Investigating Badini Kurdish Speaker's Awareness Towards Clarifying the Intended Meaning of Homonyms

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the role of homonyms that causes lexical ambiguity, highlighting speaker's awareness and difficulties in conveying intended meaning during communication. In this research, by using a qualitative method; the data have been collected from the students' awareness of their Badini Kurdish via a test that includes thirty questions. On this basis, 100 EFL learners have been chosen from Nawroz University, translation department. The data were interpreted and analyzed via t-test. The results display that students fail to recognize the correct homonyms from their native language that is 59% incorrect versus 41% correct homonyms. As far as parts of speech included results show that on the basis of correct and incorrect measurement, prepositions section (82%) compared to the lowest correct answers in the verb section (43%). Also, the relative percentage of the correct answers exceeded 50% for both noun and adverb sections. The outcomes of this study display that students are (1) mostly weak in being aware of homonyms; (2) a lack of a standardized system of the Kurdish language; (3) difficulty of translation and writing in the mother tongue and the foreign language;(4) confusion of recognizing parts of speech in the language structure of both Kurdish and English. Typically, being aware of homonyms helps students to be precise in translation and assists them to distinguish between different word meanings. It also supports them to infer in contextual meanings and conducting critical text analysis for deeper or layered messages

KEYWORDS: Badini Kurdish, Homonyms, Intended Meaning, Lexical Ambiguity, Speakers' Awareness

1. INTRODUCTION

Homonyms have been the main topic of studies and researches. This is due to the significant role of homonyms in acquiring a new language. The origin of the word 'homonyms' is derived from the Greek conjugation, namely the prefix (homo-) which means 'same', and the suffix (onymos) which means 'name' (Riemer, 2010:161). Leech (1981: no page) defines 'homonyms' as terms that have identical spelling and pronunciation but are distinct in their meanings. According to Farghal (1998: 130), homonyms are words that have the same form but different unrelated meanings or senses. Languages are rich with homonyms. Kurdish as an Indo-European Language has a vast number of homonyms.

Sheyholislami explained that Kurdish as a macro-language consists of five dialects: "Northern Kurdish (Kurmanji), Central Kurdish (Sorani), Southern Kurdish (Kirmashani/Faili/Kalhuri), Zazaki and Gorani/ Hawrami (2015: 31)."

In addition to all the dialects only two standardized dialect varieties are available namely: Sorani and Kurmanji. This is due to the division of the Kurdish speaking areas among countries: Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Armenia, Caucasus and Central Asia republics in addition to Lebanon (Sheyholislami, 2015: 32). Kurdish was prohibited due to the different policies of each state. Some other challenges occurred for this language such as geographical and socio- economic factors. Badini as a southeastern Kurmanji is spoken in Duhok province of Iraqi – Kurdistan region (Ahmed, 2010). Badini dialect has faced all the mentioned obstacles. Due to the mentioned constraints, many times the Badini speakers struggle understanding the intended meaning of some sentences written in Badini Kurdish. This is something related to linguistic struggles in every language (Sherzad & Toma, 2024) .Intended meaning in a declarative sentence defined as the relation between true situations that is a state of affairs and speaker's preferences in the sentence (Cruciani, 2010: 1028). In linguistic, context is crucial for understanding language use. The physical and social context influences how the listener interprets the speaker's intended meaning in a particular context (FaqeAbdulla, 2023: 224) Intended Meaning is a situation when writers or speakers convey message through their words. To illustrate more the speaker or writer aims to

express the intentions, nuances and emotions behind the words. For instance: a sentence like "It's really cold in here." It is not only giving information about the temperature but the intended meaning could be of different messages. First message could be an indirect request that someone should take an action by closing a window or turning on the heat. Second message could be about expressing discomfort by sharing the speaker's feeling about the temperature. Third message could be a statement to initiate a conversation about the current environment. This example showcases the importance of understanding the context of situation and the speaker's intentions for a better understanding of the intended meaning. That is why taking speaker's perspective, context, cultural or situational clues are necessary to grasp the intended meaning of the communication. Bianchi, 2006) discussed that "intended meaning as an issue is one of the open problems in the study of linguistic processes." Sometimes when the intended meaning is unclear, it leads to ambiguity. In order to clarify the intended meaning in communication the main factor to be considered is the speaker's awareness. Being aware of ambiguity enables the communicators to convey meaning more accurately specifically in the case of homonyms. In this research in order to disambiguate the intended meaning in communication, particularly for identifying homonyms in Badini Kurdish, one point is crucial to be taken into consideration. That is being familiar with a specific type of ambiguity; which is called: lexical ambiguity. According to Kroeger (2018) lexical ambiguity arises when a word or phrase has multiple meanings. This phenomenon is widespread in many languages, and it poses challenges and opportunities for learners learning these languages.

