



EFL Translation Students' Perspective toward Using Bilingual Dictionary in Translation of Polysemous Words

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Abstract

This research presented the use of bilingual dictionary and addressed the EFL translation students' points of view on the use of bilingual dictionary in translating polysemous words (English to Persian). Moreover, it aimed at finding the possible relationship between the effect of using bilingual dictionary by students in translating polysemous words and their achieved scores. In the study 30 translation students of both genders were opted based on convenience sampling. Questionnaire and translation tests were two instruments which were employed in this study. At first, MA students were asked to translate 20 sentences including polysemous words by use of monolingual dictionary. After that, the second test with the same procedures were administered to the same students. However, they were allowed to use bilingual dictionary. Then, the questionnaires were distributed to them and the participants have filled them carefully without any time limitation. At the end, all the data was gathered and analyzed. The results of this study indicated that the use of bilingual dictionary had a positive impact on the participants' performance in translating polysemous words, also they had positive perspective on the use of bilingual dictionary in translating polysemous words.

Keywords: Bilingual dictionary, Translation, Polysemous words

INTRODUCTION

Translation plays an important role in communication among different communities. Sometimes, it is not an easy task to find the equivalent words in the target language (TL) to produce a coherent message. This is not the only problem faced by students but they also encounter a number of different kinds of problems in translating texts. These problems may be caused by lexical aspects

or grammatical aspects (salem, 2014). Ghazala (2008) stated that a polysemy is a word which has more than one meaning as opposed to monosemy which describes a word with only one single meaning. The problem of translating polysemous words arises in context and many students have difficulty in choosing an exact meaning. Therefore, it is no doubt that context plays an important role in choosing suitable meanings for such words. Having knowledge of context helps a translator to understand the varieties of context

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including the historical setting of a written text, the cultural components that make a text unique, and the types of audiences for which the translation is intended. Having such knowledge also helps the translator to the most effective ways of producing a satisfactory representation of the ST (Orero, 2004). Dictionaries help and promote language learning both in and outside of the classroom, providing a range of information in addition to the meanings of words. In spite of this usefulness, the instruction on dictionary use is not given much attention or likely even ignored in language classes (Wingate 2004); many researchers have insisted that dictionary training should be included in classroom activities (e.g. Chan 2014; Nesi 2002). The focal aim of this study was to investigate the effect of using bilingual dictionary on translation of polysemous words. For this aim, polysemous words were targeted because they are highly likely to be great obstacles in dictionary use for L2 learners as found in Liou's (2000) and Wingate's (2004) studies. Considering this, one of the objectives of the study was exploring the translation students' attitude on translating polysemous words from Persian to English. Also, the study tried to find the possible relationship between using bilingual dictionary in translating polysemous words and the students' scores. Translation is not an easy task because finding the equivalent words in the target language does not mean necessarily that it is a successful translation especially when students use the bilingual dictionary as a helpful tool to their translation (Newmark, 2001). Some translation problems arise at the word level; especially when it comes to translation from L1 into L2. Thus, for students to understand the message of the English text clearly, they need to understand the meaning of words especially polysemous words to translate them successfully to produce a coherent target text. In other words, students sometimes find difficulty in getting the meaning of some English words. Therefore, they fail most of the time in transmitting the message clearly because of the difficulty of the English words. In the other place, a lot of problems rise

during translating and the lexical problems are the most difficult ones, because the first thing that the translator focuses on is words (Vanhove, 2008). Also, students make some mistakes in translating polysemous words when they treat them as words that have only one meaning. They fail in translating polysemous words because they may know only the core meaning of the word and translate it by this meaning in all contexts (Mollanazar, 2002). Although bilingual dictionaries give most equivalents to source language words, sometimes they mislead the students in selecting the appropriate equivalent to polysemous words, because they give various equivalents to words without giving any explanation or specific use in context. Selecting the appropriate equivalence would be the essential part of translating polysemous words, and a translator is expected to convey the exact meaning, because partial or incorrect translation may distort the message. In fact, the main problem of the students in translating polysemous words, is finding the appropriate equivalence for rendering an acceptable translation. Therefore, it is important to analyze the translation of such words that may lead to mistranslations. Due to the stated problems, the present study investigated the effectiveness of bilingual dictionary on translating polysemous words that students may face during translation from English to Persian, and tried to find out whether bilingual dictionaries were useful in translating them or not. Based on the objectives of the study, the following research questions were formed;

Q1. What are the Iranian EFL translation students' perspective on the use of bilingual dictionary in translating polysemous words?

Q2. Is there any positive relationship between using bilingual dictionary in translating polysemous words and the students' scores?

METHODS

In this study the quantitative method was employed to collect and analyze data, as well as in-

interpret the results. A survey study was conducted by asking subjects to give their responses to the question items. The participants of this study were M.A students of translation from English Department at Azad University of Kerman. 30 translation students of both genders, involving 11 male and 19 female translation students were the participants of the study. They were selected based on the convenience sampling. In order to gather data, two instruments were employed in this study, questionnaire and translation test. Richards et al (2002, p. 23) defined the questionnaire as "a set of questions on a topic or a group of topics designed to be answered by respondents". To explore the attitudes of the participants, a three- part questionnaire adopted by Ikhlef (2010) was used in this study. The questionnaire consists of closed questions. It is divided into three sections; the first section is general information about translation. The second section is about polysemous words and their translation, and the last section is about bilingual dictionaries. The questionnaire is designed to know the students' knowledge about polysemy, whether they know polysemous words and can translate them or not. In addition, this questionnaire seeks to know if the students rely on bilingual dictionaries while translating.

The questionnaire was developed by Ikhlef (2010), and the reported reliability of the questionnaire was 0.88. Also, it was made valid and reliable by the researcher herself. Suitability of the questionnaire was investigated for the study population or the opportunity to modify the questionnaire for the study population by referring to the similar studies in similar cases.

a. Measurement properties of the questionnaire were assessed by the characteristics of present study population.

b. Length of questionnaire, questions difficulty, and emotional impact of certain questions were modified by referring to the similar literatures and explanations in this field.

Seliger and Shohamy (2004, p. 176) pointed out that "Tests are generally used to collect data

about the subject's ability in knowledge of the second language in areas such as vocabulary, grammar, reading, meta-linguistic awareness and general proficiency". The test consists of 20 separate sentences, which includes polysemous words. The test was designed by BinSasi (2014), and it was made valid and reliable by him.

In this study two different tests with the same level of difficulty were designed and distributed to the translation students. As mentioned before, 30 translation students were selected as the subjects of the study. At first, the researcher herself attended in the class and informed the translation students about the goal of the study and encouraged them to participate in the project. Also, she asked them if there were any questions or concerns about the procedures. After their preparing, MA students were asked to translate 20 sentences include polysemous words from English to Persian. They were provided with monolingual dictionary, and they should have translated them at the specified time. In the following day, the second test with the same procedure were administered to the same students. However, the EFL students were allowed to use bilingual dictionary for translating. It should be noted that the students were forced to write their names in both tests for analyzing and comparing their scores carefully. That's to say, the scores of the tests were calculated out of 20. The translated statements were checked carefully for their form and meaning. The statements were translated by researcher, using bilingual Farhang Moaser English-Persian Dictionary. Besides, three experienced professors examined and revised the translations based on Bilingual dictionary. After collecting the papers, the questionnaires were distributed to the EFL learners. At first, the researcher gave all the necessary information about the questionnaires and cleared all the ambiguities patiently. Then, the questionnaires distributed to them and the EFL learners should have responded carefully without any time limitation. Eventually, all the questionnaire were gathered for analyzing and interpreting the data.

