# The Translation of the Arabic Word Yadd (♣) into English

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#### 1.Introduction

Human beings have the ability to communicate through many ways and language is considered the most efficient and effective one. This communication can occur through either spoken or written modes. However, either one or both of these modes may lead to the emergence of what is called ambiguity. Generally speaking, the different interpretations of a word, a phrase or a sentence can lead to this ambiguity. This in turn develops a kind of misunderstanding and miscomprehension, and hence it might cause serious problems in the process of communication(Lucas, 1987: 25). Moreover, the notion of ambiguity has attracted the attention of many scholars(cf. Zwicky and Sadock, 1975: 14). Crystal(1985: 23) states that ambiguity in its general sense refers to a word or sentence which expresses more than one meaning. Kess and Hoppe (1985: 21) claim that the early study of ambiguity in linguistics was considered a corner stone in establishing the deep structure level of the language. Ambiguity is normally divided into two types: linguistic and non-linguistic ambiguity (Lyons, 1977: 398). Linguistic ambiguity results from the linguistic factors such as phonology, syntax and lexicon. Whereas non-linguistic ambiguity is a sort of ambiguity which can be ascribed to non linguistic factors such as context of situation or referentiality of certain words (Ibid). Lexical ambiguity is the most important types of ambiguity of which three main distinguished: grammatical phonetic, forms (Ullmann, 1962: 156-158). Moreover, Newmark (1988: 219) states that the

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lexical one is " more common and difficult to clear up than grammatical ambiguity".

This paper will be restricted to the linguistic part of ambiguity which is caused by the lexicon factor. Moreover, two types of lexical ambiguity have been recognized: categorical lexical ambiguity and pure lexical ambiguity. The first one refers to the ambiguity of category on the level of grammar such as found in "can" and "will" which can be used as nouns or as auxiliary verbs. The second type, pure lexical ambiguity, deals with ambiguity on the level of semantics in which different senses of the same word are involved. Two main sources of this ambiguity are polysemy and homonymy (Su, 1994: 31-32). Polysemy is defined by Taylor (1995: 99; 2003: 638) as "the association of two or more related senses with a single linguistic form". This means that polysemy refers to a lexical relation where a single linguistic form has different senses that are related to each other by means of regular shifts or extensions from the basic meaning (Lobner, 2002: 44). The word is derived from the Greek poly-, 'many', and sem-'sense' or 'meaning'. Therefore, polysemy is mainly the case of a single lexical item having multiple meanings. For instance, the word 'mouth' has several meanings such as organ of body and entrance of cave, etc. James (1980: 91) states that the English word "Hand" is polysemuos due to its different related senses. Accordingly, the different but related senses of the word (4) in Arabic makes it a polysemous word too. Hence, such difference in meaning will be handled in this paper which constitutes a problem to the translator in determining and conveying the appropriate equivalent of the polysemous word (4) into the T.L.

### 2. Meanings of the word (♣):

It is almost certain that the majority of words in every language have a primary meaning. Newmark (1982: 27) argues that this primary meaning of a word is regarded the core meaning which is the first sense suggested by the word alone, completely out of context. This sense is generally provided in the dictionary entry and this word in turn does not always exist in isolation (Ibid). For instance, the word (فَنْنَهُ) in Arabic is given the following meanings by dictionaries: admiration, deviation, sin, denial, scandal, torture, madness, trouble, and etc.(Kalakattawi, 2005: 12). According to Boubidi (2010: 19) a word meaning is best understood when it is used in a

given sentence or phrase, in a particular context to achieve a particular effect.

Two types of word meaning are distinguished; the first one is of the following notions: conceptual meaning, denotative meaning, lexical meaning, referential meaning and the second one refers to: associative meaning, connotative meaning, stylistic meaning, affective meaning, reflected meaning and collective types of meaning (Yule, 1996: 114-115). Thus, the way people percepts the objects in the real world, the course of time and borrowing from foreign languages are the main reasons behind this multiple meanings of any lexical item (Anis, 1984: 155-161). Moreover, Greenberg and Harman (2005: 1) state that the meaning of expressions of a language are determined or explained by the role of the expressions in thinking. Furthermore, the phrase (طویل البید) in Arabic was used first to denote a generous man then in the course of time it acquired a different sense of one who steals or attacks people which is quite the opposite (Anis et al, 2004: 1063).

