

DE GRUYTER

*Wiltrud Wagner*

# IDIOMS AND AMBIGUITY IN CONTEXT

PHRASAL AND COMPOSITIONAL READINGS  
OF IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

THE DYNAMICS OF WORDPLAY

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Wiltrud Wagner  
**Idioms and Ambiguity in Context**

# The Dynamics of Wordplay



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## Volume 9

Wiltrud Wagner  
**Idioms and  
Ambiguity in Context**



Phrasal and Compositional Readings of  
Idiomatic Expressions

**DE GRUYTER**



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Ewald Lang  
1942 – 2013

Thank you for starting me on this path.



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# List of Abbreviations

BNC	The British National Corpus, version 3 (BNC XML Edition) (2007)
COCA	Corpus of Contemporary American English (Davies 2008–)
GloWbE	Corpus of Global Web-Based English (Davies 2013)
H	Hearer (including both readers and recipients of spoken texts)
OED	Oxford English Dictionary Online 2017
P4–P10	Parameters for analyzing ambiguity in discourse (see chapter 3.3.3, p. 69–74)
P4	Perceived vs. non-perceived ambiguity
P5	Strategic vs. non-strategic ambiguity
P6	Non-resolved vs. resolved ambiguity
P7	Disambiguation by time vs. no disambiguation by time
P8	Disambiguation by context vs. no disambiguation by context
P9	Disambiguation by metalinguistic strategies vs. no Disambiguation by metalinguistic strategies
P10	One-level ambiguity vs. multi-level ambiguity
Par	Paraphrase
P	Production ( <i>German</i> : Produktion)
R	Perception ( <i>German</i> : Rezeption)
S	Speaker (comprising both speakers and writers/authors)
TInCAP	Tübingen Interdisciplinary Corpus of Ambiguity Phenomena, Version 1.0
TInCAP-IDs	IDs referring to entries within TInCAP: Entry IDs consist of the login name of the user and six numerals (e.g. waw190001); Annotation IDs consist of a prefix according to annotation number (i1, i2, etc.) added to the ID of the corresponding entry (e.g. i1waw190001). All examples are taken from TInCAP 1.0.

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# Introduction

Idioms are part of our everyday language use. They allow us to express complex thoughts in only a few simple words because we can rely on our communication partners' knowledge of their figurative meaning. We also encounter them frequently in various forms of aesthetic contexts, for instance in newspaper headlines as in (1) and (2), in titles of films or series as in (3) and (4), or within literary texts as in (5), (6) and (7).

- (1) Making millions **in the blink of an eye**  
(BBC News, 28.04.2014)<sup>1</sup>
- (2) Let's **bring** bad owners **to heel**  
(The Times, 16.03.2017)<sup>2</sup>
- (3) **Inside Out**  
(Pixar, 2015)<sup>3</sup>
- (4) **Pushing Daisies**  
(ABC, 2007–2009)<sup>4</sup>
- (5) “There, there, my dear. Of course it's not true. Fellow's a madman. A madman! **Got a bee in his bonnet! Got hold of the wrong end of the stick** all round.”  
(Christie 2011, 66)
- (6) Old Marley was as **dead as a door-nail**.  
(Dickens 2008, 9)
- (7) An if you **break the ice** and do this feat –/  
Achieve the elder, set the younger free  
(Shakespeare 2010, 1.2.266–267)

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-27183047> on 16.03.2017.

<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/comment/let-s-bring-bad-owners-to-heel-with-dog-licences-fcm6nbnbh> on 16.03.2017.

<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2096673/> on 16.03.2017.

<sup>4</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0925266/> on 16.03.2017.



In these kinds of contexts, idioms are used for aesthetic reasons<sup>5</sup> or to convey subtle meanings in few words. In this respect, there is little difference to the kind of use found in everyday language (except, perhaps, in a higher frequency of idioms). However, in aesthetic contexts, we are also often confronted with a different kind of idiom use, as in the following example taken from the first chapter of *Winnie-the-Pooh*:

- (8) 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.”  
 [...])

(Milne 1926, 3f; waw190012)<sup>6</sup>

Milne uses the well-known idiom “live under the name of” and turns it onto its head by re-literalizing the figurative or phrasal meaning through the explanation providing the compositional meaning. Thus, he makes his readers aware of the flexibility of language and of the potential ambiguity of the idiomatic expression in certain contexts. Milne is no exception; many authors of children’s classics are noted for their wordplay: L. Frank Baum, Enid Blyton, Lewis Carroll, Roald Dahl, Spike Milligan, Maurice Sendak, Dr. Seuss ... The list is endlessly extendable. These authors go far beyond simple wordplay. The playful way in which they use language leads to linguistic reflection. Ambiguous idioms are especially productive for this kind of language use, as their phrasal meaning often is (or at least seems to be) absolutely arbitrary. Playing with the ambiguity of idioms thus encourages readers to reflect on phrasal and compositional meanings, on their relationship, and on the question how these meanings come about. Furthermore, idioms often describe actions in their phrasal as well as their compositional meaning. This allows for an illustration of the ambiguity in both words and images, as becomes evident from the page layout of the *Winnie-the-Pooh* example depicted in Figure 1 below. While this is possible for some other ambiguities (e.g. homonyms like “bank”), the more complex semantics of

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<sup>5</sup> Also sometimes for characterization, e.g. if a character tends to use a lot of idioms as do, for instance, P. G. Wodehouse’s *Bertie Wooster* and Alan Bradley’s *Flavia de Luce*.

<sup>6</sup> The ID corresponds to an entry within the Tübingen Interdisciplinary Corpus of Ambiguity Phenomena (TInCAP). I will give the respective ID for each of my examples that is annotated within TInCAP. Using this ID, the entry may be retrieved at <https://tincap.uni-tuebingen.de/>. For more details on TInCAP, please see chapter 5.

idioms provides a challenge for both author and readers, and, hence, enriches language play and reflection.

## WINNIE-THE-POOH

"He's Winnie-ther-Pooh. Don't you know what *'ther'* means?"

"Ah, yes, now I do," I said quickly; and I hope you do too, because it is all the explanation you are going to get.

Sometimes Winnie-the-Pooh likes a game of some sort when he comes downstairs, and sometimes he likes to sit quietly in front of the fire and listen to a story. This evening —

"What about a story?" said Christopher Robin.

"*What* about a story?" I said.

"Could you very sweetly tell Winnie-the-Pooh one?"

"I suppose I could," I said. "What sort of stories does he like?"

"About himself. Because he's *that* sort of Bear."

"Oh, I see."

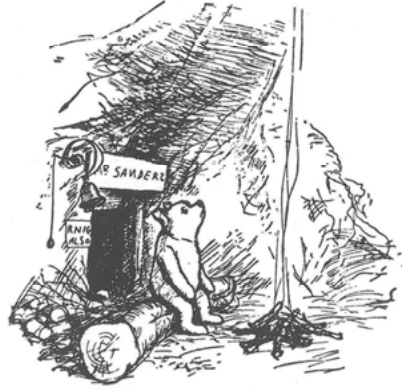
"So could you very sweetly?"

"I'll try," I said.

So I tried.

2

## WE ARE INTRODUCED



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*

3

Fig. 1: Page layout of (8), "under the name" (Winnie-the-Pooh; Milne 1926, 3)

That authors writing for children are particularly prone to playing with the double meanings of idioms is not surprising. The meanings of idioms cannot be derived from the meaning of the individual words and, thus, have to be learned. If they are not yet acquired they are either not understood in their figurative or phrasal meaning or this meaning has to be derived from the context. Therefore, it is to be expected that, if they appear in children's literature, their ambiguity is employed (if not even exploited) in a productive way: making children aware of this property, explaining the possible meanings, simply "having fun" or enjoying the joke. Thus, children's literature is a perfect recruiting ground for examples of this kind of language use.

In linguistic research on idioms, their potential ambiguity has mainly been noted as a challenge for language acquisition and language processing: Do

hearers<sup>7</sup> perceive the ambiguity? And if yes, how do they resolve it? Which meaning is processed first? Then again, in literary studies, idioms are often analyzed on their own, for example in reference to a character and his characterization. A linguistic analysis, which may provide additional insight, is mostly lacking. The productive potential of the ambiguity of idioms for aesthetic language use has never been a focus. The utilization of a different kind of corpus as well as a different kind of method and approach to the analysis of idioms is an important step in this direction.

The example taken from the children’s classic *Winnie the Pooh* can be taken as a starting point to outline the three main fields this dissertation is concerned with: Firstly, there is the linguistic phenomenon, the **idiom** “under the name”. Secondly, there is the property of **ambiguity**: The phrase “under the name of” has the two possible readings “he is called or known by the name of” (phrasal; OED<sup>8</sup>: “name, n.”, P3) or “his place of living is located under the name of” (compositional). Thirdly, there is the **context**<sup>9</sup>, which in this example leads to the perception of the ambiguity. My research interests emerge at the intersection of these three aspects, focusing on the following hypotheses:

1. Over the course of a long history of linguistic research into idiomatic language the specific attributes of idioms have been discussed and various types of idioms have been identified. While the ambiguity of idioms has often been noted, it is clear that this feature cannot be part of a general definition of idioms. Not all idioms have the potential to be ambiguous, only some have a meaningful compositional meaning in addition to the phrasal one. An analysis of the relationship of phrasal and compositional meanings of idioms has up to now been pending and is a necessary contribution to the study of idioms as well as ambiguity research.
2. The ambiguity of idioms is promoted or concealed, depending on the context. If we are interested in the processing of ambiguous idioms, we have to focus on these contexts and a context-based linguistic approach is necessary for the analysis and classification of idiom as well as ambiguity use.

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<sup>7</sup> As in Winter-Froemel & Zirker, “[t]he term speaker in the following comprises both speaker and writer/author, and hearer includes both the reader of a written text as well as recipients of spoken texts” (2015, 286). In the interest of readability, I will furthermore use generic masculine forms to refer to both males and females.

<sup>8</sup> OED refers to the Oxford English Dictionary Online (2017).

<sup>9</sup> Context and my definition thereof will be discussed in chapter 3.

3. There are texts that use the ambiguity of idioms as a literary productive force. By focusing on one specific genre, namely children's literature, and analyzing the use of idioms within these texts, patterns of ambiguity use emerge, allowing for the development of a classification of ambiguity use that is transferable to other types of context as well as other types of ambiguity.

My work on ambiguity is part of the interdisciplinary *Research Training Group (RTG) 1808: Ambiguity – Production and Perception*.<sup>10</sup> Ambiguity opens up a wide interdisciplinary field not only relevant for linguistics and literary studies, but also for every field that deals with any form of communication (Klein & Winkler 2010; Winkler 2015a). Thus, researchers from Linguistics, Literary Criticism, Rhetoric, Law & Legal Studies, Theology, Psychology, Media Studies, and Philosophy/Ethics collaborate within RTG 1808 to gain new insights into the production and perception of ambiguity: When is ambiguity produced, when is it perceived? Are production and perception strategic or not? Does ambiguity cause communication to fail, does communication succeed in spite of ambiguity, or does ambiguity add additional dimensions to an act of communication? Which part does speaker-hearer interaction play in the production and perception of ambiguity?

The interdisciplinary approach to a common object of research is a central aspect of RTG 1808, which is striving to overcome discipline boundaries. This dissertation at the interface of linguistics and literary studies is visible evidence that interdisciplinary research is not only possible but even profitable for the disciplines concerned: it provides a new corpus for the research on idioms within the field of linguistics and suggests new methods and approaches for the analysis of idioms to the study of literary texts. It hence takes its starting point from a linguistic phenomenon but links this to a textual basis firmly anchored in literary studies. The corpus developed in the framework of this dissertation relies on literary texts written for children that offer particular contexts for the study of idioms; the methodology of analysis is, in turn, intricately linked to the RTG and the *Tübingen Interdisciplinary Corpus of Ambiguity Phenomena (TInCAP)*, the corpus developed by the RTG which collects examples of ambiguity from all its disciplines. TInCAP is therefore crucial to my work, as will become evident below.