There are two types of lexical ambiguity, namely homonymy and polysemy. As far as homonymy is concerned, it is crucial to distinguish it with polysemy. The term homonym is a word that has various substitute meanings which have no semantic connection to each other and have no common origin in the history of language (Rodd et al., 2002). There are many reasons behind ambiguity in homonyms. First, when the word is written or spoken without being occurred in a sentence, this will create lexical ambiguity on the part of the listener or reader. For example, the word (شیر/ʃiːr/) in Kurdish language represents two meanings (milk and sword). The second reason is when the word occurs in a sentence and its meaning is still ambiguous. This will create syntactic ambiguity, such as the sentence (من شیر کری./mn ʃiːr kriː /). This Kurdish sentence has two different meanings: (I bought milk) and (I bought a sword). The third reason is dialectal verification when the language has different dialects and each dialect uses the unit of language for a different purpose. For instance, the word (/luːt/الوت) in Badini dialect means (to throw yourself) and in Sorani

dialect it means (nose). Hence, ambiguity occurs as the addresser's speech is not understood clearly by the addressee due to dialectal verification. An example is نەروونە رۆنە/) نە ru:nə; rɔnə/); the literal meaning of the sentence when said by a Badini speaker to a listener not familiar with the dialect is (Do not sit; sit). In this case the sentence is not clearly comprehended by the listener due to the near pronunciation of the two words روون/ru:n/ and the word رۆن/rɔn/. For the listener, both words are ambiguous in the beginning. The former word means (sit) and the latter word means (an oil cane). The correct meaning behind the fore-mentioned example is (Do not sit it is an oil cane). If a foreigner wants to learn a new language, s/he will face such difficulties on dealing with such units of language. Consequently, it is recommended to be aware of such units when learning a new language, in this case learner's awareness is important (Ali and Amedi, 2017:13).

Rodd, et al. (2002) stated that unlike homonyms, which can be seen as a disruptive form of ambiguity that is very complicated to identify without a clear understanding, polysemy is of great usefulness for communication. The idea that words can be used in extremely flexible ways to capture many precisely different covers of meaning is a key feature of language. In the end, if the speech is limited to one precisely specified meaning per word, the range of potential meanings for communication might be significantly limited. As mentioned earlier, the differentiation between homonymy and polysemy is not an easy task. This is because both are mostly mingled together. Some Kurdish linguists believe that homonymy is composed of polysemy (Mehoy, 2009 :108) For example, in Kurdish, polysemy called (فرەواتا/ frəwata/) consists of two morphemes. The first morpheme is (فرە/frə/) which is a bound morpheme that means (a lot, too much and many). The second part is a free morpheme (واتا/wa:ta/), which means (meaning). The two morphemes together mean (many meanings, too much meaning, a lot of meanings). Polysemy is defined as a unit of language that has many different interpretations but they are mainly related to each other a single lexeme. In other words, if a language unit has more than one related meaning, it is called polysemy. Ali & Amedi illustrated good examples of polysemy in Kurdish language are demonstrated below:

گر /gər/ means a hill, huge (the relation between the two terms is highness) ; شاخ/ʃa:k/ a mountain, horn of an animal (the relation between both terms is highness); لاو /laʊ/ handsome, young boy (the relation between both is being young and strong); روژ /ru:ʒ/ sun, days of a week (the relation between both is light); هەلاتن /həla:tn/ sunrise, to put inside-out of water (the relation between both is rising); رابوون /ra:bu:n/ to stand, revolution (the relation between both is to not sit) (2017:16-17).

Homonyms are being ambiguous by the speakers of Badini Kurdish. The awareness of the speakers is taken into consideration to identify the intended meaning of Badini homonyms when they are translated from English into Badini. Homonyms are investigated by many researchers from different countries and languages such as United Kingdom (Doherty, 2000), Pittsburgh (Booth, et al., 2006), Iraq (Abdul Ameer & Altaie, 2010; Saeed & Muhemddin, 2011), Ethiopia (Raga & Adola: 2012), etc. Investigation regarding the awareness of Badini Kurdish speakers regarding homonyms has not been conducted yet. There is only a dictionary by Ali & Amedi (2017) regarding homonyms in Badini Kurdish. That is why the investigation regarding the speaker's awareness about homonyms in Badini dialect is tackled in the current study. This study investigates:

1. Badini speaker's awareness of homonyms in Badini Kurdish;
2. The problem of homonyms specifically in the case of lexical ambiguity;
3. EFL learners will be able to choose the correct homonym from the translation of two sentences that are written in English language, finding the two identical words that becomes homonyms while translating the two sentences, according to their real-life experience.
4. EFL learners will be able to find the homonymous words in the translated sentences from English according to the word categories.

