

---

# Investigating Lexical and Syntactic Ambiguity on Native Facebook Celebritism

Nadirah<sup>1</sup>, La Baba<sup>2</sup>, Ibrahim Manda<sup>3</sup>, Juliana<sup>4</sup> Sam Hermansyah<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1-4</sup> English Education Department, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang, Indonesia

## ABSTRACT

The objectives of the research are to know why do many readers not understand about the meaning of the facebook post by native facebook celebritism and to find out the types of ambiguity and dominant type of lexical and syntactical ambiguity use in Facebook Post by native facebook celebritism. In this research, researcher applied descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative research, like other types of research, is descriptive, with data collected in the form of words or images rather than numbers. Choosing, reading, and underlining were the methods used to collect data. Identifying, classifying, analyzing, calculating, and interpreting the data were all used to analyze the data. Homonymy, polysemy, synonymy, and antonymy were among the linguistic ambiguities. Surface structure ambiguity and deep structure ambiguity were the two types of syntactical ambiguity. Nine of the ten Facebook posts had unclear meanings, whereas one had no confusing meanings. There were two sorts of ambiguity in certain Facebook posts: lexical and syntactical ambiguity. There were eight lexically ambiguous sentences and one syntactically ambiguous sentence, therefore lexical ambiguity was the most dominant.

**Keywords:** Investigating Lexical, Syntactic Ambiguity, Native Facebook Celebritism

## INTRODUCTION

In everyday life, language is a tool for communicating with others. Language is a symbol that is used in social interactions to communicate with others. People's language has meaning regardless of whether it is spoken or written. Language must convey a specific meaning in order for the intended to be understood. We must be able to comprehend or get information about what our interlocutor is saying when communicating. As a result, the message will not be misunderstood. The sound system of language is a symbol system. A symbol undoubtedly represents something, such as comprehension, a concept, an idea, or a thought.

When we don't state what we mean explicitly, the listeners or readers are left to interpret our meaning in a variety of ways. Written language is more to comprehend than spoken language. If the listeners don't understand what we're doing, they may ask us what we mean. On the other hand, if readers do not understand what we have written in a book, a novel, a magazine, an essay, or otherwise, they cannot explicitly ask us, which can lead to confusion. This common confusion is referred to as ambiguity.

People can find it difficult to understand words or written sentences so if they do not understand words or sentences in conversation, they may immediately ask the speaker again. However, if the words or sentences are written incorrectly, the reader can misinterpret them. The researcher must keep the headlines brief and use only lexical terms such as nouns, main verb, adjectives, and so on. Those kinds of factors will lead to people as ambiguity.

ISSN 2460-4739 (print)

\*Correspondence:

Nadirah

*Investigating*

*Lexical and Syntactic Ambiguity On*

*Native Facebook Celebritism.*

## 1.1 Lexical Ambiguity

Lexical ambiguity or commonly known as semantic ambiguity. According to Lyons (2006:56) lexical ambiguity is lexical beyond its ambiguity depending on the lexical difference of the two lexemes. As a result, lexical ambiguity occurs when the structure of the sentence, rather than the meanings of the words, causes the issue such as in "call me a cab," where it's unclear if the "cab" (name me a cab) part applies to the person or the vehicle (call a taxi for me).

### 1.1.1 Homonymy

Homonymy occur when two or more words have the same phonological shape and pronunciation, but have different meanings. Saeed (2009:63) states that homonym is an understanding that is not related to the same phonological meaning of the same phonology but the meaning of the word can be different and used in other context. In addition, Hurford and Heasley (2007: 130) homonyms are one of the ambiguous words which mean that they differ greatly from each other and are not clearly related to each other in any way supported by the intuition of native speakers. In addition, that homonym is a word that has the same spelling and the same pronunciation has different meanings. (Dharmayanti, Tika, and Sudana:2017). For example words knot and not. Additionally, examples for words that are total homophones but not homograph would be noun pairs *tale/tal*, *Story/story* or *queue/cue*. Partial homophones are numerous: *threw/through*, *write/right*, *there/their*, *whole/hole*, and *to/two/too*.

