Iraqi EFL Learner's Ability To Work Out The Meaning of Homophones From The Context

A paper

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Dedication

To those who believe in you when everyone fails you, to those who supported my faltering steps, to my mother and father, I dedicate this research, and I thank them for their always trust in my abilities.

To my friends and all those who stood next to me and helped me and had a great impact on many obstacles

To all my dear teachers; Who did not hesitate to help me

Abstract

In linguistics, a 'homophone' is one of two or more words that are pronounced the same but differ in meaning, origin, and sometimes spelling. The aim of the present paper is to explore homophony in English as well as one of the lexical relations. Homophony then refers to the phenomenon of words with different meanings having the same sound. Those words are called homophones. Homophony offers a fertile ground for a paper of a small size which falls into five sections. The first deals with introduction about the topic . The second section is concerned with homophony English . Related terms to homophony are also provided in this section with reference to different types of homophony in English. The third section the test. The four section about date analysis while the last section in the conclusion.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1The Problems

If someone hears the sentence I'll meet you in the /aɪl/, it may mean "I'll meet you in the isle" (in which isle indicates an island) or "I'll meet you in the aisle" (in which aisle means a passage between seats). Thus, the ambiguity is due to the two words isle and aisle. Actually, misapprehension may suggest itself due to this phenomenon. In fact, the problem lies in the words that have the same pronunciation and different spelling and meaning, i.e., homophones. Iraqi EFL university students have difficulty (most of the time) in giving the right orthography of these words without confusing the word with its homophone. Furthermore, the vague context enhances the difficulty

This study attempts to find solutions to the following questions:

1.Do the students have enough knowledge about homophone ?

2. Are the students good in recognition levels ?

3. Are the students good in production levels ?

4. In which levels the students are good recognition or production?

1.2 The Aims

This study aims at:

1. Showing light about the knowledge homophone with their types

2. Explaining the difficulties face Iraqi EFL learners in using homophone.

3. Investigating the good level of Iraqi EFL learners in recognition or production.

1.3 The Hypotheses

The study hypothesizes that :

1. There many information knowledge of homophone in English Language.

2. There are many difficulties face Iraqi EFL learners in using homophone.

3. Iraqi learners EFL face difficulties in production level .

1.4 The Procedure

1. Presenting a theoretical background about the homophone.

2. Design testing students from the department of English Language / University of Babylon at fourth grade in the academic year of 2021-2022..

3. Making a conclusion of the study .

1.5 The Limits

This study is limited to finding out the Iraqi EFL knowledge of Homophones include production and recognition levels.

1.6 The Value

It is hoped that this study would be of help to those who have interest in grammar whether they are students or teachers, text book writers , linguists and syllabus designers.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 The Definition of Homophone

In everyday talk, one frequently gives the meaning of words in terms of their relationships. In doing so, one is characterizing the meaning of a word not in terms of its component features, but in terms of its relationship to other words. This procedure has also been used in the semantic description of languages and treated as the analysis of lexical relations. 'Homophony' represents one of the less well-known terms which are often used to describe relationships among words in a language (Yule,1996:118-20) .

In linguistics, a 'homophone' is one of two or more words that are pronounced the same but differ in meaning, origin, and sometimes spelling. Homophony then refers to the phenomenon of words with different meaning having the same sound. Etymologically, homophony is from the Greek "homofonos", where 'homo' means the same, and 'phon' means a sound, literally 'samesounding' (Fromkin and Rodman,1988:211)

Those words are called homonyms or homophones since they may be spelled the same, such as rose (flower) and rose (past tense of "rise") , or differently, like carat, caret, and carrot, or two and too, or know and no. Another example, in English, the spelling of 'saw' can mean at least two different things, i.e., a tool for carpenters or the past tense for the verb 'to see'. Interestingly, the present tense of the same verb also has two meanings, i.e., perception by eye and the religious reference to the seat of power as in "the holy see"(ibid.)

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The book was red .

The book was read .

Reading is allowed in the library .

Reading is aloud in the library

Homophones are often used to create puns and to deceive the reader or to suggest multiple meanings. The last usage is common in poetry and creative literature. An example of this is seen in Dylan Thomas's radio play Under Milk Wood : "The shops in mourning" where mourning can be heard as mourning or morning. Another vivid example is Thomas Hood's poem "Faithless Sally Brown" where toll'd is heard as told or toll'd

They went and told the sexton, and

The sexton toll'd the bell .