This study focuses on evaluating the awareness of students at Nawroz University regarding Badini Kurdish homonyms and demonstrating their awareness through the accurate translation of homonyms in their dialect. Based on the findings from student responses, this research primarily addresses the key issues related to lexical homonyms encountered by students in the translation department. Homonyms are a primary source of communication ambiguity. Research in contexts where Kurdish is the official language and English is a foreign language remains largely unexplored. Therefore, it is essential to highlight the university students' awareness of homonyms and identify related challenges, as this will assist university teachers in recognizing the students' awareness. Overall, this understanding will aid in comprehending communication ambiguity and its impact on students' knowledge, thereby addressing potential problems that may arise.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Homonyms have consistently proven to be an intriguing subject of scholarly research and inquiry. This is so due to the significant role of homonyms in acquiring a new language, coupled with the ambiguity in the lexical and syntactical form, i.e. the sound and spelling of homonyms. Likewise, classifying homonyms has

attracted many linguists in order to arrive at solutions for the challenges in the interpretation of homonyms, especially if we know that there is a lack of an agreed-upon definition for the term homonymy. Crystal (2003:220) views homonyms as words with the same spelling but different meanings and pronunciations.

In other words, homonyms can appear when two words, stemming from the same origin, evolve to have similar forms but different meanings. Homonyms are necessary tools in language acquisition as they boost critical thinking, expand vocabulary, and reinforce linguistic perception overall (Tolliboyeva & Shakarova, 2024). Learners, by navigating the complication of homonyms, delve into language nuances more thoroughly and develop powerful linguistic abilities. This in-depth engagement demands learners to set differences in context and semantics, enhancing their communication skills across different linguistic contexts (Eragamreddy, n.d.).

The utility of integrating homonyms in language learning extend beyond simple word familiarity (Freire, 2013). As highlighted by Conwell (2017) the approach of learning homonyms is specifically beneficial for those advancing in English, since it stimulates learners to employ critical thinking. Engaging with homonyms forces a detailed analysis of contexts to pick out appropriate meanings, thus improving interpretive skills and encouraging a substantial understanding of nuanced interactions. This active learning approach not only expands one's vocabulary through the exploration of various meanings connected to the same word form, but also strengthens the retention and usability of words in multiple scenarios. As learners master homonyms, they construct confidence to control the involvement of English or any other language they try to learn. The study of homonyms when it is related to intended meaning and speaker's awareness, its effects and problems in teaching and learning processes are not new. Homonyms have not been investigated because of the dialectal variation; it has come to be advantageous in the field of education and learning languages long time ago. For example, the problem of ambiguity in homonyms arises at a childhood according to Doherty's two experiments in 2000 about children between the ages of three and four years old. The first experiment includes forty-eight children and the second experiment includes twenty-four children. The results of both experiments reveal that children at the age of four identify both meanings of homonyms. However, at the age of three children were unable to identify homonymy. Once more, the struggles younger children faced was not related to limitation in vocabulary. As far as lexical and sentence level context is concerned a survey carried out by Booth, et al., (2006) on how context affect homonyms. The participants are English speakers from Pittsburgh metropolitan area were divided into three age

groups: 9-year-olds, 10-year-olds and 12-year-olds. The results display that younger children or less proficient readers did not benefit from sentence context rather they concentrated on lexical level for understanding the homonyms. In contrast, older children or more proficient readers Contemplated sentence level support and inhibition.