### 1.1.2 Polysemy

Polysemy describes a circumstance in which two words have the same spelling but have different meaning. According to Lyons (2006:58) "polysemy is single lexeme that has multiple meaning". In other words, polysemy lexeme has several related meanings. For example the word "head" seems have related meanings when we speak of the head of person, the head of person, the head of company, head of table or bad and etc. (Kreidler:2017, 52).

### 1.1.3 Synonymy

According to Hurford and Heasley (2007:106) Synonymy is the relationship between two predicates that have the same sense. In example, in most dialect in English, the word stubborn and obstinate are synonymy, the words mercury and quicksilver are synonymy, and the words brigand and bandit are synonymy. Additionally, synonymy a word is said to be synonymy for other words in the same language if one or more of its sense bears a similarity that is close enough to one or more senses in other words. It should be noted that a complete identify of meaning (absolute synonymy) is very rare if ever encountered. Words will be absolute synonyms if there is no context in which the substitution of one another has semantics effect. The problem of characterizing synonyms is one of determining the type and level of semantics differences allowed. (Cruse:2006,176).

### 1.1.4 Antonym (opposites)

According to Kreidler (2017:2) antonym is the different sentences in polarity like this are conflicting. If true the user must be wrong. Sentences that have the same subject and prediction which are antonyms are also conflicting. Moreover, Cruse (2006;15) antonym (also known as gradable boundaries) are various opposite of lexical. Most are gradable adjectives, although some, like love; hate, are stative verbs common examples are; long: short, fast; slow, strong; weak, and old: young. Antonyms shows degrees are variable properties such as length, weight, or temperature.

## 1.2 Syntactic Ambiguity

Syntactical ambiguity is also known as the grammatical and structural ambiguity. Structural ambiguity, occurs when the meaning of the component words can be combined in more than one way (O'Grady et al. 1997), one of example of syntactic ambiguity is the sentence "I list the books in library". People will have two interpretation on it : (1) "I list the books which are in library" and (2) "I, in library, list the books". Therefore, thit sentence is considered as

ambiguous.

Ovu (2016) syntactical ambiguity takes a place when no particular word is ambiguous rather “ambiguity is due to structural relation in the sentence”. Examples of syntactical ambiguity are: a) He killed the woman with knife, b) call me taxi and, c) visiting relatives can be boring.

Syntactic ambiguity generally results from poor word choice. If care is not used when selecting phrases that taken in a connotative rather than a denotative context may have more than one meaning, or if the sentences in which they're used are not properly constructed, the results can often be confusing for readers or listeners.

### 1.3 Native Facebook Celebritism

Native Facebook Celebritism are people who are directly involved on Facebook but they are native English speakers. Native English speakers is a person who is born into family whose native language is English and then he uses that English language to communicate on a daily life, including on Social media (Facebook). Usually, an native English speakers comes from a country whose native language is English (USA, UK, Australia, Canada, etc).

Native English speakers usually communicate indirectly on facebook by posting status telling about their daily life, provide information on a specific topic or things they like. But in the status they many sentences that contain ambiguous sentences including lexicam ambiguity and syntactic ambiguity. Therefore, the researcher want to research about it.

## METHODS

This research was a descriptive qualitative research that refers to the method to formulate the conclusion by collecting, classifying, and interpreting the data of the research. In descriptive research, the researcher arranged the research systematically, based on the fact of the data. The researcher only needed to describe the data based on the problem statements and found out the result of the problem statements. Activities in the analysis include data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions and verification. Qualitative approaches are intended to obtain more in-depth data, to develop theories, and to describe the reality and complexity of the phenomenon under research.

### 1. Data and Data Sources

The Source of data in research obtained from social media networking especially "Facebook". The user of Facebook are children, teenager, and adult. In this case the resesarcher focused to the native that used Facebook as the source of data. The subject of the study is ten Native facebook Celebritism. The object of this research is the native who used lexical ambiguity and syntactic ambiguity in their facebook status. The source of data in this research is the status or their post on Facebook.

### 2. Instrument of The Research

Two research instruments were used in this research. This first one was the researcher and the second one was note. The data analysis method used by researcher was descriptive qualitative method. According to Huberman & Miles (1994) there are three current activities have to be conducted as follows: Data Reduction, Data Display and Conclusion Drawing/Verification.

