

The Effect of Multimeaning Words on Iraqi EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension

Dr. Shaima' A. AL-Bakri & Younis I. Bany Weis
University of Baghdad / College of Education / Ibn-Rushd

Chapter One **Introduction**

1.1 The Problem of the Study and Its Significance

Many linguists have asserted that language cannot be described adequately apart from meaning, since meaning is necessary in the very nature of language (Mackey, 1965:72-3).

A meaning of a word is difficult to grasp because it may change from one situation or context to another.

Mason and Kendall (1979:27) claim that much of the failure of the individual to understand speech or writing is due to deficiency in vocabulary knowledge. It is not merely the knowledge of single words and their extended meanings that is important, but also the knowledge of the multiple meanings of words and their grammatical functions. From the researchers' experience, they believe that the textbooks (*Developing Skills* and *Sixty Steps to Precis*) for both the first and second grades at the College of Education do not lay heavy emphasis on presenting polysemous words. In every unit the same type of exercise dealing with this phenomenon is presented. Consequently, teachers in Iraqi colleges, in general, are hardly ever offered guidance on how to teach these words with their extended meanings and they do not rely on a solid background concerning this important aspect in ELT. On the other hand, learners may know only one meaning or nuance and they may not be aware of the various meanings of many such words; this may contribute directly to reading comprehension problems.

Thus, the current study will emphasize the importance of not only teaching two or more meanings of multimeaning words but also of expanding learners' knowledge in relation to conceptual frameworks elicited by the meanings of the word in a particular context.

1.2 Aim of the Study

The study aims at investigating empirically the effect of teaching multimeaning words on reading comprehension.

1.3 Hypothesis of the Study

It is hypothesized that teaching reading comprehension with emphasis on multimeaning words is more effective than that with the conventional techniques.

1.4 Limits of the Study

The following are the major limits of the study:

- 1- The sample of learners is limited to daytime college learners in Baghdad for the academic year 2002-2003.
- 2- The level of learners is restricted to second grade in the Department of English , College of Education (Ibn-Rushd), University of Baghdad.
- 3- The material selected is taken from the prescribed English Textbook *Sixty Steps to Precis* by L.G. Alexander.
- 4- The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2000) is consulted in the current study.

1.5 Definition of Basic Terms

The following terms are defined as they are used in this study:

- 1- Effect: It is defined as the effect of the experimental factors under controlled conditions on the control variable.
- 2- Multimeaning words (polysemous words) : A term used in the semantic analysis to refer to a word which has a range of different, though related, meanings, e.g., plain = clear, unadorned, obvious ...etc. A large proportion of language's vocabulary is polysemous.
- 3- Reading comprehension: The process by which a person understands the meaning of a written language.

Chapter Two

Linguistic Aspects of Multimeaning Words

2.1 What Is Polysemy

The term 'polysemy' has a long history in linguistics, stylistics, psychology and literature. The feature was first noted by the Stoics¹ who applied some principles to the identification of polysemy. Presently, the term is used both in semantic and lexical analysis with a special connotation where it implies a word with multiple meaning or senses. Although such words generate little difficulties in everyday communication among people, they do pose impenetrable problems of understanding of actual sense for linguists and lexicographers (Cairns and Redman, 1986:43).

The fundamental problem posed by polysemy is that certain words can take on an almost indefinite number of subtle meaning variations. These variations can stem from regular sense extension processed, be induced by contextual factors, or result from metaphorical or metonymic extensions. Generally speaking, polysemy is a state of many meanings, though related, a word has in different context. For instance, the word shell has many separate meanings depending on the context it is used in: it can mean anything from a bullet or large artillery missile; to a kind of mollusc-seafood, to the petrol company shell; to a kind of small rowing vessel; to the command-prompt on a computer (Rodrigues and Sadoski, 2000:385-412). However, in all these situations, there is a common thread of meaning-all denote things which are shell-like-coverings. A shell covers a mollusc; shell's logo is a sea-shell (a mollusc covering); the small rowing boat is nothing more than a thin covering to keep the water a way from the rowers; the command-prompt is an ancillary process, a mere conceptual outer-covering to processes which can begin within it to any level of recursion (Lyons, 1977:543; Kempson, 1977:54; Palmer, 1981:80-82).

Lyons (1981:174) calls this common thread of meaning "relatedness of meaning", if the different meanings of a single word are put in different lexical entries in the dictionary.

Kilgarriff (1992:4-6) defines polysemy from a different point of view. His definition depends on the result which he draws from the distinction between polysemy and homonymy. For him polysemy does not form any kind of natural kind. Instead, "polysemy describes a crossroad between homonymy, alternations, collocations and analogy based on general knowledge and reasoning. Polysemous words can be characterized by at least one of these four methodologies. Kilgarriff asserts that all of them must be allowed for in order to capture the full variety of polysemy.

2.2 Comprehending Word Meaning

The problem of comprehending word meaning begins with words, which are considered the smallest meaningful units of language source. The first question is how teachers assign

meaning to the spoken words? To take one example from thousands that are available, consider the noun 'a triangle'. As philosophers pointed out long ago the noun 'a triangle' is hopelessly vague. Without further explanation we don't know whether the triangle is acute or obtuse, oblique or right-angled, scalene or isosceles or equilateral, and we have no idea what colour it is or where it is or how big it is or how it is oriented. So the word 'triangle' is referentially vague.

Moreover, the noun 'a triangle' is ambiguous, as it can be used to express more than one meaning. The word 'a triangle' can refer either to a three-sided polygon or to a musical percussion instrument or to a social situation involving three parties. If you were to hear someone say, "It's a good triangle", you could not be sure which meaning of 'a triangle' the speaker has in mind. So the noun 'a triangle' is semantically ambiguous.

Of course, 'a triangle' is seldom ambiguous when it occurs as part of an on-going conversation. It has several possible meanings, but the intended meaning is almost always clear from the context in which the word is used. The fact that it has several meanings makes it potentially ambiguous. But there is a difference between multiplicity of meaning and ambiguity. To solve the problem, the term 'polysemantic' will be adopted (McCarthy, 1990:13). Polysemantic can be interpreted as poly-means 'many' and semantic-means 'meanings'. A polysemantic word can have many meanings, yet not ambiguous when used in an appropriate context.

