

# **HOMOPHONY IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC**

Set by

Asst.Lecturer. Iman Kh. Oda  
University of A-Qadisiya /College of Education

## **Abstract**

The aim of the present paper is to explore homophony in English as well as Arabic 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 three sections. The first deals with the concept of homophony in English through some definitions by Western linguists. Related terms to homophony are also provided in this section with reference to different types of homophony in English. The second section is concerned with homophony in Arabic. The same approach adopted in the first section is followed in the second one. Definitions of homophony by Arab rhetoricians are surveyed followed by the various different types of homophony in Arabic. The third section is intended to shed some light on similarities and differences in terms of definitions and types of homophony in both English and Arabic. The findings of the paper are summed up in the conclusion.

## **الخلاصة**

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة الجناس بوصفه أحد العلاقات الدلالية في اللغة الإنكليزية واللغة العربية. الجناس يشير إلى ظاهرة الكلمات المختلفة من حيث المعنى والمتشابهة من حيث اللفظ. تسمى هذه بالكلمات المجانسة. يوفر الجناس أرضاً خصبة لبحث ذو حجم صغير يقع في ثلاث أقسام. تتناول القسم الأول مفهوم الجناس في اللغة الإنكليزية من خلال عرض بعض التعريفات التي طرحها علماء اللغة الغربيون والمفاهيم الأخرى ذات الصلة بالجناس قدمت أيضاً في هذا القسم مع الإشارة إلى الأنواع المختلفة للجناس في اللغة الإنكليزية. أما القسم الثاني فقد عُني بمفهوم الجناس في اللغة العربية. وقد أتبع المنهج ذاته في القسمين الأول والثاني من حيث التعريفات التي قدمها علماء البلاغة العرب متنوعة بالأنواع المتعددة والمختلفة للجناس في اللغة العربية. وخصص الفصل الثالث إلى إلقاء الضوء على أوجه الشبه والاختلاف بين الجناس في اللغتين العربية والإنكليزية من حيث مفهومه وأنواعه. إما نتائج البحث فقد أُلخصت في الخاتمة.

## **1.1 Definitions of Homophony in English**

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 'same-sounding' (Wikipedia,the free encyclopedia,2008:1) .

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.) .

The examples just given have identical spellings for the different meanings as well as identical sounds. But homophony is not restricted to such cases at all; '**meat**' and '**meet**' are not spelled the same and yet they have different meanings but identical sounds. A homophone is a type of homonym, although sometimes homonym is used to refer to homophones that have the same spelling but different meanings (**Homophony in Chinese**,2008:1) .

The following pairs are examples of homophones that have different spellings for the same sound (Fromkin and Rodman,1988:357) :

1.a.The book was **red** .

b.The book was **read** .

2.a.Reading is **allowed** in the library .

b.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** (**Wikipedia,the free encyclopedia**,2008:1) :

3. His death, which happen'd in his berth ,

At forty-odd befell :

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) .

Sometimes, homophones are good candidates for humour as well as for confusion like :

4. "How is bread made?"

"I know that!" Alice cried eagerly.

"You take some **flour**"

"Where do you pick the **flower**?" the White Queen asked.

(Carroll cited in Fromkin and Rodman,1988:211)

the humour of this passage is based on two sets of homophones: **flour** and **flower**. Alice means **flour** as made by grinding corn, whereas the White Queen is interpreting **flower** to mean the rose flower.

In music, homophony is a texture in which two or more parts move together in harmony, the relationship between them creating chords. In other words, homophony means music in which the voices or instruments sing or play chords. In homophonic music all the choir are singing the same words at the same time. There is a tune on top and the lower parts are the accompaniment. This is what happens in hymn singing (Paul,2005:1) .

This is distinct from polyphony, in which parts move with rhythmic independence, and monophony, in which all parts move in parallel rhythm and pitch. A homophonic texture is also homorhythmic (or uses a very similar rhythm). However, in homophony, one voice, often the highest, plays a distinct melody, and the accompanying voices work together to articulate an underlying harmony. Initially, in Ancient Greece, homophony indicated music in which a single melody is performed by two or more voices in unison or octaves, i.e., monophony with multiple voices. Homophony as a term first appeared in English by Charles Burney in 1776, emphasizing the concord of harmonized melody (Randel,2002:1) .

## 1.2 Related Terms

Several similar linguistic concepts are related to homophony. The term 'homonym' is ambiguous because there are a number of ways that two meanings can share the 'same name' and because the term is used in different ways by educated speakers, and these variant meanings are recorded by dictionaries. The terms 'homograph' and 'homophone' are however usually defined the same way as meaning "same spelling" and "same sound" respectively, and 'heteronym' and 'homonym' can be seen as respective subclasses of these (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2008:1-2).