A comparative analysis of homonymy in English and Arabic is provided by Abdul Ameer & Altaie (2010), focusing on the role of homonymy in lexical ambiguity and the diverse manifestations in both languages. The study outlines that some Arabic linguists reject the concept of homonymy, considering some meanings metaphorical rather than distinct. Homonymy works in different linguistic systems, which offer clear insights to study the implications in other languages, such as Kurdish-Badini. A survey by Saeed & Muhemddin (2011) with 25 participants to investigate the ability of Kurdish EFL learners in handling English homonyms. The participants are from the English Department of the College of Basic Education at the University of Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan regional government of Iraq. The results of the study show that 13 participants which constitute 52 % passed the test and 12 participants which constitute 48 % failed the test. The outcome displays that learners were better at recognizing homonyms than actively using them, highlighting a gap between passive understanding and active production. Noting that learners struggled most with homophones and homographs due to limited contextual exposure. The authors recommend incorporating context-based activities and explicit instruction on homonyms into EFL teaching to help learners improve their lexical skills and avoid misunderstandings. This research offers valuable insights into the challenges Kurdish learners have faced, which can be compared to how Kurdish-Badini speakers handle homonyms in their dialect.

Raga & Adola (2012) did a survey on how homonymous lexical items lead to misunderstandings and confusion among speakers from the same language but different dialect areas. 30 participants who were teachers and students from Oromo, the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia participated in this survey. The results of this study convey that when a language is lacking a standardization writing system, the phonological and morphophonemic differences among the dialects of the language and the convention in the writing system of the language which allows speakers to write expressions as they pronounce are the main reasons contribute to misunderstandings and confusions among Oromo people from differing dialect areas. In Badini Kurdish, there is the same problem with the spelling and pronunciation variation. As far as ambiguity is concerned, Badawi (2023) conducted a research on one hundred news headlines were gathered from prominent Kurdish and English

websites followed by a comparative analysis. The study exhibits that both languages have similar conceptual understanding of ambiguity. Moreover, 83% of the ambiguity in Kurdish headlines attributed to the use of personal pronouns. Whilst, 17% caused by indefinite articles. As for the English language, 80% of the ambiguity occurred at the lexical level and 20 % at the syntactic level. The findings can assist Kurdish English as Foreign Language learners EFL in mastering English language.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Design
This study employs a quantitative, descriptive research design to investigate the awareness of Badini Kurdish speakers toward clarifying the intended meaning of homonyms in their language. The aim was to assess homonym awareness based on their educational background.

3.2 Participants

The participants in this study are EFL learners from Nawroz University. A total of 100 mixed gender students that are EFL learners from Translation department by using a random sampling method. Educational Background: All participants are native speakers of Kurdish, specifically the Badini dialect, and are in their final year of undergraduate studies.

3.3 Instruments

The primary instrument for this study is short answer questions (SAQs) test designed to assess Badini Kurdish speakers' awareness of homonyms (Mehta et al., 2016). The Participants are required to identify the homonym in each sentence, thus demonstrating their understanding of its multiple meanings. The test focuses on five parts of speech: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through papers distributed to the participants in their classroom settings. Each participant was provided with a test, and they were given a set time (two hours) to complete it. The instructions were clarified beforehand to ensure uniform understanding. Participation was voluntary, and the test was anonymous to maintain confidentiality and encourage honest responses.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics: frequencies and percentages were calculated for the correct and incorrect responses in each part of speech. Standard deviations and a t-test were conducted to assess

the variability and significance of the differences between the correct and incorrect responses across the different parts of speech.

4. RESULTS

The results showed that: Nouns had the highest percentage of incorrect responses (54% incorrect), while verbs had the highest percentage of correct responses (57% correct). Prepositions had the lowest percentage of correct responses, with 82% incorrect. Out of a total of 3,000 homonyms identified **(41%)** were correctly recognized, while **(59%)** were incorrectly identified. This indicates that the majority of the participants struggled with identifying the correct meanings of homonyms.

After collecting the required data represented by the students' answers, the frequency of responses has been accounted for in terms of the correct response versus incorrect response. As such, data analysis has revealed non-significant (P>0.05) differences between the frequency of correct versus incorrect response for all measured parameters. Despite that, the relative lowest incorrect answers were reported in the verb section and the relative highest incorrect were reported in the preposition section (See Figure 1).
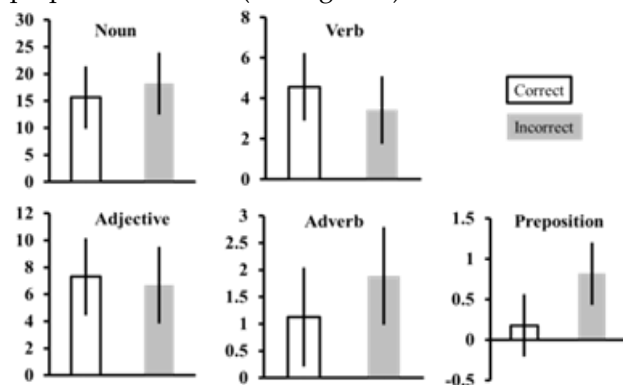