The point, however, is that words, the basic building blocks of meaningful language, are extremely slippery items and must be handled with great care.

2.2.1 Word Knowledge

What do we mean when we say a person knows a word ? Is it memorization of the definition of the lexical item, or the ability to use the word in context ? Linguists would say both and more is required to know a word. Carter (1998:74) believes that knowing a word involves knowing how to use the word syntactically, semantically and pragmatically or discoursally. McCarthy and O'Dell (1994:58) also state that knowing a word involves mastering its syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations. Syntagmatic relations involve linguistic items joined to make larger blocks of text. Paradigmatic relations deal with how each word consists of a choice from several words that have similar, but not necessarily exact meaning (family relationship).

However, knowing a lexical item is actually, a perplexing process for second / foreign language learners, especially when it comes to comprehending the vast range of meanings and the connotation that a word may have for a culture. How then can one know the meaning of lexical item ? There are two main schools of thought concerning word meaning. The first is called structural semanticists which is represented by such scholars as Carter and McCarthy. The second is, as Aitchison (1994:40) calls, the fuzzy-meaning adherents.

2.2.2 Structural Semantics and Core Vocabulary

Carter (1998:18) believes that words do not exist in isolation: their meanings are defined through the sense relations they have with other words.

Central to the semanticist view is the idea of core vocabulary. Carter (1998:39) defines core vocabulary as the most basic words in a language. Carter and McCarthy (1988:43) assert that core vocabulary bears no marks of culture. They are neutral with respect to field and tenor of discourse².

These and other lexical items are stored in a cognitive framework called the mental lexicon. Within it are semantic fields and lexicon fields. McCarthy and O'Dell (1994:21) define these terms by stating that:

“These lexicon fields are the realization (or flesh and bones, as it were) of the abstract notion of semantic fields...Semantic fields contain only concepts; lexical fields contain real words”.

In this sense, Food might be considered a semantic field, and below it another semantic field of fruit. Under this would be the lexical field of apple, banana, orange, etc. One's mental image of a lexical item seems to have something to do with the field in which it is mentally lexicalized.

While lexis can be designated in structures, Carter (1998:85) implies that meaning can still evade us. Beside this Lyons (1977:305-11) believes that semantic and lexical fields are uniquely arranged from culture to culture.

We can see that structural semanticists provide an important piece of the puzzle in our quest for a more coherent picture in what happens with lexis, meaning and culture. However, psycholinguists can also participate with their insights on mental images and cultural schematic representations.

2.2.3 The Prototype Theory

Aitchison (1994:39-40) presents a psycholinguistic viewpoint in which word meanings are considered abstract. In her viewpoint, she focuses on how our affective mental images of lexical items are more important than what we cognitively perceive as reality.

While she agrees that some words are more basic (core) in meaning than others, lexical meaning, according to this point of view, is found in prototypes. Closely related to the schema theory, Aitchison defines a prototype as “mental models of the world which we live in, models which are private and cultural architectures, and only partially in touch with reality.

Instead of thinking merely of a structure which contains core words of other lexical items, according to the prototype theory, the mental lexicon contains vague pictures of the words.

2.3 Why Is Polysemy Interesting ?

Polysemous words have a unique feature in that they economize language, i.e., if the speaker has a good knowledge of the multiple a large stock of vocabulary to express different ideas by using different words.

2.3.1 Creativity in Language Use

The fact that language users produce sentences that have never been uttered before has long been one of the central facts a linguistic theory must account for. It is incompatible that a linguistic theory must account for an indefinite number of possible sentences. But novelty in language use is not constrained to syntax. Language-users also use words in novel ways, the most dramatic being metaphor and metonymy. Novel uses of words are not arbitrary; they are constrained by the system of meanings from which they emerge (Kilgarriff, 1992:14).

People are often creative in their use of words by observing the rules and relationships that generate unfamiliar but possible meanings. Relationships between actual meanings will tend to observe the same rules that hold between actual and possible meanings, so the study of polysemy is a route towards understanding how novelty and creativity at the word level in language are possible.

2.3.2 All Human Knowledge

What is the structure of human knowledge? The question demands attention but is vast-too vast to be directly researchable. The domain must be constrained: not knowledge but some specific variety of knowledge. Some have taken knowledge of geometry, or geology, or arithmetic, or medical diagnosis : others have shifted focus from the knowledge itself to the words that are used to express it.

So what is the structure of the human lexicon? This is still a huge question. Words relate to other words in innumerable ways, and some corner of the whole must be selected for study. Again, the area of the study must be reduced and focussed. Here, a methodological consideration comes to our assistance. A proven experimental technique is to hold as many factors as possible constant, in order that any observed variation can be attributed to a limited number of sources. In studying polysemy, we hold the form of the word constant, and then observe variation in meaning and distribution. Research into polysemy is one avenue for investigating the structure of lexical knowledge and hence, indirectly, the structure of human knowledge.

2.4 Word Meaning Expansion

It is out of economy that polysemy exists in language. Singleton (1999:120) believes that by reusing words in patterns of repetition and combination, it is possible to get along with a number much smaller than the totality of meanings that we have to come with in a lifetime.

Word meaning can be expanded by means of metaphor or metonymy, or analogy. Todd (1987:51) and Lakoff and Johnson (1980:64) argue that human beings think and talk metaphorically. They apply words and phrases to new concepts and objects to extend lexical meaning. Metaphor is a norm of communication, not an exception.

Nelson-Herber (1986:628) sees word meaning as a prototype-based with abstract domains of meaning deriving their vocabulary from the concrete rather than vice versa. In simple words, a polysemous word usually has a core meaning and all other meanings come from it by means of metaphor. Todd (1987:80) asserts that a word usually has a central meaning given first, in a dictionary, followed by its closely related meanings and with metaphorical extensions coming last.

Fengying (1996:3) asserts that word-meaning expansion starts from a centre and extends outward. The centre or the core may denote a physical entity in the material word with a rather clear focus. Then it is extended to refer to other physical entities which it resembles. Finally its meaning may be broadened to abstract ideas by metaphor.