In linguistics, a 'homonym' is one of a group of words that share the same pronunciation but have different meanings, and usually spelled differently. Some sources only require that homonyms share the same spelling or pronunciation (in addition to having different meanings), but these are the definitions most other sources give for homographs and homophones respectively. The state of being a homonym is called 'homonymy'. Examples of homonyms are **stalk** (which can mean either part of a plant or to follow someone around), **bear** (animal) and **bear** (carry), **left** (opposite of right) and **left** (past tense of leave). Some sources also consider the following trio of words to be homonyms, but others designate them as "only homophones": **to**, **too** and **two** (ibid.).

Some sources state that homonym meanings must be unrelated in origin (rather than just different). Thus, **right** (correct) and **right** (opposed to left) would be polysemous, i.e., polysemes are words with the same spelling and distinct but related meanings, and not be homonyms. But the distinction between polysemy and homonymy is often subtle and subjective, and not all sources consider polysemous words to be homonyms. Words such as "**mouth**" meaning either the orifice on one's face, or the opening of a cave or river, are polysemous and may or may not be considered homonyms. The word "homonym" comes from the conjunction of the Greek prefix 'homo' (meaning same) and suffix 'onym' (meaning name). Thus, it refers to two or more distinct words sharing the "same name" (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008:2).

Homonyms may create ambiguity. A word or a sentence is ambiguous if it can be understood or interpreted in more than one way. The sentence:

5. She cannot **bear** children.

may be understood to mean "She is unable to give birth to children" or "She cannot tolerate children". The ambiguity is due to the two words **bear** with two different meanings. Sometimes additional context can help to disambiguate the sentence :

6. She cannot **bear** children if they are noisy.

7. She cannot **bear** children because she is sterile.

Both words **bear** used in the above sentences are verbs. There is another homonym **bear**, the animal, which is a noun with different semantic properties. But the adjective **bare**, despite its different spelling, is homophonous with the above words and also has a different meaning. **Bare** as a verb is yet another homonym (Fromkin and Rodman, 1988:211).

Another related term to homophone is 'homograph' since both of them constitute two types of heteronyms. 'Heteronym' is used as a broad term to include both homographs and homophones, but not homonyms. A homograph is one of a group of words that share the same spelling but have different meanings. Homographs may be pronounced the same, in this case they are also homophones. For example, **bark** (the sound of a dog) and **bark** the skin of a tree) (Riggs, 1999:4).

Alternatively they may be pronounced differently, in this case they are also heteronyms. For instance, **row** (argument) and **row** (propel with oars) . Homograph comes from the Greek prefix 'homo' means "same" and suffix 'graphos' means "written with the hand". Examples of common homographs include the following (All About Spelling, 2008:1-2) :

8. **does** and **does** (c.f. Same spelling, different pronunciation) :

a. He **does** like to run.

b. **Does** are female deer.

9. **wind** and **wind** (c.f. Same spelling, different pronunciation) :

a. I can feel the **wind** in my hair.

b. **Wind** up the string before it gets tangled.

10. **well** and **well** (c.f. Same spelling, same pronunciation) :

a. Sam doesn't feel **well** today.

b. Our neighbors are digging a new **well**.

From the above explanations, it is concluded that there is a considerable confusion and contradiction in published sources about the distinction between homonyms, homographs and homophones. Significant variant interpretations include :

**Random House Unabridged Dictionary** (2008:2) explains that homonym is technically the correct term for words that are simultaneously homographs and homophones but that it is used in the sense of only homograph or only homophone in nontechnical contexts. Thus, a river **bank**, a savings **bank**, a **bank** of switches, and a **bank** shot in pool, share only a common spelling and pronunciation, but not meaning. **Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary**, (2008:3) also states that a homonym is "one of two or more words spelled and pronounced alike but different in meaning", but appears to also give homonym as a synonym for either homophone or homograph. **Cambridge Dictionary of American English** (2008:5) defines homonym as "a word that is spelled the same as another word but that does not have the same meaning" and adds "A homonym is also a homophone". Homonym is a somewhat looser term than homophone, sometimes referring to all homophones and only homophones, and sometimes referring to the subset of homophones that are spelled alike (Suber and Thorpe, 2008:1).

The entry for homograph in **The Encyclopedia Britannica** (2008:3) mentions that homographs are "words spelt but not sounded alike", and homophones are "words alike only in sound, i.e., not alike in spelling". Also homographs are defined in the **Oxford English Dictionary**

(2008:3) as words that are spelled and pronounced the same as another but with a different meaning (which is the definition of a homonym in most other sources), thus, excluding pairs **desert** (abandon) and **desert** (a rid region), which are considered homographs by most other sources.

### **1.3 Types of Homophone**

This section discusses different types of homophone with reference to illustrative samples for each one of them as indicated below :

#### **1.3.1 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. This term was coined by Gyles Brandreth and first published in his book **The Joy of Lex** (1980), and it was used in the BBC programme **Never Mind the Full Stops**, which was featured Brandreth as a guest (**Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**, 2008:1) .

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 (**Mondegreens and Oronyms**, 2008:2) :

11. **mint spy** vs. **mince pie**.