The following study of *Idioms and Ambiguity in Context* is structured into three parts. While idioms have been an established field of research within lin-

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<sup>10</sup> [www.ambiguitaet.uni-tuebingen.de](http://www.ambiguitaet.uni-tuebingen.de). Last accessed on 31.08.2020.

guistics since the 1960s (e.g. Katz & Postal 1963; Weinreich 1969) and specifically within psycholinguistics from the 1970s onwards (e.g. Bobrow & Bell 1973; Ortony et al. 1978), looking at studies of ambiguous idioms in more detail reveals one issue: Within experimental designs, rich, natural contexts are hard to construct; ambiguous language, however, needs context in order to be resolvable. At this point the research fields of idioms, ambiguity and context overlap, and this is where this dissertation takes its starting point.

The *state of the art* (part I) is therefore more than just an overview of research in the fields of idioms, ambiguity and context. I focus on those aspects relevant to my research questions, which means that I will be immediately showing their relevance to my project as well as those points where existing research will be complemented by the increased complexity of the specific corpus that is to be analyzed. The aim is to identify clearly the desideratum and to show where my research picks up and carries on. I will start with an overview of research on idioms, focusing on criteria given for idiomaticity, with the goal of deriving a definition that captures the varied nature of idioms (chapter 1). From there, I will go on to discuss the term ambiguity, how it applies to idioms, and how ambiguity is dealt with in the processing of ambiguous idioms (chapter 2). Lastly, I will discuss the influence of context on the perception and resolution of ambiguity (chapter 3).

Parts II and III will focus on my own research. They are structured along the lines of theoretical considerations and approaches to idioms and ambiguity in context (part II) and their practical application (part III). In part II, I will develop a theory of how the ambiguity potential of idioms may be employed in larger contexts (chapter 4) and introduce the tool I used and refined further in my research (chapter 5). This tool is the above-mentioned *Tübingen Interdisciplinary Corpus of Ambiguity Phenomena* (TInCAP) that collects ambiguity examples from all participating disciplines.<sup>11</sup> The development of TInCAP within RTG 1808 pursued two main goals: On the one hand, the annotation within an interdisciplinary framework guarantees comparability across disciplines and facilitates communication between them. On the other hand, the corpus guarantees sustainability and availability of research data for researchers working in the field

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<sup>11</sup> I am using version 1.0 of TInCAP. TInCAP has been developed by Jutta Hartmann, Lisa Ebert, Gesa Schole, Raphael Titt, Wiltrud Wagner and Susanne Winkler, in collaboration with the entire RTG. Currently a team under Dr. Asya Achimova and Prof. Dr. Martin V. Butz is expanding TInCAP. For more information, please see <https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/research/core-research/research-training-groups/rtg-1808-ambiguity-production-and-perception/database-tincap/>.

of ambiguity. Moreover, the corpus offers enough flexibility to be adapted for specific research questions. Thus, I have been able to collect and annotate my data within TInCAP, complementing the interdisciplinary framework with additional annotations (see chapter 6).

In part III, the theory is applied to complex examples, exploring how ambiguity is produced, if, how, and when it is perceived on the different levels of communication, and how the individual context features interact to achieve the observed effects. The corpus of examples is taken from children's literature, on account of its specific structural attributes. The language learner's perspective, which would certainly yield interesting results as well, is not the focus of my study.<sup>12</sup> The advantages of the interdisciplinary approach using TInCAP will be highlighted. I will show the benefits of the structures the annotation scheme provides, which allow for the visualization of patterns that might otherwise go unnoticed. Furthermore, the analyses will provide insight into how contexts need to be constructed in order to expose or suppress ambiguity. Thus, these analyses will reveal how fruitful the interdisciplinary work at the interface of linguistics and literary studies may be.

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**12** For details on the source material and the selection of examples, please see chapter 8.



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## **Part I: Idioms, Ambiguity, and the Role of Context: State of the Art**





Idioms are an aspect of language that we all encounter every day. We use and perceive idioms without ever thinking about the very fact that we do. Often, we are not aware that many of these phrases have the potential to be ambiguous, because the context in which they appear allows us to resolve the ambiguity so easily that the potential second meaning does not rise to the surface. Sometimes, however, this resolution fails, and we are made aware of the ambiguous nature of idioms. Ambiguity resolution as well as ambiguity perception is thus apparently dependent on context.

As idioms have long been studied by linguists from different fields, there is a rich history of research. I will give an overview of this history in chapter 1, focusing on the main criteria often given for idiomaticity, and attempt to develop and derive a definition that captures the varied nature of idioms. From there, I will go on in chapter 2 to discuss the term ambiguity and, because not all idioms are ambiguous, define the features of those that are. These ambiguous idioms have been of interest to linguists studying the processing of language. If we encounter an ambiguous item in the course of processing, we are faced with the challenge of finding the correct reading for this occurrence. How do we do that? One – and probably the most important – help in ambiguity resolution is context. Therefore, I will go on in chapter 3 to discuss the influence of context on ambiguity perception and ambiguity resolution.

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# 1 Idioms: Deriving a Working Definition

*Kick the bucket, draw the strings, be it on your own head* – it is easy to give examples of idioms. But what is an idiom? Giving a definition is far from easy. Linguists have long been interested in this challenge, and there is a rich field of linguistic research on idioms. Yet there is no agreement on a general definition of the term *idiom*. This is partly due to the fact that linguists who study idioms are interested in different aspects and approach the phenomenon from their very individual perspectives: syntacticians are interested in how idioms may thwart regular syntax; semanticists wonder about the (non-)compositionality of idioms; pragmaticians study how idioms interact with their immediate context; and those interested in (first or second) language acquisition are concerned with the challenges learners face when confronted with idioms. Consequently, there is no standard reference book on idioms, and the definitions vary in accordance with the perspective (or the combination of perspectives) taken. Furthermore, the term *idiom* is not limited to scientific research: The term is used in everyday language, which leads researchers to erroneously assume that everyone agrees on what an idiom is. This is often reflected in the fact that no definition is given at all or that the definitions given are more or less implicit.<sup>13</sup>

In this chapter, I will therefore consider some of the most influential (implicit and explicit) definitions and try to carefully narrow down the field. The criteria for idiomaticity named most often in linguistic definitions are non-compositionality, conventionalization, figuration, and fixedness (cf. e.g. Nunberg et al. 1994, 492f). I will discuss these four criteria in the following, with my preliminary definition in (9) as a starting point:

## (9) *Preliminary Definition*

An idiom or idiomatic expression is a specific type of multiword expression. It is non-compositional, is conventionalized, involves figuration, and is fixed.

A set of multiword expressions from Jackendoff's *Wheel of Fortune* corpus (1997) will be used as a basis for the following discussion of the different aspects of idiomaticity. My aim is to develop a working definition of the term *idiom* in

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<sup>13</sup> For a similar assessment see Nunberg et al. (1994) and Burger et al. (2007).

relation to my research questions, i.e. one that will allow me to discuss the ambiguity of idioms and the role context plays in both their ambiguity and disambiguation.

## 1.1 The *Wheel of Fortune* Corpus (Jackendoff 1997)

The term *idiom* or *idiomatic expression* can cover a wide range of multiword expressions, i.e. expressions consisting of more than one word that are part of the lexicon of a language (Maher 2013, 8). However, not all multiword expressions are idioms. Among others, the term multiword expression includes compounds, clichés and quotations. The challenge faced by research on idiomatic expressions is to recognize and name those characteristics of idiomatic expressions that mark them as something different from all the other multiword expressions.

With this goal in mind, Ray Jackendoff created the *Wheel of Fortune* corpus, based on solutions of the popular U.S. television show of the same name (Jackendoff 1997, 154).<sup>14</sup> All these solutions are various kinds of multiword expressions, which Jackendoff classifies in his corpus as compounds, idioms, names (of people, places, brands and organizations), clichés, titles (of songs, books, movies, and television shows), quotations, pairs, and foreign phrases.<sup>15</sup> The original idea for creating the corpus was triggered by Jackendoff's realization that, in order for the show to work, all the solutions must be familiar to American speakers of English, i.e. they must be part of their individual lexicon. This means that the common denominator of all the expressions in the *Wheel of Fortune* corpus is the fact that they are fixed expressions (Jackendoff 1997, 155).

While my interest lies in the boundaries between different types of fixed expressions, as it seems that idioms are more likely to be viewed as ambiguous than other forms of fixed expressions (see also chapter 2.3), Jackendoff was

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<sup>14</sup> The game show *Wheel of Fortune* is based on the children's game *Hangman*. In *Hangman*, the goal of the game is to guess a word. The only hint the guesser gets is a row of dashes, with each dash representing one letter of the word. By guessing single letters, the guesser has to find the solution, with a penalty for every letter that is not part of the word. The rules for *Wheel of Fortune* are similar, with the difference that the solutions are not words but well-known multiword expressions. In addition to the number of letters, word boundaries and a category (e.g. title, place, phrase, event, quotation) are given as hints. More information on the show may be found on <http://www.wheeloffortune.com>.

<sup>15</sup> A full listing of the corpus is given in Jackendoff (1997, 209–215).

interested in the “boundary between the theory of words and that of fixed expressions” (Jackendoff 1997, 157) when compiling and analyzing his corpus.

For the categories of names, titles and foreign phrases, it seems easy to decide whether a particular solution belongs to them or not. In contrast, the distinction between the categories of compounds, idioms, clichés, and quotations is not as evident. Jackendoff acknowledges that “[t]he classifications given [...] are only heuristic and are not intended to be of any particular theoretical significance” (Jackendoff 1997, 209). Therefore, I will discuss some of his examples for these categories, given in (10)–(17), analyzing their similarities and dissimilarities, with the aim of identifying those characteristics that clearly distinguish idioms from other multiword expressions.

#### *compounds*

- (10) black and white film
- (11) frequent flyer program

#### *idioms*

- (12) the last straw
- (13) eat humble pie

#### *clichés*

- (14) good things come in small packages
- (15) love conquers all

#### *quotations*

- (16) may the Force be with you
- (17) now I lay me down to sleep

All of these phrases are similar in three aspects: they are multiword expressions, they are fixed, and they are conventionalized. They vary in their involvement of figuration and their compositionality.

## 1.2 Fixedness

*Fixedness* has often been given as an important criterion for idiomaticity (Katz 1973). The same concept has been called *inflexibility* (Nunberg et al. 1994) or *frozenness* (Fraser 1970; Swinney & Cutler 1979; Gibbs & Gonzales 1985; Gibbs &

Nayak 1989; Gibbs et al. 1989b). It refers to the fact that modifications in the form of structural reordering or lexical replacement are not easily possible.

To illustrate this point, let us consider the examples in (18) and (19), structurally reordered versions of (10) and (16), and the examples in (20) and (21), versions of (13) and (15) with lexical replacements:

- (18) white and black film
- (19) the Force may be with you
- (20) eat humble cake
- (21) love overthrows all

The expressions in (18)–(21) all are more marked than their counterparts above. The markedness is not due to syntactical or lexical restrictions. Syntactically and lexically, both versions of each phrase are possible, and a competent speaker of English is able to compose a meaning for each. The markedness is partly an effect of *frequency*; in other words: The phrases in (18)–(21) are more marked because we come across them less often than we do with the phrases in (10), (13), (15) and (16). This comparative frequency is effectively illustrated by a quick search on Google:

- (10) has roughly 42 times as many hits as (18)
- (16) has roughly 23 times as many hits as (19)
- (13) has roughly 870 times as many hits as (20)
- (15) has roughly 1810 times as many hits as (21)<sup>16</sup>

However, there are differences in the fixedness of compounds, idioms, clichés and quotations. Modifications of compounds (as in (18)) are mostly perceived as marked due to the effect of frequency. The intended reading is rarely lost. Quotations are fixed by definition: quoting involves exact reproduction.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, modifications of quotations are always marked for those who recognize

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**16** On April 11 2016, a search on “black and white film” yielded about 1 810 000 results, a search on “white and black film” only about 42 800. A search on “may the force be with you” yielded about 395 000 results, a search on “the force may be with you” only about 17 200. A search on “eat humble pie” yielded about 153 000 results, on “eat humble cake” only 176. Searching “love conquers all” yielded about 536 000 results, “love overthrows all” only 296.

