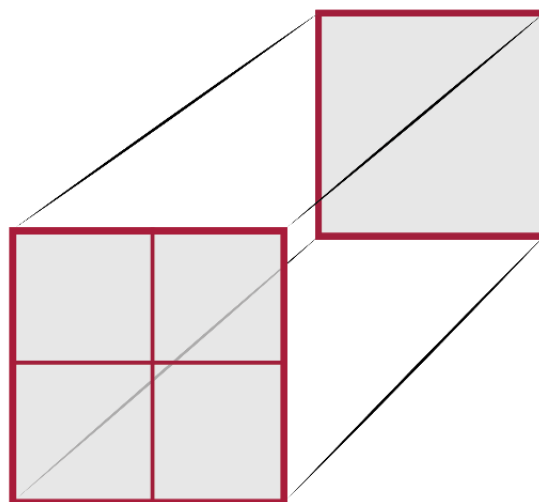




Tübingen Interdisciplinary Corpus of Ambiguity Phenomena (TInCAP): User Manual

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1 Introduction

This manual describes the database TInCAP: The Tübingen Interdisciplinary Corpus of Ambiguity Phenomena. The database is a collection of examples and annotations of ambiguities from an interdisciplinary perspective.¹ The annotations make it possible to compare examples of ambiguity from various different disciplines including linguistics, literary studies, rhetoric, law, theology, media studies and others, based on the research agenda of the graduate school GRK 1808: “Ambiguity: Production and Perception”. The database software was initially created by the DAASI international group and later developed within the GRK 1808.

The annotation structure is based on the ambiguity model presented in Winkler (2015), which distinguishes three dimensions. The first is that of the language system, which stipulates that we are dealing with language-based ambiguities (though in principle any kind of semiotic system could take its place). Examples of such ambiguities include polysemy (one linguistic unit for two or more independent meanings), as in (1a), structural ambiguities (different structural representations for one utterance), as in (1b), referential ambiguities involving pronoun resolution, as in (1c), or ellipses as in (1d), to name just a few.²

- (1) a. The vicar married my sister.
- b. John saw a man with a telescope.
- c. Peter_i said that he_{i/j} would be late.
- d. “Our enemies are innovative and resourceful, and so are we. They never stop thinking about new ways to harm our country and our people, and neither do we.” (*Speech, G. W. Bush, 5 August 2004*)

As well as the language system, the model emphasises the occurrence of ambiguity in actual communicative situations. Thus, the second dimension considers whether the ambiguity occurs in the production or the perception process, and the third considers whether or not it is produced or perceived strategically. This information is recorded in the fields Dimension Production and Dimension Perception.

In order to increase annotative power, we have added several elements to those in the model. One is the possibility of analysing the ambiguity in relation to complex communicative situations (originally inspired by the literary communication models along the lines used in Pfister (1991)). As an illustration, consider the example in (2), discussed in Hartmann, Ebert, et al. (2023). The communicative situation here is complex because there is more than one level of communication: the speaker in the comedy show quotes an advert which contains a structurally ambiguous sentence. The speaker uses the potential

¹The research for developing the annotation scheme and the web interface has been funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) via the grants to the GRK 1808: “Ambiguity: Production and Perception.” (funding period 9/2014 – 9/2022). Project number: 198647426.

²The example (1d) is taken from lecture materials by Susanne Winkler.

for structural ambiguity in the sentence in order to produce a comic effect. Thus, there is a strategic use of the ambiguity at the level of the speaker in the radio show, while at the level of the advert no ambiguity is intended: they are looking for both men (who can shear sheep) and women (with long hair). This difference is recorded in the fields for Communication Level.

- (2) This is from the BBC news websites, and it's sent in by Ben Lodge. It says: 'Casting directors are searching Dorset for bearded men to appear as extras in a BBC adaptation of a Thomas Hardy novel. **Men who can shear sheep and women with long hair are also in demand for the production.**' (*Friday Night Comedy, the News Quiz, Series 82, Episode 13* n.d.; TInCAP entry: haj040002)

Another addition is the size of the level at which the ambiguity is triggered and the size of the level at which it is relevant, recorded in Triggering Level and Range. The paraphrases can also be annotated using according to their relationship with each other in order to distinguish cases in which one is related to the other (usually derived from it), cases in which the readings are independent, and cases in which the relation is open (e.g. in cases of vagueness). The field for this is called Type of Paraphrase Relation. Finally, the database allows annotation with discipline-specific terms, so that it can be used for discipline-specific research. These can be found in the field Phenomenon. Thus, the database serves both interdisciplinary and discipline-specific needs.

2 Citing TInCAP

When working with TInCAP, please cite the following papers:

Jutta M. Hartmann, Lisa Ebert, et al. (2023). "Annotating Ambiguity Across Disciplines: The Tübingen Interdisciplinary Corpus of Ambiguity Phenomena (TInCAP)". in: *Strategies of Ambiguity*. Ed. by Matthias Bauer and Angelika Zirker. Routledge, 322–349

Asya Achimova et al. (2024). "Ambiguity in Discourse: The Tübingen Interdisciplinary Corpus of Ambiguity Phenomena". In: *Vagueness, ambiguity, and all the rest. Linguistic and pragmatic approaches*. Ed. by Ilaria Fiorentini and Chiara Zanchi. John Benjamins, 84–108.

Additionally, when you work with a particular annotation, please provide the entry's ID after citing the primary source:

- (3) Maria hat Eier, Kuchen und Milch zum Mittagessen gehabt. Maria hat Eierkuchen und Milch zum Mittagessen gehabt.
(Féry 1994:100; TInCAP entry: knm350003)

In case you have not cited the above paper and TInCAP at any point in your publication before, please refer to the complete citation:

- (4) Féry 1994:100; TInCAP entry: knm350003; TInCAP 3.0 (Hartmann, Ebert, et al. 2023; Achimova et al. 2024).

3 The Fields of TInCAP

Here we provide an overview of the fields in TInCAP. Based on these explanations, you will be able to understand and work with TInCAP entries.

3.1 Entry Data

This section contains information that is necessary to guarantee the retrievability of examples as well as interdisciplinary comparability. The fields are:

3.1.1 ID

The ID allows the unambiguous identification of entries. Each ID consists of three letters from the owner's name, an ID-Part unique to the user (two digits), and a number unique to the entry (four digits).

3.1.2 Quote

This field contains the example of ambiguity that is discussed by the accompanying annotation(s).

3.1.3 Comment

This field gives additional information about the quote. The information may help readers to understand the ambiguity or add further information about, for instance, the source.