12. **stuffy nose** vs. **stuff he knows**.

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

14. **depend** vs. **deep end**.

15. **the sky** vs. **this guy**.

Two oronyms appear in "**Ana's Song (Open Fire)**" by Silverchair, while they initially sound like mondegreens, reading the lyrics will reveal that this is not the case. The first line of the song, "Please **die Ana**, for as long as you're here we're not", also sounds very much like "Please **Diana**,...", which confuses people into believing that "**Ana**" is a person, when really it is just a nickname for **anorexia**. The next verse is "And **Ana** wrecks your life, like an **anorexia** life", which is another oronym that proves "**ana's**" real meaning (**Wikipedia,the free encyclopedia,2008:2**).

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

- 16.a.The good **can decay many ways**.
- b.The good **candy came any ways**.
- 17.a.**Ice cream** for a tasty tea time treat.
- b.**I scream** for a tasty tea time treat.
- 18.a.If you listen you can hear the **night rain**.
- b.If you listen you can hear the **night train**.

### **1.3.2 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).

### **1.3.3 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**) :

- 19. **Pete** , **peat**.
- 20. **Czech** , **check/cheque**.
- 21. **Greece** , **grease**.
- 22. **Rome** , **roam**.
- 23. **Wales** , **whales**.

### **1.3.4 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) :

- 24. **I** , **eye** , **aye**.
- 25. **O** , **oh** , **owe**.
- 26. **T** , **tea** , **tee**.
- 27. **U** , **you** , **ewe** , **yew**.

### **1.3.5 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 :

- 28. **slay/sleigh**.
- 29. **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).

## **2.1 Definitions of Homophony in Arabic**

'Homophony' (الجناس) is one of the oldest and important arts of (البيدع) since it reflects beauty whether in music or speech and makes speech have an essential effect on ear and soul because of the great surprise and deceive to the mind of the speaker when he expects the same thing that happens again. The importance of this subject made Arab grammarians and rhetoricians write basic textbooks about it. Some of them have the same name of this art like (الأصمعي 216هـ) when he wrote a book entitled **الأجناس** while others have different names since they refer to its semantic aspect as (ت: 285هـ، 1350هـ: 46) **اتفاق اللفظين والمعنى مختلف** when published سيويوه (ت: 710هـ، 1988، 24: 1) called it **ما اتفق لفظه واختلف معناه من القران المجيد** المبرد.

This art is known by (ت: 291هـ، 1980: 56) **المطابق** as ثعلب and defines it as "the same pronunciation for words of different meanings" and this makes him the first one who agrees with other rhetoricians about the definition of homophony. According to (ت: 296هـ، ب: 25) ابن المعتز homophony is considered the second and basic arts of (البيدع) which is flourished and developed in types and terms by the poets and writers particularly in the late ages.

Homophony is found in the Glorious Quran and even in old and modern poetry as exemplified below :

1. (النمل/44) ( **وَاسْلَمْتُ مَعَ سُلَيْمَانَ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ** )  
"Submit (in Islam),with Solomon, to the Lord of the Worlds." (Ali, 2001:948)
2. (الروم/43) ( **فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ الْقَائِمِ** )  
"But set thou thy face to the right Religion," (ibid.)  
say : (فيود، 1998: 276) زهير بن أبي سلمى and امرئ القيس
3. **وان كنت قد ساءتكم منى خليفة فسلى ثيابي من ثيابك تتصل**
4. **كان عيني وقد سال السليل بهم وعبرة ما هم لو أنهم أمم**

## **2.2 Homophony in Linguistics**

In linguistics, (الجناس، والتجنيس، والمجانسة) all of them mean (المشاكلّة) and come from (الجنس) which refers to everything such as people and birds (بن منظور، ت: 711هـ، 6: 43، 1955).

Some of the Arab rhetoricians want to differentiate between them and say (التجنيس) comes from (الجنس) while others say it is (المجانسة) but if one of them is similar to the other, it will be homophone. The base of (الجناس) is (جانس) and some of them say (التجانس) comes from (الجنس) for it is homophone and has different types (الحموي، ت: 837هـ، 1: 384، 85-2001).

There are different definitions for the concept of homophony in Arabic rhetoricians but all of them agree on one that is given by ثعلب (see 2.1). ابن المعتز and الأصمعي also define homophone as the words that have the same letters in poetry as well as prose (52:2004، الشيخ).

### **2.3 Types of Homophony**

The ancient rhetoricians divided homophone into two categories verbal and abstract. Verbal homophone (الجناس اللفظي) refers to the sameness in pronunciation which is subdivided into two basic types : perfect homophone (الجناس التام) and imperfect homophone (الجناس غير التام) whereas abstract homophone (الجناس المعنوي) is divided into two : implicit homophone (جناس الإضمار) and demonstrative homophone (جناس الإشارة), (الجندي، 1954: 59).

