



دراسة مقارنة في  
الظاهرة المتماثلة  
بين اللغة العربية  
واللغة الانجليزية

# **The Study of the Phenomenon of Homophone Between English and Kurdish Languages: A Comparative Study**

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## **Abstract**

Homophone is defined as words that have different meanings, different spellings but similar pronunciation. So, it exists in the language itself where there are many words that are similar in the way they are pronounced but different in meanings and spellings like *rite/write*, *see/sea* *two/too* etc.

Kurdish and English languages are interrelated to each other because the Kurdish language is related to the Indo-Iranian family and the English belongs to the Germanic family and both families are members of Indo-European family.

The present study is about investigating the phenomenon of homophone between two languages: the English language and the Kurdish Language.

To verify that the phenomenon of homophone exists between English and Kurdish, the researcher found out 20 English words has the typical pronunciations of 20 Kurdish ones. Afterward, all the words chosen from both languages were analyzed.

Although the alphabets between the languages concerned are different, the phenomenon of homophone between the said languages exists.

**Keywords:** Homophone, English, Kurdish, Phenomenon and Family

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### List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Full Descriptions
adj.	Adjective
adv.	Adverb
n.	Noun
v.	Verb
det.	Determiner
sym.	Symbol

## What is Homophone?

### 1.1. Preliminaries

The present chapter is concerned with the nature of the phenomenon of homophone. In other words, it highlights its definitions, its types, and the existence of homophones between languages. Finally, it sheds lights on the relation between English and Kurdish languages.

### 1.2. Definitions of Homophone

The English language contains an abundance of words (or linguistic units) that are pronounced or spelled like other words but have different meanings. Let us define three such categories: Homographs, words that are spelled alike but pronounced differently (e.g., *wind*, moving air; and *wind*, to coil or turn), Homonyms, words that are spelled and pronounced alike (e.g., *bear*, an animal; and *bear*, to carry or withstand). And Homophones, words that are spelled differently but pronounced alike (Lovinger, 2000:169).

In the following examples, writers have absent-mindedly replaced correct words with their homophones

"According to a news item, an editor "said he hoped the former aide to Richard Nixon would right an afterword" for a book by Nixon. Plainly *write* (to compose sentences) was confused with "right" (which also can be a verb, e.g., to right a wrong). (Lovinger, 2000: 169)"

"A famed lexicographer wrote in a letter that he had sunk "waste deep" in snow in the Alps. He meant *waist* (the narrow part of the torso), not "waste" (refuse or an act of wasting) (ibid: 169)"

"Under a proposal by the president, "overall Federal spending would be held constant accept for inflation." Someone at a newspaper confused *except* (a preposition meaning other than) with "accept" (a verb meaning to take some gredient, headquarters, or starting point; "paint with an oil base" / "our base of operations." **Bass**, a low-



pitched voice or musical instrument; “The singer is a bass” / “He plays the double bass.”(ibid: 170)"

Homophones are described as words which sound alike but are written differently and often have different meanings. For example, the English words *no* and *know* are both pronounced in some varieties of British English (Jack and Schmidt, 2010: 264). It is a type of lexical ambiguity in which two or more expressions have an identical pronunciation but different spellings and meanings, e.g. *pray* vs *prey* and *course* vs *coarse*. Even when homographic expressions (**homography**) are disambiguated by a change in spelling (e.g. *plain* and *plane*, both derived from Lat. *planus* ‘flat’), homophony often remains. (Bussmann, 2006: 520).

### 1.3. Types of Homophones

There are two types of homophones employed in the psychological researches, they are as follows:

#### 1.3.1. Pseudo-homophones

They are pseudo-words that are phonetically identical to a word. For example, *groan/grone* and *crane/crain* are pseudo-homophone pairs, whereas *plane/plain* is homophone pair since both letter strings is recognized words. Both types of pairs are used in lexical decision tasks to investigate word recognition. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homophone> retrieved on May/26/2014

#### 1.3.2. Use as ambiguous information

Homophones where one spelling is of a threatening nature and one is not (e.g. *slay/sleigh*, *war/wore*) have been used in studies of anxiety as a test of cognitive models that those with high anxiety tend to interpret ambiguous information in a threatening manner. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homophone> Retrieved on May/26/2014

### 1.4. Homophones Between Languages

It is evident that homophones exist within the language itself (see 1.2. above). But finding homophones across different languages are defined as the discovery of new era of homophones. This finding is considered to be a

great piece of evidence that support the idea of the relations between languages. In other words, although these words of different languages are not similar in spelling, meaning and even in the alphabetical order. They are interrelated because the words in question have the same pronunciation.