3.1.4 Language

This field shows the language that the quote is in.

3.1.5 Period From / Period To

If the exact year of the quote is available, this will be shown in Period From. If a range is available, the field Period From specifies the beginning of the time period in which the example was produced, and the field Period To specifies the end of the time period.

3.1.6 Mode of Expression

This field specifies which form the quote is expressed in: audio-visual, pictorial, pictorial+written, spoken, or written.

3.1.7 Expression Type

Depending on the mode of expression, different Expression Types can be chosen by the annotator. Here are the possibilities:

Mode of Expression	pictoral+written	spoken	written
Expression Type	advertisement	audio book	advertisement
	article	dialogue	article
	children's literature	drama	bible text
	comedy	experimental item	children's literature
	comic	interview	comedy
	diagram	joke	drama
	drama	monologue	email
	drawing	news	exemplum (fiction)
	epistolary novel	radio announcement	experimental item
	exemplum (fiction)	rap	interview
	hybrids	spontaneous speech	(transcript)
	illustrated text (prose)		joke
	illustrated text (verse)		law
	illustration		law (roman)
	image		letter
	instruction/manual		literary text
	joke		narrative text
	letter		novella cycle
	literary text		normative text
	model		epistolary novel
	narrative text		poem
	normative text		riddle
	novella cycle		sermon
	painting		speech (manuscript)
	painting on a postcard		speech (transcript)
	photography		stylistics
	pictograms		
	picture book		
	poem		
	reversible figures		
	riddle		
	scientific text		
	silent movie		
	stylistics		

Table 2: Expression Type and Mode of Expression 1

Mode of Expression	audio-visual	pictorial
Expression Type	advertisement	diagram
	comedy	drawing
	drama	illustration
	experimental item	image
	joke	model
	movie	painting
	news	painting on a postcard
	opera	photography
	political satire	pictograms
	rap	reversible figures
	slam poetry	silent movie
	speech	

Table 3: Expression Type and Mode of Expression 2

3.1.8 Connected Entries

Connected Entries shows the IDs of any entries which are linked to this one. One way to use this function is to link entries when a series of ambiguities in a text leads to an ambiguous interpretation of a larger entity, for example the whole text or a fictional character. An example of this is Polonius in Hamlet: the utterances and/or actions assigned to him are ambiguous and this ambiguity in turn makes the entire character ambiguous. Our interpretation of the character depends on how we resolve the ambiguity of the character’s utterances and/or actions.³

This function is also used if the ambiguity is created in one of the entries and resolved in the other, as in the following example:

- (5) *Draw the drapes when the sun comes in.*
 read Amelia Bedelia. She looked up. The sun was coming in. Amelia Bedelia looked at the list again. “Draw the drapes? That’s what it says. I’m not much of a hand at drawing, but I’ll try.”
 So Amelia Bedelia sat right down and she drew those drapes.
- (6) “Amelia Bedelia, the sun will fade the furniture. I asked you to draw the drapes,” said Mrs. Rogers.
 “I did! I did! See,” said Amelia Bedelia. She held up her picture.

In Amelia Bedelia, the phrase “draw the drapes” is used ambiguously twice, creating the ambiguity in (5) and resolving it in (6), that is, resolving it on the level of the characters (innermost level).

³Cf. Bross (2017:151-192) and TInCAP entries brm020001 and brm020009.

Thus, the function Connected Entries visualizes the interaction between individual instances of ambiguity within TInCAP. For a discussion of these examples, please see W. Wagner (2020:56) and W. Wagner (2020:117).

3.2 Bibliography Data

This section contains bibliographic information. It specifies whether the entry originates from a primary source or is cited from a secondary source. If an entry originates from a secondary source, e.g. a source in which the ambiguity of the quote has already been pointed out, the bibliographic data of both the secondary source and the underlying primary source from which the (ambiguous) quote originates are specified.

3.3 Annotation Data

This section presents the focal point of the database: the annotation scheme which was developed within the RTG 1808. It provides the means for transdisciplinary research, enabling the user to uncover systematic similarities and differences beyond the analysis of specific topics.

3.3.1 Relevant Part

The Relevant Part is the ambiguous element or section of the quote which is the focus of the annotation. Sometimes this will be the whole quote, but often it is just a small excerpt.

3.3.2 Paraphrases

The Paraphrases state the two (or more) possible interpretations of the quote and serve to indicate clearly in which way the quote is ambiguous. This is usually achieved either by rephrasing the relevant part of the quote in different words or by explaining or describing the two (or more) interpretations.

3.3.3 Type of Paraphrase Relation

Instances of ambiguity are not comparable in interdisciplinary ways by classifying them according to ambiguity phenomena like homonymy or structural ambiguity, as these phenomena are usually discipline-specific. This category is thus intended to be independent of specific phenomena or disciplines. It describes the semantic relation between the potential interpretations of the ambiguous item, thereby allowing for a qualitative classification and comparison of items across disciplines.

The field allows for three types of relation between the paraphrases of an ambiguous item: either the interpretation is open, the various interpretations are related, or they are unrelated. Entries that have multiple simultaneously possible readings in every context, which would be the case for e.g. vagueness, are examples for the open type of relation.

Entries that have two or more distinct readings are considered related or unrelated. In the case of related paraphrases, one of the readings is usually derived from the other. The derivation may be e.g. due to similarity, a part-whole-relationship, or figuration. In the case of unrelated paraphrases, the readings are not derived from each other; they are absolutely independent.

The theoretical foundation for this distinction is as follows: Ambiguity arises when several readings R for the same object of investigation O are possible in one context C , due to our uncertainty as to whether C is C_1 or C_2 etc.

- a. The object of investigation O is the ambiguity that is investigated.
- b. The reading R denotes the possible readings of the relevant sign ($R_1, R_2, R_3, \dots, R_n$). The apostrophe (‘) indicates a reading that is derived from another reading.
- c. The contexts $C_1, C_2, C_3, \dots, C_n$ label the different situations/contexts/settings/positions in which one of the readings is realized (i.e., where the ambiguity is not available). The object of investigation O is ambiguous when the context C allows several readings R simultaneously; i.e. when it is unclear whether C is C_1 or C_2 or C_n . We call this type of context C ambiguous.