Consider the following examples with words of different parts of speech: The core meaning of the word "foot" is in direct contact with the ground. This is related to the next usage referring first to the foot of a sewing machine and secondly to the lowest part of something, the base or bottom of a mountain, stair, page...etc. Thirdly, it refers to a unit of a measuring length. Fourthly, it may come in terms of function (for example, a foot in the door, set foot in). We can see that the four expanded meaning areas of the word foot are related to the original core, but they have been developed along different routes: One is based on location, another on shape, a third on length, and yet another on function.

The meaning of an adjective can also be illustrated, for example, red. The core meaning of red is the colour of blood and fire, as in, a red flag, a red car. This relates to the usages describing anything having that colour, for example, using 'bloodshot' for describing eyes with thin lines of blood in them, as in, "Her eyes were red from crying", and of a face that is red because of anger and embarrassment, as in, "He stammered something and went very red in the face".

Obviously, this way of illustration, depending on the core meaning of the word, can be generalized to the interpretation of all words. That is, we can impose a convention on the linguistic theory of meaning that every word has a unique sense (referred to as “the core meaning”) and this sense is the basis for contextually dependent interpretations of the words (Allan, 1986:149). Thus a word may have a conceptual or core meaning and an associative meaning attached to it.

In actual teaching, this way of illustration gives the learners an understanding of a word, but also the links between those meanings. With care in selection, it can also demonstrate collocations and idiomatic expression usage.

Notes to Chapter Two

- 1- In the 3rd century BC, the Stoics established more formally the basic grammatical notions that have since, via Latin, become tradition in western thought. They grouped words into parts of speech organized their variant forms into paradigms and devised names for them (e.g. The cases of the noun) (Lyons, 1968:34).
- 2- In Hallidayan Linguistics, field of discourse (field) refers to a classification of registers in terms of subject-matter, e.g., Chemistry, religion, advertising. Tenor refers to a classification of language varieties, referring to the relation among the participants in a language activity, especially the level of formality (colloquial, formal...etc) (Crystal, 1992).

Chapter Three Procedures

3.1 Selection of the Sample

The population of the present study is the second grade learners, Department of English, College of Education (Ibn-Rushd). Two sections out of four are selected randomly. In the same way, one section is selected randomly as an experimental group; it is section (D) which includes (34) learners. The other is the control group; it is section (B) which includes (33) learners. The total number of learners in these two sections is (67). After excluding the repeaters and non-Iraqi learners in every section, the total number of the sample is (60) learners.

3.2 The Pre-Test

The following steps have been followed in the administration of the pre-test.

3.2.1 Construction of the Pre-Test

In order to have an objective assessment of the learners' knowledge of multimeaning words, a multiple-choice test has been constructed (see appendix A). The test simply consists of 25 items, each has four choice of related words to the test word and the testees have to choose the most suitable one depending on the context.

3.2.2 The Pre-Test Validity

To ensure the pre-test validity, the test has been exposed to a jury of (12) experts in English Language teaching and linguistics. The jury members agree that the items of the pre-test are suitable except for some modifications which have been taken into consideration.

3.2.3 The Pre-Test Reliability

The method used to estimate the pre-test reliability is the test-retest method which refers to the stability of the subjects' scores when the same test is given to them twice with a specified time interval between the two administrations.

Thirty second-year learners from the Department of English, College of Education (Ibn-Rushd), section A, are selected to apply the pre-test for estimating its reliability. After applying Pearson Formula, the results indicate that the correlation coefficient of reliability is (0.86), which is considered a high stable correlation.

3.2.4 Application of the Pre-Test

The pre-test in its final form has been administered on the 25th of October, 2003. The time allocated for the test is 45 minutes. For the purpose of scoring the pre-test objectively, one mark is given for the correct answer and zero for the wrong one. As the test consists of 25 items, the highest mark for the pre-test is twenty-five while a zero is the lowest.

3.2.5 The Pre-Test Equalization

By using chi-square method for two independent samples, it has been found that there are no statistically significant differences between the two groups in the pre-test. Table 1 shows that the computed t-value (0.104) is found to be lower than the critical t-value (1.641) under 58 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance

Table 1

The Equalization between the Tests of the Control Group and the Experimental One in the Pre-test.

Group	No.	Mean	Standard Deviation	Degree of Freedom	Level of Significance	T-Values	
						Computed	Critical
Experimental	30	17.825	7.114	58	0.05	0.014	1.641
Control	30	16.750	5.904				

3.3 The Teaching Material

Five passages are chosen from the prescribed English textbook, *Sixty steps to Precise* by L.G. Alexander, of the second grade. These passages namely (1,2,3,5,7) are the teaching materials for both experimental and control groups.

3.4 Experiment Application

The same passages are chosen for both groups. The learners of the two groups have had nearly the same conditions except in one aspect, namely: the opportunity of training in multimeaning words.

3.4.1 The Control Group

As for the control group, the original teacher has taught them reading comprehension by following the traditional technique. These techniques, as being observed by the researchers, are:

- 1- The teacher reads the passage aloud.
- 2- Learners are asked to read the passage silently.

- 3- Individual learners are asked to read the passage aloud and the teacher corrects their mistakes.
- 4- The teacher explains the difficult words.
- 5- Finally, the teacher asks the learners to give the gist of the passage.

3.4.2 The Experimental Group

In teaching the experimental group, thirty-one words are selected from the aforementioned passages depending on their frequent occurrences in the language and their value to the learners as core vocabulary of English. These words are among the words list which Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2000) provides as the most common, frequent and valuable words in English language. The selected words; as shown in Appendix B, are presented in different sentences carrying multiple related senses of these words. They cover different parts of speech (i.e., open-class system; verbs; nouns; adjectives; and adverbs). The passages and the multimeaning words with their extended meaning, presented in different sentences, are exposed to a jury of (14) experts in English language teaching and linguistics. Each member of the jury is requested to point out his / her remarks and suggestions about the suitability of the teaching items and techniques to the learners level. Consequently, six of ten items are modified and reconstructed.

Several steps are followed in order to identify the students' intellectual level before starting the experiment:

Step one :

The learners are asked (in pairs, and using dictionaries) to answer the following questions.