The study, however, will not tackle the metaphoric use of the word (ع) as in (الأيدي الناعمة) lit. "soft hands" which denotes feminism and feminist attitudes, (يد من حديد) lit. "iron hand which denotes strength and firm control", and (اليد البيضاء) lit. " the white hand" which means someone who always helps others. The meaning of the word (ع) in such metaphoric use can be obtained by sharing abstract correspondence between the topic and the vehicle concept domains (cf. McGlone, 1996: 564).

Arabic employs the word (ユ) in different meanings. Physically, the word (ユ) refers to a part of human body from the shoulder towards the tips of one's fingers (Anis *et al*, 2004: 1063). Linguistically speaking, the word (ユ) is a feminine noun and comes with twenty seven different meanings (Al-Adnani, 1989: 741; Al-Zamakhshary, 2001: 106). The following points illustrates the most recurrent and common ones:

- 1. generosity and /or parsimony as in the Prophet Mohammed's saying (اليد العليا خير من اليد السفلى)
- 1. dominance, and control as in the Qur'anic verse (٢٣٧ عُقْدَةُ النَّكاحِ) (البقرة/ الآية ٢٣٧)
- 2. niggard and penny- pinching as in (ضيقٌ ذَاتِ الْمَيْ) (Anis et al, 2004: 1064)
- 3. regret and grief and sorrow as in the Qur'anic verse (ولمّا سُقِطَ في أَيْدِيهُم) (الأعراف/ الآية ١٤٩)
- 4. help, unified and power as in the Qur'anic verse

5. possession as in the Qur'anic verse

6. obedience and submission as in the following Qur'anic verse (رُيُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَنْ يَد وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ ) (التوبة/ الآية ٢٨)

Moreover, the body part word (يد) in the following sentences (خرج فلان من) has the following (رحت يدي ), (رحت يدي ) has the following meanings to teach, to sell, to be kind and good respectively (Abu Sa'ad, 1987: 248).

## 3. Translation, Equivalence and lexical ambiguity:

Translation is viewed as a matter of equivalence between the Source Language (henceforth; S.L.) and Target Language (henceforth; T.L.) in which a meaningful message is reproduced (cf. Catford, 1965: 27-35). Therefore, we find that the main task of translation is to reproduce the most appropriate equivalent of the S.L. in the T.L. Translation equivalence, however, has been approached by different theorist and linguists.

Nida (1964: 165-171) distinguishes two types of equivalence: formal and dynamic equivalence. Formal equivalence is mainly source oriented. It focuses on the similarity of form between the S.L. text and T.L. text as well as on the content. Dynamic equivalence, on the other hand, is based on the equivalence of response. As such, it is mainly receptor directed. It aims at reproducing an equivalent effect on the receiver as that experienced by the S.L. receiver. This type of equivalent aims at reproducing a communicative effect on the T.L. receptor (Kerr, 2011: 6) For instance, the phrase (یَدُ اِلٰی یِدِ) in the sentence (جَاءَ فَلان بِما أَدّتُ یَدُ اِلٰی یِدِ) refers to someone's failure and disappointment (Anis et al, 2004: 1063) which cannot be rendered into "hand to hand" which means "close and direct involvement in something" (Hornby, 2003: 584).

Equivalence for Newmark (1982: 39) is of two types: semantic and communicative. Communicative translation, on the one hand, emphasizes the message of the text rather than its form, the force rather than content. Semantic translation, on the other hand, concentrates on the transfer of form and meaning as close as possible. For instance, the word *hand* in "hand of the clock" can be semantically rendered into (عقرب الساعة) in which the form is retained and communicatively into (عقرب الساعة) in which the force of the S.L. is reproduced in the T.L.