RESULTS

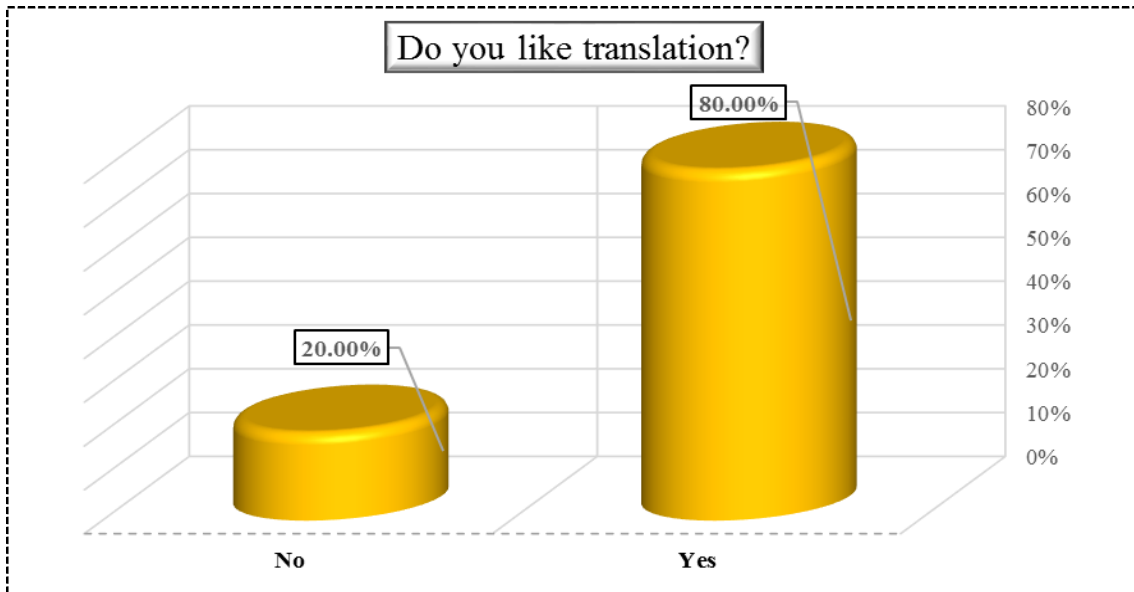


Diagram 1. Question One

First part of dictionary evaluated the general items related to general information about translation. The first item of questionnaire

investigated whether the students like translation. Based on results, most of the students (80%) liked it, and 20% did not like translation.

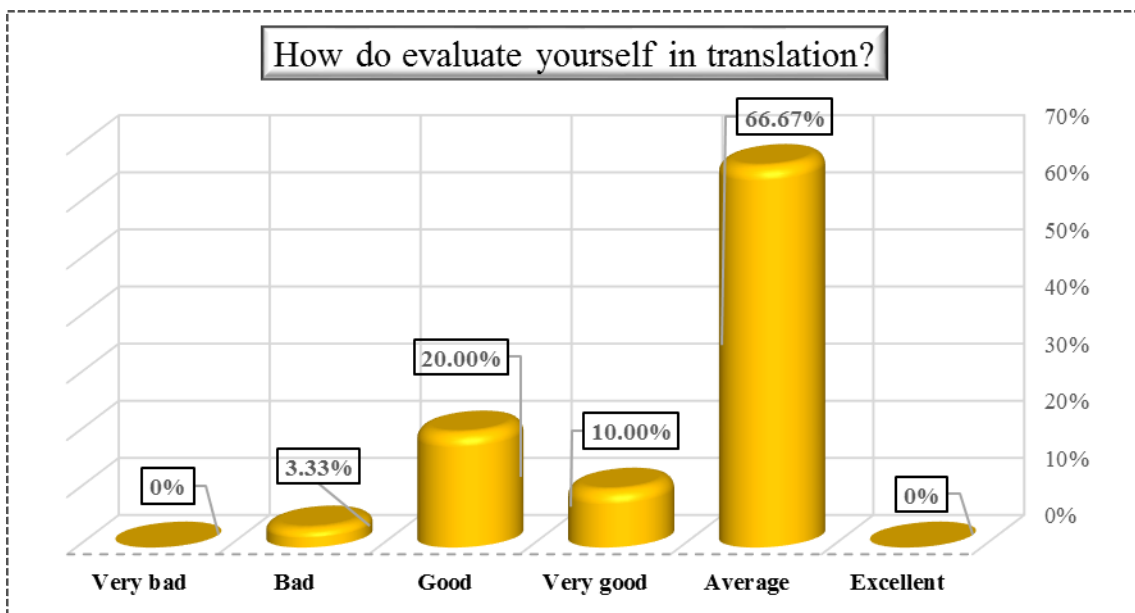


Diagram 2. Question Two

Accordingly, analysis showed that most of the participants (about 67%) claimed that their level is "Average". While, a low percentage of them (20%) stated their level as "Good". Also, a very

small percentage (10%) followed by (3.33%) mentioned their level as "Very Good" and "Bad" respectively.

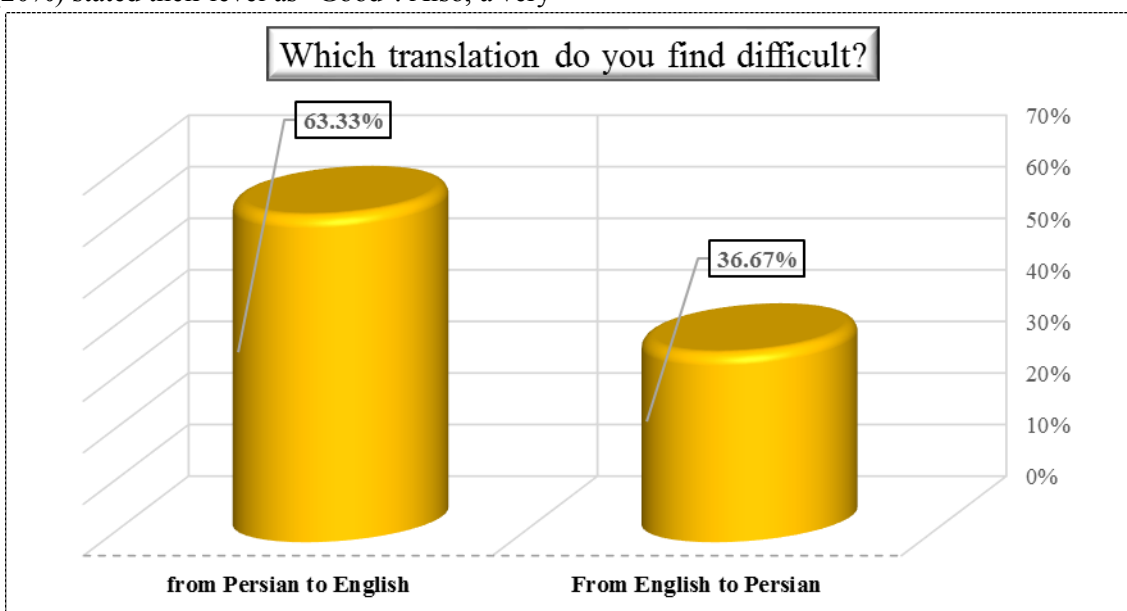


Diagram 3 Question Three

The third statement identified the more difficult translation. Based on the above results, a high percentage of the students (63.33%) declared that "Persian to English" translation is

more difficult than "English to Persian" one. As it is clear, 36.67% of them stated that translation a text from English to Persian would be more difficult.

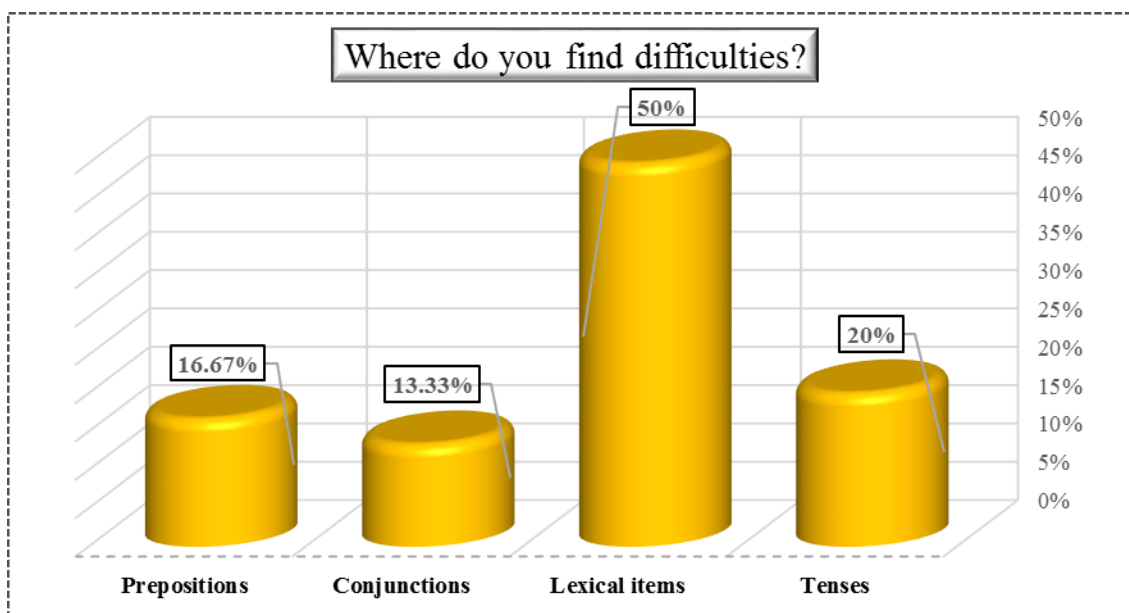


Diagram 4. Question Four

The data analysis displayed that 50% of the participants found the translation difficulties in "Lexical items". Then, 20% named the "Tenses" as the difficult part of translation. After that,

16.67%, followed by 13.33% felt that "Prepositions" and "Conjunctions" were the difficult items of translation.

