

Ambiguity

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दादा कोंडके ना एकदा

हींदी चित्रपट काढायचा होता.

पण त्यांना चित्रपटाचं नाव असं ठेवायचं होतं की,

त्यांचा हींदी आणि मराठी

दोन्ही भाषेत अर्थ निघला पाहीजे.

मग शेवटी त्यांनी विचार करून नाव ठेवलं.

॥ बदला लूंगी ॥



What is Ambiguity?

- It is a common feature of all natural human languages
- It creates double meaning of same sentence or utterance
- This may be used purposefully to confuse or to create fun
- In English we identify 03 kinds of ambiguity
- 1) Phonological 2) Lexical 3) Structural

Lexical Ambiguity

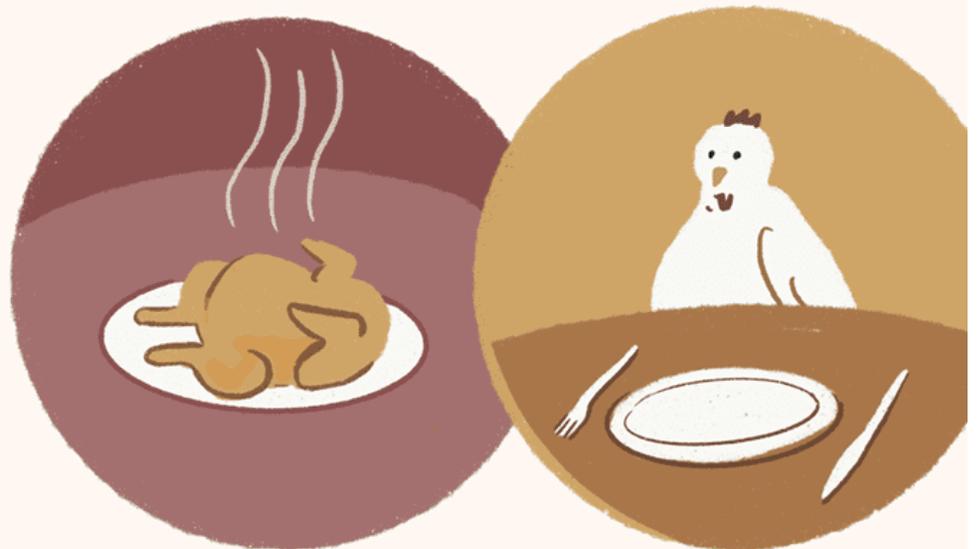
The presence of two or more possible meanings within a single word.



"I saw her duck."

Syntactic Ambiguity

The presence of two or more possible meanings within a single sentence or sequence of words.



"The chicken is ready to eat."

Some examples from Hindi and Marathi

- **Seat per bhaithe hue kutte ko bandhiye**
- (Who is on the seat? Dog or the listener?)
- **Roko mat jane do.**
- (1-if you pause after- roko mat,jane do)
- (2- if you pause after – roko, mat jane do)
- In one of his movies Dada Kondke had this dialogue “**Aata jawal jawal zopaychi vel zaali**”
- How do we interpret the word Jawal Jawal?
- Does it refer to **time or physical nearness**
- Again in many of his dialogues we find the expression like “**Tumchya ter Aayala**”. It was a political punch (common abuse in Marathi/ Congress (I) party)



**You want me to
get you a taxi or
tell you you're a
taxi?**

**Call me a taxi,
please.**

1- Phonological Ambiguity

- In this there is no clarity of what is spoken by the speaker
- This happens because the utterance can be interpreted in 2 different ways by the listener
- The pronunciation of the utterance is identical/ similar
- Eg. Ice cream/ I scream
- The Sun's rays meet/ The sons raise meat
- If we pronounce the utterances which of the two do we mean

Lexical Ambiguity

- In this case the word has 2 or more meanings
- Which of the meaning to take confuses the listener
- Eg. The modal auxiliary **CAN** has 03 meanings
- 1) ability 2) Possibility 3) Permission
- So * **You can drive my car now*** could mean
- 1) You are able to drive my car now
- 2) You are permitted to drive my car now
- 3) It is possible that you may drive my car now

LEXICAL AMBIGUITY

Occurs when a phrase or sentences has more than one basic structure so it produces more than one way to understand, even if the individual words of the expression are not lexically ambiguous.