**17** cf. OED “quotation, n.”, 5a; “quote, v.”, 2a.

the nature of the quotation. I will illustrate this with (16) and (19), here repeated as (22) and (23):

(22) may the Force be with you

(23) the Force may be with you

“May the Force be with you” is one of the best-known quotations from the *Star Wars* movies. It was first used in “Star Wars” (1977) and appeared in each subsequent movie of the series. Mostly it is used when two people or groups part ways and wish the other one luck, to express the hope that “the Force” will work in their favour. The reference to this situation is part of the quotation’s meaning which thus goes far beyond the compositional meaning of the phrase. Modifying a quotation may lead to a loss of the reference and, hence, of much of the quotation’s meaning. The modification in (23) does not go so far as to make it impossible to recognize the original quotation. However, while those who know the quotation well will still recognize it as such, they will also say that it is marked.

Idioms and clichés are similar in their fixedness. The phrase “eat humble pie” is used to express being very submissive or apologizing humbly (OED: “humble pie, n.”, 2a). Similarly, the phrase “don’t cry over spilt milk” is mostly used to tell someone not to worry or grieve about a mistake or loss which cannot be amended (OED “spilt, adj.”, 2b). The modification of the lexical form, as repeated in (24) and (25), in both cases leads to a loss of this figurative meaning; only the literal meaning can be deduced from these phrases:<sup>18</sup>

(24) eat humble cake

(25) don’t cry over spilt juice

However, while this might be true for the prototypical idiom, some idioms are syntactically or lexically productive, i.e. they retain their idiomatic meaning even if modified syntactically or lexically. The idiom “lay down the law” is used to express “giving strict orders”. Gibbs & Nayak (1989) show that this meaning

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<sup>18</sup> This might be prevented by a specific context. For example, in a (literary) world where witches and wizards are real, as in *Harry Potter*, the following variation on the idiom “to cry over spilt milk” (OED: “spilt, adj.”, 2b) is effortlessly understood in its phrasal meaning: “I’ll take you to the door”, said Mrs Figg, as they turned into Privet Drive. “Just in case there are more of them around ... oh my word, what a catastrophe ... and you had to fight them off yourself ... and Dumbledore said we were to keep you from doing magic at all costs ... well, it’s no good **crying over spilt potion**, I suppose [...]” (Rowling 2003, Ch. 2).

is retained even if the phrase is syntactically modified as in (26), e.g. by adverb insertion (b), adjective insertion (c), passivization (d), or nominalization (e):

- (26) lay down the law
- a. John laid down the law.
  - b. John will quickly lay down the law.
  - c. John laid down the school law.
  - d. The law was laid down by John.
  - e. John's laying down of the law.

Gibbs et al. (1989a) shows that lexical modification is also possible. As seen in (27), the idiomatic meaning “start a conversation” may be retained in b and c.

- (27) break the ice
- a. John broke the ice.
  - b. John burst the ice.
  - c. John cracked the ice.

The observation that idioms are less fixed than originally assumed has led to varying ideas about the classification of idioms. I will briefly present two very influential proposals: Fraser's *frozenness hierarchy*, and Gibbs and Nayak's *Idiom Decomposition Hypothesis*.

Fraser's *frozenness hierarchy* classifies idioms according to the distortions they permit while still retaining their idiomatic meaning. The levels Fraser proposes for this hierarchy are:

- (28) *frozenness hierarchy* (Fraser 1970, 39)
- L6 – Unrestricted
  - L5 – Reconstitution
  - L4 – Extraction
  - L3 – Permutation
  - L2 – Insertion
  - L1 – Adjunction
  - LØ – Completely Frozen

The most frozen idioms, LØ, allow no syntactic transformations at all, while those characterized by L6 allow any transformation. Fraser emphasizes that “any idiom marked as belonging to one level is automatically marked as belong-



ing to any lower level” (Fraser 1970, 39). Thus, any idiom characterized as L5 as “lay down the law” in (29) should not only allow reconstitution (a) but also extraction (b), permutation (c), insertion (d), and adjunction (e).

(29) lay down the law

- a. John’s laying down of the law to his daughter.
- b. The law was laid down by John.
- c. John laid the law down.
- d. John laid down the school law.
- e. John’s laying down the law.

In their experiments, Swinney & Cutler find no effect of Fraser’s frozenness hierarchy on idiom processing, i.e. frozen idioms are not processed faster or slower than those allowing all transformations (Swinney & Cutler 1979, 532). However, Gibbs & Gonzales (1985) note that “[f]rozen idioms appear to be more lexicalized than flexible ones and consequently can be accessed faster from the mental lexicon” (Gibbs & Gonzales 1985, 256). I will come back to this assessment in chapter 2.4.

Gibbs & Nayak (1989) developed their *Idiom Decomposition Hypothesis* to answer the question *why* some idioms are less fixed or frozen than others. They state that “idioms are partially analyzable and speakers’ assumptions about how the meaning of the parts contribute to the figurative meanings of the whole determines the syntactic behavior of idioms” (Gibbs & Nayak 1989, 104). They classify idioms in three groups: normally decomposable, abnormally decomposable, and nondecomposable. This classification is based on the mapping of the components of the idiom to its idiomatic referent. For *normally decomposable* idioms, this mapping is quite transparent or conventional. *Abnormally decomposable* idioms share a less conventional, perhaps metaphorical, connection with their idiomatic referent. For *nondecomposable idioms*, there is no apparent connection between the idiom’s components and the components of the idiomatic referent. Speakers judge normally decomposable idioms as more syntactically flexible than abnormally decomposable ones, and they judge abnormally decomposable idioms as more flexible than nondecomposable ones. This shows that the relation of an idiom’s internal semantics and its figurative meaning may influence its syntactic flexibility.<sup>19</sup>

The core idea of both these proposals, namely that not all idioms are absolutely fixed and that some idioms are more flexible than others, has repeatedly

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<sup>19</sup> I will discuss the *Idiom Decomposition Hypothesis* in more detail in chapter 2.3.

been tested in various experiments (Gibbs & Nayak 1989; Gibbs et al. 1989a; Colombo 1993, 1998; Fellbaum 2015b). Today, it is widely accepted that “idioms vary in the extent to which they are lexically and syntactically fixed” (Fellbaum 2015b, 782). Furthermore, I have shown that there are other multiword expressions that are at least as fixed as idioms. Therefore, fixedness may be typical for some idioms but it is not a defining criterion on its own.

### 1.3 Conventionality

*Conventionality*, here referring to the conventionalization of the surface structure of a phrase,<sup>20</sup> can also influence the markedness of phrases and their variations. More conventionalized phrases appear more marked when changed than less conventionalized ones. Most multiword expressions or aspects of them are conventionalized through use. This is the case for the order “black and white film” in (10) as compared to “white and black film” in (18). The OED lists an entry for “black and white” referring to photography, film, and television (“black and white, adj. and n.”, 2b), with the first recorded use in 1848. There is no corresponding entry for “white and black”. Similar observations can be made for (20) in comparison to (13) (OED: “humble pie, n.”, 2a). However, like fixedness, conventionality applies to all multiword expressions cited in (10)–(17). While both are important features of idiomatic expressions, they do not distinguish idiomatic expressions from all other multiword expressions.

### 1.4 Figuration

Idioms are often ascribed an element of figuration (Gibbs & Nayak 1989; Colombo 1993; Cacciari & Glucksberg 1995; Nunberg et al. 1994; Gibbs & Colston 2006, 2012). Basically, the term *figurative language* refers to saying something other than what is meant. Looking again at the idiom examples from Jackendoff, here repeated as (30) and (31), this is true for both:

(30) the last straw

(31) eat humble pie

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<sup>20</sup> I will discuss non-compositionality, which refers to the conventionalization of both surface structure and meaning of a phrase, in chapter 1.5.

In its phrasal meaning, (30) refers to “the culminating fact or event in a series of unpleasant or unwelcome ones, causing an extreme reaction not experienced before” (OED “last straw, n.”). There is no literal straw involved. And the phrase “eat humble pie” is used to express being very submissive or apologizing humbly (OED: “humble pie, n.”, 2a). It does not refer to eating nor to a specific kind of pie.

Speakers may not always recognize the motive for the specific figure used; however, they will perceive that some form of figuration is involved. This manifests itself in the fact that most speakers will find it easy to assign some form of ‘literal meaning’ to all idiomatic phrases (Nunberg et al. 1994, 492).

Still, idioms are not the only phrases involving figuration. Among the examples from Jackendoff’s collection, the phrases he calls clichés involve figuration as well (here repeated as (32) and (33)):

(32) good things come in small packages

(33) love conquers all

The phrase in (32) does not usually refer to little parcels in the literal sense, it is used to convey that something needs not to be big in order to be good. And although ‘love’ in (33) is personified, it does not denote a physical conqueror with an army but is used in a figurative sense. All examples given for Jackendoff’s categories of idioms and clichés involve figuration, those for compounds and quotations do not. Thus, the question whether figuration is involved or not allows us to distinguish idioms from compounds as well as quotations but not from what Jackendoff calls clichés.

## 1.5 Non-compositionality

The linguistic principle of compositionality, established among others by Frege (1892), claims that the meaning of a complex phrase can be deduced from the meaning of the individual words, according to syntactic rules or through the conventions determining the use of the individual words when they appear independent of one another.<sup>21</sup> This principle applies to the compounds in (10) and (11), here repeated as (34) and (35): every language user who knows the meaning of the individual words and the applicable syntactic rules of English is

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**21** For critical discussions of and further research on the principle of compositionality, please see e.g. Szabó (2013), Heim & Kratzer (1998), and Hinzen et al. (2012), esp. Zimmermann (2012).

able to compose their meaning. Modifications as in (36) and (37) do not change the meaning of the phrase, even if the reordering is marked due to conventionality.

(34) black and white film

(35) frequent flyer program

(36) white and black film

(37) frequent air traveler program

For idioms, by contrast, non-compositionality has often been considered the main-feature and even a defining criterion:

The essential feature of an idiom is that its full meaning, and more generally the meaning of any sentence containing an idiomatic stretch, is not a compositional function of the meanings of the idiom's elementary grammatical parts. (Katz & Postal 1963, 275)

[...] the common understanding of an idiom as a complex expression whose meaning cannot be derived from the meanings of its elements. (Weinreich 1969, 26)

These are idiomatic in the sense that their meaning is non-compositional. (Chomsky 1980, 149)

The traditional definition of an idiom states that its meaning is not a function of the meanings of its parts and the way these are syntactically combined; that is, an idiom is a noncompositional expression. (van der Linden 1992b, 223)

That idioms are viewed as an exception to the principle of compositionality is also reflected in the OED's definition of idioms as "a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from the meanings of the individual words" ("idiom, n.", 3). Jackendoff's idiom examples in (12) and (13), here repeated as (38) and (39), illustrate this:

(38) the last straw

(39) eat humble pie

A competent speaker of the English language, who knows all the words and syntactic rules involved in these phrases but who does not know their phrasal meaning, does not have any way of composing this meaning from his knowledge. However, the same is true for Jackendoff's clichés, with the examples repeated in (40) and (41):

(40) good things come in small packages

(41) love conquers all

As with the examples for idioms in (38) and (39), a purely compositional meaning does not capture the whole meaning of these phrases. Their figurative meaning is tied to this specific phrasing; in a different configuration the small packages would not evoke the same figurative meaning. Thus, the conventions apply to the whole phrase and not to the individual word. The phrases are not fully compositional. Just as for idioms, a competent speaker will not be able to compose their meaning purely from his knowledge of the language. However, general knowledge about the generation of figurative meaning will suffice to understand these phrases, a speaker does not have to learn these. This constitutes the difference between idioms and clichés.