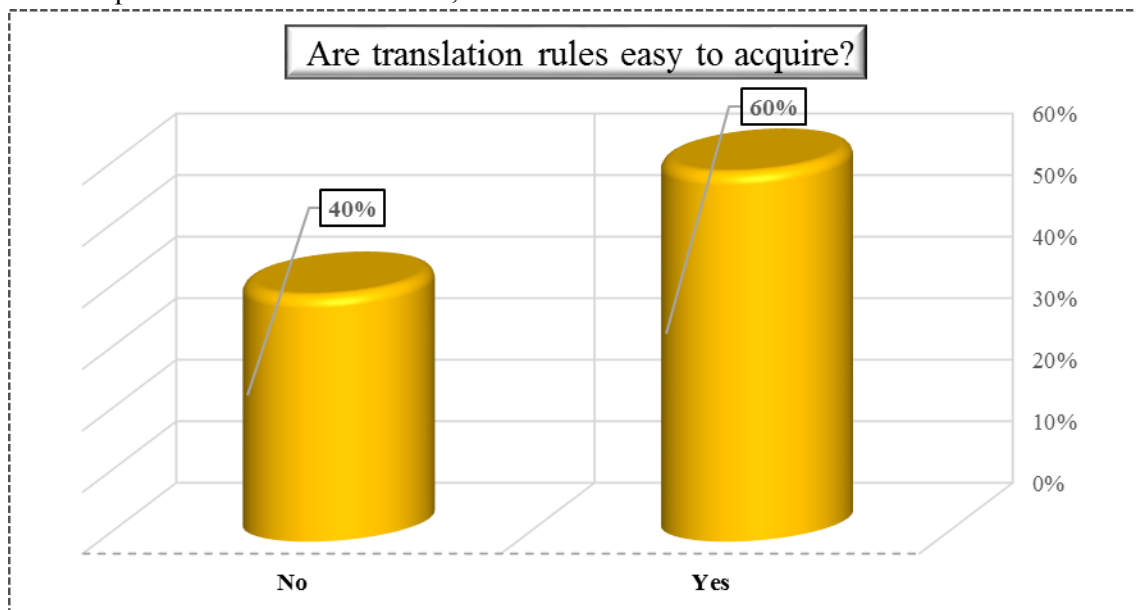


Diagram 5. Question Five

The questionnaire analyzed if the translation rules were acquired. Data analysis highlighted that 60% of respondents believed that the

translation rules were easy to acquired, and 40% showed their disagreement on the proposed item.

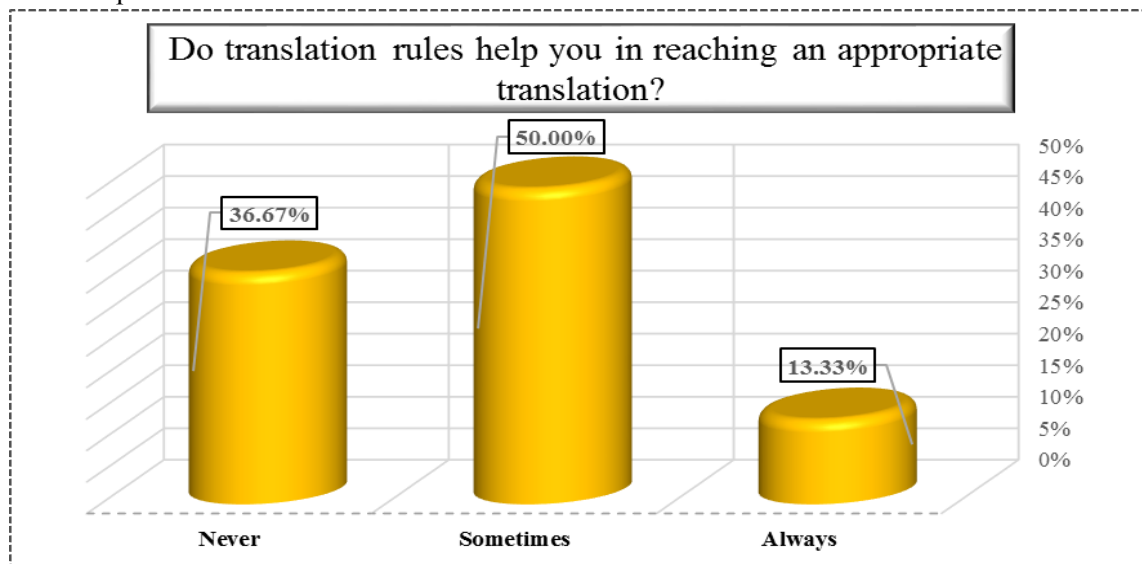


Diagram 6. Question Six

Descriptive analysis illustrated that half of the subjects (50%) considered that translation rules sometimes help them in reaching an appropriate translation, and 36.67% of them noted that trans-

lation rules never help them, and a small percentage (13.33%) stated that these rules always help them for rendering suitable translation.

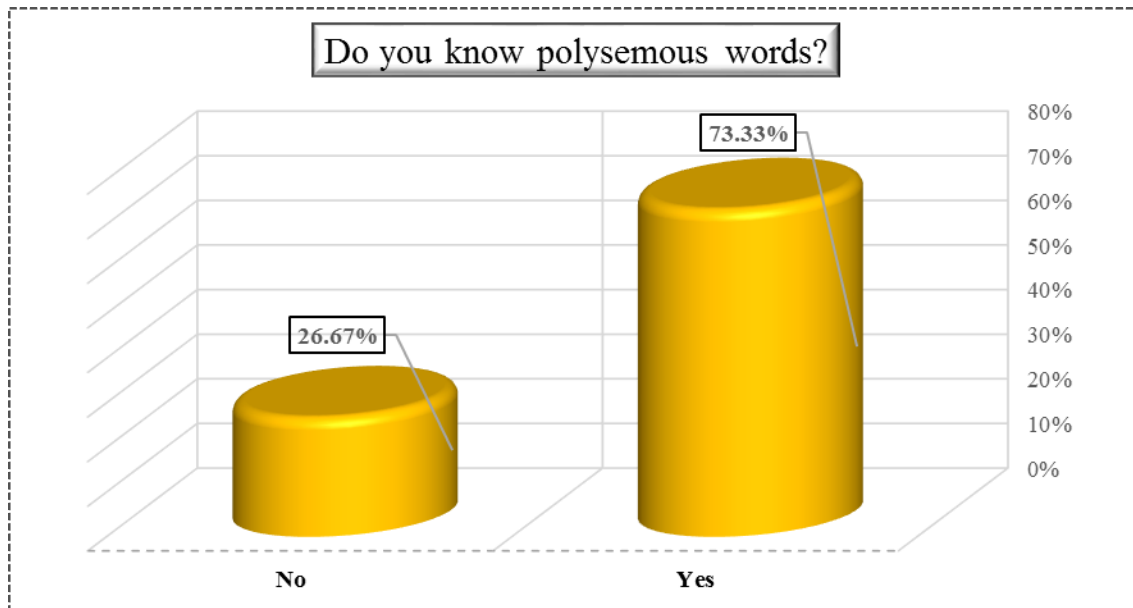


Diagram 7. Question Seven

The second part of the questionnaire investigated the translation of polysemous words. As it

can be seen, most of them (73.33%) replied "Yes", and a low percentage (26.67%) answered "No".