Catford (1965: 35) argues that translation equivalence should be achieved by formal correspondence and textual equivalence. He contents that "translation equivalence occurs when an S.L. and a T.L. text or item are relatable to (at least some of) the same features of substance" (Ibid: 50). Put it differently, it occurs when the S.L. text and T.L. text share at least some of the features of situation. According to him, a textual translation equivalent in the T.L. is "any T.L. form (text or portion of the text) which is observed to be the equivalent of a given S.L. form (text or portion of the text) " (Ibid: 27). Whereas a formal correspondent means "any T.L. category which may be said to occupy, as nearly as possible, the 'same' place in the economy of the T.L. as the given S.L. category occupies in the S.L. (Ibid: 32).

In other words, the more features we have in common between the S.L. and the T.L. the more easy the translation we get, and translation stops when there is no common features between the S.L. and T.L. Such inability to find common features leads to a linguistic untranslatability. Catford (1965: 94) points out that linguistic untranslatability occurs when an ambiguity peculiar to the S.L. text is a functionally relevant feature as is the case in translating S.L. puns into T.L. He (Ibid: 96) distinguishes three types of lexical ambiguity: shared exponence, polysemy and oligosemy. These three types are usually subsumed under the term "lexical problems".

### 4. Data Analysis & Discussion:

The study analysis of the different meanings of the word (4) is carried out with the help of the semantic features or components proposed by Fodor and Katz (1963, cited in Kalakattawi, 2005: 12). Thus, the meanings of the word (4) in the original text will be given using componential analyses to decide on their semantic components (cf. Crystal, 1985: 53-254). Then, the same semantic components are employed as one of the situational features proposed by Catford (1965) which is to be compared and contrasted with those of the equivalent translated ones to see how far they converge or to decide whether they are appropriate equivalents or not.

In order to prove our hypotheses, the study examines Eight sentences containing the word ((4)) with its different semantic components chosen from Arabic – Arabic dictionaries. The data is given in the form of tables which also show six different renderings of all sentences. In each table, the lexical item which will be examined is underlined both in the original text

and in the six target texts. In general, the meaning conveyed by the lexical word "" in dictionaries is that of 1) generosity, 2) dominance, 3) control, 4) poverty, 5) regret, 6) favour, 7) group, 8) unified, 9) grace, 10) possession, 11) obedience, 12) submission, 13)teaching, 14) selling and 11) being good (See Abu Sa`ad, 1987; Al-Zamakhshary, 2001; Anis *et al*, 2004:).

To do so, six translators with different academic degrees were asked to translate each sentence, so that each one was translated (6) times. as in the following tables and discussions:

Table (1a)

1. The original Text	Subjects' Renderings	
ما لي بهذا الأمر يدان	I cannot manage this matter.	
	I have nothing to do with this matter.	
	I have no business in this matter.	
	This matter is out of my hands.	
	I am not qualified to this task.	
	I have nothing to do with it.	

The semantic components of this lexical (بدان) within the linguistic context of the above S.L. sentence are "supporters, followers, group ".(Abu Sa`ad, 1987: 170; Anis et al, 2004: 1064).

Table (1b)

The word	The semantic components		
یدان	support	support followers group	
<b>Original Text</b>	+	+	+
Subject.1	-	-	-
Subject.2	-	-	-
Subject.3	-	-	-
Subject.4	-	-	-
Subject.5	-	-	-
Subject.6	-	-	-

Unfortunately, the renderings of all subjects failed to convey any of the semantic components of the lexical item (پدان) in S.L. successfully. Accordingly, they could not provide the appropriate equivalent due to the absence of the situational feature of the S.L. sentence in the T.L. Moreover, subject (4) seems to have misunderstood the contextual meaning of the

lexical item (بدان) in S.L. for the sake of producing inaccurately a formal correspondence by rendering it into the word " hand". So, an appropriate equivalence can be provided by translating the sentence as: Nobody supports me in this matter.

Table (2a)

2. The original Text	Subjects' Renderings		
هم یدٌ علی غیرهم	They are unified against others.		
	2	They are as a one group.	
	3	They are one group against their enemy.	
	4	We are like the one hand that washes the other	
	5	All for one, one for all.	
	6	They are one against other people.	