- 1- What similarities are there between a chair and a human being ? (Answer: Both have legs and a back, and sometimes arms.)
- 2- What is the similarity between a clock, a coin, a house and a mountain ? (Answer: They all have faces.)
- 3- Who has a mouth but can not drink ? (Answer: The bottle, the river, and the cave.)

Step two :

Each student is requested to choose five favourite words and to look them up in a dictionary. What other meanings do they have ? Are the extended meanings the same as in the learners' mind ? If not, what differences are there ? Next, students are asked to share their findings with their classmates.

Step three :

Students are asked to identify words by inferring words missing from sentences. They should choose the word that correctly completes both sentences.

- 1- My uncle was recently promoted to the rank of _____ in the Air Force.
I know the _____ area of the camp ground, but not how to get there exactly.
a- general b- major c- immediate d- approximate
- 2- The plane will _____ between five and six o'clock tonight.
How much _____ does your family own in New Jersey.
a- arrive b- property c- come d- land

As far as reading comprehension is concerned, the main goal of teaching it is to train learners to read efficiently and quickly enough to get information or meaning from written material rapidly and with full understanding.

To achieve this aim, different techniques in teaching reading comprehension in the light of modern trends in teaching English as a foreign language are utilized. These techniques are:

- 1- presenting the new multimeaning words and structures that may appear in the passage and clarifying the purpose of the passage;
- 2- arousing the learners' interest in the reading passage by briefing the main theme;
- 3- asking the learners to read the passage silently (silent reading is reading for understanding or for comprehension);
- 4- asking the learners a few comprehension questions on the passage content to evaluate their ability to comprehend what they have read;
- 5- reading the passage aloud;
- 6- asking the learners to read the passage individually, good learners can start first so that they can provide examples for other classmates; and
- 7- asking the class to do the exercises on multimeaning words and the patterns which are usually included in the reading textbook.

3.4.3 Techniques Used in Teaching Multimeaning Words

The following techniques have been used in teaching the experimental group the multimeaning words:

A- The learners are asked to use the dictionary. Dictionaries are a treasure-house of information on multimeaning words.

Being advanced learners, the dictionary chosen for the current study is Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (2000).

B- Within one lecture the plan consisted of 5-7 words only. Since the chosen words are taught with their extended meanings, it is considered that presenting a large number of words will confuse the learners and will not be a useful procedure. Studying 5-7 words at a time with their multiple senses in meaningful situations is found to be interesting and the learners are found to follow the presentation attentively and enthusiastically.

C- The multimeaning words in the passage are presented in new sentences so as to carry different meanings. The section is divided into groups, each group is given a number of these sentences and asked to look up the multimeaning words in their dictionaries. Next, learners are asked to share or compare their findings with their classmates.

D- Short authentic and interesting passages carrying multimeaning words are presented every two weeks, the learners are asked to pick the equivalent meanings from the multiple choices available with the passage.

E- One polysemous word is presented in different sentences having a different meaning in each one. Then, equivalent meaning to each polysemous word is listed randomly and the learners are asked to match them.

F- One word-Two meanings

This is an advanced exercise which measures the learners' productive level.

The learners here are asked to give the equivalent meaning of each of the underlined words as it is used in the context of the sentence. For example:

- 1.He sat on the river bank to fish.
- 2.I must go to the bank to get some cash.
- 1.I think that that's a crazy idea.
- 2.She goes crazy when people criticize her.

3.5 Instrument of the Study

In order to have an objective assessment of the learners' achievement, a post-test has been constructed. The post-test consists, as it appears in Appendix C, of six questions which cover different techniques that have been used in testing multimeaning words. The questions include 50 items of production and recognition type.

3.5.1 Post-Test Validity

In order to ensure face validity of the test, the items of the test have been exposed to a jury of (13) experts in English language teaching and linguistics. Each member of the jury has been requested to point out his / her remarks and suggestions about the suitability and difficulty of the test items to the learners' level. Consequently, the jury have agreed that the items are suitable except for some modifications which have been taken into consideration.

3.5.2 The Pilot Administration of the Post-Test

In order to secure the clarity of the passages, the items and the instruction accompanying the test; to analyze the items to determine their effectiveness in terms of item difficulty and item discrimination power; and to estimate the time needed for answering the whole test, the test has been administered to a sample of a pilot study. Therefore, thirty learners have been chosen from section (C). The findings of the pilot test have revealed that all the learners are able to answer the test. The time computed for whole learners in the pilot test ranges between 70-90 minutes.

3.5.3 Item Analysis

After scoring the test papers, the scored test has been arranged in order of scores, from high to low. This produces two subgroups of test papers, an upper group consisting of 27 percent of the total group who receive the highest scores on the test, and a lower group consisting of an equal number of papers from those who receive the lowest scores.

The number of times each response to each item is chosen on the papers of the upper group has been counted, then the same is done separately for the papers of the lower group.

After the application of the formula of the item discrimination power, it has been found that the discrimination power ranges between (0.31- 0.87). According to Ebel's index discrimination this power is considered satisfactory. After the application of item Difficulty formula, it has been found that it ranges between (0.21 - 0.77). (see Table 2).

"A good spread of results can be obtained if the average difficulty of the items is around 50 to 60 per cent and items vary in difficulty from 20 to 80 per cent". (Bloom et al, 1981: 95).

