَّلَكَ) (he gave property to someone), mulika (it was owned), (مُلِكَ) mulika (مُلِكٌ) (he was given property). The absence of vocalization, all these words are written as: {ملك}. (Chahine, Nadin,2012:158).

Hermena et al (2015:3-4) Letters mainly denote consonants sounds , while short vowels are denoted by diacritical marks, which are added to the written letters. The vowel functions to disambiguate the pronunciation of words with similar writing system (homograph). These words have a number of different pronunciations (i.e., heterophones). Heterophonic-homographs are very common in Arabic. For example, (كتب) / ktb/ can be pronounced k^ut^ub, meaning books noun. K^at^ab^a, he wrote (past tense active verb) , k^utib^a, meaning was written (past tense passive verb). The presented examples illustrate (كُتِبَ, كُتِبَ and كُتِبَ) Each one of these words has its specific pronunciation. This example is in contrast to non- diacritised form (كتب) .

The examples above clarify that diacritics also provide information in addition to phonological information.

It is the fact that full diacritics texts add a considerable amount of visual information to the texts. This is in comparison of non diacritised texts. (Ibid:13).

6- 'Triangle of Language':

In Arabic, the triangle of language means that three words spelled similarly but are different in diacritics in which changing the vowel points will change the meaning. So, those three words are homographs. The Arabic language is rich of homographic words. There are nouns and verbs related to this triangle. (Dawood,2001:27).

-Changing of the vowel point may occur in nouns and verbs. In nouns, changing of the vowel point may be on the first, second, third letter. The diacritic change rarely occur on the fourth letter. Changing the vowel points may occur on the first and third letters together. (Ibid:).

In verbs, changing the vowel points or diacritics change may mostly occur on the second letter (عين الفعل) and may transfer to the (فاء الفعل) in the case of geminated verb (الفعل المضاعف) and empty verb (الفعل الأجوف) (Ibid).

The triangle is divided into two kinds: the first of one meaning triangle and the second of various meanings triangle. The second kind is divided into the following divisions:

Change of the vowel point is on the first letter. It is common in nouns.

Examples, (37)

﴿ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْيَتِيمُونَ الْفُقَرَاءُ الشَّجَرَةُ النَّسَمُ الْقَصَصُ الْعَبَكُوتُ الْبُؤْسُ لُثْمَانُ السَّجْدَةِ الْأَجْرَانِ ﴾

سَيْبٌ قَطْرٌ (المنافقون:2)

﴿ النَّجْدُ الْإِسْرَةُ الْكَهْنُ بَرَكِيَّةٌ طَلَّةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ الْحُجَّجُ الْمُتَنَبِّهُونَ الْيَتِيمُونَ الْفُقَرَاءُ الشَّجَرَةُ النَّسَمُ الْقَصَصُ ﴾

﴿ (الأعراف:184)(38) ﴾

﴿ الرَّحِيمِ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمِ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴾ (الفرقان:15) (39)

-Change of the vowel point be on the second letter. It is mostly common in verbs. Examples,

- ﴿ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴾ قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ بِسْمِ ﴾ (هود:98) (40)

﴿ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ ﴾ (الفرقان:23) (41)

قَدِمَ → He came back. قَدُمَ → became old. (42)

-Change of the vowel point be on the third letter which is rare. Examples, (43)

a- to make someone smell something on purpose.

b-to thrust someone on his nose.

c-to overdo learning somebody.

(مُسْعِطُ) means the doer of the preceding meanings. (44)

(مُسْعُطُ) means a dish used by ill people for sneezing. (45)

- Change of the vowel point is on the first and second letter .There are no many words.

a-الأَبْدُ: (many years) along period of time. (46)

b-الإِبْدُ :to have children from slave girls. (47)

c-الأَبْدُ: a person being always angry. (48)

5-Change of the vowel point be on the first and third letter .

The words of this case are few.

a-عَجْرَمَة: running fast. (49)

b-عَجْرَمَة: a short fat woman. (50)

b-عَجْرَمَة: a kind of trees. (51)

6-Change of vowel point is on the fourth letter. This type is very seldom (تفاوت). (52)

Conclusions

There are many phenomena available in Arabic and English because linguistics is universal. So, homograph is one of these phenomena, though there are differences. In English, homonymy is divided into total and partial.

Homograph is considered as partial homonymy. Homograph are words with identical form with different pronunciation and meanings.

On the other hand, in Arabic, there is (pun) (الجناس) which means the harmony of two utterances in one aspect and differ in meanings. Aljenas or (pun) is divided into verbal and lexical.

The verbal pun is divided into complete pun that means two words are identical in letters, number, arrangement and their vowel points. The second division is incomplete pun means two words differ in one major factor, letter, number, arrangement and diacritics. Incomplete pun is like homograph in English.

In Arabic, there is the triangle of language that means three words are identical in pronunciation and differ in diacritics, so this difference in diacritics may cause change in meaning.

Arabic language is rich of homographic words which relate to the triangle of language. Arabic language is a homographic language. Homograph cause a problem in Arabic and English.