The semantic components of this lexical (پِدُّ) within the linguistic context of the above S.L. sentence are "unity, group and agreement ".(Abu Sa`ad, 1987: 170; Anis et al, 2004: 1064).

Table (2b)

The word	The semantic components		
تر	unity	group	agreement
Original Text	+	+	+
Subject.1	+	-	-
Subject.2	-	+	-
Subject.3	-	+	-
Subject.4	-	-	-
Subject.5	-	-	-
Subject.6	-	-	-

Examining the renderings, we note that the subjects (1), (2) and (3) succeeded in conveying one of the semantic components of the lexical item ( $\stackrel{\checkmark}{L}$ ). They, in turn, could supply appropriate equivalents of the lexical ( $\stackrel{\checkmark}{L}$ ) in the T.L. for they managed to reproduce the S.L. situational features in the T.L. However, the rest of the subjects could not give the appropriate equivalent to the sentence for they failed to maintain any of the semantic components and hence, the situational features of the word ( $\stackrel{\checkmark}{L}$ ) in the T.L. Subject(4) also failed to produce an appropriate equivalent for the sake of a formal correspondence. He gave inaccurately the word " hand" and thus, he missed the contextual meaning of the lexical item ( $\stackrel{\checkmark}{L}$ ) whose meaning is

limited to the above three semantic components. So, a suggested version of the sentence might go as: *They are all united against others*.

Table (3a)

3. The original Text		Subjects' Renderings
هذه يدي لكَ	1 This is my hand for you.	
	2 You can count on me.	
	3 Her is my help.	
	4 Here, I extend my hand.	
	5	I will help you.
	6	Let me help you.

The semantic components of this lexical (4) within the linguistic context of the above S.L. sentence are "guidance, obedience and compliance". (Abu Sa'ad, 1987: 170; Anis et al, 2004: 1064).

Table (3b)

e word	The semantic components		
يدي	guidance obedience complian		
Original Text	+	+	+
Subject.1	-	-	-
Subject.2	-	-	-
Subject.3	-	-	-
Subject.4	-	-	-
Subject.5	-	-	-
Subject.6	-	-	-

Examining the subjects' renderings, we notice that all of the semantic components of the lexical item ((4)) are missing. Accordingly, all subjects failed to supply the appropriate equivalents because of the situational feature of the S.L. sentence was also lost. Moreover, subjects (1) and (4) have provided the word "hand" for the sake of formal correspondence. However, they also did not succeed for they could not reproduce the contextual meaning of the lexical item ((4)) in the T.L. whose precise meaning is limited in the mentioned semantic components only. Accordingly, the appropriate equivalence can be provided by translating the sentence as: I am all for you.

Table (4a)

4. The original Text	Subjects' Renderings	
,	1. He gave tribute unwillingly.	
أعطى الجزية عن يدِ	2. He paid the tribute under duress.	
	3 He was obliged to give tribute.	
	4. He gave the ransom bound hand and foo	
	5. He paid the tribute obediently.	
	6. He paid the fine obediently.	

The semantic components of this lexical (4) within the linguistic context of the above S.L. sentence are "submission, surrender and humiliation".(Al-Zamakhshary, 2001: 712; Anis et al, 2004: 1064).

Table (4b)

The word	Th	The semantic components		
يَي	submission	submission surrender humiliation		
<b>Original Text</b>	+	+	+	
Subject.1	-	-	-	
Subject.2	-	-	-	
Subject.3	-	-	-	
Subject.4	-	-	-	
Subject.5	-	-	-	
Subject.6	-	-	-	

Obviously, non of the versions offered by the subjects could achieve the appropriate equivalent of the lexical item(بد) for the subjects failed to provide any of the S.L. semantic components. Consequently, they did not succeed in maintaining the situational features of the S.L. sentence in the T.L. Moreover, the word "hand" provided by the subject(4) failed also to be a formal correspondent to the lexical (بد) due to the different contextual meanings it carried in both the S.L. and the T.L. specified by the semantic components. Hence, a suggested version of the sentence might go as:

### He submissively gave the tribute.

Table (5a)

5. The original Text		Subjects' Renderings
خرج من تحت يدهِ فلان	1 He went out of his control.	
	2 He got out of his control.	
	3 A man learned from him.	
	4 He has brought up someone.	
	5 s/he went out of his league.	
	6	He brought up somebody.