Type of relation	Relation: Ambiguity in C	Definition
UNRELATED	$(O \text{ in } C_1) = R_1$ $(O \text{ in } C_2) = R_2$ Ambiguity: $(O \text{ in } C_{\text{ambiguous}}) = R_1/R_2$	The object of investigation O in the contexts C_1 and C_2 is assigned distinct readings which are not derived from each other. O is ambiguous when C_1 and C_2 cannot be distinguished.
RELATED	$(O \text{ in } C_1) = R_1$ $(O \text{ in } C_2) = R_1'$ Ambiguity: $(O \text{ in } C_{\text{ambiguous}}) = R_1/R_1'$	The object of investigation O is assigned reading R_1 in context C_1 . In context C_2 O is assigned the derived reading R_1' . The derivation could be based on a relation of analogy or on connectedness.
OPEN	$(O \text{ in } C) = R_1 - n$ Ambiguity: $(O \text{ in } C_{\text{ambiguous}}) = R_1 - n$	The object of study O may be assigned several readings R in every single context C . Vague examples are all of this type of relation.

Table 4: Type of relation and ambiguity

3.3.4 Phenomenon

This field uses discipline-specific terms. Each entry is connected with at least one relevant Phenomenon. The phenomena either cause or are related to ambiguity. The following glossary provides working definitions of the terms:

Phenomenon	Definition
Ambiguity in discourse	<p>When the ambiguity of an utterance or text does not come from the ambiguity of lexical items or multiple underlying structures, we speak of ambiguity in discourse (Winter-Froemel and Zirker 2015:288).</p> <p><u>Example:</u> La poubelle est pleine. [The bin is full.] a) The bin is full. b) Empty the bin! (Fuchs 1996:19; TInCAP entry: wie210001)</p>
Ambiguity in the language system	<p>Ambiguity in the language system is a characteristic of signs (morphemes, words, constructions) that can be assigned two (or more) distinct meanings prior to their use in a communicative situation (Winter-Froemel and Zirker 2015:288).</p> <p><u>Example:</u> Morpheme -s in English is ambiguous between a plural marker (<i>dogs, papers</i>) and a 3rd-person singular marker (<i>likes, writes</i>).</p>
Apo koinou	<p>The apo koinou construction, a figure of speech, is a syntactical construction in which two clauses are blended by means of a lexeme with two syntactical functions (as per “dead” in the below example). The ambiguity in the lexeme may then lead to ambiguity in the reading of the clauses. (Aarts, Chalker, and Weiner 2014:30).</p> <p><u>Example:</u> Indeed, I never shall be satisfied With Romeo till I behold him, dead, Is my poor heart so for a kinsman vexed. a) I shall never be satisfied until I see Romeo. My heart is dead because I lost my vexed cousin. b) I shall never be satisfied until I see Romeo dead. My heart is vexed because I lost my cousin. (Shakespeare 2005:390; TInCAP entry: vot730002)</p>

Bridging context	<p>The process of semantic change between meaning A and meaning B contains a phase where A and B are both present (polysemy). Before this, there is another phase in which B arises from the word being used in certain contexts, without B being part of the word's general meaning (i.e. without it yet being lexicalised). The term bridging context describes this phase, and is commonly used in theories of language change (N. Evans and Wilkins 2000; Heine 2002).</p> <p><u>Example:</u> Philaminte. [...] Holà ! Je vous ai dit en paroles bien claires, Que j'ai besoin de vous. Henriette. Mais pour quelles affaires ? Philaminte. Venez, on va dans peu vous les faire savoir. a) I ("on") will let you know. b) One ("on") will let you know. (Molière 1763; TInCAP entry: wie210002)</p>
Collocation	<p>Collocations are partly or fully fixed expressions that are established through repeated context-dependent use. Their meaning is semantically transparent (Fellbaum 2011). A collocation can help determine which meaning of an otherwise ambiguous word is relevant.</p> <p><u>Example:</u> Compare the meaning of the verb "dust" in a) and b) a) dust the furniture (cf. Parish 1963:20-22; TInCAP entry: waw190046) b) dust the cake with powdered sugar.</p>
Conceptual contrast	<p>Conceptual contrast is an associative principle that relates the meanings of an ambiguous expression (Blank 2013). In the case of polysemy, the different meanings are in contrastive relation to each other. In literary texts, the interpretations of an ambiguous character or event may be related via conceptual contrast. (See also contiguity and similarity.)</p> <p><u>Example:</u> True, by this time it was not a blank space any more. It had got filled since my boyhood with rivers and lakes and names. It had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery— a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over. It had become a place of darkness. a) blank space: white space b) blank space: dark space (Conrad 2004:24; TInCAP entry: zhx540006)</p>
Contiguity	<p>Contiguity is an associative principle that relates the meanings of an ambiguous expression (Blank 2013). Here the relationship is based on the temporal, spatial or conceptual neighborhood of the concepts in question. (See also conceptual contrast and similarity).</p>

Example:

E ben covenc que Deu nasquès en Betleem, «quia Betleem domus panis interpretatur»; car Betleem, maison de pa es apelada, per aiçò car aquí nasc Nostre S[énner], le quals es apelats celestial pan, si con diz en l'Avangeli.

a) Betlehem

b) house of bread → Jesus Christ (Ocerinjauregui 1990:93; TInCAP entry: sim180002)

Conversational
implicature

Conversational implicatures are a type of implicature that arises from the observance, non-observance or (blatant) flouting of Grice's conversational maxims of relevance, quality, quantity, and manner (Grice 1968; Grice 1975). Conversational implicatures are calculable, defeasible (i.e. open to revision), non-detachable and non-conventional. If they do not presuppose context, they are generalized. If they use preceding context, they are particularized.

Example:

Are you going to his party? – I have to work.

a) I have to work.

b) I am not going to his party. (Winter-Froemel and Zirker 2015:288; TInCAP entry: rom700012)

Disambiguation by
context

Ambiguity may be temporary within a single sentence: it disappears once the whole sentence is processed (see **Temporary ambiguity** below). In other cases, we need context to disambiguate the sentence. Thus, in the example, we need more context to understand whether a) or b) is meant by the speaker.

Example:

Kinder dürfen da nur drauf sitzen!

[Children are allowed to sit there only!]

a). Only children are allowed to sit there (and no one else)

b). Children are only allowed to sit here, and should not do anything else (e.g. jump) (Jäger 2020:3; TInCAP entry: knm350015)

Dramatic irony

Dramatic irony occurs in a drama or other literary text when the audience or reader knows more than a character, meaning that what happens or what is said may take on additional meanings the character is not aware of. This often results in ambiguity, as per the example below, in which Gertrude, not knowing Claudius's plans, understands meaning (b), while the audience infers meaning (a).