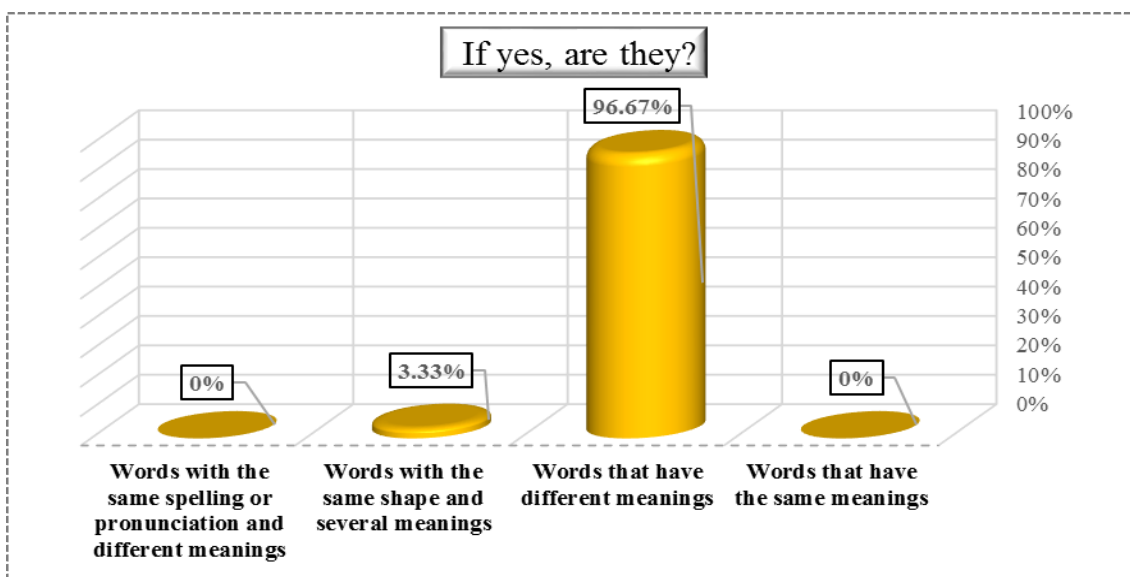


Diagram 8. Question Eight

Then, the second part of the questionnaire (Information about Polysemous words) evaluated the meaning of the polysemous words. According to careful analysis, nearly all of them uttered that

polysemous words are the words that have different meanings (96.67%). Only, a very low percentage (3.33%) regarded the polysemous words as the words with the same shape and several meaning

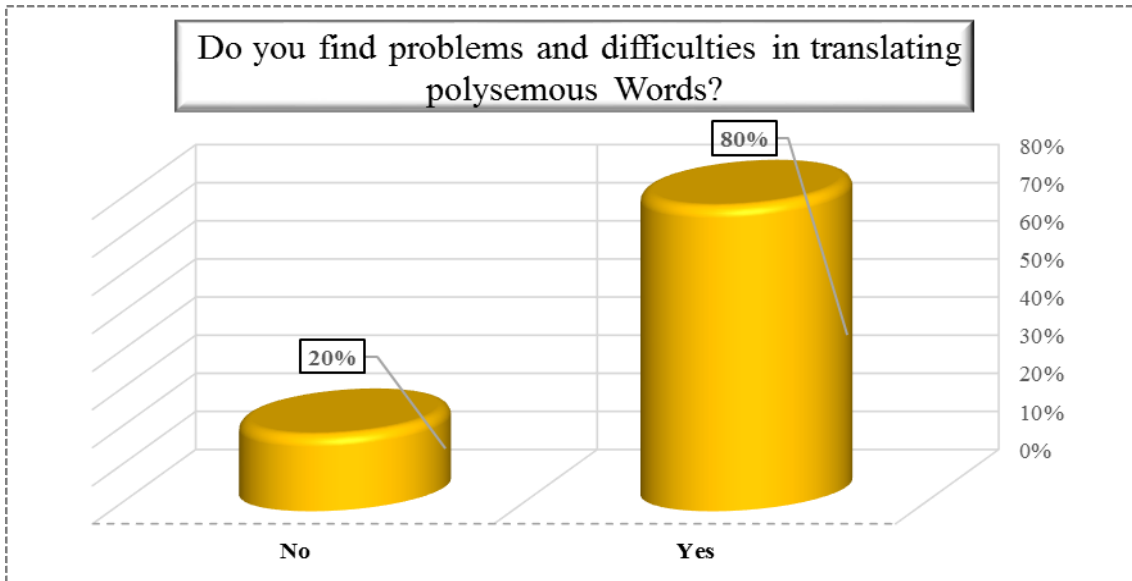


Diagram 9. Question Nine

The last question of the second part, evaluated the problems and difficulties in translating polysemous words. As the above diagram revealed, 80% of the respondents found some problems and difficulties in translating polysemous words, whereas 20% of them did not find any prob-

lems. After analyzing the second part, this study examined 10 statements about bilingual dictionaries. In other words, the last part of the questionnaire was related to the some information about bilingual dictionaries.

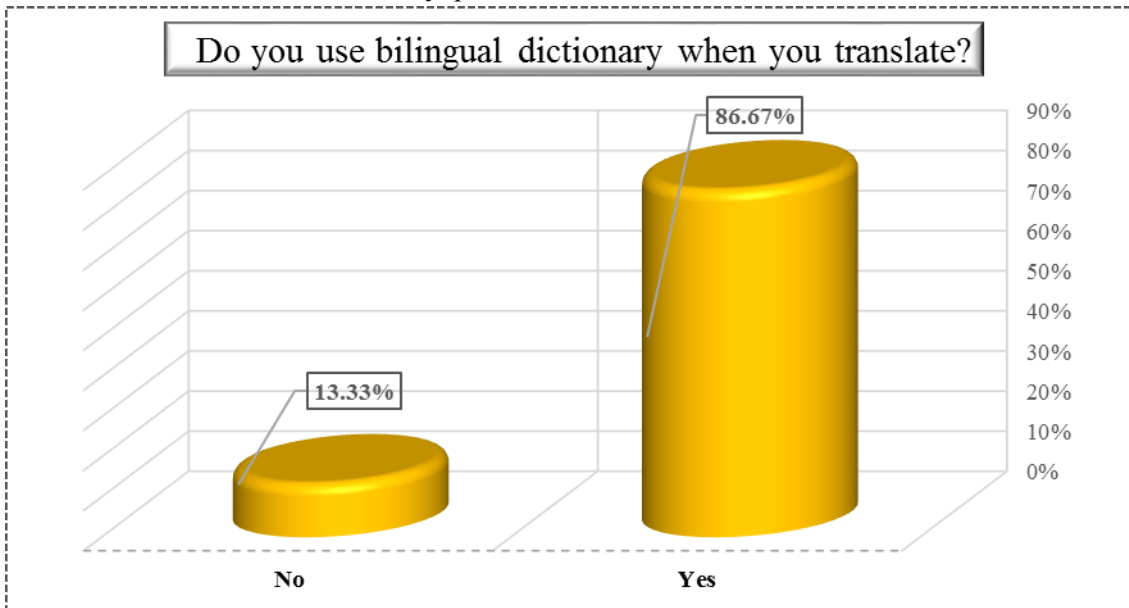


Diagram 10. Question Ten

First, this part asked if the students used bilingual dictionary for translating. As it can be seen, a great percentage of the students, (86.67%),

answered "Yes", just a low percentage of them (13.3%) said that they did not use bilingual dictionary while translating.