Homophone is strictly a relative term, then the words if spoken without context are of ambiguous signification. It is convenient, for instance, to say that-son-and-heir-are both homophones , meaning that each belongs to that particular class of words which without context are of ambiguous signification: and it is convenient also to say that-son-and-sun-and-heir-and-air- are homophones without explaining it is meant that they are mutually homophonous, which is evident. Thus, a physician congratulating a friend on the birth of his first-born might say, 'Now that you have a son and heir, see that he gets enough sun and air (Bridges, 2004:2) .

2.2 Types of Homophone

2.2.1 Oronyms

Homophones in the context of word games are known as 'oronyms'. Oronyms are basically homophones which span words. They work in spoken English because one runs all his words together. Generally the word homophone is used to describe one of a pair or group of words that have the same sound like ant and aunt ; hear and here, whilst oronyms are normally strings of words or phrases that sound the same as another string of words or phrases, but they are spelt differently such as iced ink and I stink. Oronyms usually occur because sometimes in speech it is almost impossible to tell where one word ends and the next begins. The seamlessness of speech can often cause misunderstandings (Pinker,2007:1). Mistakenly hearing an oronym in a song or poem instead of the phrase referred to as a mondegreen or juncture which means a series of words that result from the mishearing of a statement or song lyric as exemplified in the following :

 i.c.u. vs. I see you.

depend vs. deep end.

the sky vs. this guy

Here are some more phrases that sound the same (Oronyms,2008:1)

Ice cream for a tasty tea time treat.

I scream for a tasty tea time treat.

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If you listen you can hear the night rain.

If you listen you can hear the night train.

2.2.2 Pseudo-Homophones

Pseudo-homophones are non-words that are phonetically identical to a word-pseudo-homophone pairs which are phonetically identical letter strings where one string is a word and the other is a non-word, for example, groan/grone ; crane/crain ; oui/we and nein/nine are pseudo-homophone pairs, whereas plane/plain is a homophone pair since both letter strings are recognized words, both types of pairs are used in lexical decision tasks to investigate word recognition (Cooper,2008:2).

2.2.3 Proper Nouns Homophone

This type of homophone refers to a few proper names, that are capitalized the names of two or things having the same pronunciation but different spellings. Notably a lot of nations, nationalities, and place names are pronounced the same as common nouns as in the following samples (English Homophones,2008:3) :

Pete , peat.

Czech , check/cheque.

Greece , grease.

Rome , roam.

Wales , whales.

2.2.4 Homophones of the Letters of Alphabet

Since homophones represent the state or condition of a letter, word, or symbol having the same sound as another but a different meaning, then, this type of homophone refers to a letter or a character expressing the same sound as another (Farlex,2008:1)

I , eye , aye.

O , oh , owe.

T , tea , tee.

U , you , ewe , yew.

2.2.5 Homophones Related to Threat

This type of homophone is called so when one spelling is of a threatening nature and one is not, as in :

slay/sleigh.

war/wore.

It has been used in studies of anxiety as a test of cognitive models when those with high anxiety tend to interpret ambiguous information in a threatening manner (Mogg,1994:461). Furthermore, homophones can be found in hyphenated compounds like: fillip , fill-up , Phillip and acronyms that have come to be pronounced as words, e.g., WACS in WACS , wacks , wax ,whacks.

There are also pairs of words when pronounced together sound like some other single words as in: a cord , accord ; back ache , backache, and there are some words that differ in spelling from other words only in the use of a possessive apostrophe, e.g., homes , home's. However, when an apostrophe indicates a standard contraction, it will include the following pairs: its , it's ; theirs , there's (Suber and Thorp,2008:2).

Obviously, the determination of what counts as sounding the "same" depends on the dialect of the speaker. This means that regional accents may affect whether words are homophones: c.f. rode and road , father and farther , court and caught in the so-called Received Pronunciation (RP) of British English. In certain Scottish accent, none of these pairs of forms are homophones; as father : farther and court : caught, though caught and cot are homophones in many American accents. It is an important fact about Standard English that it is pronounced differently by different groups and what are homophones for one group of speakers may not be for another (Lyons,1981:71). Occasionally dialectal variation produces what is called "disjunctive homophones", when some people pronounce route and rout alike, while others pronounce route and root alike (Suber and Thorpe,2008:3).