Example:

Claudius [to Gertrude]: I hope to hear good news [concerning Hamlet] from thence [England] ere long

If everything falls out to our content.

- a) Claudius hopes to hear that Hamlet has been executed in England.
- b) Claudius hopes to hear that Hamlet has arrived well in England. (Shakespeare 2006; TInCAP entry: brm020016)

Ellipsis

Ellipsis is the omission of linguistic material in a sentence (see Merchant 2001; Sag 1976; Winkler 2011 among others). In certain situations, such as verb phrase ellipsis and sluicing, omission of parts of a sentence may lead to ambiguity: the deleted site can be reconstructed in more than one way.

Example:

Barry insulted Lane at the office, but I don't know who else.

- a) I don't know who else insulted Lane.
- b) I don't know who else Barry insulted. (Remmele 2019:405; TInCAP entry: reb240015)

Enigmatic ambiguity

Enigmatic ambiguity designates local cases of ambiguity that may be disambiguated by the recipient through a coherence that the text subversively disguises (Güthlein 2021).

Example:

Also glaub nicht, dass du Hund hier'n Aufreißer wirst, wie'n Chinaimbiss

- a) Glaub nicht dass du Hund hier'n Aufreißer wirst.
- b) Glaub nicht, dass du Hundhirn auf Reis servierst. (TInCAP entry: gue280011)

Epistemic ambiguity

Epistemic ambiguity has to do with a conflicted state of knowledge: if there are inconsistent hypotheses about a given object or event, we can say that it is epistemically ambiguous. To create an ambiguity, the hypotheses must be valid, refer to the same totality of evidence, be mutually exclusive, and resist merger into a superordinate unit.

Example:

In court there might be conflicting testimonies and therefore differing stories about reality. In the case of the so called "Moonwalkrobbery":

- a) One witness describes many offenders and states that the victim was hit several times.
- b) One witness describes one offender who hit the victim once. (TInCAP entry: rof150001)

Figurative language	<p>Figurative language refers to “speech where speakers mean something other than what they literally say” (Gibbs Jr and Colston 2012:1). Ambiguity may arise whenever it is not clear whether the speaker uses words in the literal or the figurative sense.</p> <p><u>Example:</u> “I don’t know, Tim. I’m completely in the dark...” That was when the lights went out. Suddenly it was pitch-black in the room. At the same time there was a click and a rush of cool air as the door was opened, and [...] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) I am physically in a place where there is no light. b) I have no idea what is going on. (Horowitz 2005:55; TInCAP entry: waw190038) </p>
Focus	<p>Focus is the part of the information structure of a sentence which contains new or contrastive information often marked prosodically (Hartmann and Winkler 2013; Krifka 2008; Lambrecht 1996; Prince 1981; Roberts 1998). There may be a set of alternatives for what the focus of a sentence is, especially in writing, where prosody is absent. (Rooth 1992; Krifka 2006)</p> <p><u>Example:</u> Gramma only gave a bunny to Maryanne. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Only to Maryanne and nobody else (focus on Maryanne). b) Gramma only gave Maryanne a bunny and nothing else (focus on bunny). (M. Wagner et al. 2010; TInCAP entry: knm350009) </p>
Formulaic language	<p>Formulaic language relates to multiword expressions (Wray 2005) such as idioms, collocations, proverbs, etc. In literary texts, the author may create a context where the formulaic language is interpreted as a regular sequence of words. Thus, the expression will appear ambiguous between its formulaic and compositional meaning.</p> <p><u>Example:</u> “What takes you to Dover?” “Well ... the train does.” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Why are you going to Dover? b) What kind of transport takes you to Dover? (Horowitz 2005:63; TInCAP entry: waw190034) </p>
Garden path	<p>A temporary ambiguity that arises because we process sentences in online fashion as words come in (Frazier and Fodor 1978). In the example, we first parse <i>past</i> as a preposition. Then when we reach <i>fell</i> we hit the end of the garden path and have to reanalyse the syntactic structure so that <i>the barn</i> is the subject of a new clause and <i>past</i> an adverb.</p>

Example:

The horse raced past the barn fell

a) The horse raced past the barn.

b) The horse raced past. The barn fell. (Bever 1970:316; TInCAP entry: vot730014)

Genre ambiguity

Ambiguity of genre is a type of structural / constitutive ambiguity (also called frame ambiguity). Every literary text is encoded via the genre or type that it belongs to (cf. Berndt and Maienborn 2013:91). Generic style sheets may be described as a set of rules, as frames or complex scripts (cf. Raskin 1985). **Genre ambiguity** arises with the combination of two (and/or more) distinct generic style sheets that manifest the structure of a literary text so that the literary text is equally close to two (and/or more) genres (cf. Weimar 2009:55).

Example:

Der zerbrochene Krug by Heinrich von Kleist

a) A comedy

b) A tragedy (Kleist 1957; TInCAP entry: vot730012)

Homography

Homography is a type of lexical ambiguity and a sub-type of homonymy. The meanings of homographs are, therefore, as homonyms, distinct and unrelated. Homographs are spelled identically but may differ in their pronunciation (e.g. to lead (verb) vs. lead (noun)).

Example:

a) The strong *contrast* was hard to ignore. (noun)

b) The strong *contrast* with their weaker friends. (verb)

(Breen and Clifton Jr 2011:25; TInCAP entry: reb240005)

Homonymy

Homonymy is a type of lexical ambiguity that is based on two or more words which are identical in spelling and/or pronunciation while their meanings are distinct and unrelated. Subtypes of **homonymy** include homography and homophony (Bußmann 1996:519).

Example:

One laid hands on my trunk

a) One laid hands on my suitcase.

b) One laid hands on my behind. (slang)

c) One laid hands on my prolonged flexible snout.

d) One laid hands on my torso.

(Brontë and Smith 2008:50; TInCAP entry: brk530009)

Homophony

Homophony is a type of lexical ambiguity and a sub-type of homonymy. Like homographs (see above), the meanings of homophones are distinct and unrelated but unlike homographs, they are identical in their pronunciation but not necessarily in their spelling (e.g. *to* vs. *too* vs. *two*).

Example: “The Bare Necessities”

a) bare

b) bear (Disney and Reitherman 1967; TInCAP entry: brk530001)

Idiom

Idioms are multiword utterances the meaning of which is at least in part non-compositional (Fellbaum 2011). All **idioms** are conventional (W. Wagner 2020). In literary texts and public speeches, the authors may bring the reader’s attention to the literal meaning of the words composing an **idiom**, thus creating an ambiguity between a literal and a conventional meaning.