The semantic components of this lexical (بدو) within the linguistic context of the above S.L. sentence are " teaching, learning, raising and bringing up ". (Abu Sa'ad, 1987: 97; Anis et al, 2004: 1064).

Table (5b)

The word	The semantic components			
يدهِ	teaching	learning	raising	bringing up
<b>Original Text</b>	+	+	+	+
Subject.1	-	-	-	-
Subject.2	-	-	-	-
Subject.3	-	+	-	-
Subject.4	-	-	-	+
Subject.5	-	-	-	-
Subject.6	-	-	-	+

Examining the renderings, we note that subjects (3), (4) and (6) succeed in providing the semantic components of the lexical (עָב'פּ) mentioned above. Thus, the three subjects give the appropriate equivalent of the sentence by reproducing the situational feature of the above S.L. sentence. Whereas, subjects(1), (2) and (5) failed by missing the semantic components and they could not maintain the situational feature specified by the semantic component of the word (עָב'פּ) in the T.L. As such, the sentence can be rendered as: *He brought up and taught someone*.

Table (6a)

6. The original Text	Subjects' Renderings		
مشى بين يديهِ	1 He walked in front of him.		
	2 He served him.		
	3 He walked before him.		
	4 He offered a helping hand.		
	5 He served him.		
	6	He walked before him.	

The semantic components of this lexical (בָּבֶּבֶּ) within the linguistic context of the above S.L. sentence are "before and in front of ".(Abu Sa`ad, 1987: 66; Al-Zamakhshary, 2001: 106; Anis et al, 2004: 1064).

Table (6b)

The word	The semantic components		
يديهِ	before	in front of	
Original Text	+	+	
Subject.1	-	+	
Subject.2	-	-	
Subject.3	+	-	
Subject.4	-	-	
Subject.5	-	-	
Subject.6	+	-	

Examining the renderings, we note that subjects (1), (3) and (6) succeed in matching the semantic components and the situational features between the S.L. and the T.L. They succeeded in providing the appropriate equivalent of the sentence in the T.L. Whereas, subjects(2), (4) and (5) failed to maintain any of the semantic and situational features in the T.L. Obviously, the word "hand" provided by subject (4) could not work as a formal correspondence to the lexical ((4)) for the two words have completely different situational meanings specified by the semantic components in the above linguistic context.

The Translation of the Arabic Word Yadd (4) into English Lect. Atheel A. Saeed

Table (7a)

7. The original Text	Subjects' Renderings		
سُنْقِطُ فَي يدهِ	1	It went far away from his control.	
	2	He was regretful.	
	3 He fell in his power.		
	4 He became regretful.		
	5	He was regretful.	
	6	He is totally at loss.	

The semantic components of this lexical (پيدو) within the linguistic context of the above S.L. sentence are "regret, grief and sorrow". (Al-Zamakhshary, 2001: 151; Abu Sa'ad, 1987: 125).

Table (7b)

The word	The semantic components			
يده	regret	grief	sorrow	
Original Text		+		
	+		+	
Subject.1	-	-	-	
Subject.2	+	-	-	
Subject.3	-	-	-	
Subject.4	+	-	-	
Subject.5	+	-	-	
Subject.6	-	-	-	

Examining the renderings, we note that subjects (2), (4) and (5) succeeded in providing the semantic components of the lexical (عدو) and thus supplying the accurate situational features of the sentence in the T.L. Whereas, subjects(1), (3) and (6) failed to maintain any of the semantic components of the word (عدو) for they misunderstood the contextual meaning of the lexical (عدو) in the S.L.