FOR EXAMPLE:

We should be discussing violence on TV.

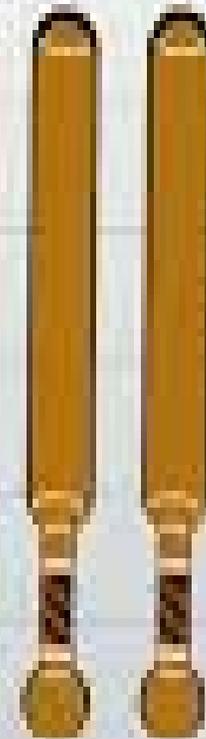
• INTERPRETATIONS:

- We should be discussion violence on TV.*
- We should be discussion violence on TV.*

EXAMPLES

1000-1000-1000

I saw bats.

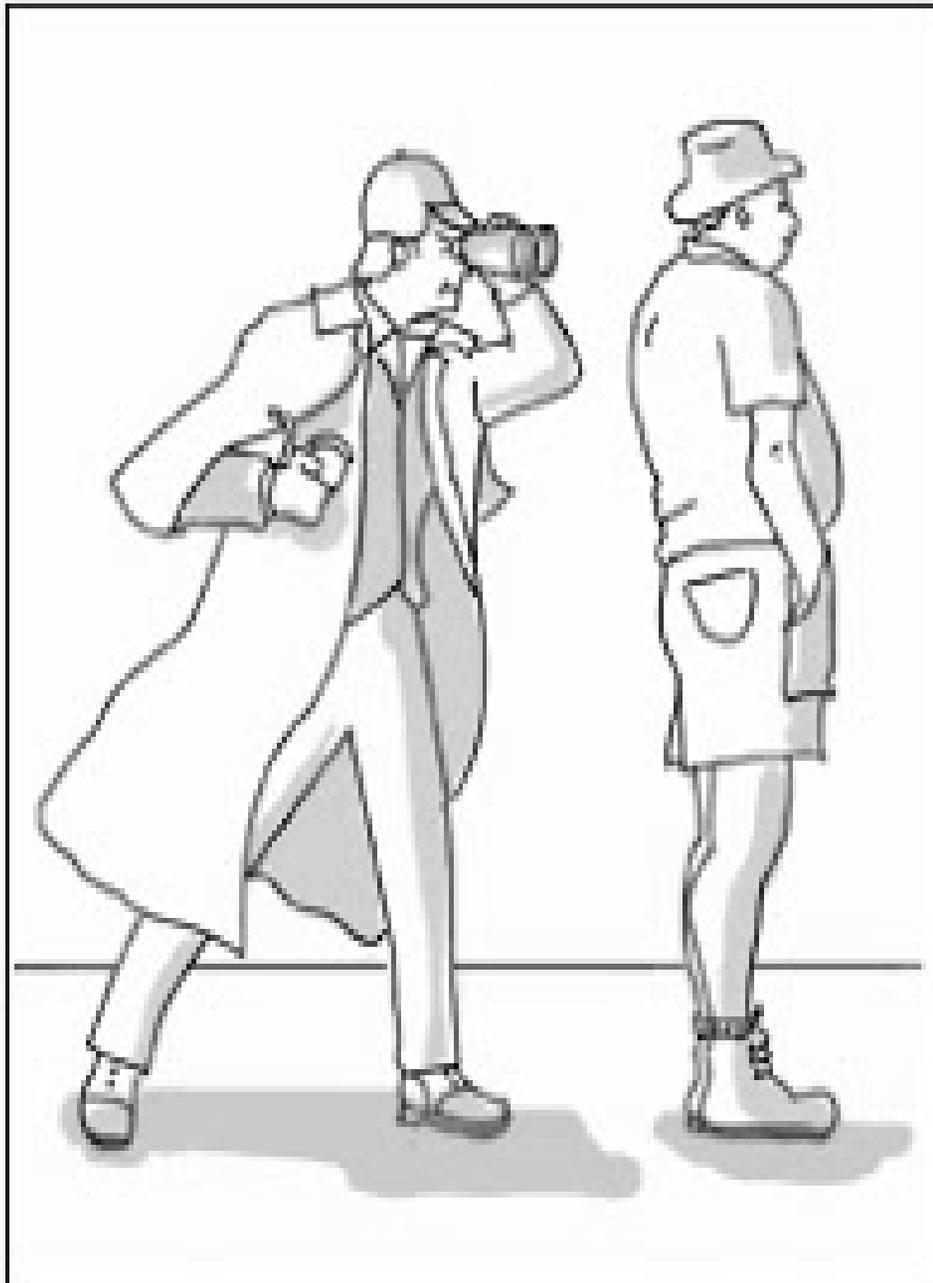


I saw bats

- **Bats** has two meanings-
 - 1) Playing tool (like cricket bat)
 - 2) A winged bird (watwaghul in Marathi)
- **Saw** also has two meanings
 - 1) to look at with eyes
 - 2) to cut something with saw (a cutting tool)
- So the sentence I SAW BATS can mean
 - 1) I looked at the Playing bats
 - 2) I looked at the flying birds
 - 3) I cut the playing bats
 - 4) I cut the living bird

3. Structural ambiguity

- This is a case when different treatment is given to the same structural unit
- Different treatment results in difference of meaning
- Sometimes this is also called GRAMMATICAL ambiguity
- It has many dimensions



Sherlock saw the man using binoculars.



Sherlock saw the man using binoculars.

- "I shot an **elephant** in my pajamas"
- Here we have both Lexical as well as Structural ambiguity
- Lexical
- Shot has 02 meanings 1) to shoot using gun 2) to shoot using camera
- Structural
- I shot an elephant in my pajamas. (SVO)
- I shot an elephant in my pajamas. (SVOA)
- **SVO**- I shot an elephant which was in my pajamas
- **SVOA**- I shot an elephant when I was in pajamas

- Old men and women were invited to the party.
- The above sentence can be understood in two ways in the following bracket style
- Old [men and women] were invited to the party.
- [Old men] and women were invited to the party.
- The case here is a co-ordinated subject and an adjective (old) before it. In the first case the adjective old refers to both the nouns but in the second case it refers to only nearby noun. So the difference of meaning

- They are hunting dogs
- They are hunting dogs (SVO)
- They are hunting dogs (SVCs)
- SVO- Dogs are being hunt by them