Example:

Mama fällt ständig aus allen Wolken. (Mom is always falling down from the clouds.)

a) Mom is always taken by surprise (idiomatic/conventional).

b) Mom is always falling down from the clouds (literal). (*Werbung Kinderschokolade* 2016; TInCAP entry: wis200064)

Implicature

Implicatures are meanings that have not been directly expressed but rather implied (Grice 1975). They can be subdivided into conventional and conversational implicatures (Bußmann 1996:546). A sentence containing an **implicature** may be ambiguous depending on whether the listener computes the **implicature** or not.

Example: Some students passed the test.

a) In fact, all of them did. (implicature cancelled)

b) Not all students passed the test. (implicature computed).

Indirectness

Indirectness is at play when someone performs one speech act by performing another. That means, for example, that a question is used to make a request (as is frequently the case in polite requests), or, as in the case of the example below, a statement is used to make a request. When being indirect, the speaker does not communicate a direct representation of her goal but leaves this goal to be inferred via pragmatic reasoning by the listener (cf. Searle 1975).

Example:

It’s cold in here.

a) The temperature in this room is low.

b) Please shut the window.

(Winter-Froemel and Zirker 2015:308; TInCAP entry: aca670004)

Irony

The expression of meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite (Waite 2012). If the listener fails to notice the **irony**, she may interpret the utterance literally. Thus, an utterance may be ambiguous between its literal and ironic meaning.

Lexical ambiguity	<p><u>Example:</u> What an amazing movie! [when the movie is in fact terrible]. a) The movie is great. b) The movie is terrible.</p>
	<p>Lexical ambiguity occurs when a lexical item has more than one meaning. If the meanings are related we talk about polysemy, and if meanings are unrelated we are dealing with homonymy (Wasow 2015:33).</p>
Literary character	<p><u>Example:</u> kiwi a) fruit b) a bird native to New Zealand c) a New Zealander (colloquial; TInCAP entry: tir410042).</p>
	<p>Literary characters can be ambiguous on a conceptual level. This occurs when the information given about a character produces contradictory conceptualisations, whose elements are incompatible (otherwise we have a “mixed character”, with e.g. good and bad traits), and which cannot be explained by the course of the character’s development (Zirker and Potysch 2019:3-4).</p>
Metaphor	<p><u>Example:</u> Polonius is a character in Shakespeare’s Hamlet a) cunning courtier b) senile fool c) concerned father (Shakespeare 1982; TInCAP entry: brm020002)</p>
	<p>A metaphor is a sub-type of figurative language that exploits the similarity between two domains. It depends on the comparison between two parts: target (what is being talked about) and source (the concept to characterize the target) (Holyoak and Stamenković 2018:643-644). In the most frequent case, a more abstract domain is described by making use of concrete domain (V. Evans 2007:136-138). Metaphors can be seen as ambiguity phenomena as they are – in principle – ambiguous between their literal and their figurative meanings, although in most cases, one of the two readings might be more prominent or the only sensible one in a discourse.</p>
	<p><u>Example:</u> Juliet is the sun. a) Juliet is literally a heavenly body with a mass of more than a thousand Earths so as to support thermonuclear fusion at her core. b) Juliet has an aspect in which she is very much like the sun. (Asher 2011:312-313; TInCAP entry: eln690004)</p>

Metonymy

Metonymy is a sub-type of figurative language. One expression is substituted for another on the basis that they are closely associated. For instance, containers can be used to refer to the things that are contained, or agents to refer to a product of the action, or an object to its possessor (respectively: “I’ll have a glass”, “reading Wordsworth”, “loyalty to the crown”) (Greene et al. 2012:867). **Metonymy** may help to generate ambiguity when a hearer isn’t certain whether a statement is meant metonymically or literally.

Example:

“It doesn’t matter how,” he said and I realized that it did matter a lot. “All that matters is that he doesn’t kill Kusenov on British soil.”

“Suppose he stays on the pavement?” Tim asked.

Mr Waverly swallowed hard. “I mean, we have to ensure that Kusenov is not killed while he is anywhere in Britain,” he explained, choosing his words carefully.

a) on British soil

b) on the soil/ground/dirt one finds in Britain

(Wagner 2020:282f; TInCAP entry: waw190035)

Narrative ambiguity

A text is narratively ambiguous if

- (1) it holds properties which result in two or more mutually exclusive interpretations of what happens
- (2) those interpretations provoke a cognitive stalemate without being resolved
- (3) there are no intratextual hints that dissolve the ambiguity or give preference to one interpretation.

Narrative ambiguity can appear in different media, such as novels, film and drama. (See Rimmon 1977; Mittelbach 2003.)

Example:

Henry James’s story “The Turn of the Screw” is about a tragedy that occurs when a governess tries to save the children in her care from malevolent ghosts. We never learn definitively whether the ghosts are real or figments of the governess’s imagination. Instead we get a series of clues which point one way or the other, giving rise to two equally possible but incompatible hypotheses. (James 2020 [1898]; Rimmon 1977)

Perceived ambiguity

The label **perceived ambiguity** can be used to mark the level of communication where the ambiguity is first perceived. This helps to distinguish ambiguity awareness in cases where there are multiple annotations for different levels of communication.

Example:

Draw the drapes when the sun comes in.

read Amelia Bedelia. She looked up. The sun was coming in. Amelia Bedelia looked at the list again. “Draw the drapes? That’s what it says. I’m not much of a hand at drawing, but I’ll try.”

So Amelia Bedelia sat right down and she drew those drapes.

a) close the drapes

b) make a drawing of the drapes (Parish 1963:25; TInCAP entry: waw190065)

Polysemy

Polysemy is a type of lexical ambiguity. One sign (word, phrase, or symbol) is connected with several meanings, which usually share an etymological relation (e.g. Bußmann 1996:918). The meanings have a common underlying core and are usually related by contiguity of meaning within a semantic field.

Example:

John’s Mom burned the book on magic before he could master it.

a) book = physical object (in combination with the verb “to burn”)

b) book = informational object (in combination with the verb “to master”) (Asher 2011:186; TInCAP entry: eln690002)

Potential ambiguity

This category describes the situation where a (linguistic) structure has the potential to be ambiguous, yet this potential is not realized, for example because the context disambiguates immediately. It follows that there is no ambiguity perceived, even if the potential for ambiguity is there. (Bauer et al. 2010:42; W. Wagner 2020:36-41, 83-86)

Example:

“Oh, Bear!” said Christopher Robin. “How I do love you!”