Homophone has different names according to different rhetoricians like الوطواط (ت: 573هـ، 1964) who subdivides it into seven types such as: perfect (التام) , deficiency (الناقص) , additional (الزائد), complex (المركب), repeated (المكرر) , then (المطرف) and (الخط). Such divisions are complicated more and more as in (2: 1973هـ، 911هـ، السيوطي) who pride of great numbers of homophone that never heard before.

Despite of all these types, the study will discuss the two basic types of homophone which are given by القز ويني (ت: 739هـ) since they are the most reliable types for most modern Arab rhetoricians. Thus, verbal homophone and its types are set first and abstract homophone and its types are set second.

#### **2.3.1 Perfect Homophone (الجناس التام)**

القيرواني (ت: 456هـ، 1: 321، 1964) and ابن المعتز (ت: 296هـ، ب: 25) refer to perfect homophone (الجناس التام) in general as the homophonous words in their letters but have different meanings.

But the precise definition of this type is given by القز ويني (ت: 739هـ، 289: 2003) when he says that they have homophonous letters concerning their types, numbers, shapes and orders.

This means that the words in this type of homophone associate with each others in everything including exact characteristics of their sounds and letters' orders except meaning (539: 2000هـ، 626هـ، السكاكي). Perfect homophone is subdivided into three types: identical (المماثل) , complete (المستوفي) , and complex (المركب) which can be presented in the following sections.

##### **1.3.1.1 Identical (المماثل)**

Identical homophone (الجناس المماثل) refers to the homophonous words in the types of letters, numbers, shapes and orders, and they belong to the same part of speech whether nouns, verbs or prepositions as in (فيود، 1998: 279) :

5. (وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُقْسِمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ مَا لَبِثُوا غَيْرَ سَاعَةٍ) (الروم/ 55)

"On the Day that the Hour(of reckoning) will be established, the transgressors will swear that they tarried not but an hour:" (Ali, 2001:1023)

Identical homophone exists between two nouns: Hour (الساعة) and hour (ساعة) and they are similar in their pronunciation but differ in meaning since the meaning of the first Hour which refers to Doomsday is different from the second which means a period of time.

6. (يَكَادُ سَنَا بَرْقِهِ يَذْهَبُ بِالْأَبْصَرِهُ يُقَلِّبُ اللَّهُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لَأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ) (النور/ 43-44)

"The vivid flash of His lightning well-night blinds the sight.It is Allah Who alternates the Night and the Day: Verily in these things is an instructive example for those who have vision! (ibid.).

Here, the meaning of the first noun (الأبصار) is sight which is different from the second one that means vision or mind though both of them are similar in their letters' types, numbers, shapes and orders (فيود، 1998: 279).

And أبي نواس says:

7. عباس عباس إذا احتدم الوغى والفضل فضل والربيع ربيع

in this line, عباس, الفضل and الربيع are proper nouns whereas the second عباس means scowl, فضل means favour and ربيع refers to spring season (51:2004، الشيخ).

Identical homophone may occur between verbs which is exemplified by the following (الخازن cited in 280:1998، فيود، ) :

8. قوم لو أنهم ارتاضوا لما قرضوا أو أنهم شعروا بالنقص ما شعروا

the first verb here, (شعروا) means sense that is different from the second means compose poetry.

And it also happens between prepositions as in :

9. قد ينزل المطر شتاءً وقد ينزل صيفاً

The rain might fall in winter and might fall in summer.

The identical homophone is between two prepositions (قد) in everything except meaning for the first one refers to plenty of rain while the second means little rain (ibid.).

### 1.3.1.2 Complete ( المستوفي )

This type of complete homophone (الجناس المستوفي) refers to the sameness in letters concerning their types, numbers, shapes and orders except a contrast in word classes. Thus, one of them can be a verb while the other is a noun or a preposition and one of them may be a noun whereas the second is a preposition. Homophones that occur between a noun and verb are in the following lines (230:2002، هـ، 729): (الجرجاني، ت):

10. وسميته يحيى ليحيى فلم يكن إلى مرد أمر الله فيه سبيل

the first word (يحيى) is a noun while the second is a verb.

11. ودارهم ما دمت في دارهم وأرضهم ما دمت في أرضهم

The poet uses four homophonous words between verbs and nouns such as the first verb (دارهم) to mean good deed whereas the second noun means their houses. Homophone also occurs between the verb (أرضهم) which means satisfy them and noun to mean their land (51:2004، الشيخ).

Homophone between a verb and preposition is (281:1998، فيود):

12. علا نجمه في عالم الشعر فجأة على أنه ما زال في الشعر شاديا

Here, the poet expresses homophone between the first word (علا) as a verb to mean go up and the second one as a preposition. Then, homophone can also occur between a preposition and noun as in :

13. هويت في حفرة فسقطت من في أسناني

I fell down in a hole and lost my teeth.

When the first word (في) is used as a preposition while the second is a noun.