Homograph – Some homophones are similar in spelling, but different in meanings. They are called homographs. For instance, "hail" meaning an ice storm, and "hail" meaning something that occurs in large numbers, such as "a hail of bullets

Homonymy : According to Saeed (2009: 63) "Homonyms are unrelated sense of the same phonological word" but this definition is somewhat different from the definition of Matthews (1997: 164)

which calls homonymy as a relationship between words of the same shape but different meaning and can not be connected . Palmer (1976: 67) states that "Homonymy is when there are several words with the same shape." Homonymy includes the relation between the word pronunciation and the same form, but the meaning is unrelated. Based on the explanation, the writer argues that homonymy is the word that has the same pronunciation and the same form, but the meaning is different

For example

.. 1. Bank ' means the place to save the money.

 2. Bank ' means riverside .

    Heterograph – Homophones that have different spellings but are pronounced in the same way are called heterographs. For instance, "write" and "right."

Chapter Three

Methods

3.1 The Sample

The test is applied to (30 students) as a sample of fourth year students of Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences ,University of Babylon during the academic year 2022-2021.

3.2 The Instrument

According to Skehan (1999:203), a language test is a systematic method and a means of checking the student's performance through the elicitation certain behaviour to make inferences about certain characteristics of an individual. To find the fill full of study .

According to Brown (1987 : 219) " A test is a method of measuring a person's ability or knowledge in a given test ".

The test is used as means of checking what student can do with the language (Aljuboury ,1999 :1)

3.3 The Features   of a Good Test
A good test should have the following features:

3.3.1 Validity
According to Al-Juboury (1999:84), validity is the degree to which a test measures what is supposed to measure and it can be used successfully for the purpose for which its intended Validity can be classified into content validity and face validity (Ibid:24).

The most important types of validity are:

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A . Content Validity

This type of validity refers to the extent to which a test adequately covers the syllabus to be tested.(Ibid:25).

B. Face Validity

It means the way the test looks to the examiness, supervisors or in general to the people concerned with the education of the students.

3.3.2 Reliability

Reliability is the ability of apparatus, mechanic or system to consistently perform its intended or required fiction or mission and demand and without degradation or failure (www.bussnies dic .com.definition ,reliability).

3.4 Test Design

The test consists of two questions .Question one represents the recognition level and has 10 items ,while question two represents the production level. and has 10 items .The testees have to exemplify suitable sentences according to the question.

Most items of the test are taken from grammar books mentioned in chapter two   and the university grammar of English by quirk,R,G,1973).

Chapter Four

Finding of the study

4.1Data Analysis

The result of question one shows that the number and percentage of incorrect responses (191, 64%)) are more than those of correct response (109, 36%).

Items (4,9,10) :The number and percentage achieved a higher percentage (23 ,76%) of the incorrect responses because the student are not familiar with these items so that they face difficulty.

While in the correct responses we have items (6):The number and percentage achieve a higher percentage (18 , 60%) of the correct responses ,because this item can be understood easily and the students are familiar with this item.

Table (1) the Students' performance at the Recognition Level of Question One

Items	No. of correct responses	Percentage %	No. of incorrect responses	Percentage %
1	10	34%	20	66%
2	12	40%	18	60%
3	11	36%	19	64%
4	7	24%	23	76%
5	13	44%	17	56%
6	18	60%	12	40%
7	14	46%	16	54%
8	10	34%	20	66%
9	7	24%	23	76%
10	7	24%	23	76%
Total	109	36%	191	64%

According to the results of the test of question two , the number and percentage of the incorrect responses (206, 68.4) are more than those of correct responses (94, 31.6%).

We have items (9 and 3):The number and percentage achieved a higher percentage (26,86% and 25,83%) of the incorrect responses because these items are difficult and the students are not familiar with them.

While in the correct responses, we have items (5,7):The number and percentage achieved (15,50%,14,46%).

These items achieved higher percentage of the correct responses because the students are familiar with these items so that they not face difficulty.

Table (2) Students' performance of Question Two

Items	No. of correct responses	Percentage %	No. of incorrect responses	Percentage %
1	10	34%	20	66%
2	12	40%	18	60%
3	5	16%	25	84%
4	11	36%	19	64%
5	15	50%	15	50%
6	9	30%	21	70%
7	14	46%	16	54%
8	8	26%	22	74%
9	4	14%	26	86%
10	6	20%	24	80%
Total	94	31.6%	206	68.4%

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Chapter Five

Conclusion, Suggestion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

Homophone is one of two or more words that are pronounced the same but differ in meaning, origin, and sometimes spelling. Homophony then refers to the phenomenon of words with different meaning having the same sound.