“So do I,” said Pooh.

a) I love you, too.

b) I love myself. (Milne 2005:71; TInCAP entry: waw190060)

Pragmatic ambiguity

Pragmatic ambiguity is triggered by elements of the communicative situation such as speaker, addressee, time and space, and implicatures rather than by specific parts of the utterance. The entire utterance can be taken as ambiguous. (Winter-Froemel and Zirker 2015:305; Winter-Froemel, Munderich, and Schole Forthcoming).

Example:

It’s cold in here.

a) The temperature in this room is low.

b) Please shut the window.

(Winter-Froemel and Zirker 2015:308; TInCAP entry: aca670004)

Punctuation	<p>Punctuation is the use of signs such as full stop, comma or exclamation mark in order to mark the structure of constituents in written language (e.g. Bußmann 2008:807). In certain contexts, punctuation disambiguates structural ambiguities. An ambiguity might arise when punctuation is accidentally or purposely omitted.</p> <p><u>Example:</u> Let's Eat Grandma</p> <p>a) Someone is invited to eat a grandmother (Let's eat grandma). b) A grandmother is invited to eat something (Let's eat, grandma). (Stubbs 2016:1; TInCAP entry: eln690001)</p>
Referential ambiguity	<p>Referential ambiguity occurs whenever an expression can possibly refer to more than just one object/person. This is, for instance, the case when a speaker uses a pronoun in a context that allows for multiple possible antecedents (e.g. Kroeger 2018:24).</p> <p><u>Example:</u> Mario has jumped on the head of Toad. As a result, he could not destroy the box.</p> <p>a) Toad could not destroy the box. b) Mario could not destroy the box. (TInCAP entry: kim460004)</p>
Reperspectivization / reconceptualization	<p>With reperspectivization / reconceptualization the hearer interprets the extra-linguistic situation represented by the speaker according to their own perspective and thus reconceptualizes it, creating ambiguity (cf. Munderich and Schole 2019; Koch 2004:424). The below example shows an ambiguous reflexive construction in contemporary Spanish, which developed diachronically via a syntactic reanalysis of reflexive passive constructions. In the passive meaning, the apple is in focus, but the event can be reperspectivized with the eater of the apple in focus.</p> <p><u>Example:</u> Si mangia delle mele.</p> <p>a) "Apples are eaten" b) "(Some)one eats apples" (TInCAP entry: muc130010)</p>
Resolved ambiguity	<p>Resolved ambiguity refers to examples where an ambiguity is disambiguated. Winter-Froemel and Zirker (2015:313) distinguish between three basic types of disambiguation: time, context and metalinguistic strategies. There might be, however, also other disambiguating factors (e.g. punctuation, world knowledge, etc.). The counterpart of a resolved ambiguity is an unresolved ambiguity, i.e. one in which at least two readings are possible at the same time within a particular context.</p>

Example:

Köhler (1925) studied an ape called Sultan. He (the ape rather than Köhler!) was kept inside a cage, and could only reach a banana outside the cage by joining two sticks together.

a) The ape was kept inside a cage.

b) Köhler was kept inside a cage. (Eysenck 2006:361; TInCAP entry: kim460006)

Retrospective
ambiguity

Retrospective ambiguity occurs when an ambiguity is not perceived at first, but ambiguity perception is triggered retrospectively by something following the ambiguous element. This may or may not lead to reanalysis.

Example:

Once upon a time, a very long time ago now, about last Friday, Winnie-the-Pooh lived in a forest all by himself under the name of Sanders.

“What does ‘under the name’ mean?” asked Christopher Robin.

“It means he had the name over the door in gold letters and lived under it.”

a) was called or known by the name [phrasal]

b) his place of living was located under the name [compositional] (Milne 2005:4; TInCAP entry: waw190012)

Rhetorical question

A **rhetorical question** is interrogative in structure but has the force of a strong assertion. It generally does not expect an answer. (Quirk 1985:825)

Example:

What have the Romans ever done for us?

a) Tell me what the Romans have done for us.

b) The Romans have never done anything for us. (*The life of Brian. Monty Python* 1979; TInCAP entry: rom700011)

Scope ambiguity

In analogy to formal logic, where ‘scope’ denotes the range governed by operators (logical connective, quantifier), in linguistics ‘scope’ denotes the range of semantic reference of negation, linguistic quantifiers, and particles. The interpretation of scope frequently depends on the placement of sentence stress (intonation). **Scope ambiguity** often arises as a result of the interaction of two or more operators, typically quantifiers, numerals, negation, etc. (e.g. Bußmann 2008:629). The term is also used in other disciplines. Thus, in law studies, the scope of a clause is the range of its application, for example, a clause may apply only to the referenced document or all of its pre-conditions.

Example:

Two boys are holding three balloons.

- a) Two boys are each holding three balloons. There is a total of six balloons.
- b) Three balloons are each held by two boys. There is a total of six boys (Musolino 2009:7; TInCAP entry: aca670001)

Similarity

Similarity is an associative principle that relates the meanings of an ambiguous expression. It denotes a relationship of similarity between meanings. Together with contrast, it represents the basis for metaphorical extensions of lexical items (Blank 2013:42-43). (See also conceptual contrast and similarity.)

Example:

In the Sermon 2 of Maurice of Sulley he says: “Li encens senefie buene proiere”. He builds in his allegorical (tropological) exegesis on the similarity between

- a) incense and
- b) prayer

in the Jewish-Christian tradition (Robson et al. 1952:2,1-66; TInCAP entry: sim180001)

Structural ambiguity

Structural ambiguity occurs when more than one structure can possibly underlie a sentence or complex word. The different meanings arise depending on the respective deep structure chosen. When the object of enquiry is a sentence, we can speak of syntactic ambiguity (Wasow 2015:34)

Example:

I like ambiguity more than most people.

- a) I like ambiguity more than I like most people.
- b) I like ambiguity more than most people like it. (Bacskai-Atkari 2014:240; TInCAP entry: reb240003)

Syntactic ambiguity

Syntactic ambiguity is a type of structural ambiguity, which arises when it is possible to assign more than one syntactic structure to a sentence (Sennet 2016). This can take the shape of several subtypes such as coordination or attachment ambiguities. In coordination ambiguities, a modifier or a complement can associate with only one or both parts of a coordination. In attachment ambiguities, a modifier has several different possible attachment sites.

Example:

The murderer killed the student with the book.