Table 2

The Items Difficulty and Items Discrimination Power of the Test

	Items	Item Difficulty	Item Discrimination Power
Questions Number 1	1	0.21	0.31
	2	0.33	0.62
	3	0.34	0.38
	4	0.65	0.43
	5	0.34	0.62
Average		0.37	0.47

Questions Number 2	6	0.65	0.68
	7	0.62	0.62
	8	0.56	0.87
	9	0.53	0.51
	10	0.68	0.52
	11	0.46	0.83
	12	0.62	0.35
	13	0.59	0.61
	14	0.59	0.41
	15	0.40	0.32
Average		0.57	0.57
Questions Number 3	16	0.59	0.51
	17	0.50	0.62
	18	0.43	0.87
	19	0.43	0.75
	20	0.53	0.56
	21	0.65	0.56
	22	0.68	0.50
	23	0.62	0.75
	24	0.59	0.56
	25	0.40	0.43
Average		0.54	0.61
Questions Number 4	26	0.34	0.48
	27	0.37	0.35
	28	0.40	0.68
	29	0.31	0.62
	30	0.56	0.62
	31	0.28	0.43
	32	0.56	0.75
	33	0.50	0.87
	34	0.21	0.31
	35	0.32	0.35
Average		0.38	0.54
Questions Number 5	36	0.46	0.31
	37	0.43	0.37
	38	0.71	0.62
	39	0.50	0.62
	40	0.53	0.56
Average		0.52	0.49

	41	0.31	0.62
	42	0.31	0.42
	43	0.34	0.56
	44	0.53	0.41
Questions	45	0.31	0.50
Number 6	46	0.28	0.36
	47	0.56	0.31
	48	0.31	0.62
	49	0.77	0.37
	50	0.43	0.87
Average		0.41	0.50

3.5.4 Post-Test Reliability

The method used in this study is the test-retest method which refers to the stability of the subjects scores when the same test is administered to them twice with a specified time interval between the two administrations.

Thirty learners from section (A) have been chosen to apply the test for estimating its reliability. The same group of learners have been retested after ten days. After applying Pearson formula, the results indicate that the correlation coefficient of reliability is (0.83), which is considered a high stable correlation.

3.5.5 Final Administration of the Post-Test

After gaining the validity and reliability qualifications, the test has been administered to the sample of the study totalling 60 learners. The time allocated for the test was 90 minutes.

3.5.6 The Scoring Scheme of the Post-Test

For the purpose of scoring the test objectively, one mark has been given for the correct answer of each item, and zero for the wrong one. As the test consists of 50 items, the highest mark for the test is 50, while a zero is the lowest. Failure to tick any choice or leaving out any item by the testee has been given zero.

3.6 Statistical Means

The following statistical means have been used in the analysis of the results of this study:

1. Chi² – Square method (χ^2), to find out the significant differences between the two groups in the pre-test
2. Pearson correlation coefficient to estimate test reliability.
3. t-test for two independent groups, to find out the significant differences between the groups in the experimental alternatives.

Chapter Four

Analysis of Results, Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Analysis of the Results

The mean scores of the two groups have been compared on the post-test and the t-value has been computed in order to find out if there are any statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the two groups.

As illustrated in Table 3, it has been found that the computed t-value (8.113) is higher than the critical t-value (2.00) under (58) degree of freedom and at (0.05) level of significance. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the two groups. Accordingly, the hypothesis, which states that teaching reading comprehension with emphasis on multimeaning words is more effective than that with the conventional techniques, is validated.

Table 3
Means, Standard Deviations and T-Value of the Test Scores

Group	No.	Mean	Standard Deviation	Degree of freedom	Level of significance	T-Value	
						Computed	Critical
Experimental	30	30.4059	9.8546	58	0.05	8.113	2.00
Control	30	12.7333	7.0707				

4.2 Discussion of the Results

The statistical analysis of the results indicates that the learners' achievement in the experimental group is better than that of the control group. The mean value of the experimental group (30.405) is higher than that of the control group (12.733).

However, the result indicates that this experiment turns out to demonstrate significantly more learning effects for teaching multimeaning words. This can be interpreted to mean that teaching reading comprehension by using multimeaning words is more useful in learning than the traditional ways which are used by teachers.

The reason behind the result of the present study from a pedagogical view point is due to the fact that learners in general are in need of much meanings. The idea of shedding light or paying the learners' attention to the existence of multimeaning words and learning how to infer the meaning of words from the context have appealed to the subjects of the experimental group.

4.3 Conclusions

Besides, teaching multimeaning words develops the learners' mental abilities to think of the several meanings of the word and to expand their knowledge of vocabulary. It also increases their motivation for producing the extended meanings of a given word since they are given the chance to experiment with any multimeaning words.

In the light of the results obtained from this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

- 1- Generally, English multimeaning words constitute, for Iraqi college students, a problem that needs treatment.
- 2- Students' recognition ability is higher than that of their production in the use of multimeaning words. This is so because recognition is easier than production since the latter requires full recognition plus the ability to produce.
- 3- Some teachers do not exert sufficient efforts in teaching and explaining multimeaning words incorporated in the syllabus.
- 4- Learning multimeaning words through context can be considered the basic technique for increasing vocabulary knowledge and this in turn will improve the students' reading comprehension level.
- 5- Polysemy is a term which can be applied to characterize word senses in an entirely precise way.

- 6- Most multimeaning words display some variation in the meaning they express and the criteria for pinning down senses are often dependent on questions of frequency and predictability rather than on clearly delineated distinctions.

4.4 Recommendations

In the light of the results and the conclusions, the following recommendations are drawn:

- 1- Since English multimeaning words constitute a problematic issue to Iraqi college students, the teaching of these words should be given more attention, as it is not less important than the other types of language vocabulary.
- 2- Intensive practice needs to be given when dealing with multimeaning words involving their extended meanings. The more the students are exposed to these words, the better their performance on these words will be.
- 3- More attention should be given to multimeaning words at earlier stages in the process of ELT so as to give the students more opportunities to practise these words frequently and systematically.
- 4- Teachers should be encouraged to use short, authentic and interesting passages to teach multimeaning words in different context.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Aitchison, J. 1994. Words in the Mind. 2nd ed. Oxford : Blackwell.
2. Allan, K. 1986. Linguistic Meaning. New York : Routledge and Kegan. Paul Inc, Vol, 1.
3. Bloom, B., Madaus, G., and Hastings, T. 1981. Evaluation to Improve Learning. New York : McGraw Hill.
4. Cairns, R. and Redman, S. 1986. Working With Words. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
5. Carter, R. and McCarthy, M. 1988. Vocabulary and Language Teaching. London : Longman.
6. Carter, R. 1998. Vocabulary : Applied Linguistic Perspectives. 2nd ed. London : Routledge.
7. Crystal, D. 1992. A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics. U.K. : Basil Blackwell Publishers.
8. Ebel, R. 1972. Essentials of Educational Measurements. New Jersey : Prentice Hall.
9. Fengying, M. 1996. The Ripple Effect : Word Meaning Expansion and its Application in Teaching Vocabulary. English Teaching Forum, Vol. 34, No.1.
10. Kempson, R. 1977. Semantic Theory. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
11. Kilgarrif, A. 1992. Polysemy. USA : University of Sussex.
12. Lackoff, G. and Johnson, M. 1980. Metaphor We Live by. Chicago : University of Chicago Press.
13. Lyons, J. 1968. Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
14. Lyons, J. 1977. Semantics. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
15. Lyons, J. 1981. Language and Linguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
16. Mackey, W. 1965. Language Teaching Analysis. London : Longman.
17. Mason, J. and Kendall, A. 1979. Teaching Reading Comprehension. London : Longman.
18. McCarthy, M. 1990. Vocabulary. Oxford : Oxford University Press.