### 2.3.1.3 Complex (المركب)

Complex homophone (الجناس المركب) occurs if its words are complex or one of them is complex while the other is single. السبتي says (ibid.:282) :

14. إلى حتفي سعى قدمي أرى قدمي أراق دمي

Here, the homophonous words are complex since both of them consist of two words: (أرى قدمي) and (أراق دمي) , and the poet also says:

15. وكم لجباه الراغبين إليه من مجال سجود في مجالس جود

This line is similar to the above one since the complex words comprise two: (مجال سجود) and (مجالس جود). This type of complex homophone is called faked (ملفقا).

Complex homophone may have two parts: one of them consists of a single word and the other has one word and a half. Arab rhetoricians call

such a type as woven (مرفوا), (230:2002، هـ، 729) and (الجرجاني، ت: 290:2003، هـ، 739) . القزويني، ت:

16. طرقت الباب حتى كل متني فلما كل متني كلمتني

Homophone here, is between a single word (كلمتني) and complex one (كل متني) . The same is in the following line:

17. سل سبيلا إلى النجاة ودع دم ع عيني يجري سلسبيلا

which consists of a complex word (سل سبيلا) and a single one (سلسبيلا).

This type of homophone may also comprise a single word and two words. This is called (متشابهها) if the items are similar to each other in pronunciation as well as spelling. السبتي says :



18. إذا مَلِكٍ لم يكن ذا هبة فـدعه ، فدولته ذاهية

Here, the first word is a complex one that consists of two: (ذا) and (هبة) whereas the second is a single one (ذاهية). And if they are pronounced alike but have different spelling it is called separated (مفروقا) like: (جام لنا) and (جاملنا) in :

19. كلكم قد اخذ الجا مَ ، ولا جام لنا  
ما الذي ضَرَّ مُديرَ الجام لو جاملنا

### 2.3.2 Imperfect Homophone (الجناس غير التام)

Imperfect homophones (الجناس غير التام) is also called (المجانس) by ابن الزمكاني (ت:651هـ، 1964): (166) who states that it is different from perfect homophone because of the deficiency that may occur in (الحركات) and the differences between the letters of the words that may come from one base or not .

The same point is expressed by القز ويني (ت:739هـ، 2003:290) when he calls such differences in the shapes of the letters, numbers, types, and orders as deviant (المحرف), deficiency (الناقص), present and subsequent (المضارع واللاحق), and reverse (القلب) respectively. The following sections will discuss these types of imperfect homophone.

#### 2.3.2.1 Deviant (المحرف)

Deviant (المحرف) is one type of imperfect homophone that refers to the agreement between words concerning the letters' types, numbers and orders except a contrast in their shapes. Such differences may occur in (الحركة) as : (مُنذِرِينَ) and (المُنذَرِينَ) in the following aaya :

20. (وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا فِيهِمْ مُنذِرِينَ هَ فَاَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُنذَرِينَ) (الصافات/72-73)

"But We sent a foretime, among them, (messengers) to admonish them-then see what was the End of those who were admonished (but heeded not)-" (Ali, 2001:1145)

Or in (الشَّعْرِ) and (الشُّعْرِ) as in (السُّكُونِ) and (الحركة) :

21. (وَالْحُسْنُ يَظْهَرُ فِي رَبَّيْتَيْنِ رَوْنَقَهُ بَيْتٍ مِنَ الشُّعْرِ أَوْ بَيْتٍ مِنَ الشَّعْرِ) (الجرجاني، ت:729هـ، 2002:231 cited in المعري)

#### 2.3.2.2 Deficiency (الناقص)

Some rhetoricians agree to say that deficiency homophone (الجناس الناقص) is spelled differently concerning the numbers of the letters only that's why it is called deficiency since one of the homophonous words are deficient from the other in one or two letters only. An example of the deficient letter that occurs initially (الحنفي، ت:943هـ، 114:1، 2001) and (السبكي، ت:773هـ، 21:162، 2001) :

22. (قوله تعالى (وَالنَّفْتِ السَّاقِ بِالسَّاقِ هَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقُ) (القيامة/29-30)

"And one leg will be joined with another: that Day the Drive will be (all) to thy Lord!" (Ali, 2001:1568)

Homophone in this aaya is between (الساق) which is different from (المساق) in one letter only.

Or in the middle of the word :

23. (جَدِّي جَهْدِي)

Found out my effort.

And finally and it is called (مطرفا) . says : (مطرفا) أبي تمام .