Figure1. The relative percentages of the frequency of students' answers in terms of being correct versus incorrect for the measured parameters.
Data expressed as mean ±SD. No significant differences exist between correct versus incorrect answer at p value >0.05.
The relative percentages of the frequency of students answers in terms of being correct versus incorrect demonstrate that correct answers were more in the prepositions section (82%) compared to the lowest correct answers in the verb section verb (43%). Also, the relative percentage of the correct answers exceeded 50% in both noun and adverb sections (Figure 2).
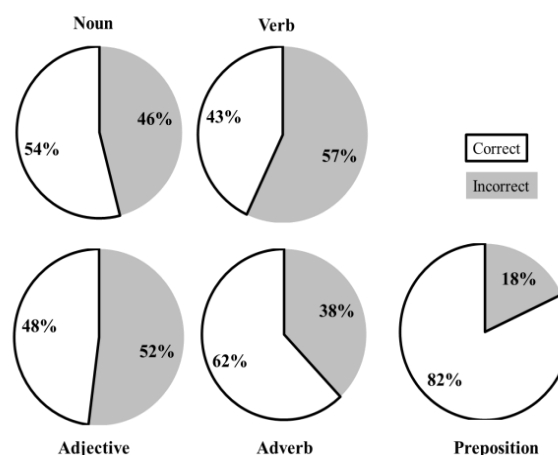

Figure 2. The relative percentages of the frequency of students' answers in terms of being correct versus incorrect for the measured parameters.

To determine the effect of the presence of homonyms on the students' answers, the analysis has revealed non-significant (P>0.05) differences between the frequency of correct versus incorrect response in presence of homonyms. Despite that, the incorrect answers were reported to be higher than correct ones (Figure 3A). The relative percentages of the frequency of the students' answers in terms of being correct versus incorrect show that correct answers (60%) was higher compared to the incorrect response (40%) in the presence of homonyms (Figure 3B).

Table (1)
The relative percentage of parts of speech as per correct and incorrect words

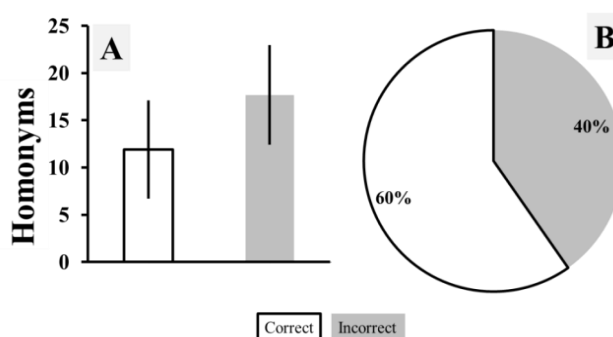| Parts of speech	Correct		Incorrect	
	No.	%	No.	%
Nouns	1576	46	1824	56
Verbs	457	57	343	43
Adjectives	744	53	656	47
Adverbs	113	38	187	62
Prepositions	18	18	82	82

Figure 3. The effect of the presence of homonyms in the sentences on the students answers in terms of being correct versus incorrect. (A) Data expressed as mean ± SD. No significant differences exist between correct versus

incorrect answer at p value >0.05. (B) The relative percentages of the student response of the frequency of correct versus incorrect.

Table 2. The relative percentage of correct versus incorrect part of speech

Relative Percentage	Correct		Incorrect	
	No.	%	No.	%
Homonyms	1232	41	1768	59

Note: relative percentage calculated as below
Relative percentage of correct

$$= \frac{Total\ correct\ respone}{Total\ correct\ respone + Total\ incorrect\ respone} X100$$

Relative percentage of incorrect

$$= \frac{Total\ incorrect\ respone}{Total\ correct\ respone + Total\ incorrect\ respone} X100$$

5. DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that students are more comfortable identifying homonyms in verbs and adjectives but struggle with recognizing them in prepositions and adverbs. This may indicate that certain parts of speech are inherently more challenging when it comes to identifying multiple meanings (Croft, 2000). The results reflect the students' exposure to specific word categories in their academic environments, where verbs and nouns are used more frequently, while adverbs and prepositions are less emphasized (Granger & Paquot, 2009). The findings of this study also indicates that 4th year students from the university have a weak background regarding Badini Kurdish with reference to polysemy. For them polysemous words are almost identical with the homonyms.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusions drawn from the analysis and results are outlined as follows:
1. The majority of Badini Kurdish speakers are not aware of the homonyms in their dialects although they are in the academic level at the university who must be described as bilingual translators.
2. Lacking of standardized systematic language is the main reason behind loss or dead of some words that in the language specifically with languages like Kurdish. Students are lost between different dialects and shortage of synonyms.
3. The difficulty of translation and writing the correct homonym is the result of the weak level of awareness in the mother tongue and the foreign language.
1. The limitations in recognizing parts of speech are the result of confusion between the language structure of both Kurdish and English. Typically, being aware of homonyms in language will help students to be more precise in translation. As well as distinguishing between different meanings of words.