19. McCarthy, M. and Odell, F. 1994. English Vocabulary in Use. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
20. Nelson-Herber, J. 1986. Expanding and Refining Vocabulary in Context. Journal of Reading, 29.
21. Palmer, F. 1981. Semantics. Cambridge " Cambridge University Press.
22. Rodrigues, M. and Sadoski, M. 2000. Effect of Rote, Content, Keyword, and Context : Keyword Methods on Retention of Vocabulary in Efl Classroom. Language Learning Journal, 50, 2.
23. Singleton, D. 1999. Exploring the Second Language Mental Lexicon. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
24. Todd, L. 1987. An Introduction to Linguistics. London : Longman.

Appendix (A) The Pre-Test

Choose one option that is equivalent in meaning to the underlined word as it is used in the context of its sentence.

1. Because of his negligence, his manager bounced him
(a) promoted (b) recovered (c) dismissed (d) bound
2. The unexpected course of events aroused considerable alarm.
(a) development (b) chain (c) programme (d) way
3. She goes crazy when people criticize her.
(a) stupid (b) angry (c) excited (d) foolish
4. He stammered something and went very red in the face.
(a) embarrassed (b) crimson (c) blushful (d) glum
5. Please keep your room neat and tidy.
(a) excellent (b) simple (c) good (d) orderly
6. He threw himself into the path of an oncoming vehicle.
(a) trail (b) course (c) street (d) footbath
7. The government is determined to check the growth of puplic spending.
(a) stop (b) control (c) examine (d) change
8. She witnessed some very distressing scenes.
(a) event (b) sites (c) views (d) films
9. Mary walked along the bank of the river.
(a) side (b) shore (c) slope (d) beach
10. We ran indoors when the storm broke.
(a) belw (b) reduced (c) began (d) escaped
11. Birds wheeled above the ship.
(a) flew around (b) turned around (c) staggered (d) screamed
12. Her husband was at the wheel when the accident happened.
(a) metting (b) steering wheel (c) league (d) circuit
13. The college runs summer courses for foreign students.
(a) hurries (b) operates (c) provides (d) makes
14. You haven't stirred from that chair all evening.
(a) moved (b) rose (c) woke (d) seethed
15. He has decided to turn professional.
(a) reverse (b) become (c) render (d) alter

16. I'll be **plain** with you, I don't like the idea.
 (a) homely (b) frank (c) simple (d) clear
17. The plane **leaves** for Dallas at 12.30.
 (a) allows (b) abandons (c) exits (d) departs
18. Two countries broke **article** 10 of European convention.
 (a) essay (b) point (c) paper (d) thing
19. There was a **note** of amusement in this voice.
 (a) quality (b) letter (c) remark (d) musical sound
20. Child abuse **occurs** in all classes of society.
 (a) goes (b) exists (c) strikes (d) develops
21. He **claims** that he was not given a fair hearing.
 (a) challenges (b) demands (c) maintains (d) defends
22. Shells were **bursting** all around us.
 (a) shattering (b) diving (c) smashing (d) exploding
23. We **change** our car every two years.
 (a) transform (b) replace (c) shift (d) convert
24. It was getting dark so I switched on the light and **drew** the curtains.
 (a) pulled (b) moved (c) closed (d) took
25. The hunter followed the **track** of deer.
 (a) rough road (b) footprint (c) path (d) way

Appendix B

The selected words from the passages

Bounce

The stone bounced off the wall and hit him on his head. (rebound)
 Yesterday, his cheques were bounced. (not accepted)
 Because of his negligence, his manager bounced him. (dismissed)
 The children were bouncing on their beds. (jumping up & down)
 Her hair bounced from side to side as she walked. (moved up and down)

Course

We changed course and sailed towards the land. (route)
 Several of horses didn't complete the course. (race course)
 I'm taking a course in French. (a series of lessons)
 The doctor put her on a course of tablets. (a series of medical treatment)
 There are many events that changed the course of history. (line)
 The boat drowned in the course. (channel)
 The wisest course would be to say nothing. (policy)
 The unexpected course of events aroused considerable alarm. (development)
 The main course was roast duck. (part of meal)

Burst

The balloon will burst because of heat. (blow up)
 She burst into the room without knocking. (rushed)
 The roads are bursting with cars. (very full)
 Shells were bursting all around us. (exploding)

Crazy

I think that that's a crazy idea. (silly)
 She goes crazy when people criticize her. (angry)

He's always been crazy about horses. (very interested)
 The fans went crazy when their team scored the first goal. (excited)
 She must be crazy to lend him money. (stupid)
 I've been crazy about him since the first time I saw him. (infatuated)

Neat

He is always neat in appearance. (elegant)
 Please keep your room neat and tidy. (orderly)
 That's a really neat car. (good)
 She has a neat figure. (small)
 The teacher found a neat solution to the problem. (simple)

Early

He started writing music as early as 1989. (at the beginning of)
 The bus arrived five minutes early. (before the expected time)

Bank

People were fishing along the bank on either side of the road. (areas of sloping ground)
 The sun disappeared behind a bank of clouds. (mass)

Bank

He went to the bank and got some money out of his account. (financial institution)
 There is a blood bank in the hospital. (a store of blood)