The conclusions to be drawn here may be of two types: theoretical and practical. At the theoretical level the teachers have to enable the students how to distinguish between recognition and production correct spelling usage in sentences context choosing, This can be done by giving them the definition the word of homophone with its meaning. And a significantly larger homophone appropriate. word effect for words overlapping in phonology and orthography than words overlapping in orthography only. The results of the study were supportive of the idea that there are individual differences in word recognition ability caused by variation in orthographic processing abilities that are in part determined by print exposure differences. At the practical level, the students need to be exposed to different pairs of homophone concentrating on the productive of spelling comprehension level; and they must know the appropriate spelling ,and correct contextual meaning of the homophone words in sentences.

5.2 Recommendations

It is recommended that some additional exercises about Homophone are added to the subject of grammar of the fourth _year stage of the department of English .

5.3 Suggestions

The following topics are suggested to be investigated by other researchers because they are beyond the limits of the present study:

1. Homophone in English and Arabic: A contrasting study

2. Homophone in some literary texts.

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The Test

The test of the study has been approved by the following teaching staff members:

Dr. Said Abdul Waheb

Assist. Lec. Farah A. Jebur

Q1/ Choose the correct homophone for each of the following sentences

Ex/.You will mar your ……… if you do not work hard.

Answer/career

Carrier

Career

Carier

1_In order to judge how people felt, the senator's office hired a firm to take a _____.

A_poal

B_poll

C_pol

D_pole

2_When I was younger, I _____ all of the Harry Potter books.

A_read

B_roads

C_reads

D_road

3_We'll remain safe inside as long as they can't cross the _____ filled with alligators.

A_moat

B_mote

C_moet

D_mott

4_No one will _____ my writing!" he angrily typed, unaware that no one was even reading it.

a-censure

b-senser

c-sensor

d-censor

5-Open the _____" he screamed as the room filled with smoke.

a-flue

b-flew

c-flu

d-flow

6-The couple hired an _____ to foretell their fortunes on the day they were married.

a-auger

b-ogger

c-ogre

b-augur

7-After taking the candy from the children, he scurried home to add it to his _____.

a-horde

b-whored

c-whoard

d-hoard

8-The jeweler pressed the _____ to her eye and said "that's a nice fake you've bought for yourself."

a-loope

b-lupe

C-loop

d-loupe

9-He was asked to display his --- at the exhibition."

 a_Wear

b_Ware

C_where

d_Were

10-____ many times the screw holding the chair together becomes _____.

a-To, loose

b-Too, lose

c-Too, loose

d-To, lose

Q2/Examplify the following Homophone.

1_ Homograph (Homophone)

A_ _____

B_____

2_Homonymy(Homophone)

A_ _____

B_ _____

3_Heterograph(Homophone)

A_ _____

B_ _____

4_Oronym(Homophone)

A_ _____

B_ _____

5_Pseudohomophony(Homophone)

A_ _____

B_ _____

The Answer of the test :

Q1/

1_In order to judge how people felt, the senator's office hired a firm to take a __

B_poll

2_When I was younger, I __ all of the Harry Potter books.

A_read

3_We'll remain safe inside as long as they can't cross the __ filled with alligatored

D_mott

4_No one will __ my writing!" he angrily typed, unaware that no one was even reading it.

d-censor

5-Open the __" he screamed as the room filled with smoke.

a-flue

6-The couple hired an __ to foretell their fortunes on the day they were married.

b-augur

7-After taking the candy from the children, he scurried home to add it to his __.

d-hoard

8-The jeweler pressed the __ to her eye and said "that's a nice fake you've bought for yourself."

d-loupe

9-He was asked to display his --- at the exhibition."

b_Ware

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10-__ many times the screw holding the chair together becomes ____.

c-Too, loose

Q2/

_1The wind was too strong to wind the sail.

After a number of injections my jaw got number.

2_You have to teach him that getting wreak is not a good thing.

Where does this bad reek come from?

3_You come, too!'

'I saw two monkeys.'

4_She screams frightened

He eats ice cream

5_Don't be scared of a little bumble bee

Yesterday, he read the book with the red cover.