From the examples discussed so far, it seems to be true that non-compositionality is an important criterion for idiomaticity. However, non-compositionality cannot be a defining criterion for idiomatic expressions because there are idioms that are fully compositional (Wasow 2015b). As an example Wasow gives *make headway*, which is listed in idiom dictionaries<sup>22</sup> and cited in papers about idioms, with some scholars even claiming that *headway* only appears as an argument of *make* (e.g. Schenk 1995). The OED also contradicts this claim. It does list *headway* in collocation with *make* (OED: “headway, n.”, 2). However, it also lists it on its own with four different meanings.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, a quick search of the internet reveals that there are examples like (42), even though they are quite rare:

(42) Headway is also needed, some experts say, in educating people to buy recycled products.<sup>24</sup>

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**22** E.g. in the Cambridge Idioms Dictionary (2006): “make headway: to make progress (often negative)”.

**23** The first is obsolete (OED: “headway, n.”, 1: “a chief or main road; a highway”). The second meaning refers to coal mining and is only used historically (OED: “headway, n.”, 2). The third defines it as a synonym of *headroom* (OED: “headway, n.”, 4). The last is restricted to the U.S. and refers to the “interval of time or (occas.) distance between two consecutive trains, buses, etc., on a given route” (OED: “headway, n.”, 5).

**24** Ross Atkin: The mixed bag of community recycling. The Christian Science Monitor. 17.04.2002. Retrieved from <http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0417/p12s01-lihc.html> (on 08.07.2016).

In many cases where *headway* is used on its own, it still retains the meaning of ‘progress’, which it also has in collocation with *make* (but not in any of the independent usages listed in the OED). Following the definition of idioms given above, it is not clear why we persist in calling *make headway* an idiomatic expression, but because we do, non-compositionality cannot be essential for idiomaticity.

However, a different view on compositionality is possible. While agreeing that, without any prior knowledge, a hearer will not be able to understand most idioms, Nunberg et al. (1994) still assign some measure of semantic compositionality. They focus on the fact that in many idioms parts of the meaning are associated with parts of the expression. For example, if we know the meaning of the idiom *spill the beans*, we can map this meaning onto the parts of the idiom in such a way that *spill* means roughly ‘disclose’ and *the beans* means roughly ‘information’. These types of idioms are called “idiomatically combining expressions” in contrast to the non-mappable “idiomatic phrases”.<sup>25</sup>

What this reveals is that the difference between compositional and non-compositional multiword expressions is more relevant for the hearer than for the speaker. All multiword expressions are conventionalized to some extent. Therefore, all multiword expressions are the same for the speaker insofar as he must have learned the specific form in order to produce it. The hearer, however, does not have to have stored all multiword expressions in his individual lexicon. If he is a competent user of the language (i.e. if he knows the individual words and the relevant rules of the language), he will be able to understand compositional multiword expressions even without their being part of his individual lexicon. In contrast, non-compositional multiword expressions can only be understood if their meaning is known by the hearer, i.e. if the meaning is stored in the hearer’s lexicon – at least if there is no supporting context.

This shows that the competence of a language user on the one hand and his individual lexicon on the other hand play a decisive role in the production and perception of idiomatic expressions. There are, hence, at least two sets of criteria to be considered when looking at idioms: criteria pertaining to the language or language system as well as criteria that are speaker/hearer related. This distinction will be discussed further in chapter 2.1.

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<sup>25</sup> This approach is similar to Gibbs and Nayak’s *Idiom Decomposition Hypothesis* (1989). Both theories are discussed in detail in chapter 2.3.

## 1.6 Alternative Approaches to Defining Idioms

Nunberg et al. (1994) note that a definition of the term *idiomatic expression* must always fall short because the expressions we try to cover with this term are diverse. This is why they approach the challenge of distinguishing idioms from other multiword expressions not with the objective of giving a definition but rather of providing a description of the properties of prototypical idioms. They are thus able to do justice to the “several important dimensions of idiomaticity, including, among others, conventionality and figuration” (Nunberg et al. 1994, 491). The possible criteria for idiomaticity Nunberg et al. have examined are conventionality (here used as non-compositionality), inflexibility, figuration, proverbiality, informality, and affect. In the end, they postulate that the only criterion that always applies is conventionality, although we grow ever more reluctant to call a phrase an idiom if more of the other criteria are missing:

Apart from the property of conventionality, none of these properties applies obligatorily to all idioms. [...] Yet when we encounter a fixed expression that is missing several of the relevant properties – say one that involves no figuration, lacks a proverbial character, and has not strong association with popular speech – we become increasingly reluctant to call it an idiom. (Nunberg et al. 1994, 493–494)

Perhaps a general definition of idioms is not possible because there are too many cases that cannot be clearly categorized, and we have to accept that idioms vary in their degree of syntactical and lexical flexibility as well as with regard to their semantic opacity and their figuration. Still, there are quite a few phrases for which all researchers agree on the label *idiom* (e.g. kick the bucket, lay down the law, break the ice). Therefore, the only practicable solution is not to try to give a definition that clearly delimits *idioms* from non-idioms. This approach is shared by a number of linguists: Nunberg et al. (1994) describe prototypical aspects of idioms; Maher (2013) states that “[t]he fact that the target’s edges are ill-defined does [not] preclude us from studying the bullseye of prototypical idioms” (Maher 2013, 9); and Fellbaum (2015b) and Dobrovolskij (1995) define idioms as a “radial category”, here given in Dobrovolskij’s words:

The [...] idiom-concept is based not upon a binary opposition of the type “either or”, but rather upon a gradual (spatial) opposition, and explains the existence of various borderline cases. Idioms can have different degrees of categorial membership. [...] we can speak in this regard of *good exemplars* and *bad exemplars* of an idiom. From this viewpoint idioms as a whole can be described as a *radial category*. (Dobrovolskij 1995, 242)

Following these considerations, I will use the working definition given in (43):

(43) *Working Definition of Idioms*

Idioms are a radial category. Prototypical idioms are non-compositional, inflexible, and involve figuration. Less prototypical idioms may share only some of these categories. All idioms share the element of conventionality.



## 2 The Ambiguity Model and the Analysis of Idioms

Idioms as defined above may be divided into two groups: those that are ambiguous and those that are not. My research is mainly concerned with the first group, ambiguous idioms, and their use in context. However, the term *ambiguity* is itself often used ambiguously. Therefore, I will start out with a discussion of my use of the term *ambiguity* with reference to the ambiguity model of RTG 1808, which allows for a distinction between ambiguity in the language system and ambiguity in discourse (2.1). From there, I will go on to examine what constitutes the ambiguity of idioms with the aim of refining my working definition of idioms (2.2) as well as the relationship between the compositional and the phrasal meaning of idioms with reference to the types of idioms distinguished in the literature (2.3). Last, I will discuss the effect of ambiguity on idiom processing (2.4).

### 2.1 Ambiguity and the Ambiguity Model

Bauer et al. (2010) note that the term ambiguity is not used uniformly across different disciplines and that its definitions are often imprecise (Bauer et al. 2010, 7). This imprecision is even true when we move within one discipline. Partly, this is due to the fact that the English term *ambiguity* may refer to various concepts, for instance, to German “Zweideutigkeit”, “Mehrdeutigkeit”, and “Vieldeutigkeit” (Bode 1997, 67). Ambiguity is also brought into connection with underspecification, uncertainty, and vagueness (Olson 2001, 21) and sometimes even characterized as a subtype of uncertainty (Kennedy 2011, 508).

Kennedy provides a linguistic definition of ambiguity as it is found in the language system: “Ambiguity [...] is characterized by the association of a single orthographic or phonological string with more than one meaning” (Kennedy 2011, 510). While he goes on to distinguish between different varieties of ambiguity (phonological, lexical, structural, etc.), he does not elaborate on what “associating with meaning” exactly means. In this, he is in line with Wasow et al. (2005), who define the semantic property of ambiguity as follows: “An expression is ambiguous if it has two or more distinct denotations – that is, if it is associated with more than one region of the meaning space” (Wasow et al. 2005, 265). Like Kennedy, they do not elaborate on what exactly the “meaning space” is. As their focus is not on the semantics of ambiguity but on its effect for communication, this is not necessary for their research. The same is true for my

research, as I focus on ambiguity in discourse. For these questions, all we have to know is that “meaning [...] involves associating expressions in a language with something else (things or events in the world, mental representations, sets of possible worlds, or what have you)” (Wasow et al. 2005, 265). Most semanticians agree that there is such an association of an expression with “something else” (a region in the meaning space), namely the denotation of the expression. What sets ambiguous expressions apart from other expressions is the fact that they have two or more denotations.

Vague or underspecified expressions, of course, also appear to have more than one meaning. However, this is in fact one meaning whose boundaries are not quite clear, while ambiguous expressions have two or more distinct meanings. In keeping with Wasow et al.’s terminology, “[i]f expressions are thought of as picking out regions in some semantic space, then ambiguous expressions pick out more than one region, whereas vague expressions pick out regions with fuzzy boundaries” (Wasow 2015a, 32–33). Hence, the distinction between ambiguous and vague expressions is based on the question whether the two or more denotations are clearly distinct from each other or not. Cases of polysemy fall somewhere in between ambiguity and vagueness: they have two distinct denotations like homonyms, yet these denotations are semantically related like the denotations of vague expressions (Winter-Froemel & Zirker 2010, 77–78). I will come back to this in chapter 2.3. For now, I will use the following working definition of ambiguity in the language system:

(44) *Working Definition of Ambiguity in the Language System*

Ambiguity in the language system is a semantic category. An expression has the potential to be ambiguous if it has two or more distinct denotations.

The focus of this working definition on semantics, i.e. on the meaning of expressions, is not intended to delimit ambiguity to small units of the language system. While I mainly focus on expressions that do not extend beyond the range of words or small phrases, the working definition includes larger units of the language system, e.g. sentences. Sentences frequently have two or more possible syntactic structures, which in turn are associated with two distinct denotations.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> “Not all ambiguities can be tied to specific lexical items. Structural ambiguities arise when a given string of words can be parsed in two different ways, with different meanings” (Wasow 2015a, 34).

The definition in (44) gives us an understanding of ambiguity on the level of the language system; it tells us which expressions have the potential to be ambiguous. Yet not every expression that has the potential to be ambiguous is always ambiguous when used in a specific context; ambiguity may or may not become functional. For the distinction between potential and functional ambiguity, please have a look at the following examples:

(45) duck

(46) The duck swam in the lake.

(47) In order to hide, duck behind the hedge.

(48) We saw her duck behind the hedge.

The word duck in (45) has the potential to be ambiguous: it can refer to a water-living bird or to the action of lowering one's head or body in order to avoid being hit by something or being seen. Without context, it is impossible to disambiguate. In both (46) and (47), the word duck can only mean one thing in each of the sentences. In (46), the only possible denotation is that of the water-living bird; in (47), duck can only refer to the action of ducking. In both cases, the surrounding context disambiguates the word and the potential ambiguity does not become functional. The sentence in (48) may either be read as "we saw her bird behind the hedge" or "we saw her hide behind the hedge". Here, the ambiguity becomes functional as the context does not disambiguate. Thus, ambiguity may only become functional in discourse, but not every ambiguity has to become functional in each discourse. Therefore, I propose the definition given in (49) for ambiguity in discourse:

(49) *Working Definition of Ambiguity in Discourse*<sup>27</sup>

Ambiguity in discourse is a pragmatic category. A potential ambiguity becomes functional if it has two or more distinct denotations in a specific discourse.