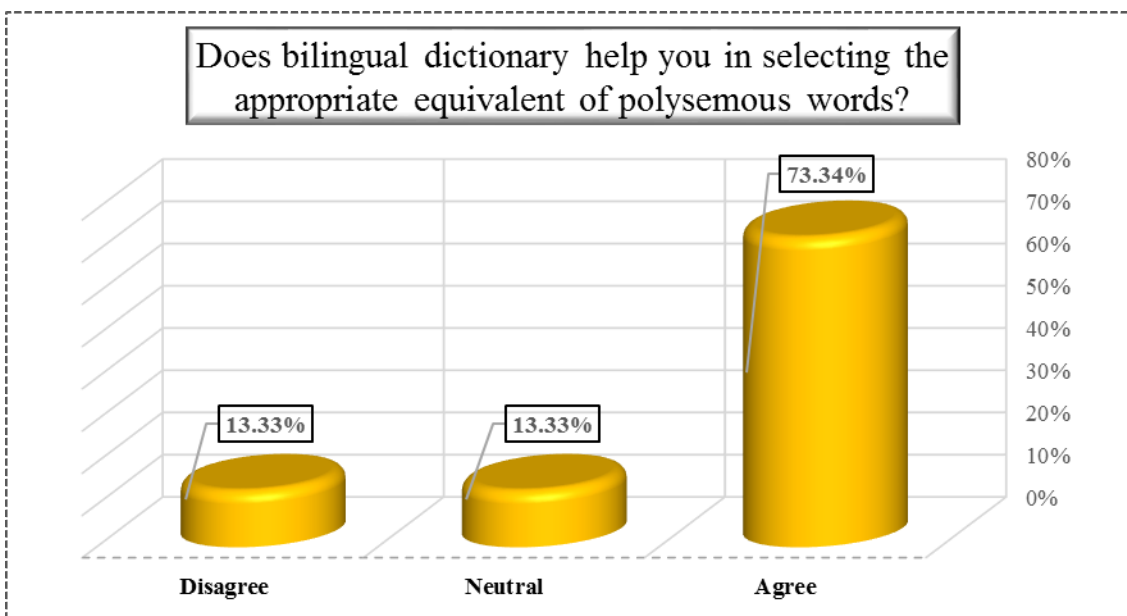


Diagram 11. Question Eleven

Second, the questionnaire examined the students' opinion whether bilingual dictionary helped them in selecting the appropriate equivalent of polysemous words. As displayed, most of the

participants (73.34%) indicated their agreement on the mentioned question. The same percentage of the learners (13.33%) showed their disagreement and neutral opinion on the above statement.

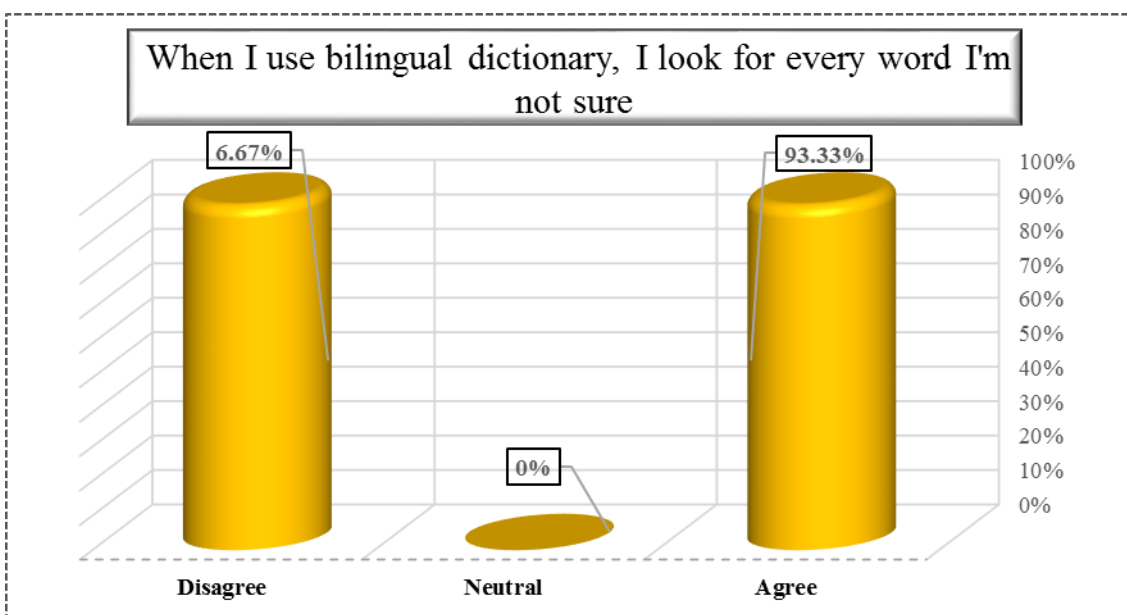


Diagram 12. Question Twelve

Moreover, a great percentage of the participants of the study (93.33%) declared that they used bilingual dictionary for searching every

word that they were not sure. Just, some of them (6.67%) disagreed on using bilingual dictionary for finding the translation of words.

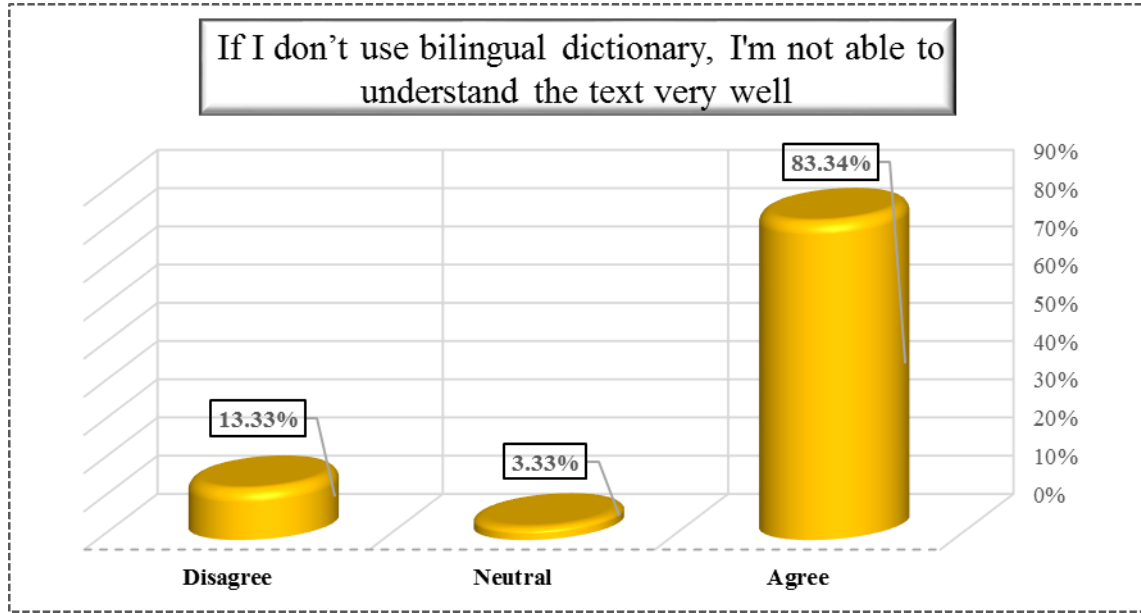


Diagram 13. Question Thirteen

Also, the questionnaire examined the role of bilingual dictionary on understanding the text. As seen in, data analysis highlighted that 83.34% of respondents stated that if they did not use bilingual dictionary, they would not be able to

understand the text very well. Whereas, 13.33% and 3.33% of them demonstrated their disagreements and neutral ideas on the mentioned item respectively.



Diagram 14. Question Fourteen

The questionnaire analyzed the chances of learners to improve their vocabulary level by using bilingual dictionary. 73.33% of the translation students agreed that using bilingual

dictionary would improve their vocabulary level. However, the same percentage (15%) of members highlighted their disagreements and strong disagreements on this item. That's to say, 10% of them had neutral ideas.