## 1.5. The Relation Between Kurdish and English as Far as The Phenomenon of Homophone is Concerned

### 1.5.1. The Kurdish language:

The Kurdish languages are several [Iranian languages](#) spoken by the [Kurds](#) in [western Asia](#). The Kurdish languages, of which [Kurmanji Kurdish](#) has the largest number of speakers, are not [mutually intelligible](#) without acquired bilingualism. The languages spoken by Kurds do not form a linguistic group; the four in the box at right are commonly grouped together, whereas the [Zaza–Gorani languages](#) are more distantly related. The literary output in the Kurdish languages was mostly confined to poetry until the early 20th century, when a more general literature began to be developed. In its written form today, Kurdish has two principal dialects, namely [Kurmanji](#) in the northern parts of the geographical region of [Kurdistan](#), and [Sorani](#) further east and south.

Sorani is the second official language of [Iraq](#) and is referred to in political documents simply as "Kurdish", whereas the recognized minority language in Armenia is Kurmanji, which is also spoken in Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. So, The Kurdish languages belong to the [Iranian](#) branch of the [Indo-European](#) family. They are generally classified as Northwestern Iranian languages or by some scholars as intermediate between Northwestern and Southwestern Iranian.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdish\\_languages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdish_languages) retrieved on May/26/2014

### 1.5.2. The English language:

The English language is a [West Germanic language](#) that was first spoken in [early medieval England](#) and is now a global [lingua franca](#). It is spoken as a first language by the majority populations of several sovereign states, including the [United Kingdom](#), the [United States](#), [Canada](#), [Australia](#), [Ireland](#), [New Zealand](#) and a number of [Caribbean](#) nations; and it is an [official language](#) of [almost 60 sovereign states](#). It is the third-most-common native language in the world,

after Mandarin Chinese and Spanish. It is widely learned as a second language and is an official language of the European Union, many Commonwealth countries and the United Nations, as well as in many world organizations. English arose in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of England and what is now southeast Scotland. Following the extensive influence of Great Britain and the United Kingdom from the 17th to mid-20th centuries through the British Empire, it has been widely propagated around the world.

Through the spread of American-dominated media and technology, English has become the leading language of international discourse and the *lingua franca* in many regions. Historically, English originated from the fusion of closely related dialects, now collectively termed Old English, which were brought to the eastern coast of Great Britain by Germanic settlers (Anglo-Saxons) by the 5th century; the word *English* is derived from the name of the Angles, and ultimately from their ancestral region of Angeln (in what is now Schleswig-Holstein). The language was also influenced early on by the Old Norse language through Viking invasions in the 9th and 10th centuries. So, The English language belongs to the Anglo-Frisian sub-group of the West Germanic branch of the Germanic languages, a member of the Indo-European languages. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English\\_language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language) retrieved on May/26/2014

It is understood now that both languages above are interrelated because they belong to the Indo-European languages.

## The Production of Homophones Between English and Kurdish Languages

### 2.1. Preliminaries

This chapter is about presenting a list of homophones between Kurdish and English languages. This means that there English words have equivalents in Kurdish language vocabulary as far as their pronunciations are concerned.

### 2.2. The English Words that have Homophonic Equivalents in The Kurdish language Vocabulary

The researcher found out 20 English words that have the same pronunciation of 20 Kurdish words. In other words, these words are



different in alphabet, meanings and spellings. They are similar in pronunciation only. In addition, some English words do not match the Kurdish ones as far as their parts of speech are concerned.

