



# The Explanation of Homonymy in the Lexicon of Arabic

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The phenomenon of homonymy appeared at the conceptual beginnings of Arabic grammar. In the chapter devoted to the relationship between form and lexical meaning in the *kitâb by Sibawayhi* we read that it is possible to find in the spoken language of the Arabs "two concordant forms although the meanings differ, when you say: *wajadtu 'alayhi* (I felt resentment against him), which comes from *al-mawjjudatu* (resentment) and *wajadtu* (I found) if you look at *wijdâna l-ḍâllati* (to find the lost animal). Examples of this kind are numerous". Throughout the centuries nobody has been able to provide a satisfactory explanation of this phenomenon.

Standard linguistic studies restrict themselves to the level of the root, whereas this phenomenon can only be accounted for at the submorphemic level. As posited in the Theory of Etymons and Matrices (TME), the minimal phonetic units of the lexicon are not phonemes but phonetic features and the minimal units of sound and meaning are not morphemes but matrices composed of vectors of phonetic features correlated to a notional invariant.

In this book we account for some fifty roots (in the traditional meaning of the term). Such a large number cannot be dismissed as just a handful of convenient examples chosen for the purpose. Within the framework of TME, homonymy is thus an ordinary phenomenon which is predicted and explained by the theory and every case of homonymy will have an explanation once the entire lexicon has been described.

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Foreword

### 1. Some forgotten yet obvious points

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- I. Introduction
- II. First series of facts: alternations involving glides and identical consonants  
 $C_j C_i C_i$ ,  $C_j W Y C_i$ ,  $C_j C_i W Y$ ,  $W C_j C_i$
- III. Second series of facts: presence/absence of a guttural
- IV. Third series of facts: paradigms including two initial consonants
- V. Fourth series of facts: presence/absence of  $r$ ,  $m$ ,  $n$ , in the initial position

### 2. The Theory of Matrices and Etymons

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- I. Introduction
- II. The phonetic component of the matrix
- III. Articulation of the notional fields

### 3. Homonymy

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- I. Understanding the problem
- II. Explanations

### 4. The Explanation of Homonymy in the Theory of Matrices and Etymons

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- I. Homonymy resulting from blending
- II. Homonymy by realization of multiple matrices in one etymon
- III. Homonymy due to the possibility of many etymonial analyses
- IV. Case study: the radicals with initial  $n$

### 5. Elaboration of the theory: levels of explanation

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- I. Introduction: / prefix or crement ?
- II. Explanation through the identification of the parent matrix
- III. Explanation through identification of the parent etymon

### 6. Case study: radicals with the initial /

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- I. *laḥana*
- II. *lasa'a*
- III. *lašafa and lašifa*
- IV. *lasaba and lasiba*
- V. *laḥafa*

### 7. Case study: radicals with initial $m$

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- I. Introduction: the status of the  $m$
- II. Two meanings
- III. Three meanings
- IV. Four meanings
- V.  $n$  meanings

### 8. Case study: radicals with an initial $r$

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- I. Introduction: the status of the  $r$
- II. Two meanings
- III. Three meanings
- IV.  $n$  meanings

### 9. Case study: radical with initial $t$

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- I. Introduction: the status of the initial  $t$
- II.  $n$  meanings

### 10. Case study: radical with initial $s/\š$

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- I. The status of  $s$  and  $\š$
- II. Two meanings
- III. Three meanings
- IV.  $n$  meanings

### 11. Consequence: the explanation of enantiosemy

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- I. The solution through blending
- II. Case Study

Conclusion

Bibliography

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