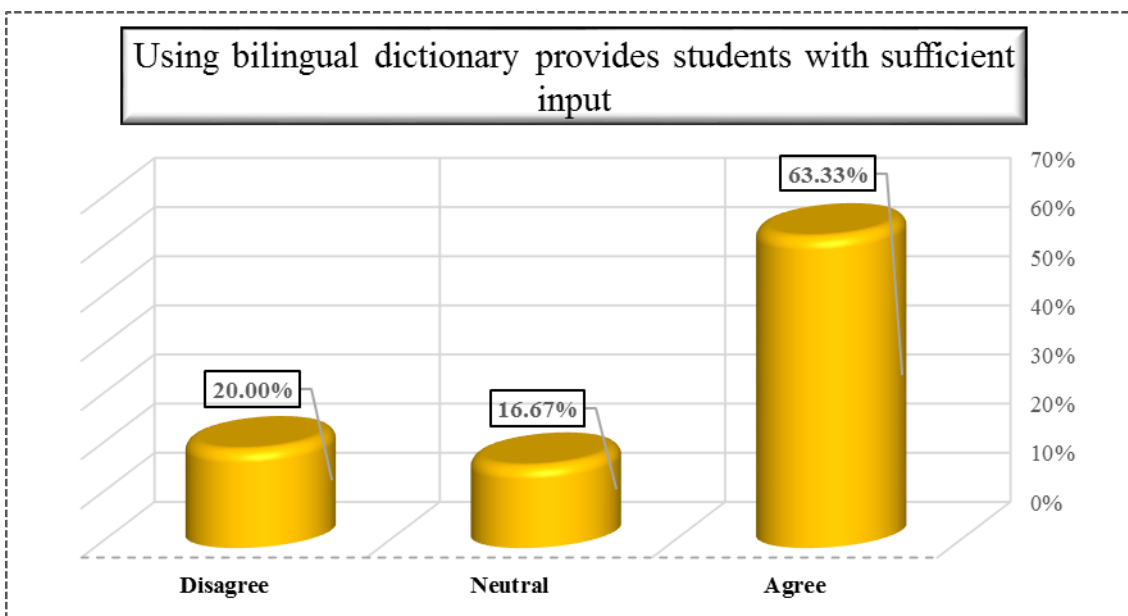


Diagram 15. Question Fifteen

Data analysis toward the above statement indicated that more than half of the translation students of this study (63.33%) assumed that using bilingual dictionary provided students with

sufficient input. whereas, 20% of them displayed their disagreements, and 16.67% had neutral opinion on the above statement.

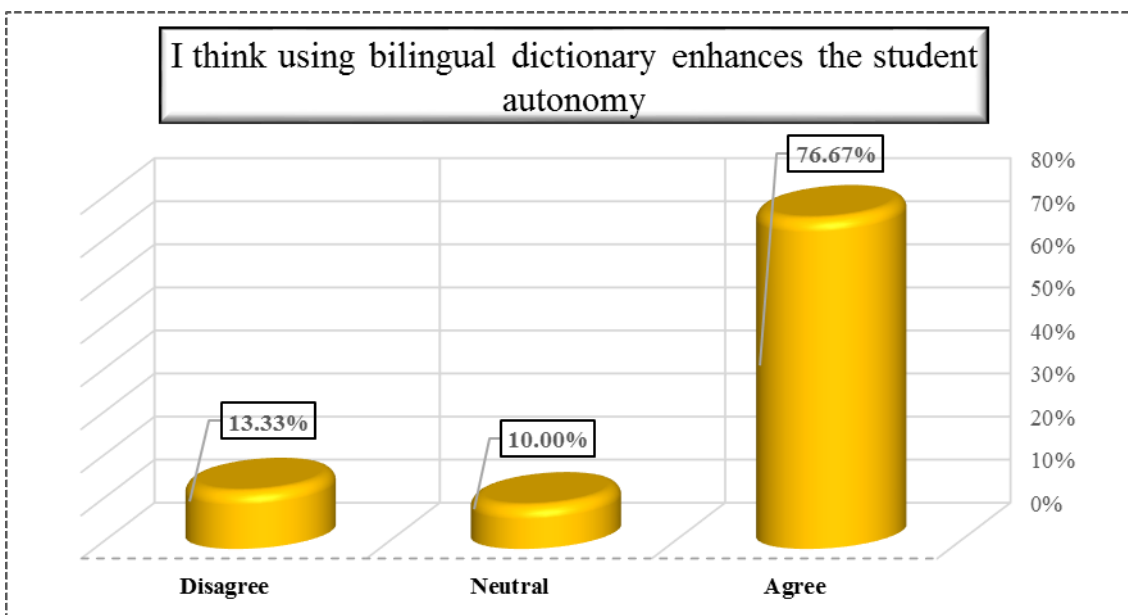


Diagram 16. Question Sixteen

The results of the above diagram highlighted that a high percentage of the participants (76.67%) thought that using bilingual dictionary enhances

the student autonomy. The low percentage of them (13.33%) had negative, and 10% had neutral perception towards the mentioned item.

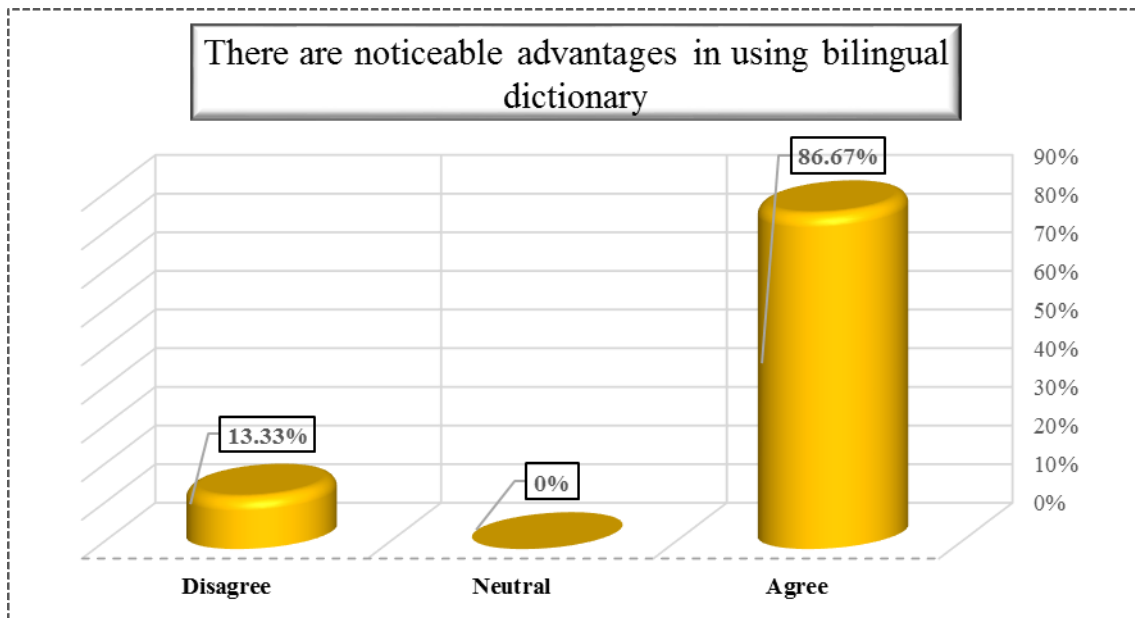


Diagram 17. Question Seventeen

According to the information in the above, a great percentage (86.67%) of the students mentioned that there are noticeable advantages in us

ing bilingual dictionary. However, half of them a low percentage (13.33%) showed their disagreement on this statement.

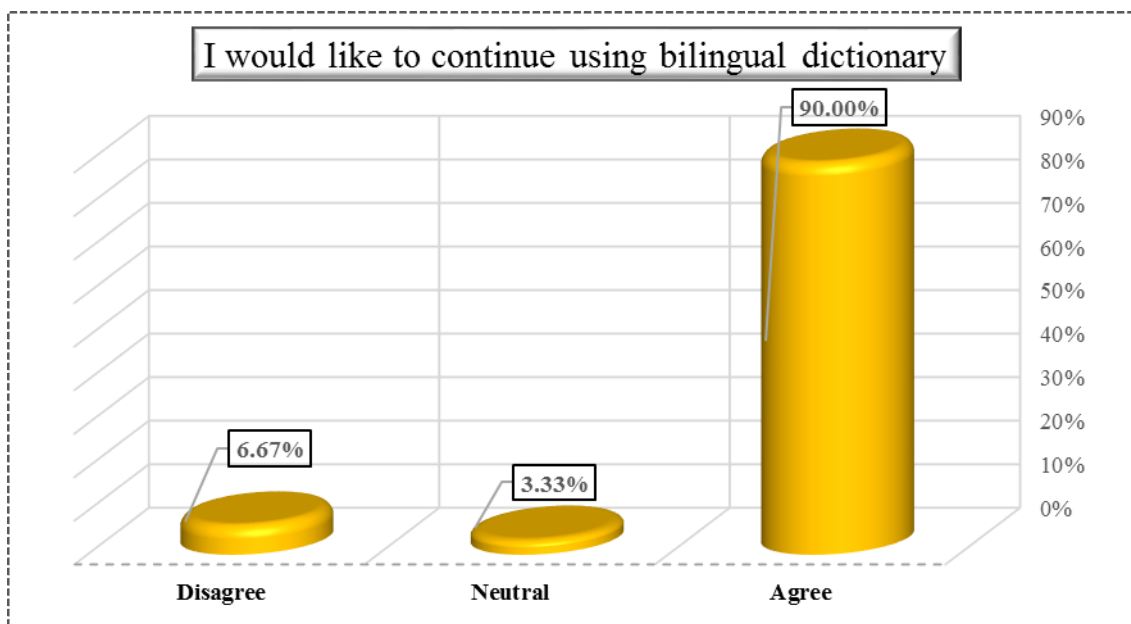


Diagram 18. Question Eighteen

Additionally, a remarkable percentage of the participants (90%) would like to continue using bilingual dictionary. A very low percentage