To verify that the pronunciation of English words match the Kurdish ones and the English words might not have similar parts of speech in the language concerned the English and Kurdish words with their meanings and parts of speech are presented in below

### 2.2.1. The English Words Concerned

Word	Type	Definition
<b>Bone</b>	<b>(n.)</b>	It refers to any of the pieces of hard whitish tissue making up the skeleton in humans and other vertebrates. <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/bone?q=Bone">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/bone?q=Bone</a> + retrieved on May/27/2014
<b>Car</b>	<b>(n.)</b>	It is a road vehicle, typically with four wheels, powered by an internal-combustion engine and able to carry a small number of people. <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/car?q=Car">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/car?q=Car</a> + retrieved on May/27/2014
<b>Now</b>	<b>(adv)</b>	It means at the present time or moment. <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/now?q=Now">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/now?q=Now</a> + retrieved on May/27/2014
<b>Care</b>	<b>(v. and n.)</b>	It is of two definitions, they are as follows: 1- The provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare, maintenance, and protection of someone or something 2- Serious attention or consideration applied to doing something correctly or to avoid damage or risk. And it can function as a verb that means to feel concern or interest; attach importance to something. <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/care?q=Care">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/care?q=Care</a> + retrieved on May/27/2014
<b>Hat</b>	<b>(n.)</b>	It stands for a shaped covering for the head worn for warmth, as a fashion item, or as part of a uniform. <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english</a>



		<a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/h/hat?q=Hat">h/hat?q=Hat</a> + retrieved on May/27/2014
<b>Rush</b>	(v. and n.)	It means moving with urgent haste or it refers to dash towards (someone or something) in an attempt to attack or capture. It comes as a noun as well: a sudden quick movement towards something, typically by a number of people. <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/h/rush?q=Rush">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/h/rush?q=Rush</a> + retrieved on May/27/2014
<b>Share</b>	(v. and n.)	it is a part or portion of a larger amount which is divided among a number of people, or to which a number of people contribute or it is one of the equal parts into which a company's capital is divided, entitling the holder to a proportion of the profits while it refers to Have a portion of (something) with another or others when it comes in the form of verb. <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/h/share?q=Share">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/h/share?q=Share</a> + retrieved on May/27/2014
<b>Bash</b>	(v. and n.)	It means to Strike hard and violently when it is a verb form, whereas it stands for a heavy blow when it functions as a noun. <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/h/bash?q=Bash">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/h/bash?q=Bash</a> + retrieved on May/27/2014
<b>Mill</b>	(v. and n.)	It is a building equipped with machinery for grinding grain into flour or a factory fitted with machinery for a particular manufacturing process. It means to Grind (something) in a mill. <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/h/mill?q=Mill">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/h/mill?q=Mill</a> + retrieved on May/27/2014
<b>Bang</b>	(v. and n.)	It is a sudden loud, sharp noise or a fringe of hair cut straight across the forehead. It also refers to strike or put down (something) forcefully and noisily. <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/h/bang?q=Bang">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/h/bang?q=Bang</a> + retrieved on May/27/2014
<b>Mast</b>	(n.)	It is a tall upright post, spar, or other structure on a ship or boat, in sailing vessels generally carrying a

		sail or sails or a tall upright post on land, especially a flagpole or a television or radio transmitter. <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/mast?q=Mast">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/mast?q=Mast</a> + retrieved on May/27/2014
<b>Core</b>	<b>(v. and n.)</b>	It is the tough central part of various fruits, containing the seeds or the part of something that is central to its existence or character. It means to remove the tough central part and seeds from (a fruit). <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/core#core">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/core#core</a> retrieved on May/27/2014
<b>Peer</b>	<b>(v. and n.)</b>	It means Looking with difficulty or concentration at someone or something or a person of the same age, status, or ability as another specified person. <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/peer?q=Peer+#peer-2">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/peer?q=Peer+#peer-2</a> retrieved on May/27/2014
<b>Match</b>	<b>(v. and n.)</b>	It is a contest in which people or teams compete against each other in a particular sport, a short, thin piece of wood or cardboard used to light a fire, being tipped with a composition that ignites when rubbed against a rough surface or to correspond or cause to correspond in some essential respect; make or be harmonious. <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/match?q=Match+#match">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/match?q=Match+#match</a> retrieved on May/27/2014
<b>Pack</b>	<b>(v. and n.)</b>	It stands for a small cardboard or paper container and the items contained within it, a group of similar things or people, especially one regarded as unpleasant or to Fill (a jury, committee, etc.) with people likely to support a particular verdict or decision. <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/pack?q=Pack+#pack-2">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/pack?q=Pack+#pack-2</a> retrieved on May/27/2014
<b>Peace</b>	<b>(n.)</b>	It refers to freedom from disturbance. <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/peace">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/peace</a>