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<sup>27</sup> This definition of ambiguity in discourse only refers to cases where a potential ambiguity in the language system becomes functional. For my object of investigation, this narrow definition suffices (see chapters 2.2 and 2.3 for more details). However, ambiguity in discourse may also arise without a corresponding potential ambiguity in the language system, e.g. through pragmatic implicatures. For a broader definition that includes such cases, please see Winter-Froemel & Zirker (2015, 290).

With *discourse*, I refer to “language in context across all forms and modes” (Tannen 1982, x). Discourse thus includes the entirety of a communicative situation: the form the communication takes (e.g. if it is oral or written) as well as all forms of context (co-text, cognitive context, social and sociocultural context, etc.).<sup>28</sup> In contrast to *text*, which does not per se refer to the participants of a communicative situation, discourse includes speaker(s) and hearer(s) as well. The default of discourse is any form of everyday communication, which is what I focus on here. Literature, as a specific case of discourse that imitates everyday communication, is discussed in chapter 8.

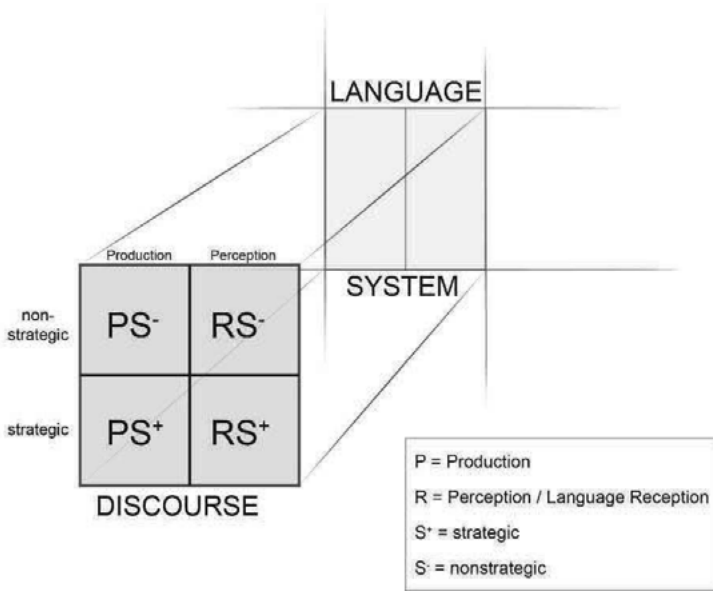


Fig. 2: Three-dimensional ambiguity model (Winkler 2015b, 6)<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> I discuss the different forms of context and their effect on ambiguity and ambiguity resolution in chapter 3.

<sup>29</sup> “The ambiguity model was developed by Matthias Bauer, Joachim Knape, Peter Koch, Christof Landmesser, Jürgen Leonhardt, Thomas Susanka, Susanne Winkler, Esme Winter-Froemel, René Ziegler and Angelika Zirker during intensive discussions from 2009–2013. Thomas Susanka provided the graphical representation” (Winkler 2015b, 6).

A model that describes the difference between ambiguity in the (language) system and ambiguity in discourse is the three-dimensional ambiguity model developed in the context of RTG 1808 “Ambiguity – Production and Perception” (Figure 2). The background of the model shows what (44) defines: the potential for ambiguity in the system, in this case the language system.<sup>30</sup> The foreground of the model depicts what (49) defines: ambiguity becoming functional in discourse.

In a specific discourse, ambiguity may affect communication in various ways: it may hinder it, e.g. by leading to misunderstandings, but it may also further communication, e.g. by adding dimensions of meaning (Winter-Froemel & Zirker 2015, 284f). Nevertheless, according to Grice’s very influential cooperative principle (Grice 1975, 45), more precisely his maxim of manner, ambiguity should be avoided in everyday discourse. From this perspective, ambiguity hinders communication because it is not clear for the hearer which of the possible meanings the speaker wants to convey. The hearer is faced with the additional task of disambiguation.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, miscommunication is much more likely since the hearer may disambiguate an utterance in a way that was not intended by the speaker. Grice’s cooperative principle thus suggests that the speaker has to go out of his way to make understanding easier for the hearer in order to guarantee smooth communication. However, it seems that, in contrast to this theory, speakers do not necessarily avoid ambiguity, and that Grice’s view does not take into account the pragmatics of negotiation between communicative partners. Wasow (2015a) discusses various studies<sup>32</sup> that investigate this seeming lack of cooperation on behalf of the speaker. In these studies, he finds some evidence that speakers choose alternative linguistic forms. Yet, such cases are scarce: “While there is evidence that the possibility of a confusing ambiguity occasionally leads speakers to choose another linguistic form, such cases are rare” (Wasow 2015a, 42). He concludes that “although grammars contain mechanisms to minimize [...] ambiguity, ambiguity avoidance is widely overrated as a factor in language structure and use” (Wasow 2015a, 44). Thus, we have to in-

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**30** I cite this version of the model, which refers only to the language system, because my object of investigation is language-based. The model can be (and is) used also to describe other systems, e.g. pictorial communication. For more information, please see the homepage of RTG 1808 ([www.ambiguitaet.uni-tuebingen.de](http://www.ambiguitaet.uni-tuebingen.de)).

**31** We will see below that this does not have to be the case. Depending on the context, disambiguation may not be pursued (see chapters 3 and 4 as well as part III).

**32** Arnold et al. (2004), Ferreira (2003, 2006a, 2006b, 2008), Ferreira & Dell (2000), Ferreira et al. (2005), Haywood et al. (2005), Jaeger (2006), Jaeger & Wasow (2008), Roland et al. (2006), Roland et al. (2007), Temperly (2003), Wasow (2002).

clude discourse in our study of ambiguity and ask how communication is successful despite – or because of – ambiguity.

In a specific discourse, ambiguity may or may not be strategically used by the speaker or the hearer of an utterance.<sup>33</sup> The resulting four dimensions are shown in the foreground of the three-dimensional ambiguity model: strategic production (PS<sup>+</sup>), non-strategic production (PS<sup>-</sup>), strategic perception (RS<sup>+</sup>), and non-strategic perception (RS<sup>-</sup>).<sup>34</sup> In discourse, all four dimensions are conceivable, as I will illustrate here with one example for each dimension, further examples will be discussed in chapter 5 and part III.

When ambiguity is produced strategically (PS<sup>+</sup>), it “is functionalized as a means to reach a particular communicative goal within the current communicative act” (Hartmann et al. submitted, 18).

(50) Have a break, have a kit-kat.

In the advertising slogan cited in (50) (see also Winter-Froemel & Zirker 2015, 284), “break” can refer to either “resting for a moment” or to “crack something into pieces”. Both meanings fit the context of eating the advertised chocolate bar. Within the specific setting, we can assume that the speakers, i.e. the advertising company that produced the slogan, employed the ambiguity strategically to connect both meanings. Thus, the act of eating a kit-kat is directly associated with having a break.

In non-strategic production of ambiguity (PS<sup>-</sup>), “[a]mbiguity is produced – which often goes unnoticed – but does not serve the function of a means to reach the communicative goal” (Hartmann et al. submitted, 18).

(51) Jetzt fehlt nur noch, daß das Gummi reißt! (‘All I need now is that the rubber tears!’, translation EWF/AZ) (Winter-Froemel & Zirker 2015, 320f)

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**33** For a definition of the term strategy as used in rhetorics, please see Knape et al. (2009). Here, I use the term as it is used in TInCAP, the corpus of RTG 1808: “the application of ambiguity in a communicative act is strategic whenever the ambiguous item is utilized as a means, i.e. whenever ambiguity is primarily applied to reach a particular communicative goal, which is the case when two potential interpretations are exploited on purpose” Hartmann et al. (submitted, 15). For a detailed discussion, please see Hartmann et al. (submitted, 14–19).

**34** The abbreviations are taken from the German model used in RTG 1808, where P stands for German *Produktion* (= production) and R for German *Rezeption* (= perception).

The sentence in (51) is uttered by a teacher during a physics lesson. While the German word “Gummi” may refer to either a rubber band or a preservative, it is highly unlikely that the teacher produced the ambiguity strategically, i.e. with a goal in mind.

In the perception of ambiguity, the same distinction between strategic and non-strategic has to be made. In most cases, determining whether the perception is strategic or not is only possible if the hearer explicitly reacts to the ambiguity, i.e. if he acts productively in turn. In strategic perception (**RS**<sup>+</sup>), “[a]mbiguity or unambiguousness is taken up by the recipient and functionalized as a means to reach one’s own communicative goal” by “(a) ambiguating an item that was produced unambiguously before [...], (b) functionalizing a potential ambiguity [...], [or] (c) interpreting a functional ambiguity in a way different than intended by its producer [...]. In all these cases, the recipient shows an explicit reaction to the ambiguous item, which can be taken as evidence for the strategic perception” (Hartmann et al. submitted, 19).

Looking at the example in (51) from the angle of the hearers allows for a different analysis. Even though the context easily allows for disambiguation (during a physics lesson, the meaning “rubber band” is much more plausible than “preservative”), a classroom full of teenagers may well perceive the ambiguity. Pursuing their own goal (e.g. of making fun of the teacher), they will functionalize the potential ambiguity, thus perceiving it strategically.

In cases of non-strategic perception (**RS**<sup>-</sup>), the “[a]mbiguity is not perceived as a means to reach a particular communicative goal or not perceived at all” (Hartmann et al. submitted, 19).

- (52) “Doctor, come at once! Our baby swallowed a fountain pen!”  
 “I’ll be right over. What are you doing in the meantime?”  
 “Using a pencil.”  
 (Bauer et al. 2010, 55)

The characters in this joke, who are calling the doctor, are not aware of the ambiguity of “What are you doing in the meantime?”.<sup>35</sup> They do not misunderstand the doctor on purpose, in order to reach a particular goal. The ambiguity is perceived non-strategically.

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<sup>35</sup> In fact, there is no ambiguity on the level of the language system in this case. The ambiguity is generated in discourse. For further discussion of this example, please see Bauer et al. (2010, 55).

With its distinction between ambiguity in the language system and ambiguity in discourse as well as the four dimensions of (non-)strategic production and perception, the ambiguity model lends itself well to visualize my object of investigation: potential ambiguities that become functional in discourse. The model has been integrated in RTG 1808's corpus TInCAP, which I will present in chapter 5. With the addition of a model of communication levels (see 5.2.2, p. 100f) the differences in strategic production and/or perception on the various levels of communication become visible (see 5.2.3, p. 110f). Thus, the three-dimensional ambiguity model proves useful as a heuristic model for analyzing my examples of idioms appearing in literary texts, where multiple levels of communication are not the exception but the norm (see 8.1.5).

## 2.2 Features of Ambiguous Idioms

In discussing the different criteria for idiomaticity above, I have already touched on the fact that idioms have the potential to be ambiguous. This potential is located on the level of the language system: idiomatic phrases may be associated with a so-called literal meaning in addition to their phrasal meaning. The view that idiomatic expressions are ambiguous is widely adopted by researchers in the field of idiomatic language (Bobrow & Bell 1973; Cacciari & Tabossi 1988; Caillies & Le Sourn-Bissaoui 2008; Chafe 1970; Colombo 1998; Gibbs 1980, 1986, 1992; Holsinger & Kaiser 2013; Moon 1998; Ortony et al. 1978; Spector 1996; van der Linden 1992a). The ambiguity of idiomatic expressions seems to be so irrefutable as not to require much explanation any more. Accordingly, van der Linden & Kraaij (1990) write about “the resolution of the ambiguity between the non-idiomatic and the idiomatic reading of a phrase that is possibly idiomatic” (van der Linden & Kraaij 1990, 245) without further specifying this ambiguity and how it is resolved. Cacciari & Glucksberg (1995) state that “idiomatic strings can convey both a literal and an idiomatic meaning” (Cacciari & Glucksberg 1995, 283), and that every time “people encounter idioms in discourse, two kinds of meanings are available: the meaning of the idiomatic expression *qua* idiom, and the meaning(s) of the linguistic constituents” (Cacciari & Glucksberg 1995, 284), without going into any more detail. Colombo (1993) adopts this view as well: “Ambiguous idioms in fact can be assigned either a literal interpretation, based on the compositional meanings of its constituents, or a figurative meaning, which has been learned and associated with the whole string” (Colombo 1993, 163). If we follow these assertions, idioms are ambiguous because they are associated with (at least) two regions of the meaning space: a compositional meaning and a phrasal meaning.