Lead

She took the lead in the second lap. (first place)
 If one bank raises interest rates, all the others will follow their lead. (example)
 The police will follow up all possible leads to track down the killer. (pieces of information)
 Who is playing the lead in the new film ? (main role)
 Dogs must be kept on a lead in the park. (chain or rope)
 He leads a peaceful life. (lives)

Lead

I have two boxes made of lead. (a kind of metal)

Check

Check the oil and water before setting off. (examine)
 The government is determined to check the growth of the public spending. (control)
 Do you want to check your coat ? (leave)
 Check the box next to the right answer. (make mark)
 You'd better check with Jane what time she's expecting us tonight.(be sure)

Draw

He drew a circle in the sand with a stick. (made)
 It was getting dark so I switched on the light and drew the curtains. (closed)
 The Queen's coach was drawn by six horses. (pulled)
 The train drew into the station. (moved)
 The movie is drawing large audiences. (attracting)
 She drew a revolver on me. (took out)
 The plan has drawn a lot of criticism. (received)
 Italy has been drawn against Spain in the first round. (chosen)
 England drew their game against France. (deuce)
 Can I draw \$ 80 out of my account ? (take)
 He drew thoughtfully on his pipe. (smoked)
 We can draw some lessons for the future from this account. (conclude)

Track

The hunter followed the track of deer. (footprint)
 The road became just a muddy track. (rough road)
 The train stopped because there was a tree across the track. (rails)
 The police are on the track of the thieves.(path that somebody is moving in)
 They sing a track from their latest album. (song)

Break

He managed to break a code. (solve)
 All the windows broke with the force of the blast. (damaged)
 The photocopier has broken. (stopped)
 The dog bit me but did not break the skin. (hurt)
 He was breaking the speed limit. (travelling faster than the law allows)
 Let's break for lunch. (short interval for rest)
 She broke the silence by coughing. (interrupted)
 He finally managed to break from his attacker. (escape)
 The government is determined to break the power of trade unions. (destroy)
 The death of his wife broke him completely. (made him sad)
 We ran indoors when the storm broke. (began)
 Her voice broke as she told us the dreadful news. (changed)
 The scandal broke him. (degraded)

Scene

Italy was the scene of many demonstrations at that time. (place)
 She witnessed some very distressing scenes. (events)
 The movie opens with a scene in a New York apartment. (a part of film)
 They went abroad for a change of scene. (view)
 Please leave, he said, I didn't want a scene. (argument)
 A newcomer has appeared on the fashion scene. (field)

Red

The lights changed to red before I could get across. (the red colour)
 Her eyes were red from crying. (bloodshot)
 He stammered something and went very red in the face. (embarrassed)

Wheel

She wheeled her bicycle across the road.(move something that has wheels)
 Birds wheeled above us in the sky. (fly in a circle)
 He wheeled his horse back to the gate. (turned round suddenly)

Wheel

Her husband was at the wheel when the accident happened.(steering wheel)
 He braked suddenly, causing the front wheel skid. (circular objects)
 I was forced to be engaged in the wheels of politics. (world)

Run

Can you run as fast as Mike ? (scamper)
 There are only five horses running in the first race. (taking part)
 When it's really cold, my nose runs. (flows)
 The college runs summer courses for students. (provide)
 He has no idea how to run a business. (operate)
 He used to run guns across the border. (smuggle)

Shall I run you home? (drive)

A shiver ran down my spine. (moved quickly)

The path runs along the crest of the hill. (goes)

The river runs dry during the drought. (becomes)

The doctors decided to run some more tests on the blood samples. (check)

This debate will run and run. (continue)

Run and get your swimsuits kids. (hurry)

Article

The proposal breaches article 10 of the European Convention, which guarantees free speech. (point)

The articles found in the car helped the police to identify the body.(things)

There is an article about cycling holidays in today's paper. (essay)

Note

There was a note of amusement in her voice. (quality)

He sat taking notes of everything that was said. (a written reminder)

She left a note for Ben on the kitchen table. (short letter)

I can only remember the first few notes of the song. (musical sound)

I'd like the money in \$10 notes, please. (banknote)

There is a new edition of Hamlet with explanatory notes. (footnote)

The buyer has to sign a delivery note as poof of receipt.(official document)

Turn

The wheels of the car began to turn. (pivot)

He turned the page and started the next chapter. (turned over)

He truned very red when I asked him about the money. (became)

The road turns to the left after the church. (curves)

He turned the lorry into the yard. (changed direction)

Police turned water cannon on the rioters. (aimed)

He turned up the collar of his coat and hurried out into the rain. (folded)

Plain

It was plain that he didn't want to talk about it. (clear)

I'll be plain with you. I don't like the idea. (honest)

She's a rather plain child. (not beautiful)

The rooms are quite plain, but very comfortable. (simple)

Shall we have a plain or patterned carpet ? (straight)

Stir

Stir the paint before you use it . (mix)

You haven't stirred from that chair all evening. (moved)

She was stirred by his sad story. (excited)

New optimism was stirring throughout the country. (arising)

Claim

He claims that he was not a fair hearing. (maintains)

A lot of lost property is never claimed. (demanded)

She has finally claimed a place on the team. (gained)

The car crash claimed three lives. (caused death)

A most unwelcome event claimed his attention. (got)

Leave

The plane leaves to Dallas at 12. (departs)

My secretary has threatened to leave. (stop working)
 Don't leave your friend outside in the cold. Invite him in. (let)
 Let's leave the washing-up till tomorrow. (quit)
 He is leaving her because of her carelessness. (abandoning)
 Don't leave any of your belongings behind. (forget)
 In his will he left everything to his three sons. (bequeathed)
 Mary left a message on her answerphone. (put)
 Someone left this note for you. (delivered)

Occur

Child abuse occurs in all classes of society. (exists)
 The accident occurred late last night. (happened)
 It never occurred to Jack that his wife might be unhappy.(came into hismind)

Path

Keep to the path or you may get lost. (track)
 There was a narrow path leading down the cliff. (footpath)
 He threw himself into the path of an oncoming vehicle. (line)
 The path led up a steep hill. (way)