24. (يَمْدُونُ مِنْ أَيْدِ عَوَاصٍ عَوَاصِمِ تَصُولُ بِأَسْيَافٍ قَوَاضٍ قَوَاضِبِ)

Sometimes homophonous words differ from each other in two letters that must occur finally, i.e., (الجوانح) in the following and the rhetoricians call a such type (مذيلا) , says : (الخنساء) :

25. (أَنَّ الْبِكَاءَ هُوَ الشَّفَا ءُ مِنْ الْجَوَى بَيْنَ الْجَوَانِحِ)

#### 2.3.2.3 Present and Subsequent Homophones

(الجناس المضارع و اللاحق)

Present homophone (الجناس المضارع) refers to the differences between words including the types of the letters in no more than one and if they are similar to each other in articulation they will be called so. Such differences may occur at the beginning of the words like (دامس) and (طامس) in (القز ويني، ت:739هـ، 2003:291) , (الحريري

26. بيني وبين كَيْي ليلِ دامس وطريق طامس  
Or in the middle between (ينهون) and (ينئون) :
27. (وَهُمْ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ) (الأنعام/26)  
"Others they keep away from it, and themselves they keep away;"  
(Ali,2001:300)  
And at the end of the words as in the Prophet Muhammed's speech (الخير) and (الخير) :
28. الخيل مَعْقُودٌ بنواصيها الخيرُ إلى يومِ القيامة .  
Subsequent homophone (الجناس اللاحق) occurs in homophonous words that differ from each other in their letters that may come initially as in (29) or in the middle of the words in (30) and finally in (31) respectively but they are different in articulation, (232:2002هـ،729هـ) : (الجرجاني،ت:729هـ،232:2002هـ) :
29. (وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ) (الهمزة/1)  
"Woe to every(kind of) and backbiter," (Ali,2001:1698)
30. (ذَلِكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَمْرَحُونَ) (غافر/75)  
"That was because ye were wont to rejoice on the earth in things other than the Truth, and that ye were wont to be insolent." (Ali , 2001:1225)
31. (وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِّنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوْ الْخَوْفِ) (النساء/83)  
"When there comes to them some matter touching(Public) safety or fear," (ibid.:210)  
Present and subsequent homophones differ in letters' types only and similar in letter's numbers, orders and shapes. This means that homophonous words are alike in their spelling except a contrast in dots, so they are called (الجناس المصحف) or (الجناس المرسوم) (288:1998هـ،288:1998هـ):
32. فأن حلوا فليس لهم مقر وان رحلوا فليس لهم مقر  
Here, the poet expresses homophones between two words (مقر) and (مقر) that look like the same except a contrast in their dots.

#### **2.3.2.4 Reverse Homophone (جناس القلب)**

Reverse homophone (جناس القلب) means the differences between homophonous words in the orders of the letters which is either complete reverse when one of them is completely opposite the other in the letters' orders, الاحنف says (ibid.:286) :

33. حسامك فيه للأحباب فتح ورمحك فيه للأعداء حتف

In this line, (فتح) represents complete reverse of (حتف). Or incomplete reverse which refers to the differences between words in the orders of some letters, as in :

34. (إِنِّي خَشِيتُ أَنْ تَقُولَ فَرَّقْتَ بَيْنَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ) (طه/94)

"Truly I feared lest thou shouldst say, Thou hast caused a division among the Children of Israel," (Ali,2001:783)

Here, homophone is between two words: (بين) and (بني) for they differ in the order of the last two letters.

Sometimes complete reverse occurs between the first and the last words and it is called (مقلوبا) (الحنفي،ت:943هـ،2001:1:115 and السبكي،ت:773هـ،2001:1-2:128)، (مجنا)

35. أسكرني باللفظ والمقلة الـ كحلاء والوجنة والكأس  
ساق يريني قلبه قسوة وكل ساق قلبه قاس

complete reverse is between the beginning word (ساق) and the end (قاس). And between the first word (لاح) and the last one (حال) in the following line:

36. لاح أنوار الهدى في كفه من كل حال

Furthermore, homophonous words follow each other and it is called double and repeated homophones (جناسا مزدوجا ومكررا) such as between (سبا) and (نبا) in (ibid.):

37. (وَجِئْتُكَ مِنْ سَبَأٍ بِنَبَأٍ يَقِينٍ) (النمل/22)

"And I have come to thee from Saba with tidings true." (Ali,2001: 943)

### **2.3.3 Implicit Homophone (جناس الإضمار)**

Implicit homophone (جناس الإضمار) is the first type of abstract homophone which is expressed by the speaker when he says something but means another that can be understood from the context, e.g.:

38. فهو إذا رآته عين الرائي أبو معاذ أو أخو الخنساء

The meaning of (أبو معاذ) is a mountain and (أخو الخنساء) is a rock but they are not meant here, because the implied meaning is blaming the hearer when he looks like a rock (الشيرازي، 1379هـ: 2).

### **2.3.4 Demonstrative Homophone (جناس الإشارة)**

The second type of abstract homophone is represented by demonstrative homophone (جناس الإشارة) which means the speaker mentions only one of homophonous words while the other is interpreted from certain reference to it (الهاشمي، ب.ت: 403):

39. يا حمزة اسمح بوصل وامنن علينا بقرب  
في تغرك اسمك أضحي مصحفًا وقلبي

The poet mentions (حمزة) as one of homophonous words and he demonstrates to the other (الجمرة) and (المصحف) as (مصحفًا حمزة).