The compositional meaning is formed following Frege's principle of compositionality (cf. 1.5). i.e. the compositional meaning of *kick the bucket* is composed from the meanings of the words *kick*, *the*, and *bucket*, according to the syntactic rules of the English language. As evident from the quotations above, the compositional meaning is often called the literal meaning of a phrase. This term is problematic at best. It can only apply if solely literal meanings of the components are used to compose the meaning of the phrase. However, it is not always clear what the literal meaning of individual words is. We are so used to figurative language that we often do not even recognize it as figurative anymore. Yet Frege's principle of compositionality does not refer to "literal meanings", only to the meaning of the individual words and the conventions determining their use when appearing independently. This includes figurative meanings as well as so-called literal ones. Therefore, I will refer to this kind of meaning as the *compositional meaning* of idiomatic phrases.

The second meaning idiomatic phrases are associated with is the phrasal, figurative, or idiomatic meaning. This meaning cannot be composed from the meaning of the parts; it is conventionalized and has to be learned as a whole. As shown above (1.3), this often applies to collocations, quotations, and clichés as well. Accordingly, these phrases may show a similar type of ambiguity. Therefore, I will not use the term idiomatic meaning but rather refer to this kind of meaning as the *phrasal meaning* of idiomatic phrases.

The frequent use of the term *literal* meaning for the compositional meaning of idiomatic phrases and the assumption that the phrasal meaning is figurative may suggest that the compositional meaning is the basic meaning from which the phrasal meaning is derived. This suggestion follows from common definitions which characterize figurative language in opposition to literal language: "Figurative language generally refers to speech where speakers mean something other than what they literally say" (Gibbs & Colston 2012, 1). The assumption that the compositional meaning is derived more directly from our knowledge of language than the phrasal meaning (which has to make a detour via the compositional meaning) suggests that the phrasal meaning should be more marked because it is idiosyncratic.

However, the opposite is the case. Firstly, the phrasal meaning of many idiomatic expressions is used more frequently than the compositional meaning (cf. Colombo 1993). Secondly, psycholinguistic studies have found that in most cases the phrasal meaning is the one that is understood primarily (Burger 2010, 23; Gibbs 1980, 150).<sup>36</sup> Lastly, figurative language in general is much more prev-

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<sup>36</sup> I will go into more detail concerning the order of processing in chapter 2.4.

alent than this kind of definition implies, and the distinction between literal and figurative language is not as clear as is generally assumed (Gibbs & Colston 2012, 2). For now, it suffices to say that it is best not to judge whether one meaning is more natural or typical than the other. Rather, the question to ask is whether all idioms do have both meanings and, hence, whether all idioms are ambiguous. This is not the case.

Some idioms do not have a compositional meaning that is well-formed. This may, for one, be due to structural reasons: idioms like *trip the light fantastic* do not comply with common morphosyntactic rules. Furthermore, if idioms are taken at their compositional face value, some of them are inconsistent with our world knowledge. Gibbs & Nayak (1989) call this group of idioms “literally ill-formed”, Fellbaum calls them “implausible idioms”: “*pull yourself up by your bootstraps, give/lend somebody a hand*, and German *mit der Kirche ums Dorf fahren* (lit. ‘drive with the church around the village’, deal with an issue in an overly complicated or laborious manner) denote highly implausible events in their literal readings” (Fellbaum 2011, 444). These idioms do not have a strong potential ambiguity, i.e. it would need a rather specific context to achieve a compositional reading, if this is possible at all.

On the other hand, there are idioms which comply with morphosyntactic rules and have a compositional meaning that is compatible with our world knowledge. Gibbs & Nayak (1989) call those “literally well-formed”, stating that “well-formed idioms [...] are ambiguous. By definition, each well-formed idiom has both a literal and figurative interpretation” (Gibbs & Nayak 1989, 121). Fellbaum calls them “plausible idioms“, saying that they “are polysemous between an idiomatic and a literal, compositional meaning, such as *play first fiddle* and *fall off the wagon*” (Fellbaum 2011, 444). For these, context has to determine which reading is intended.

This second group of idioms has the potential to be ambiguous, depending on the given context. Accordingly, the general statements about the ambiguity of idioms cited above have to be restricted to those idioms that have a well-formed literal meaning. If the literal meaning is not well-formed, i.e. implausible, we are rarely confronted with ambiguity. Therefore, I will delimit my investigations only to those idioms that have the potential to be ambiguous, according to the definition given in (53):

(53) *Working Definition of Ambiguous Idioms*

Ambiguous idioms have a well-formed and plausible compositional meaning in addition to the phrasal meaning.

## 2.3 The Relationship of Phrasal and Compositional Meaning

Ambiguous idioms do not only have a phrasal but also a well-formed compositional meaning. As mentioned above, the terms *figurative* and *literal* are not adequate to distinguish these two; rather, we have to ask how the two meanings are related to each other: Can the phrasal meaning be deduced from the compositional meaning in any way, or are the two meanings entirely unrelated? Similar questions need to be asked when trying to determine whether a lexical item with more than one possible meaning is homonymous or polysemous. Due to this analogy, I will try to answer these questions by comparing the ambiguity of idioms with varieties of lexical ambiguity.

Lexical items with more than one meaning can be arranged on a scale according to the semantic distance between the meanings.<sup>37</sup> This scale reaches from vagueness through polysemy to homonymy, with a continuous increase of the semantic distance between meanings. The possible meanings of vague lexical items are so closely related that it is not possible to distinguish between two distinct meanings; rather, the meanings are manifestations of a single denotation. The semantic distance between the meanings is so small that vague lexical items are below the threshold of ambiguity. In contrast, polysemous and homonymous items have (at least) two clearly distinct meanings.

In the case of polysemy, these meanings are etymologically – and therefore semantically – related, e.g. through metaphor, metonymy or hypo-/hyperonymy. According to Fillmore & Atkins' definition, there are three elements to polysemy: (i) the various senses of a polysemous word have a central origin, (ii) the links between these senses form a network, and (iii) understanding the “inner” one contributes to understanding of the “outer” one (Fillmore & Atkins 2000, 100).

For homonyms, by contrast, no relation between the two meanings is apparent. They are situated on the end of the scale opposite to vagueness. Traditionally, it is assumed that we deal with an ‘accident’ of the language system, where two signs are denoted with the same expression by coincidence. However, the meanings may also be related etymologically, but this relation is no longer discernible due to changes in the language system. In these cases, the boundary to polysemy becomes blurry: it may depend on the world and language knowledge of the individual speaker whether a lexical item is perceived as polysemous or homonymous.

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<sup>37</sup> For the following observations on vagueness, homonymy and polysemy, cf. also Bauer et al. (2010, 48), Ravin & Leacock (2000, 2–3), and Winter-Froemel & Zirker (2010, 77–78).

These reflections on homonymy and polysemy may be transferred to the relationship between the possible meanings of idioms: for some idioms, the compositional and the phrasal meanings are closely related, while, for others, no relation is apparent. In idiom research, the degree of relation is often called the transparency, respectively opacity of idioms.<sup>38</sup>

For *opaque* idioms, there is no obvious relation between the idiom's phrasal and compositional meaning. Mostly, there will be historic reasons for the use of a certain phrase. However, if these reasons are lost for most speakers of English today, the idiom has to be considered opaque. For example, the phrasal meaning 'to take responsibility' of the well-known idiom *face the music* has no obvious semantic relation with the compositional meaning of the phrase.<sup>39</sup> For *transparent* idioms, by contrast, the motivation for the use is easily determined. Often it is a metaphorical extension of the compositional meaning as with *lose one's grip* ('to lose control'): If one loses one's grip on an item, one loses control over it. Remarkably, the motivation does not have to be etymologically correct, it only needs to be plausible (Nunberg et al. 1994, 498).

The reliance of transparent idioms on metaphoric extension leads to another challenge: How can we distinguish between transparent idioms and metaphors? Which category do we ascribe to the examples given in (54)–(56)?<sup>40</sup>

- (54) close your eyes to
- (55) bridge the gap between
- (56) close the rift between

With conventionality given in (43) as the main criterion for idiomaticity, this might be one possible distinguishing characteristic. Using this criterion, (54) and (55) are more idiomatic than (56), because they are more frequently used.<sup>41</sup> However, (55), the most frequently used of the three phrases, is cited as a conventional metaphor, not an idiom. This illustrates again the blurriness of the boundaries between the categories: the more transparent the phrasal meaning,

**38** For the following observations on opaque and transparent idioms, please cf. Gibbs & Nayak (1989) and Nunberg et al. (1994).

**39** OED: "face, v.", P1, h: "to face the music: to accept or confront the inevitable, or the unpleasant consequences of one's actions. [Origin uncertain and disputed [...]]".

**40** (54) is taken from Gibbs & Nayak's list of transparent idioms (1989, 134), (55) and (56) are examples from Maher (2013, 8).

**41** On June 21, 2016, a search on "close your eyes to" yielded about 405.000 results, a search on "bridge the gap between" about 16.200.000, and a search on "close the rift between" yielded only about 38.900.

the more difficult the distinction between idiomatic and other figurative language (e.g. metaphor). There are not two groups of idioms. Rather, idioms may be arranged on a scale according to the semantic distance of their meanings similar to the scale of vagueness, polysemy and homonymy, with the semantic distance increasing from fully transparent idioms to fully opaque idioms. By analogy, it may also be expected that the more transparent idioms are, the less likely they are perceived as ambiguous.

The likeliness of perceiving a potentially ambiguous idiom as ambiguous is influenced by other aspects besides transparency, most prominently by the familiarity with the idiom and its decomposability. *Familiarity* with an idiom is measured by frequency of exposure (Levorato & Cacciari 1992, 417). The more often an idiomatic expression is encountered in its phrasal meaning, the faster it is recognized as an idiom, and the more the phrasal meaning is reinforced. The more the phrasal meaning is strengthened, the more likely is the idiomatic expression considered as ambiguous, i.e. as having two distinct meanings.

Familiarity may also influence the perception of the transparency of idiomatic expressions: Knowing the phrasal meaning of an idiom allows the mapping of this phrasal meaning on the components of the idiom, thus creating the appearance of transparency. Two theories that are based on this thought are Gibbs & Nayak's *Idiom Decomposition Hypothesis* (1989) and Nunberg et al.'s distinction between *idiomatically combining expressions* and *idiomatic phrases* (1994).<sup>42</sup> Both theories distinguish between idioms where parts of the phrasal meaning correspond to parts of the idiomatic phrase, and those where it does not. Furthermore, both of these theories emphasize the fact that there is a difference between compositionality (as defined in chapter 1.5) and decomposability. A phrase is fully compositional if we can deduce its meaning from the meaning of the individual parts according to syntactic rules or through the conventions determining the use of the individual parts when they appear independent of one another. In other words, compositionality refers to the fact that we can construct or understand a phrase without having learned it before. Decomposability focuses on the opposite viewpoint, on what happens when we do know the phrasal meaning. Thus, familiarity is a prerequisite for decomposability.

The *Idiom Decomposition Hypothesis* assumes that many “idioms are partially analyzable and speaker[s] [have] assumptions about how the meaning of the parts contributes to the figurative meanings of the whole” (Gibbs & Nayak 1989,

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<sup>42</sup> Both theories have been touched on in chapter 1.

104). The result is a continuum of analyzability, with three main groups: *normally decomposable*, *abnormally decomposable*, and *nondecomposable*.