Cover

The soliders had no cover and easy targets. (shelter)
 The ships needed air cover once when they reached enemy waters. (protection)
 His work as a civil servant was a cover for his activities as a spy. (hide)
 She threw back the covers and leapt out of bed. (blankets)
 Her face was on the cover of every magazine. (front page)
 The policy provides cover against theft. (insurance)
 I can't remember the title of the book but I know it has a green cover. (outside part of the book)

Change

Her life changed completely when she won the lottery.(became different)
 Fame has not really changed him (converted)
 Wait for the traffic light to change. (shift)
 We change our car every two years. (replace)
 Can I change seals with you ? (exchange)
 The design of the car has been changed for racing. (modified)
 I think you need to change your diet a little more. (vary)
 The rules are always being changed. (altered)
 Where do I have to change the bus ? (to get another)
 Could you help me change the bed ? (to change the sheet)

Quietly

I spent a few hours quietly relaxing. (calmly)
 He is quietly confident that they can succeed. (silently)

Appendix C

The Final Form of the Test

(1) Read carefully the following passage and then answer the questions below:

As a student I ate my meal at a seaside boarding-house. The landlady was a good cook and, as her husband was a fisherman, we always ate fish for dinner. Eventually I got tired of it, and took to slipping it under the sofa, where the family cat would find and devour it.

This worked very successfully until one day the landlady tiptoed up behind and said, "Young man it's high time I told you that our cat was run over by a lorry three weeks ago."

Mark the best choice

1. 'good' in line 2 means.....
 - a. clever
 - b. helpful
 - c. suitable
 - d. qualified
- 2- 'Eventually' in line three 3 means.....
 - a. lately
 - b. in the end
 - c. latterly
 - d. laterally
- 3- 'took to' in line 3 means.....
 - a. carry something to somewhere
 - b. ask something to do something
 - c. begin to do something as a habit
 - d. go away to place to hide
- 4- To 'tiptoe' in line 7 means.....
 - a. quietly on the toes
 - b. say something softly
 - c. hit something by foot
 - d. run towards something
- 5- 'run over' in line 8 means.....
 - a. hit something while running
 - b. drive over something
 - c. take something away
 - d. steal something from a place

(2) Match the equivalents in list B with the underlined words in the following sentences in list A

A

It was getting dark so I switched on the light
 And drew the curtains.
 The Queen's coach was drawn by six horses
 The movie is drawing large audiences.
 Italy has been drawn against Spain in the first round.
 We can draw some lessons for the future from
 the accident.

B

attracting
 moved
 conclude
 chosen
 closed
 pulled

A

We changed course and sailed towards the land.
 I'm taking a course in French.
 The boat sank in the course.
 The main course was roast duck.
 There are many events that changed the course
 of history.

B

part of meal
 a series of lessons
 line
 route
 channel

(3) Choose one option that is equivalent in meaning to the underlined words as it is used in the context of its sentence.

- The stone bounced off the wall and hit him on his head.
 a. rebound b. jumped c. moved d. recovered
- Immediately she'd gone, I remembered her name.
 a. at once b. exactly c. directly d. as soon as
- I've been crazy about him since the first time I saw him.
 a. stupid b. infatuated c. foolish d. excited
- In his will he left everything to his three sons.
 a. let b. put c. gave d. bequeathed
- The soldiers had no cover and were easy targets.
 a. shelter b. blankets c. insurance d. mask
- Check the oil and water before setting off
 a. control b. examine c. leave d. make mark
- Italy was the scene of many demonstrations at time.
 a. view b. event c. place d. argument
- The articles found in the car helped the police to identify the body.
 a. points b. essays c. items d. things
- He sat taking notes of everything that was said.
 a. a written reminder b. short letter c. official document d. footnote
- Police turned water cannon on the rioters.
 a. reversed b. changed c. aimed d. resorted

(4) For each of the following words, give two full sentences which bring out different meanings of the words.

- Run (v.).....
- Lead (n.).....
- Break (v.).....
- Neat (adj.).....
- Quietly (adj.).....

(5) Encircle the letter of the choice that most suitably fills the numbered blank.

A young housewife told me: 'My husband and I never argue, no matter how 1.....we may be. Instead we sit down 2.....discuss both sides of the 3.....Then I make a list of all the 4.....I intend to 5.....'

- 1) a. angry b. waxy c. heated d. confused
- 2) a. consequently b. intelligent c. rationally d. normally
- 3) a. talk b. dispute c. discussion d. argument
- 4) a. instrument b. appliance c. apparatus d. crockery
- 5) a. hit b. defeat c. smash d. destroy

(6) Give the equivalent meaning of each of the underlined words as it is used in the context of its sentence.

1. They went abroad for a change of scene.
2. Stir the paint before you use it
3. Her life changed completely when she won the lottery.
4. He started writing music as early as 1989.
5. He wheeled his horse back to the gate.
6. She has finally claimed a place on the team.
7. There was a narrow path leading down the cliff.
8. I can only remember the first few notes of the song.
9. The road turns to the left after the church.
10. The rooms are quite plain, but very comfortable.

: الخلاصة

أثر الكلمات ذات المعنى المتعدد على الاستيعاب ألقرائي للطلبة العراقيين دارسي اللغة الإنكليزية لغة أجنبية

تهدف الدراسة الحالية الى معرفة أثر تدريس الكلمات ذات المعنى المتعدد على الاستيعاب القرائي للطلبة العراقيين متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية. تشتمل عينة الدراسة طلبة المرحلة الثانية في قسم اللغة الانكليزية / كلية التربية / ابن رشد وقد تحددت عينة المفردات بالكلمات ذات المعنى المتعدد الواردة في المنهج الدراسي المقرر في القسم اعلاه (Sixty Steps to Precis). ولتحقيق الهدف من الدراسة صممت تجربة من نوع (مجموعة تجريبية – مجموعة ضابطة / اختبار قبلي وبعدي) وقد اختيرت مجموعتان تضم كل منها ثلاثين طالبا بطريقة عشوائية. وتم بناء فقرات اختبار بعدي تحصيلي طبق على عينة الدراسة في نهاية التجربة. وقد استنتج بان لتدريس الكلمات ذات المعنى المتعدد نتائج ايجابية على استيعاب الطلبة وتوسيع المفردات لديهم.