(6.67%) would not like to continue using it, and, 3.33% of them had neutral ideas.

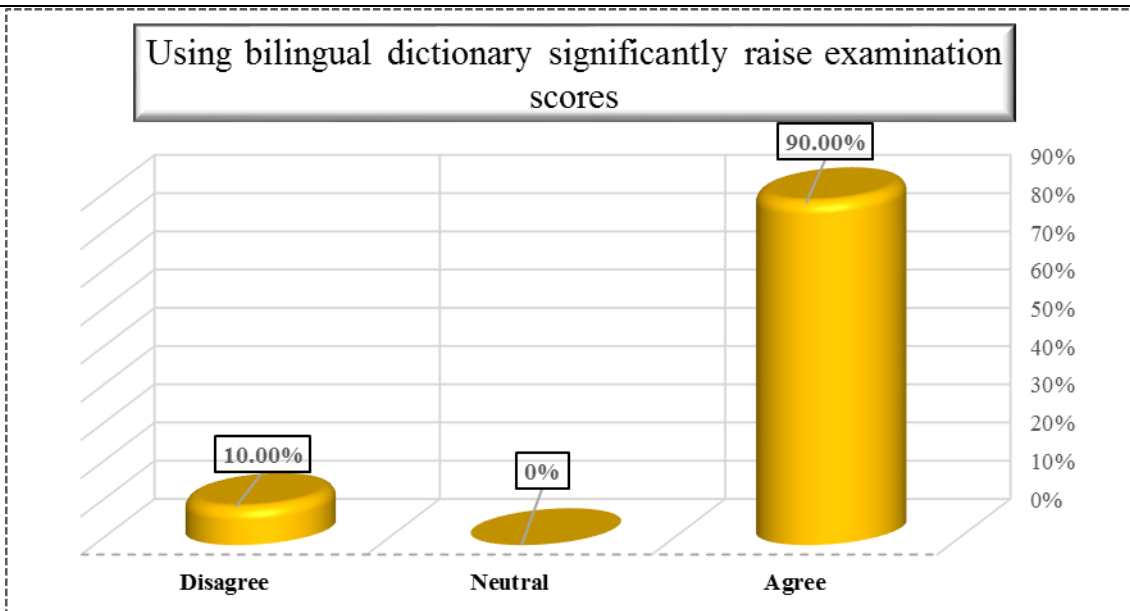


Diagram 19. Question Nineteen

The data analysis remarked that 90% of the translation students declared that using bilingual

dictionary significantly raise examination scores. 10% of them disagreed on this statement, and nobody indicated neutral idea toward this item.

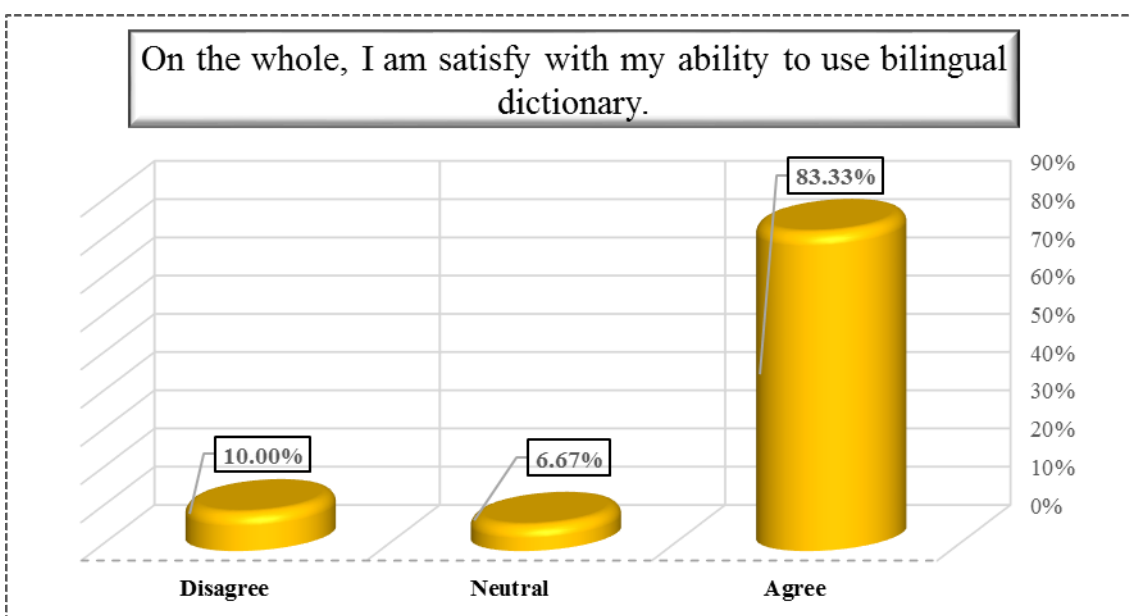


Diagram 20. Question Twenty

The last item of the questionnaire examined the general attitude of the subject on bilingual dictionary. As the last diagram demonstrated, most of the participants (83.33%) of them were satisfy with their ability to use bilingual dictionary. While, 10% of them uttered their agreements on the last item, and 6.67% revealed their neutral perception.

Discussion

Examining the Results of Tests

The following table displayed the numbers, mean, and standard deviation of all the scores of two tests. According to careful analysis, in both groups the mean scores has increased in the second test (using bilingual dictionary). However, the difference between the means of two tests

is remarkable. In fact, the mean of the second test (using bilingual dictionary) has increased more

than the mean score of the first test (using monolingual dictionary).

Table 1.
Descriptive Statistics of T-Tests

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
First Test	30	6	20	14.00	3.769
Second Test	30	9	20	15.40	3.035

Table illustrated the results of two independent sample t-test. After employing bilingual dictionary in the second test, the scores of the tests demonstrated the different means. In other words, the means of the first test and the second test are 14.00 and 15.40 respectively. The difference be-

tween the two means is 1.40, which indicates a remarkable difference between two means. Furthermore, p-value was reported 0.00 ($P < 0.05$) that illustrates the mean scores of the second test has changed.