(57) pop the question ('propose marriage')

(58) bury the hatchet ('resolve a dispute')

(59) kick the bucket ('die')<sup>43</sup>

The idiom in (57) is *normally decomposable* because "each of the components refers in some way to the components of the idiomatic referent" (Gibbs & Nayak 1989, 105): 'pop' refers to 'propose', 'the question' refers to 'marriage'. For normally decomposable idioms, this "mapping from an individual component to its idiomatic referent is [...] transparent or conventional" (Gibbs & Nayak 1989, 128). This transparency and conventionality is true for (57): the expression is conventionally used, and there is an actual question involved. Furthermore, 'pop' introduces the secondary denotation of the proposal being sudden or unexpected.

In *abnormally decomposable* idioms, the "mapping is less transparent or less conventional" and more "indirect, or perhaps metaphorical" (Gibbs & Nayak 1989, 128). Yet, if one knows the meaning, a mapping is possible. Therefore, the idiom in (58) is abnormally decomposable: 'bury' refers to 'resolve' and 'the hatchet' refers to 'dispute', using a conventional metaphor.

For *nondecomposable* idioms, "the relations are historical and/or arbitrary and it is difficult to assign their individual components with particular parts of their overall figurative meanings" (Gibbs & Nayak 1989, 107). This group of idioms is least transparent, which in turn means that the phrasal meaning has to be learned as a whole and is therefore more lexicalized. (59) is a prototypical example for a nondecomposable idiom: if one does not know the meaning, it is not possible to deduce it from the meaning of the parts and if one knows the meaning, it is not possible to map this meaning onto the parts of the idiomatic phrase.

Nunberg et al. (1994) distinguish between *idiomatically combining expressions* and *idiomatic phrases*.

(60) pull strings ('exploit personal connections')

(61) spill the beans ('divulge information')

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<sup>43</sup> Examples (57)–(59) and their analysis are taken from Gibbs & Nayak (1989).

(62) shoot the breeze ('to chat, to talk idly')

(63) saw logs ('to snore')<sup>44</sup>

Similar to (normally and abnormally) decomposable idioms, *idiomatically combining expressions* are "idioms whose parts carry identifiably parts of their idiomatic meanings" (Nunberg et al. 1994, 496). For (60) this is true. Knowing that 'pull the strings' refers to 'exploiting personal connections' allows the hearer to construct parallels between the parts of the denotation and the parts of the idiomatic phrase: 'pull' refers to 'exploiting' and 'strings' to the 'personal connections' that are exploited. This connection does not have to be transparent, as (61) shows. We are able to divide and map the idiom 'spill the beans' onto its phrasal meaning: 'spill' relates to the action of divulging, 'the beans' relate to the information divulged. This relation between the parts of the idiom and the parts of the phrasal meaning depends on the co-occurrence of the idioms parts: if 'beans' occurs without 'spill', the meaning 'information' is not available. Thus, idiomatically combining expressions are given a compositional meaning that is idiosyncratic and not predictable from the meaning of the constituents when they are used independently of each other.

By contrast, a mapping of the meaning onto the parts of the idiom is not possible for *idiomatic phrases*, the equivalent to Gibbs & Nayak's (1989) *non-decomposable idioms*. They "must therefore be entered in the lexicon as complete phrases" (Nunberg et al. 1994, 497), not as two or more parts with a specific meaning when they co-occur. (62) illustrates this clearly: there is no way of associating 'shoot' or 'the breeze' with parts of the phrasal meaning of the idiom. This impossibility to map the phrasal meaning on the parts of the idiom does not necessarily coincide with a lack of transparency: the motivation for using 'saw logs' in (63) to mean 'snore' is clear. Still, it is not possible to map the meaning, simply because 'to snore' does not have the binary relation that sawing logs has. With regard to ambiguity, the conclusion from both theories is the same: the easier the mapping of the phrasal meaning on the idiomatic parts, the less strongly is the idiom perceived as ambiguous.<sup>45</sup>

These considerations relating to a few aspects that influence whether we perceive idioms with a phrasal and a compositional meaning as truly ambiguous or not show that there is no easy answer. As discussed above, decomposability is not directly related to transparency and thus semantic distance. This

<sup>44</sup> Examples (60)–(63) and their analysis are taken from Nunberg et al. (1994).

<sup>45</sup> As subjects are not consistent in their judgment of decompositionality (Tabossi et al. 2008, 323), the perception of ambiguity will vary between individuals as well.

leads to the following conclusions: Firstly, the ambiguity of idioms is a question of degree. Secondly, this degree is influenced by (at least) two aspects: semantic distance and decomposability. Thirdly, ambiguous idioms are most likely to be perceived as ambiguous if they are opaque as well as non-decomposable.

## 2.4 Processing of Ambiguous Idioms

In this chapter I will give an overview over the predictions different processing theories make about the processing of (ambiguous) idioms. Partially, these theories are based on figurative language in general, and, as idioms are a type of figurative language, are often assumed to apply to idioms as well. There are some issues this assumption raises: Firstly, types of figurative language vary considerably. One theory might not capture all types. Idioms, for example, are in general much more conventionalized and fixed than other types of figurative language, which suggests that processing might differ significantly. Secondly, some idioms are perceived as much more ambiguous than e.g. metaphors, and thus the processing of idioms might show more similarities to the processing of ambiguous language than to the processing of figurative language. Thirdly, idioms are a radial category (cf. chapter 1). It is unlikely that all idioms are processed in exactly the same way. While I am not able to address all of these issues here in detail, I will discuss where experimental designs are pushed to their limits when trying to explain how authentic, rich contexts can influence the perception of ambiguity.

I will begin my overview with the starting point of all pragmatic theories of figurative language processing, the standard pragmatic view, while including a few points of criticism (2.4.1). From there, I will move on to the varied experimental evidence on the processing of ambiguous idioms, with a focus on views of idioms as long words (2.4.2) and views of idioms as configurations (2.4.3). Finally, I will turn to the importance of context for the processing of idioms and present approaches that try to incorporate context in their models of (idiom) processing (2.4.4).

### 2.4.1 Standard Pragmatic View

The standard pragmatic approach to figurative language processing (Grice 1975; Searle 1993) is based on two assumptions: Firstly, there is a fundamental difference between literal and figurative language. Literal language generates meaning according to Frege's principle of compositionality (cf. 1.5), using the words'



meaning stored in the language user's lexicon and syntactic rules. Figurative language, by contrast, utilizes pragmatic principles. Secondly, there are maxims of conversation that guide language use. Grice summarizes these under his cooperative principle: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice 1975, 45). Starting with this general principle, he develops four maxims (quantity, quality, relation, and manner) with various submaxims. If a language user encounters a statement that – on the level of what is said – does not comply with one of these maxims, he "is entitled to assume that that maxim, or at least the overall Cooperative Principle, is observed at the level of what is implicated" (Grice 1975, 52). According to this assumption, conversational implicatures are generated, and the utterance is thus made to comply with the cooperative principle. The generation of conversational implicatures takes place unconsciously. The language user is not aware of this process, yet a slight processing delay is discernable in (some) experimental settings (e.g. Bobrow & Bell 1973, see 2.4.2 below).

The distinction between "what is said" and "what is implicated" illustrates that, "in the traditional view, literal meanings are thought to differ from nonliteral meanings in the same way that semantic meanings differ from pragmatic meanings" (Gibbs & Colston 2012, 62). For the processing of idioms, the standard pragmatic view thus predicts that, whenever an idiom is encountered, the compositional meaning is processed. If, and only if, this meaning appears to violate the cooperative principle, the phrasal meaning is generated via conversational implicatures. I will illustrate the core ideas of the standard pragmatic view by applying them to an example of my own corpus:

(64) "Did you even come to the match?" he [Harry] asked her. "Of course I did", said Hermione in a strangely high-pitched voice, not looking up. "And I'm very glad we won! And I think you did really well, but I need to read this by Monday."

"Come on Hermione, come and have some food", Harry said, looking over at Ron and wondering whether he was in a good enough mood to **bury the hatchet**. "I can't Harry, I've still got 422 pages to read" said Hermione, now sounding slightly hysterical. "Anyway", she glanced over at Ron, too. "He doesn't want me to join in."

(Rowling 1999, Ch. 13; waw190055)

For an idiom like "bury the hatchet" in (64), the standard pragmatic view predicts that the compositional meaning of "entombing a specific ax" is generated

first. To try and integrate this meaning into the context already processed is not possible: Harry, Ron, and Hermione are in the Gryffindor common room; it is highly unlikely that they will bury anything there. The definite article suggests that the hatchet has been mentioned before, yet this is not the case. Instead, they have been talking about winning a game and about food. The context preceding the cited paragraph does not allow an integration of the idiom's compositional meaning either. Assuming that Harry is being cooperative and is making a meaningful contribution to the conversation leads to the retrieval of the idiom's phrasal meaning "stop fighting".<sup>46</sup> Ron and Hermione have been fighting, and Harry wonders whether they are ready to make up and get along with each other again.

One possible conclusion to draw from the application of the standard pragmatic view to example (64) is the hypothesis that the processing of nonliteral language is more difficult – and thus requires more cognitive effort – than the processing of literal language. If we apply this hypothesis to idioms, we arrive at the prediction that processing idioms is costlier in their phrasal reading than in their compositional reading. The standard pragmatic view thus makes the comprehension of idioms (and other forms of figurative language) out to be something other than "normal" language comprehension, requiring a different mode of processing. This theory is challenged by various studies (Gibbs 1979; Ortony et al. 1978; Gibbs 1994).<sup>47</sup> An alternative view "treats idioms as continuous with ordinary forms of language use" (Cacciari & Glucksberg 1991, 217) and does not view idioms as "noncomponential lexicalized phrases" (Cutting & Bock 1997, 57).

When researchers set out to experimentally investigate the processing of idioms, they started by testing the hypotheses the standard pragmatic view suggests: Firstly, the compositional meaning of idioms is processed faster than the phrasal meaning (see 2.4.2 below). Secondly, the phrasal meaning is not processed if there is no conflict between the compositional meaning and the context (see 2.4.2 below). Thirdly, the compositional meaning and the meaning of the parts of the phrase are activated, even if only the phrasal meaning complies with the context (see 2.4.3 below). In the following, I will present exemplary experiments testing these hypotheses in various ways.

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<sup>46</sup> OED: "hatchet, n.", P2, a(a).

<sup>47</sup> See also Gibbs & Colston (2012, 58–84) and Glucksberg (2001, 76f).

### 2.4.2 Word-like Models

These theories of idiom processing see idioms as similar to long words: Idioms have to be learned as units and are stored in the mental lexicon, either in a separate list comprised of idioms or as part of the normal mental lexicon.

#### Idiomatic List Hypothesis

Bobrow & Bell propose the *idiomatic list hypothesis* (Bobrow & Bell 1973, 343): the elements of the idiomatic expression are combined into a complex “idiom word” whose meaning is found by searching through a separate “idiom list” that is not part of the normal lexicon. This idiom list is compiled in the process of language acquisition, adding each idiomatic phrase and its meaning as it is learned. Thus, while idioms are viewed as long words, they are stored differently from other words and, therefore, there are two modes of processing: a literal and an idiomatic one. The literal mode of processing is privileged; only if this fails to yield a coherent meaning, is the idiomatic mode of processing employed. In their experiments, Bobrow & Bell introduced set paradigms, with four either idiomatic or non-idiomatic sentences preceding a test sentence with an ambiguous idiom. Subjects were asked to give the two meanings of the test sentence and indicate which meaning they saw first. In the non-idiomatic sets “saw idiom first” proportions were much lower than in the idiomatic set. The results are interpreted as a clear indication for the existence of the two distinct processing strategies, with the possibility of switching directly to idiom processing mode if brought into a mode of idiom awareness by preceding idioms.