Table (8a)

8. The original Text	Subjects' Renderings		
أعطاه مالاً عن ظهر يدٍ	1	He gave him money reluctantly.	
	2	He gave him the money generously.	
	3 He was forced to give him money.		
	4 He gave him money for no reason.		
	5	He paid him generously.	
	6	He gave him money willingly.	

The semantic components of this lexical (بين) within the linguistic context of the above S.L. sentence are "favour, grace and kindness". (Abu Sa'ad, 1987: 125; Anis et al, 2004: 1064).

Table (8b)

The word	The semantic components			
يًا	favour	grace	kindness	
<b>Original Text</b>	+	+	+	
Subject.1	-	-	-	
Subject.2	-	-	-	
Subject.3	-	-	-	
Subject.4	-	-	-	
Subject.5	-	-	-	
Subject.6	•	-	-	

Unfortunately, non of the versions offered by the subjects provided an appropriate equivalent to the lexical item() for the subjects failed to provide any of the S.L. semantic components. Consequently, they did not succeed in maintaining any of the situational features in the T.L. Moreover, the subjects could not interpret the accurate contextual meaning of the lexical item() specified by its semantic components. They instead provided inaccurately the following words " reluctantly, generously, willingly, forced and no reason " to be equivalents to the lexical item (). Accordingly, a suggested version of the sentence might be:

He was gracious enough to grant him money.

### 5. Conclusions:

After analyzing the renderings of the word (4) in eight sentences, the study comes to conclude the following points:

- 1. Formal correspondence cannot be obtained in rendering the different meanings of the lexical item (4) into English. In other words, the renderings of the word (4) show that some of our subjects have tried to provide the word "hand" as a formal correspondence. However, they failed to understand the contextual meanings of the word (4) especially those specified by their semantic components (cf. the translation of sentences 1.(4), 2.(4), 3.(1;4), 4.(4) and 6.(4)). Moreover, Arabic —Arabic dictionaries defines the word(4) as that part of the body between the shoulder and the tips of one's fingers. Whereas, the word hand according to English-English dictionaries is defined as that part of a person's arm below the wrist. Thus, the word (4) is probably better rendered into the word " arm" instead of "hand" (cf. Anis et al, 2004: 1064; Hornby, 2003: 581).
- 2. An appropriate equivalent to the word  $(\mbox{$\frac{1}{2}$})$  can be realized through sharing the S.L situational feature specified by the semantic components with the feature produced in the T.L. In other words, the more the translator is able to match between such features, the more appropriate his rendering will be. As such, to deal with the different semantic components of the word  $(\mbox{$\frac{1}{2}$})$ , the translator should resort to textual equivalence in order to provide an appropriate equivalence.
- 3. The different meanings of the word (4) constitute a real difficulty to the translators to provide an appropriate equivalence in the T.L. and such difficulty cannot be resolved unless the translator resort to an Arabic Arabic dictionaries to determine its accurate meaning within the linguistic context.

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# الكلمة العربية (يد) و ترجمتها إلى اللغة الانكليزية

## م. أثيل عبد الخالق سعيد

### المستخلص

يُعنىَ البحث بالمشاكل التي يواجهها المترجمون عند ترجمة كلمة (يد) العربية إلى اللغة الانكليزية و الصعوبات التي تكمن لديهم عند تعاملهم مع المعاني المختلفة التي تحملها المفردة؛ لذا يفترض البحث أن ليس ثمة توافق تام بين اللغتين العربية والانكليزية قدر تعلق الأمر بمفردة (يد).

ويفترض أنَّ الوصول إلى ترجمة مناسبة يتم بقيام المترجم بنقل إحدى المميزات السياقية التي تحددها السمات الدلالية للنص في اللغة الأصل إلى النص في اللغة الهدف. وتمَّ اختيار ثماني جمل تحوي على مفردة (يد) من معاجم عربية مختلفة، وقام ستة مترجمين بترجمتها إلى الانكليزية، وتحديد السمات الدلالية على وفق تحليل العناصر الأساسية للمعاني المختلفة التي تحملها مفردة (يد). وقد جاءت نتائج البحث متوافقة مع الفرضيات التي طرحها البحث مقدماً.