### 3. Procedure of Conducting Data

In conducting this research, the researchers do some steps. The first is Looking the data of native user in facebook; 2. Capture or photo the data which contain lexical ambiguity and syntactic ambiguity; 3. Determine the data included in the types of lexical ambiguity and syntactic ambiguity and then saving the data.

### 4. Technique of Analyzing Data

#### 4.1 Data reduction

The data obtained from the fields is quite huge, therefore, data analysis needs to be done through data reduction. Reducing the data means summarizing, choosing the main thing, focusing on the important things, finding the topic and the form. Thus, the data that has been reduced will

give clearer information, and make it easier for the researcher to collect next data. Reduction data can be done with several process, such as; selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming of the raw data.

#### 4.2 Data display

Next step, by displaying the data, the researcher was easy to understand and to analyze what was happening with the data presented. And the researcher began to do the next plan of the research based on what the researcher has experienced.

#### 4.3 Conclusion Drawing and Verification

The third step of analysis data is conclusion drawing and verification. Conclusion in qualitative research may be able to answer the formulation of the problem that has been formulated from the beginning, but maybe not. In this case, it depends on valid and consistent evidence that supports the next stage data collection as cited by Sugiyono (2015). It means the problems and formulation of the problem in qualitative research are still temporary and can develop after research in the field.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The entire number of ambiguities discovered by the researcher is listed below. Lexical ambiguity and syntactic ambiguity are two types of ambiguity. Because one of the ten celebrity Facebook posts used as research objects did not contain ambiguity words or sentences, nine were included in the case of ambiguity. There were two sorts of ambiguity in certain Facebook posts: lexical and syntactical ambiguity. The categories of ambiguity cases were used to describe them all.

### 1. Lexical Ambiguity

The types of lexical ambiguity which have been identified on facebook post are;

#### 1.1 Homonymy

Homonym was same phonological but the meaning of its word can be different and it used in other context. The example of homonym found on facebook post were:

##### a. Statement:

*“Breath of the air”*

Based on the picture and statement above, the underlined word was ambiguous because of the word air, the word air can be interpreted into two interpretations. Air means “oxygen”, and “a lilting tune or voice”. So, this sentence was included into homonym because it can interpreted become oxygen and a lilting tune or voice.

##### b. Statement :

*“Not mine but I would like it to be. Started loving cars again after taking a break from them. So now it’s time to build back my small collection. Any thoughts guys on what’s the newest coolest cars out right now.”*

Based on statement above, the word “right” implied homonymy. Additionally, right can means ”to emphasize that you are referring to the present moment (time), “correct”, “direction” and etc . It means that the word right is ambiguous because has different meaning based on the context.

#### 1.2 Polysemy

Polysemy belongs to lexical sense which is related to the same basic meaning of the word it occurred in the different context. In others word, the basic meaning of the word is the same in others sentences. The researcher found the data of polysemy as follows :

Statement :

*“Yeah, yeah. We **fight** to the finish. We’re in it, to win it!”*

Based on statement and picture above, The statement contains polysemy which showed by the word **fight**. The word **fight** as noun based on the Oxford dictionary means an angry argument or disagreement for something and ability to keep fighting for something. The second interpretation of the confusing word **fight** is the most appropriate from both perspectives. Because, given the circumstances, they continue to battle for victory. Thus, this meaning indicates conceptual meaning. Both meaning were different but related.

### 1.3. Synonymy

Synonym is different phonological and spelling word which have the same or very similar meanings but the word are related (Saeed 2009). The researcher found the data as below:

Statement:

*“ I didn’t grow up with a dog. I wasn’t aware of what this kind of love could look like or feel like. I didn’t understand how it would **change** me and **transform** my life.”*

Based on the statement and picture above, both of the underlined words were synonymy because between the words **change** and **transform** had the same meanings. Based on Oxford dictionary the word **change** means the process of replacing something with something new or different, and also we know that word **transform** means to change a thing into a different thing.

### 1.4. Antonym

According to Seed (2009) defines antonyms are words which opposite in meaning, it described on the following explanation.