		<a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/peace?q=Peace">h/peace?q=Peace</a> + retrieved on May/27/2014
<b>Do</b>	<b>(v.)</b>	It means to perform (an action, the precise nature of which is often unspecified or it is used before a verb (except <i>be</i> , <i>can</i> , <i>may</i> , <i>ought</i> , <i>shall</i> , <i>will</i> ) in questions and negative statements. <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/do?q=Do">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/do?q=Do</a> + retrieved on May/27/2014
<b>No</b>	<b>(sym. and det.)</b>	It stands for the chemical element nobelium. It is used to indicate that something is quite the opposite of what is being specified. <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/no?q=No+#no">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/no?q=No+#no</a> retrieved on May/27/2014
<b>See</b>	<b>(v. and n.)</b>	It refers to perceive with the eyes; discern visually or the place in which a cathedral church stands, identified as the seat of authority of a bishop or archbishop. <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/see?q=See+#see-2">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/see?q=See+#see-2</a> retrieved on May/27/2014
<b>Jam</b>	<b>(v. and n.)</b>	It means to Squeeze or pack tightly into a specified space or a sweet spread or conserve made from fruit and sugar boiled to a thick consistency. <a href="http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/jam?q=Jam+#jam-2">http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/jam?q=Jam+#jam-2</a> retrieved on May/27/2014

Figure (2.1.) A Table showing the meanings, types and the definitions of the English words concerned

### 2.2.2. The Kurdish Words in Question

The following website is used to translate the words below  
<http://www.inkurdish.com/index.php> retrieved on May/28/2014

Word	Type	Its Meaning in English
بۆن	(v. and n.)	Perfume
کار	(v. and n.)	Work

ناو	(n.)	Name
كنير	(n.)	Penis
هات	(v.)	Come
رهش	(adj. and n.)	Black
شیر	(n.)	Lion
باش	(adj.)	Good
مل	(n.)	Neck
بانگ	(v.)	Call to prayer
کور	(adj.)	Blind
ماست	(n.)	Yogurt
پیر	(adj.)	Old
ماچ	(v.)	Kiss
پاک	(adj.)	Clean
پیس	(adj.)	Dirty
دوو	(n.)	Two
نو	(n.)	Nine
سی	(n.)	Thirty
جام	(n.)	Glass

Figure (2.2.) A Table Showing The Kurdish Words in Question, their types and their meanings in English

### 2.3. The Results of the Analysis

The following table shows the results of comparing and analyzing the meanings and the types of Kurdish and English languages:

The Kurdish words	Types of Kurdish Words	The Meanings of Kurdish Word in English	The English Words	Types of English Words
بۆن	(v. and n.)	Perfume	Bone	(n.)
کار	(v. and n.)	Work	Car	(n.)
ناو	(n.)	Name	Now	(adv)
کنیر	(n.)	Penis	Care	(v. and n.)
هات	(v.)	Come	Hat	(n.)



رەش	(adj. and n.)	Black	Rush	(v. and n.)
شیر	(n.)	Lion	Share	(v. and n.)
باش	(adj.)	Good	Bash	(v. and n.)
مل	(n.)	Neck	Mill	(v. and n.)
بانگ	(v.)	Call to prayer	Bang	(v. and n.)
کور	(adj.)	Blind	Mast	(n.)
ماس	(n.)	Yogurt	Core	(v. and n.)
پیر	(adj.)	Old	Peer	(v. and n.)
ماچ	(v.)	Kiss	Match	(v. and n.)
پاک	(adj.)	Clean	Pack	(v. and n.)
پیس	(adj.)	Dirty	Peace	(n.)
دوو	(n.)	Two	Do	(v.)
نۆ	(n.)	Nine	No	(sym. and det.)
سی	(n.)	Thirty	See	(v. and n.)
جام	(n.)	Glass	Jam	(v. and n.)

Figure (2.3.) A Table showing the Results of Analyzing the Kurdish and English Words as far as their meanings, types are concerned.

## Conclusions

- 1- The phenomenon of Homophone between Kurdish and English languages exists.
- 2- Kurdish and English Languages are interrelated because the former belongs to the indo-Iranian family while the latter belongs to Germanic family and both of them are members of indo-European family.
- 3- The meanings of English and Kurdish Words are completely different from Each other.
- 4- The Types of English and Kurdish words are almost different.
- 5- The phenomenon of Homophone between Kurdish and English Languages is Contrastive as a result of having words with different meanings. For instance (بۆن) which means **perfume** in English has nothing to do with its English (Bone) equivalent in Pronunciation.

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