7. IMPLICATIONS

On the basis of literature review, results and conclusions, it is significant to suggest that teaching homonyms at the very first stages of language learning and translation will be of great assist to students being aware of homonyms in their native language. Researchers like: Rabadi (2015); Tulloch (2017); and Mamedova (2019) also recommended the above-mentioned implication. Such a point of conclusion came after it was found that lack of standardized language is the main difficulty and problem for the native speakers of language to recognize ambiguity in communication. Moreover, the availability of detailed dictionaries will assist Badini Kurdish speakers develop their communication skills. Additionally, more attention should be given to contextual usage, which helps clarify meanings in everyday communication.

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شێرزاد سەبری عەلی. محمد عبدالله ئامێدی (٢٠١٧) فەرهەنگا پەیڤێن هەڤپێژ دزمانی کوردیدا. هەولێر : کتێبخانا جزیری .

Appendix I

A sample of the test:

Investigating Kurdish- Badini Speaker's Awareness Towards Clarifying the Intended Meaning of Homonyms:

College: Department: Stage:

In the following table, each square includes two sentences. Identify the word in each sentence that stands for a homonymous word in Badini Kurdish which you should also mention.

a.	Sentences
1.	- He throws a stone into the pond.
	- The apple tree has ripened.
2.	- What's your date of birth?
	- They cut the fabric in reverse.
3.	- Bradust Mountain is a well-known geological feature in the Kurdistan region
	- He is a friend of mine.
4.	- He swept the crumbs from under the table.
	- It is time to harvest the wheat.

5. - Her heart melted with compassion.
    - Limestone is widely used in architecture for wall applications.
6. - I felt my cheeks turn red.
    - They will look like total hypocrites.
7. - Leave it with me.
    - Tanbour Moutya is a musical interesting sound.
8. - She walked through the door.
    - He ran outside to see what the noise was about.
9. - I did not know there were so many.
    - The assault on the town followed.
10. - A brace of partridge whirred into the air.
    - He gave her a smart answer.
11. - I do not know what I have done to upset her.
    - He died of tuberculosis, a disease from which he had suffered for many years.
12. - Each monk is assigned work duties.
    - The poor kid is feeling deserted.
13. - She closed her eyes and let out her fear in a high-pitched scream.
    - The highways are in good condition, featuring a smooth bitumen surface and clear road markings
14. - At this time, I am unsure of what I should do.
    - We slowed down to a walk.
15. - There was a long queue at the checkout.
    - The pond overflowed across the roads.
16. - Change is the topic on everyone's lips in tourism these days.
    - He loves to catch fish and crabs along the riverbank.
17. - It is a light substance.
    - Please clarify your idea for me.
18. - The instructor angrily said: Be quiet.
    - We are aware of the extent of the problem.
19. - This soup is quite salty.
    - The recipe requires two cloves of garlic.
20. - It was rich, fertile soil.
    - His sorrowful, pale face stretched into a grin.
21. - Do you know the Aramaic Language?
    - You should be able to live comfortably on your allowance.
22. - Clean, well water is piped into the village.
    - Let me have your thoughts on this.
23. - The patient was administered anesthesia prior to the surgery.
    - The branches tore at my jacket and scratched my hands and face.
24. - To them, it is permanent like this tattoo.
    - It's simply a remarkable piece of writing.
25. - They live in comfort.
    - The stink of the place hit me as I walked in.
26. - I drank a glass of milk.
    - He showed his skills with the sword.
27. - That person is greedy and selfish.
    - The meat was dry, overcooked, and almost completely unchewable.
28. - Desserts can be substituted with a portion of fresh fruits.
    - I ordered four fillets of beef.
29. - Cats can be kept as pets in our homes as well.
    - He eats dried figs as a snack.
30. - We drove a long distance.
    - Why do not you lie down on the sofa for a while.