## **3.1 Analysis of Homophony**

In this section, an attempt is made to trace the similarities and differences of homophony in English and Arabic. This will be done in terms of the definitions characterizing homophony and its types.

**1. Defining homophony :** Despite the various names and definitions given by Arab rhetoricians, the concept is the same in Arabic language. Homophony is basically the process that exists between words that are pronounced alike, but have different meanings. But there is a confusion about the definition of homophony in English. A homophone is a word that shares the same pronunciation as another word but differs in meaning. Homophones may be spelled the same in this case they are also homonyms or spelled differently. In such a case, the distinction between homophony and homonymy is not always clear cut. A homophone, on one hand, is considered a type of homonym and homonyms can be seen as the subclass of homophones that are spelled the same, on the other hand. This means homonym according to some Western linguists is seen as a synonym with homophone. Above all, if homophonous words share the same spelling with another, they will be similar to Arabic perfect homophone and if they have different spelling, they will be parallel to imperfect homophone in Arabic.

**2. Types of homophony :** The study of the types of homophony in English and Arabic has shown a difference in manner of classification. Types of homophony in English are more restricted in comparison with Arabic. Each type of homophony in English is set according to a certain aspect of homophony. The types recognized are in terms of the strings of words, identical words to non-words, proper nouns, the conditions of letter and threat. In Arabic, the classification of the types of homophony enjoy more freedom of membership. Arab rhetoricians and grammarians have tried to put types of homophony in terms of two categories: verbal and abstract then each one of them is subdivided into various types. Despite the differences in classification between types of homophony in both languages, there are similarities between some of them. Thus, oronyms represent one type of homophone in English which is parallel to Arabic complex perfect homophone since both of them comprise a pair of words. The second similarity is between proper nouns and identical perfect homophones in English and Arabic that refer to homophone between nouns and things sharing the same pronunciation.

## **Conclusion**

It has been found that the concept of homophony in English is not the same as in the case of Arabic. Western linguists confuse between the two terms homophony and homonymy concerning their definitions while Arab rhetoricians share the same view that homophony is basically a lexical relation when the words have the same sound but different meanings. It is maintained that the comprehension of any homophony depends on context in order to reveal the ambiguity that rises between homophonous words. Homophony in both languages shows itself to be dependent on context. Arab grammarians and rhetoricians adopt a different approach from their Western counterparts in the classification of types of homophony. Arab scholars give homophony a lot of attention and study it extensively due to their interest in rhetoric. The classification of types of homophony in Arabic confirms this.

## **English References**

- Ali,A.(2001).**The Meaning of The Holy Qur'an**. Beltsville:Amana Corporation.
- All About Spelling**.(2008). (<http://www.firstschoolyears.com/literacy/word/other/homonyms/htm-28k->)
- Bridges, R.(2004).**Society for Pure English,Tract 2,on English Homophones**.Chicago:Chicago University Press.
- Cambridge Dictionary of American English**.(2008). ([http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org/define.asp?key=homonym\\*1+0&dict=A](http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org/define.asp?key=homonym*1+0&dict=A))
- Cooper,A.(2008).**Alan Cooper's Homonym List**.Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- English Homophones**.(2008). (<http://www.bifroest.demon.co.uk/misc/homophones.html-6k->)
- Farlex,H.(2008).**The Free Dictionary**.Princeton:Princeton University Press.
- Fromkin,V. and Rodman,R.(1988).**An Introduction to Language**. Chicago:Holt,Rinehart and Winston,Inc.
- Homophony in Chinese**.(2008). (<http://www.haskins.yale.edu/STAFF/IGMconf/Feldman-ppt->)
- Lyons,J.(1981).**Language and Linguistics**.Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.
- Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary**.(2008). (<http://www.m.w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=homonym>)
- Mogg,K.(1994).**Interpretation of Homophones Related to Threat: Anxiety**.New bury:Heinle and Heinle.
- Mondegreens and Oronym**.(2008). (<http://www.wordinfo.info/words/index/info/view-unit/3347-12k->)
- Oronyms**.(2008). (<http://www.users.tinyonline.co.uk/gswithenbank/oronyms-htm-10k->)
- Oxford English Dictionary**.(2008).Oxford:Oxford University Press.
- Paul,G.(2005).**The Penguin Companion to Classical Music**.London: Oxford University Press.
- Pinker,S.(2007).**The Language Instinct**.London:Addison Wesley Language,Inc.
- Randel,D.(2002).**The Harvard Concise Dictionary of Music and Musicians**.Chicago:Holt,Rinehart and Winston,Inc.
- Random House Unabridged Dictionary**.(2008). (<http://www.dictionary.reference.com/search?q=homonym&r=66>)
- Riggs,F.(1999).**Homonyms,Heteronyms and Allonyms**.Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Suber,P. and Thorpe,A.(2008).**An English Homophone Dictionary**. New York:William Morrow and Company,Inc.
- The Encyclopaedia Britannica**.(2008).London:Cambridge University Press.
- Wikipedia,the free encuclopedia**.(2008). (<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>)
- Yule,G.(1996).**The Study of Language**.Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.