- SVCs– They are trained dogs for hunting

- Beating wives may be dangerous
- S: NP
- S: Nonfinite clause
- NP- The wives who beat their husbands may be dangerous
- Nonfinite clause- Husbands beat their wives and that may be dangerous

Now try these examples yourselves

- 1. I saw a girl singing a song
- 2. Old English Dictionary
- 3. I want to see the girl in your room
- 4. He must get scholarship
- 5. It is right
- 6. Good life depends on liver
- 7. The teacher told me to report at night
- 8. Bring me a chair in the room
- 9. I saw a dog smoking a cigar
- 10. He took my picture

- An ideal way to write your answer
- He is a poor teacher
- Step 1- This is the case of lexical ambiguity
- Step 2- M1- He is financially weak and he is a teacher
- M2- His ability as a teacher is very weak
- Step 3- The ambiguity arises due to the word POOR.
- On one hand it refers to one's financial status and on the other hand it can also refer to one's ability.

- Time flies
- Step 1- This is a case of structural ambiguity
- Str. 1- Time flies (S:NP + V:VP)
- Str.2- Time flies (V:VP + O:NP)
- M1- Time is not stagnant/ permanent
- M2- Someone asked me to mark the time of arrival and departure of the insects

- Expl: The ambiguity arises due to the treatment given to the parts of the sentence. In str.1 we treat TIME as noun and FLIES as verb so we get M1.
- But in str.2 we treat TIME as verb and FLIES as plural noun to get M2. So in a way this is also a case of lexical ambiguity

A close-up photograph of two hands, palms up, holding a small, rectangular white paper strip. The paper strip has a slightly torn, deckled edge and is held horizontally between the fingers. On the paper strip, the words "Thank You" are written in a black, elegant cursive script. The background is a solid, dark color, which makes the hands and the white paper stand out. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the skin and the paper.

Thank You