Table 2.
Paired Sample T-test

Paired Samples Test								
Paired Differences								
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Two Tests	-1.400	1.812	.331	-2.077	-.723	-4.232	29	.000

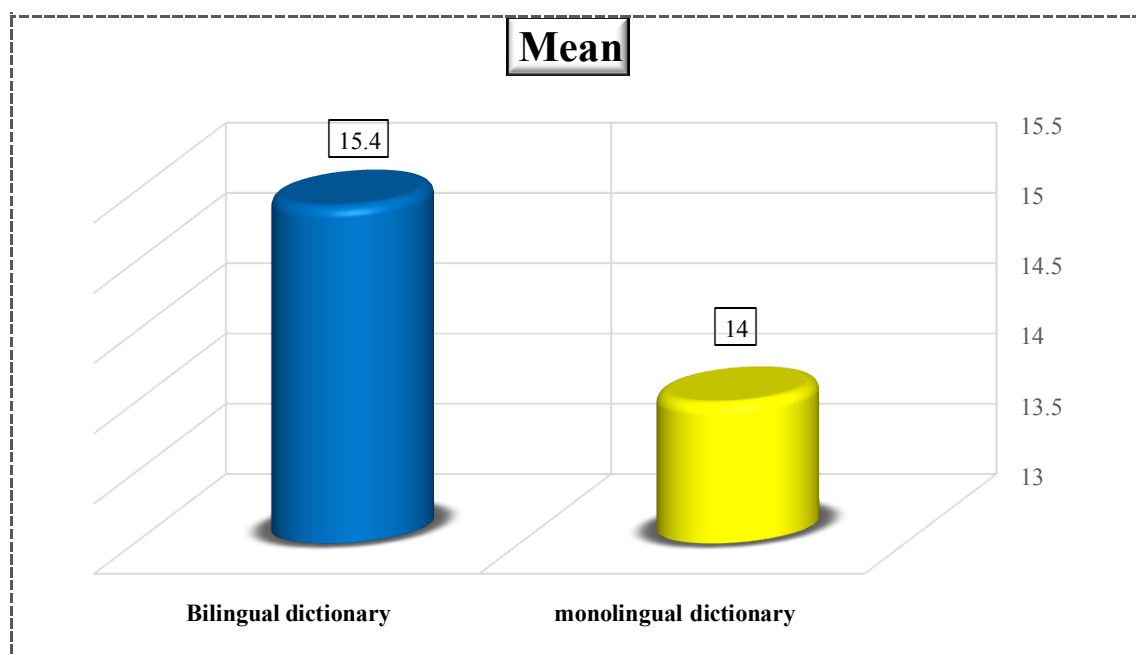


Diagram 21. Comparison of Mean Score of Two Tes

The first null hypothesis of the study;

H^0_1 . Iranian EFL translation students do not have positive perspective on the use of bilingual dictionary in translating polysemous words.

The first null hypothesis of the study highlighted the EFL translation students' attitude toward bilingual dictionary in translating polysemous words. Descriptive statistics revealed the students' attitude by 20 statements on the effectiveness of bilingual dictionary. At first, the questionnaire investigated the students' opinion on general information about translation. A great percentage of the learners (80%) declared that they like translation. Moreover, 75% of the students considered that this method gave them the opportunity to practice thinking. Moreover, the analysis indicated that most of the respondents (nearly 67%) considered their level of translation as "average". Also, a high percentage of the students (63.33%) declared that "Persian to English" translation is more difficult than "English to Persian" one. additionally, data analysis displayed that 50% of the participants found the translation difficulties in "Lexical items". Then, 20% named the "Tenses" as the difficult part of translation. After that, 16.67%, followed by 13.33% felt that "Prepositions" and "Conjunctions" were the difficult items of translation. Then, data analysis highlighted that half of the subjects (50%) found the translation difficulties in "Lexical items", and 60% of them regarded that the translation rules were easy to acquired. Furthermore, 50% of the participants (85%) mentioned that translation rules sometimes help them in reaching an appropriate translation.

Descriptive analysis of the second part of the questionnaire (Information about polysemous words and their translation) showed that most of the subjects (73.33%) knew the polysemous words, and identified the polysemous words as the words with the same shape and several meanings. additionally 80% of the respondents found some problems and difficulties in translating polysemous words, whereas 20% of them did not find any problems.

The third part of the questionnaire evaluated the participants' opinion on bilingual dictionaries. At first, most of the participants mentioned that they have used bilingual dictionary when they translated. Moreover, a great percentage (about 74%) claimed that bilingual dictionary helped them in selecting the appropriate equivalent of polysemous words. Also, most of the respondents (93.33%) declared that they used bilingual dictionary for searching every word that they were not sure.

Also, the questionnaire examined the role of bilingual dictionary on understanding the text. As seen in table, 83.34% of respondents stated that if they did not use bilingual dictionary, they would not be able to understand the text very well, and 73.33% of them agreed that using bilingual dictionary would improve their vocabulary level. Then, data analysis indicated that most of the translation students of this study (75%) assumed that using bilingual dictionary provided students with sufficient input, and 76.67% thought that using bilingual dictionary enhanced the student autonomy. Besides, the questionnaire concentrated on advantages of using bilingual dictionary. The results illustrated their positive attitudes on it. It means that most of the (60%) stated that there were noticeable advantages in using bilingual dictionary. Also, a remarkable percentage of the participants (90%) would like to continue using bilingual dictionary. Eventually, data analysis remarked that 90% of the translation students felt that using bilingual dictionary significantly raise their examination scores, and most of them (83.33%) were satisfy with their ability to use bilingual dictionary.

In a nutshell, due to the careful analysis, it was found that the Participants of the study were highly satisfied with using bilingual dictionary, and the use of it, had positive effect on students' attitude in translating. Therefore, the first null hypothesis "Iranian EFL translation students do not have positive perspective on the use of bilingual dictionary in translating polysemous words" is completely rejected based on descriptive analysis results.

The second null hypothesis of the study;

H_2^0 . There is not any positive relationship between using bilingual dictionary in translating polysemous words and the students' scores.

Descriptive statistics displayed the students' improvement in translating polysemous words by using bilingual dictionary. Based on the related table, the mean of students' scores with using monolingual dictionary, is 14.00, and the mean of participants' score by using bilingual dictionary was reported 15.40. In the other words, EFL translation students had better performance in examination when they were provided with bilingual dictionary ($14.00 < 15.40$). Findings of the second hypothesis proved that there was statistically significant difference between the mean scores of two tests. Due to the careful analysis, it can be concluded that the second null hypothesis "There is not any positive relationship between using bilingual dictionary in translating polysemous words and the students' scores" is completely rejected here.

Conclusions

This research was conducted to gain more insights in students' use of bilingual dictionaries in translating polysemous words. By carrying out this project, it has been found that bilingual dictionary is effective in translating polysemous words, and it can be easily recommended to translation students. Throughout the analysis of the tests and the questionnaire, the findings serve the hypothesis of this research. Although some students use bilingual dictionaries, they do not achieve an appropriate translation. Hence, it is concluded that if students are familiar with a polysemous word, and the context of a sentence is obvious, they translate it correctly. However, when they find polysemous words with which they are not familiar, they fail in translating them. Moreover, when they face an ambiguous sentence, they translate it incorrectly. Therefore, the misunderstanding of a sentence leads to a mistranslation. However, some students use bilingual dictionaries, they do not succeed in selecting the appropriate equivalents of the polysemous

words. As a result, in order to benefit from using bilingual dictionaries in translating polysemous words, translation students should take the context into consideration. In addition, without considering both linguistic and extra-linguistic aspects, dictionaries will always remain deficient. It is important to say that teachers should make students aware about the strategies of translation and pay more attention to the context, because it is the key of any translation. Furthermore, teachers should advise the students on the way and procedures of using the bilingual dictionary. Based on the results of this study, both null hypotheses were rejected. In other words, the research provided evidence that there was a positive relationship between using bilingual dictionary in translating polysemous words and the students' scores, and translation students had positive perspective on the use of bilingual dictionary in translating polysemous words. The results of this experimental study tend to support Knight's (2004) finding that bilingual dictionary, results in more vocabulary gains and improved comprehension than translating by a monolingual dictionary. He claimed that bilingual dictionary users had significantly higher scores than students who read without dictionaries.

The capability of putting the outcomes of every research into practice is the most important purpose and challenge of every scientific study. As mentioned before, this project described a study on investigating the efficacy of bilingual dictionary for translating polysemous words. The above results suggest the majority of students participating in the study felt positive about the effectiveness of the bilingual dictionary in translating polysemous words. Most of the students agreed to some extent that the use of bilingual dictionary had helped them to prepare more effectively for translating polysemous words. In general, the findings of the present study can be helpful for teachers, students, instructors, and decision-makers to enhance the level of translation. In particular, the results of the study can serve to help the board of translation at educational contexts as universities as to consider and

enhance comprehension and vocabulary power among the students. Finally, many factors such as raising examination scores, students' autonomy, facilitating the level of translation, receiving elaborated and individualized input, improving vo

cabulary knowledge, and etc. were highlighted with the application of bilingual dictionary. It is expected that the findings of this project will guide further research and development in different educational systems.

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