- a) The murderer used the book as a weapon.
- b) The student was holding a book when the crime was committed. (TInCAP entry: brk530008)

- Temporary ambiguity **Temporary ambiguity** is a subtype of resolved ambiguity in which the disambiguation proceeds via time. **Temporary ambiguities** disappear during the processing of the utterance (Winter-Froemel and Zirker 2015:315).
- Example:
 BILD HÖRT AUF seine Leser
 a) Bild hört auf (The newspaper Bild stops)
 b) Bild hört auf seine Leser (The newspaper Bild listens to its readers) (Koch, Krefeld, and Oesterreicher 1997; Winter-Froemel and Zirker 2015)
- Underspecification **Underspecification** describes the fact that language in communication is usually not semantically complete and precise, but often incomplete. For the purposes of comprehension, this is often sufficient, but when that is not the case ambiguity may arise (cf. Sanford and Graesser 2006; Christianson et al. 2001; Ferreira, Bailey, and Ferraro 2002). In a literary text, a character may intentionally misinterpret the underspecified relation to create a comic effect.
- Example:
 Expressions of the type “dust + noun” do not specify whether the dust needs to be added or removed. Compare
 a) dust the furniture (Parish 1963:20-22; TInCAP entry: waw190046)
 b) dust the cake with powdered sugar
- Unresolved ambiguity **Unresolved ambiguity** refers to examples where an ambiguity is not disambiguated within the section of text considered. There is no indication in the immediate context (either preceding or following the ambiguity) that only one of the readings was intended. Thus, a resolution of the ambiguity is not possible. (W. Wagner 2020:86-87)
- Example: “Of course I have. Ever since I read about that ice-skater getting killed...” “Rushmore,” I muttered. “The late Eightysix”, Tim added.
 “Yeah,” I said. “They finally got his number.” Charlotte sat down and waved us both to a seat.
 a) understood his character, capabilities, or situation
 b) judged him ready to die
 c) knew his tricot number
 (Horowitz 2005:107; TInCAP entry: waw190049)

Vagueness

Vagueness and ambiguity both describe situations of interpretative uncertainty. Unlike ambiguity, which applies to cases when it is not clear which of the available meanings is intended, **vagueness** involves uncertainty about the meanings themselves (Kennedy 2011). Words like “expensive”, in the example below, might mean different things in different contexts, and give rise to borderline cases, where it’s not clear whether something is the case or is not (e.g. is expensive or not).

Example:

The coffee in Rome is expensive. (Kennedy 2011; TInCAP entry: wie210003)

Wordplay

With **wordplay**, a less expected form is chosen because of its similarity with a more expected form, usually exploiting an ambiguity in the language system. The arising contrast can be stronger or weaker, depending on a variety of factors such as semantic meaning, similarity and the concrete communicative setting (Delabastita 1996; Partington 2009; Winter-Froemel and Zirker 2015).

Example:

Mr. Gum’s bedroom was absolutely grimsters. The wardrobe contained so much mould and old cheese that there was hardly any room for his moth-eaten clothes, and the bed was never made. (I don’t mean that the duvet was never put back on the bed, I mean the bed had never even been MADE. Mr Gum hadn’t gone to the bother of assembling it. He had just chucked all the bits of wood on the floor and dumped a mattress on top.)

a) assemble the bed

b) put the duvet back on the bed (Stanton 2013; TInCAP entry: waw190036)

3.3.5 Communication Level

TInCAP distinguishes between different levels of communication. This is often productive for the analysis of ambiguities because it may reveal similarities between seemingly very different examples from various disciplines, e.g. as regards the strategic/non-strategic use of the same instance of ambiguity (Hartmann, Ebert, et al. 2023). There are three levels of communication: the innermost level, the mediating level, and the outermost level:

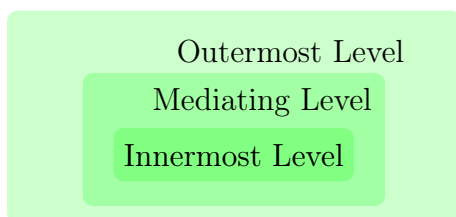


Figure 1: Levels of Communication

Outermost Level: The outermost level of communication in a quote applies to, on the one hand, figures such as the (implied) author of a text, the director of a movie or the presenter of a speech, and, on the other hand, to their respective readers, audiences, and recipients. It represents the default level in our model and is, therefore, chosen if there is only one level of communication in a given example (e.g. speaker-listener, author-reader) or if additional levels are not in focus.

Innermost Level: The innermost level of communication applies to the characters in a literary text or to quoted communication within dialogues, amongst other things. In the following example from BBC 4’s *Friday Night Comedy*, the level of the author(s) of the original advertisement and their recipients is annotated as the Innermost Level, while the comedian and his audience are assigned to the Outermost Level:

- (7) This is from the BBC news websites, and it’s sent in by Ben Lodge. It says: ‘Casting directors are searching Dorset for bearded men to appear as extras in a BBC adaptation of a Thomas Hardy novel. **Men who can shear sheep and women with long hair are also in demand for the production.**’” (*Friday Night Comedy, the News Quiz, Series 82, Episode 13* n.d.; TInCAP entry: haj040002⁴).

Mediating Level: This is the level of a possible mediating instance between the Innermost and the Outermost Level of communication in an example (e.g. a narrator in a literary text). This level only applies if an example has both an Innermost and an Outermost Level. TInCAP allows for a subspecification of the Mediating Level. Thus, in some examples, Embedded Mediating Levels are annotated.

Production and Perception: In most cases, the production and the respective perception of an ambiguity are situated on the same level(s) of communication. However, there are some examples where this is not the case (e.g. metalepses, in which one figure of speech is cited in another, meaning that the innermost level of the citation is related to the outermost level of the hearer). Thus, TInCAP distinguishes between production and reception.

⁴For a more detailed discussion of this example, see Hartmann, Ebert, et al. 2023

3.3.6 Dimension

For both dimensions, Production and Perception, annotators decide whether the ambiguity is S^+ [strategic], S^- [nonstrategic], or whether the question of strategy remains unsolved, i.e. 0 [unsolved].

The Dimension of Production relates to the first appearance of the ambiguous item in the text, even if the ambiguity is not immediately apparent or is only actualised in the Dimension of Perception; by its nature, the perception of ambiguity responds to a potential that already exists in the communicative act in focus.

The question for both Production and Perception is whether the ambiguous item is used strategically to reach a particular goal in communication:

S^+ [strategic]: The ambiguity of the item is used to reach a particular communicative goal.