Statement :

*“Business on **top**, party on the **bottom**.”*

Based on the statement and picture above, the antonym was created by the words **top** and **bottom** which has opposite meaning. Based on Oxford dictionary, **top** means a the highest part. But **bottom** means the lowest part. In other words, the meaning both are very contradictory.

Statement : “This past month has been a wild journey traveling around the world. I’m so grateful that I found a lifelong partner that I can go on new adventures and pursue new opportunities with. Not only do you allow me to be 100% me all the time, but you pick me **up** when i’m **down** and raise me up even higher when i’m up.”

Based on the statement and picture above, the antonym showed by the words **up** and **down** which has the opposite meaning as adverb. Based on Oxford dictionary, **up** means in higher position or level but **down** means a lower level. In other words, the meaning both are very contradictory or not accordance.

## 2. Syntactical Ambiguity

The types of syntactical ambiguity which have been investigated on facebook post by celebrities were:

### 2.1 Surface Structure Ambiguity

Surface structural ambiguity refers to the fact that words can be grouped together in a variety of ways. The following are the several forms of surface structure:

#### 2.1.1. A coordinate head with one modifier

A coordinate head is made up of two words that are linked together by the conjunction 'and.' Because there were certain additions that changed before or after it, it will be unclear. As a result, the researcher discovered ambiguous statements in a form of coordinate with one modifier. Only one confusing sentence in the headlines featured a coordinate head with one modifier, according to the study. As an example, A coordinate head with one modifier

For example: the only people left were old men and women.

This sentence is ambiguous because it has one modifier, it is ([old men] and [women], old [men and women]).

## 2.2 Deep structural ambiguity

Kreidler's (2017:170) states deep structure ambiguity is one of sequences of words may have more than one interpretations, generally because the rules of contradiction of the sentence and the deletion of what of is understood. In this research, the researcher only found one type of deep structural ambiguity.

a. Gerund + object or participle modifying s noun.

Statement: *"This past month has been a wild journey traveling around the world. I'm so grateful that I found a lifelong partner that I can go on new adventures and pursue new opportunities with. Not only do you allow me to be 100% me all the time, but you pick me up when i'm down and raise me up even higher when I'm up."*

Based on the picture above, the statement by Paris Hilton "This past month has been a wild journey traveling around the world" is ambiguous because has more than one interpretation, the are: ("traveling around" or traveling world).

The researcher discovered certain data that contained lexical and syntactic ambiguity on native facebook celebrityism based on the research findings. Lexical ambiguity included homonymy, polysemy, synonym and antonym, and then syntactic ambiguity included surface structure ambiguity and Deep structure Ambiguity.

In this field of research, from 10 facebook post by celebrities taken as research objects, there were 9 included into the case of ambiguity because 1 of them did not contain ambiguity words or sentences. In some facebook post there were two types of ambiguity both lexical and syntactical ambiguity. The researcher found 8 facebook post included into lexical ambiguity and 1 facebook post included syntactic ambiguity from 10 facebook post that taken as research. So, the dominant type of ambiguity was lexical ambiguity.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the research and the discussion. The researcher came at the following conclusion, the researcher found some data which contained lexical and syntactic ambiguity on native facebook celebrityism. lexical ambiguity included homonymy, polysemy, synonym and antonym, and then syntactic ambiguity included surface structure ambiguity and deep structure ambiguity.

## REFERENCES

- Britton, B. K. (1978). Lexical ambiguity of words used in english text. *Behavior Research Methods & Instrumentation*, 10 (1), 1–7.
- Bucaria, C. (2004). Lexical and syntactic ambiguity as a source of humor. 7–3, 279–309.  
<https://doi.org/10.1515/HUMR.2004.013>
- Chandra, A. (2019). Ambiguitas pada Judul Artikel Surat Kabar Tempo. *Skripsi*.
- Charina, I.N., Dharma, S., Rayner, Giora, Gorfein, Laurian, & L. (2018). LEXICAL AND SYNTACTIC AMBIGUITY IN HUMOR. *International Journal of Humanity Studies*, 1, 120–131.  
<https://doi.org/10.24071/ijhs.2017.010113>
- Dharmayanti, G, Ketut., and Gede. 2017. Lexical ambiguity in English Advertisement Slogans of Unilever Products. *Journal Humanis*, 19 (1).