**Arabic References**

- ثعلب، أبي العباس احمد بن يحيى. (ت: 291هـ، 1980). **مجالس ثعلب** شرح وتحقيق: عبد السلام محمد هارون. القاهرة: دار المعارف.
- الجرجاني، ركن الدين محمد بن علي بن محمد. (ت: 729هـ، 2002). **الإشارات والتنبيهات في علم البلاغة** بيروت: دار الكتب العلمية.
- الجندي، علي. (1954). **فن الجناس، بلاغة، أدب، نقد**. القاهرة: مؤسسة المختار للنشر والتوزيع.
- الحموي، أبي بكر علي بن عبد الله بن حجة. (ت: 837هـ، 2001). **خزانة الأدب وغاية الإرب** ج 1 ط 1. دراسة وتحقيق: د. كوكب دياب. بيروت: دار صادر.
- الحنفي، إبراهيم بن محمد بن عرشاه عصام الدين. (ت: 943هـ، 2001). **الأطول**. شرح تلخيص مفتاح العلوم. ج 1 ط 1. تحقيق: د. عبد الحميد هنداوي. بيروت: دار الكتب العلمية.
- ابن الزمكاني. (ت: 651هـ، 1964). **التبيان في علم البيان المطلع على إعجاز القرآن** ط 1. تحقيق: د. احمد مطلوب، ود. خديجة ألدحي. بغداد: مطبعة العاني.
- السبكي، بهاء الدين أبي حامد احمد بن علي بن عبد الكافي. (ت: 773هـ، 2001). **عروس الأفراح** في شرح تلخيص المفتاح. ج 1-2. تحقيق: د. خليل إبراهيم خليل بيروت: دار الكتب العلمية.
- السكاكي، أبي يعقوب بن يوسف بن أبي بكر بن محمد بن علي. (ت: 626هـ، 2000). **مفتاح العلوم** ط 1. تحقيق: د. عبد الحميد هنداوي. بيروت: دار الكتب العلمية.
- سيبويه، أبي بشر عمرو بن عثمان بن قنبر. (ت: 710هـ، 1988). **اتفاق اللفظين والمعنى مختلف** ج 1 ط 3. تحقيق وشرح: عبد السلام محمد هارون. القاهرة: مكتبة الخانجي للطباعة والنشر.
- السيوطي، أبي الفضل جلال الدين عبد الرحمن. (ت: 911هـ، 1973). **معترك الأقران في إعجاز القرآن**. تحقيق: علي محمد البجاوي. القاهرة: دار الثقافة العربية للطباعة.
- الشيخ، حمدي. (2004). **الوافي في تيسير البلاغة البديع-البيان-المعاني**. الإسكندرية: المكتب الجامعي.
- الشيرازي، محمد بن المهدي الحسيني. (1379هـ). **علم البديع** بيروت: دار الكتب العلمية.
- فيود، بسيوني عبد الفتاح. (1998). **علم البديع**. القاهرة: مؤسسة المختار للنشر والتوزيع.
- القرزويني، جلال الدين محمد بن عبد الرحمن بن عمرو بن احمد بن محمد. (ت: 739هـ، 2003). **الإيضاح في علوم البلاغة المعاني والبيان والبديع** بيروت: دار الكتب العلمية.
- القيرواني، أبي علي الحسن. (ت: 456هـ، 1964). **العمدة في محاسن الشعر وأدابه ونقده** ج 1 ط 3. تحقيق وتعليق: محمد محي الدين عبد الحميد. القاهرة: مطبعة السعادة.
- المبرد، أبي العباس محمد بن يزيد. (ت: 285هـ، 1350هـ). **ما اتفق لفظه واختلف معناه من القرآن المجيد**. اعتناء: الأستاذ عبد العزيز الميمني. القاهرة: المطبعة السلفية.
- ابن المعتز، عبد الله. (ت: 296هـ، ب.ت). **البديع**. تحقيق: المستشرق اغناطيوس كراتشكوفسكي. دمشق: دار الحكمة.
- بن منظور، أبي الفضل جمال الدين محمد بن مكرم. (ت: 711هـ، 1955). **لسان العرب** بيروت: دار صادر.
- الهاشمي، احمد. (ب.ت). **جواهر البلاغة في المعاني والبيان والبديع** ط 12. بيروت: دار إحياء التراث العربي.
- الوطواط، رشيد الدين محمد العمري. (ت: 573هـ، 1964). **حدائق السحر في دقائق الشعر** ط 1. نقل وتعريب وتوضيح: د. إبراهيم أمين الشواربي. القاهرة: المطبعة لجنة التأليف والترجمة والنشر.