S^- [nonstrategic]: The ambiguity of the item is not used to reach a particular communicative goal.

0 [unsolved]: The strategic character of the ambiguity is unclear or impossible to assess.

The setting 0 [unsolved] is useful in situations where, for example, we are not able to access the dimension of perception (as is the case when the communicative act is between a text and any possible reader of the text). In this case perception is marked as 0. It is also used for cases of immediate disambiguation, i.e. cases in which a potential ambiguity does not become functional in the communicative act, for example in cases of spoken language in which potential distinct interpretations are ruled out by a particular prosody. In such and similar cases, the item is annotated as production and perception 0. The respective disambiguation trigger is usually made explicit in the comment field.

3.3.7 Quantitative Classification: Triggering Level and Range

The Quantitative Classification determines the scale of the trigger of the ambiguity (Triggering Level) and the scale of the area influenced by this ambiguity (Range). The combination of both yields an instrument for comparing entries from different disciplines and of different medial types. Through categorization on the same level, we are able to compare, for instance, a figure within an image (media science) with a single phrase within a paragraph (linguistics, literary studies).

For every Annotation of an Entry, the Triggering Level as well as the Range of the ambiguity are annotated.

- (a) Triggering Level: On which level is the ambiguity triggered?
- (b) Range: On which level does the ambiguity have an effect? Up to which level does the ambiguity matter?

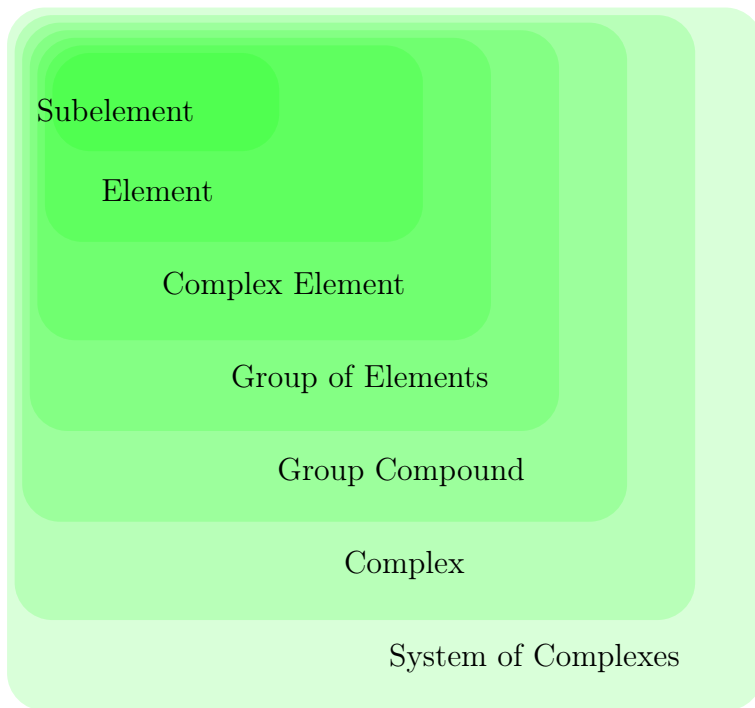


Figure 2: Levels for the quantitative classification

Figure 2 shows the possible levels for the quantitative classification. To facilitate the application of the categories to entries from every discipline, we gave them names that are as neutral as possible, not taking them from one of the participating disciplines. The structure of the levels mirrors the division of the human body (biological perspective), with the inner levels being part of and building up the outer levels. Each discipline can develop its correspondences. Here we give general definitions for the levels as well as correspondences for language studies and pictorial studies.

Category	Language Studies	Pictorial Studies
subelement dependent elements which differentiate between meanings or carry meaning themselves	phoneme, grapheme, morpheme	—
element independent elements which are clearly distinguishable from each other, carry meaning, and may consist of subelements	word	—

<p>complex element consisting of two or more elements, a complex element forms a structure which is not self-contained and therefore expandable; it may be composed ad hoc or be an established component</p>	<p>phraseme, phrase</p>	<p>single figure</p>
<p>group of elements composed of one or more elements and/or complex elements which may be structurally linked, it forms a self-contained unit of meaning</p>	<p>sentence</p>	<p>group of figures</p>
<p>group compound the part of a whole which carries a message, thematically essentially self-contained, and structurally and/or thematically separated from the whole it belongs to</p>	<p>section text/discourse/ speech</p>	<p>of picture (cotext)</p>
<p>complex a network of thematically, structurally and/or functionally linked sub-units (groups of elements, group compounds), separated and independent from other complexes, and complete in itself</p>	<p>text; discourse; speech</p>	<p>picture and circum- stances of reception (context)</p>
<p>system of complexes a theoretically indefinite number of thematically, structurally and/or functionally comparable complexes</p>	<p>thematically, struc- turally and/or functionally linked texts/discourses /speeches</p>	<p>multiple linked pic- tures</p>

Table 6: Definitions and applications of the levels for the quantitative classification.

3.3.8 Comment to Annotation

Here you can find additional information or notes about an annotation, for example an explanation in the case where an annotation is controversial.

3.3.9 Author of Annotation

In this field, you find an abbreviation for the author of the annotation.

3.3.10 Connected Annotations

Often, one entry allows for several analyses, depending, for example, on whether we focus on the producer or the percipient, whether we focus on different levels of communication, whether we focus on different elements of a complex ambiguity, etc. Thus, there may be several annotations for one ambiguity. These are connected via the fields Additional Ambiguity and Change of Communication Level.

3.3.10.1 Change of Communication Level

This type of connection is used if there are multiple annotations of one ambiguity due to a Change of the Communication Level, as in the following example discussed in W. Wagner (2020:125):

- (8) “One day he went to King Big-Twytt, who was eating a bathtub of roast chicken, custard and chips, and said: ‘King - I want a licence to catch ye dragons.’ ‘What?’ said King Twytt. ‘But ye dragons are dangerous! They eat ye farm animals.’ ‘So do we,’ said Sir Nobonk, ‘and no one says we’re dangerous.’ ‘Yea, very well,’ said King Twytt, ‘I will give you a licence, but be it on your own head.’ So Sir Nobonk strapped the licence to his head.”

(Milligan 1982; TInCAP entry: waw190004)

Annotation 1 (TInCAP entry: i1waw190004):

Communication Level: Innermost Level

Dimension: PS – /RS –

Annotation 2 (TInCAP entry: i1waw190004):

Communication Level: Outermost Level

Dimension: PS + /RS 0

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