- Dussias, P. E. (2003). Syntactic Ambiguity Resolution in L2 Learners. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 25(4), 529–557.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0272263103000238>
- Elmawati, D. (n.d.). Structural Ambiguity in the Headlines Compiled by Department of Languages , Cultures and Linguistics Bucknell University : A Study on the X-bar Theory. 1–8.
- Fayyadh, H. M., Zurif, E., Swinney, D., & Garrett, M. (2018). Syntactic Ambiguity in Newspaper Headlines. March 2011, 1–29.
- Fera, A. (2019). March , 2019 LEXICAL AMBIGUITY COMPARED TO SYNTACTIC / OR STRUCTURAL AMBIGUITY Ardian Fera. 30, 1113–1116.
- Finch, G. (2003). *Beginning Linguistics. How to Study Linguistics*, 1–11.
- Griffith, P. 2006. *An Introduction to English Semantics and Pragmatics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd.
- Journal, I., & Studies, H. (2017). *International Journal of Humanity Studies* <http://e-journal.usd.ac.id/index.php/IJHS> Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. 1(1), 120–131.
- Kagan, O. (2016). Structural ambiguity in Russian humor creation. *Russian Linguistics*, 40(1), 1–10.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11185-015-9159-0>
- Katz, J.J. 1971. *Semantic Theory*. New York : Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Kreidler, C W. 2017. *Introduction English Semantics*. London: Routledge.
- Littlejohn, Stephen W. 2002. *Theories of Human Communication*, 7th Edition, Wadsworth Thompson Learning.
- Lyons, J. 2006. *Linguistics Semantics An Introduction*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- MacDonald, M. (1993). The interaction of lexical and syntactic ambiguity. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 32, 692-715.
- Ni Putu V A. 2016. *The lexical Ambiguity in the Cosmetic Avertisements*. Thesis.Published.English Letters study Program. Sanata Dharma University: Yokyakarta.
- Nordquist, R. (2017). *Definition and Examples of Syntactic Ambiguity*. <https://www.thoughtco.com/syntactic-ambiguity-grammar-1692179>
- Oaks, D. D. (2015). *Structural Ambiguity in English Volume II. Structural Ambiguity in English : An Applied Grammatical Inventory*.
- Ovu, B F. 2011. *Lexical Sources of Ambiguity in English and Daily Communication*. Olouha Journal of Languges, 1(1).
- Prasetyawan, T. O., Myartawan, I., & Suprianti, G. A. P. (2018). An Analysis of ambiguity in Online Recipes. *Undiksa*, 5(2), 1–12.
- Riscahyanti, Meltysari. 2014. *Ambiguity Found 4 English Textbook*. Article Publication. 1 (2).
- Saeed, J I. 2009. *Semantics*. United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing.
- Simatupang, M. S. (n.d.). *Types of Structural Ambiguity*. 99–104.
- Simatupang, M.S. (2007). How Ambiguous Is The Structural Ambiguity. *Lingua Cultura*, 1, 99-104. doi:10.21512/LC.V1I2.315
- Small, S L,Cottrel and Tanenhouse. 1988. *Lexical Ambiguity Resulation*. Morgan Kaufman

Publisher: California

Sugiyono. 2009. *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan*. Bandung: Alfabeta.

Sumarsono. 2009. *Sosiolinguistik*. Yogyakarta. Pustaka Pelajar.

Vasiloaia, M. (2020). Semantic Ambiguity in Advertising Language. 23(2), 95–99.

Vol, V. J. (2015). LEXICAL AMBIGUITY IN THE HEADLINES OF THE JAKARTA POST. 4(1).

Wakhidah, Nurjannah W. 2008. A study of Ambiguity in Student's English workbook of Vocational High School. *A journal of Language*. 1 (2).

Yastanti, U., & Setiawati, A. D. (2018). Ambiguity in Soundtrack Songs Lyric of Moana Movie. *Wanastra: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 10(2), 1–12.

Yudith Aprila Krisinda Kristian. (2018). Lexical and Structural Ambiguity Found in the Jakarta Post Articles on the E-Id Graft Case Lexical and Structural Ambiguity Found in the Jakarta Post Articles on the E-Id Graft Case.