#### Lexical Representation Hypothesis

Some of the results, however, seem to point in a different direction: It is not always the idiomatic set that raises idiom awareness but rather the literal set that lowers it. Following this line of thought, Swinney & Cutler developed the *lexical representation hypothesis* (1979). While they agree that idioms are long words, unlike Bobrow & Bell (1973), they do not assume predominance of a literal processing mode. In their view, “idioms are stored and retrieved from the lexicon in the same manner as any other word” (Swinney & Cutler 1979, 525). The processing of both meanings, the compositional and the phrasal, commences at the same time, as soon as the first word of the idiom is encountered, which means that the meaning of the individual words is retrieved from the lexicon and structural analysis takes place simultaneously to accessing the entire idiom in the lexicon. The context-free phrase classification task they em-

ploy to test their hypothesis was designed to reflect on-line processing rather than post-perceptual evaluation.<sup>48</sup> They asked “subjects to decide whether or not a visually presented string of words formed a meaningful, natural phrase in English” (Swinney & Cutler 1979, 526). It is hence not relevant whether subjects access the phrasal or the compositional meaning of idiomatic phrases, as in both cases they will be judged as acceptable phrases of English. If the *lexical representation hypothesis*, which suggests that both meanings are accessed in parallel, holds true, classification for idiomatic phrases should be faster than for non-idiomatic phrases. The authors claim that, for idiomatic phrases, only retrieval of the phrasal meaning from the lexicon is necessary and no additional structural analysis of the compositional meaning. The results support their hypothesis. Under varying conditions (various types of idioms, changes in the awareness of idioms), idiomatic phrases were constantly classified faster than non-idiomatic phrases. The experiments of Ortony et al. (1978) can also be interpreted as supporting this hypothesis: they report that comprehension of idiomatic phrases in their phrasal meaning is often faster than in their compositional meaning. Both experiments are seen as refuting the idea that there is a special processing mode for figurative or idiomatic language.

### Direct Access View

Seeing that the phrasal meaning of idioms is accessed quickly, especially “in realistic social contexts” (Gibbs & Colston 2012, 63), Gibbs (1980, 1986) came to postulate his *direct access view*. His hypothesis is “that hearers can use context to understand indirect utterances directly, without first analyzing the literal form of the sentence” (Gibbs 1980, 149), and that, hence, the “analysis of a sentence’s complete literal meaning is not an obligatory part of figurative language processing” (Gibbs & Colston 2012, 64). Without context, any utterance must be processed “in more of a bottom-up manner” (Gibbs 1980, 150). Context, on the other hand, gives the hearer predictive power. Gibbs created story contexts, which, in a separate study, were rated to be natural and to yield the intended interpretations of the ambiguous idioms. With these story contexts, Gibbs provides a test for sentence understanding that is more realistic than the previously used isolated sentences (see above). The stories end with the target, an ambiguous idiom in either its phrasal or its compositional meaning. In the study, these stories were followed by a paraphrase (of either the phrasal or the composition-

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<sup>48</sup> Swinney & Cutler (1979, 526) argue that post-perceptual tasks, like the ones given by e.g. Bobrow & Bell (1973), do not necessarily reflect online processing.

al meaning) that had to be rated as true or false. Comprehension time for the target as well as judgement time for the paraphrase was measured. Both in and out of context, reaction times for the phrasal meaning of idioms were faster than for the compositional meaning. Gibbs explains this with the strong conventional meaning associated with idioms, due to which “context plays much less of a role in helping the listener construct an appropriate [phrasal] interpretation” (Gibbs 1980, 150). By contrast, “context should play a crucial role in getting the listener to understand an unconventional use of an idiomatic expression” (Gibbs 1980, 150). With the direct access view, Gibbs gives prominence to the influence context has on the processing of idioms and figurative language in general. However, he does not provide details on how exactly figurative interpretations are reached, nor details on *how* exactly context influences processing.

### 2.4.3 Idioms as Configurations

In contrast to the aforementioned models, the following theories do not see idioms as independent entries in the mental lexicon. Instead, “their meaning is associated with particular configurations of words and becomes available [...] whenever sufficient input has rendered the configuration recognizable” (Cacciari & Tabossi 1988, 678). The words that are part of the configuration may also be used separately. Thus, the challenge for the hearer is to recognize whether words are used as part of a configuration or not.

#### Idiomatic Key Hypothesis

The *configuration hypothesis* or *idiomatic key hypothesis* (Cacciari & Tabossi 1988) thus predicts that ‘bury’, for example, is a separate lexical entry in the mental lexicon. It is activated when processing a sentence like “She buried the box”. Additionally, it is part of the configuration “bury the hatchet” and is activated in its processing. The *idiomatic key hypothesis* predicts “that a configuration, i.e., an idiom, cannot be recognized before a certain amount of information has been received” (Cacciari & Tabossi 1988, 678). In their experiments with sentential contexts, Cacciari & Tabossi test opaque VP-idioms which are not ambiguous and are unambiguously identifiable as idioms when their last word is encountered. In contrast to former studies, which they criticize for not necessarily reflecting the way we process idioms, they employ cross-modal priming as a method reflecting online processing. Measurements are taken before the last word, the idiomatic key, is reached. The results of their experiments show

that predictability of the idiom facilitates the processing of the phrasal meaning, that in contexts without cues only the literal meaning is directly available, and that both meanings are immediately available in idiomatic contexts. These findings cannot be explained adequately by either the *lexical representation model* or the *direct access model*, while supporting the *idiomatic key hypothesis*. However, the question remains how much information has to be processed to facilitate idiom recognition and how we can determine the necessary amount, i.e. where the idiomatic key is located.

### Hybrid Model

A similar approach, the *hybrid model*, was first promoted by Titone & Connine (1999). They investigate the simultaneous processing of idioms as non-compositional and compositional word sequences with self-paced reading and eye tracking studies. They find that the processing of idioms is dependent on, among other factors, their frequency, decomposability, and transparency. Idioms that are more conventionalized and more frequent as well as less decomposable and less transparent are more likely to be retrieved instantly as a whole, i.e. as non-compositional phrases. Idioms that are less conventionalized, less frequent, more decomposable and more transparent are more likely to be processed compositionally first or in parallel to the non-compositional processing. In this case, the phrasal meaning is only directly retrieved when the idiomatic key is encountered. According to this approach, “idioms can be both unitary in that they require their own lexical entry, and compositional, in that they make use of simple lemmas in the mental lexicon” (Sprenger et al. 2006, 164). The lemmas making up the idiom are not restricted to the idiomatic context; they can also be used elsewhere. The *hybrid model* thus takes into account “the word-like aspects as well as the metaphorical and compositionally derived aspects of idioms” (Titone & Connine 1999, 1672) and is therefore more likely to apply to the various types of idioms. Studies by Sprenger et al. (2006), Caillies & Butcher (2007), and Holsinger & Kaiser (2013), among others, offer support for a hybrid model of idiom processing. They find that, while literal word meanings become active during the processing of idioms, priming happens on a conceptual level as well.

#### 2.4.4 Processing Theories Including Context

Many of the studies cited above attribute great importance to the context in which the processing of an idiom takes place.<sup>49</sup> Context is said to influence the real-time processing of idioms, with contextual expectations strengthening either the compositional or the phrasal reading, and allowing the hearer to process the intended meaning much more quickly. Nevertheless, many studies on the processing of idioms are carried out without embedding the idioms in any context at all. Even in those experiments focusing on contextual expectations, the experimental items are seldom composed of more than one or two sentences (i.e. the idiom is embedded in one sentence and there is one preceding sentence). There are only few studies including longer texts preceding the idiom (e.g. Bobrow & Bell 1973; Gibbs 1986; McGlone et al. 1994). Still, these do not give much information as to how these texts were constructed; rather, they test whether they seem to yield the intended results (e.g. inducing phrasal or compositional readings).

In contrast to these findings, it has been argued that “realistic social contexts” are necessary to study any form of figurative language processing:

Numerous reading time and phrase classification studies demonstrate that listeners and readers can often understand the figurative interpretations of metaphors, irony, sarcasm, idioms, proverbs, and indirect speech acts without having to first analyze and reject their literal meanings when these expressions are seen in realistic social contexts. (Gibbs & Colston 2012, 63)

In my opinion, this statement has two main consequences: Firstly, the studying of idiom processing should ideally take place in what Gibbs and Colston call “realistic social contexts” (Gibbs & Colston 2012, 63).<sup>50</sup> Secondly, it is essential to study context in more detail and define which context features in particular influence idiom processing. In the following, I am going to present approaches to idiom processing that include context in some way and add a brief critical evaluation to each.

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<sup>49</sup> In this chapter, I report on the writings and studies of others, who often do not define clearly what they refer to with context. Hence, I will not go into detail here concerning the question what exactly context means. I will define context more closely in reference to my work in chapter 3.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. also Kaminski (1992), who argues (in psychology) for evaluating research objects in their natural habitat, saying that laboratory experiments cannot yield valid data on how humans behave in the real world.

### Graded Salience View

Giora's approach is referred to as *graded salience view*. According to her, idiom processing does not necessarily distinguish between phrasal and compositional meanings; rather, language users always process the more salient meaning first (Giora 1997, 183). The "salient sense of a word or an expression is the one directly computable from the mental lexicon irrespective of inferences drawn on the basis of contextual information" (Giora 2003, 18). Salient meanings are the meanings that are more frequent, conventional, familiar or prototypical/stereotypical than less salient ones (Giora 1997, 183; Gibbs & Colston 2012, 87). In other words:

Stored information is superior to unstored information such as novel information or information inferable from context: while salient information is highly accessible, nonsalient information requires strongly supportive contextual information to become as accessible as salient information. (Giora 2003, 15)

Thus, prior context may change the salience of the meanings of words or phrases, enhancing one and, in comparison, lowering another (Giora 1997, 183). This observation indicates that "salience is not an either-or notion, [...] it admits degrees" (Giora 2003, 15f). The grades of salience are dependent on the linguistic community, the individual, and the given linguistic context.

What follows from the *graded salience view* for the processing of ambiguous idioms? The relative salience of the phrasal and the compositional meaning is closely linked with the relationship between the meanings as discussed in chapter 2.3: An increasing semantic distance mostly coincides with a more conventionalized phrasal meaning, and thus the phrasal meaning is very likely more salient. However, when trying to determine the relative salience of the phrasal and the compositional meaning, there may be differences according to whether the idiom is encountered without or within a specific context. Out of context, it may be difficult to determine this, as all factors depend on some contextual factors: frequency and familiarity, for example, cannot be determined without referring to a linguistic community or individual. Within a specific linguistic context, we additionally have to determine the factors influencing the salience of both meanings.

There are a few aspects not addressed satisfactorily in the *graded salience view*. Firstly, the studies reported in Giora & Fein (1999) compare the salience of word meanings with that of utterance meanings. Different approaches may be difficult to implement; still, it has to be questioned whether this is acceptable and whether the results are dependable. Secondly, there is no clarification of how the graded salience view deals with the fact that salient word meanings



and salient phrase meanings should be activated at the same time (e.g. when encountering the phrase “kick the bucket”, the word meanings of “kick” and “bucket” should be activated as well as the phrasal meaning “die”). Lastly, the *graded salience view* leaves unanswered how precisely context influences the salience of word or utterance meanings.

### Alternative Approaches to Incorporating Context

Apart from the graded salience view, there are only few approaches to idiom processing that include context, even though there are general processing theories that do so. I will shortly introduce two of these that have been applied to the processing of idioms.

Firstly, there is the *accessibility-based serial model* presented in Recanati (1995). Recanati argues that semantic values are often contextually assigned to constituents, with nonliteral interpretation being a particular case of such a contextual interpretation (Recanati 1995, 209). It is always “only the most accessible candidate” that “goes into the overall interpretation of the utterance” (Recanati 1995, 230). In reference to Barsalou & Billman (1989), accessibility is defined as a combination of the factors frequency of processing, recency of processing, and contextual relevance (Recanati 1995, 212). If the most accessible semantic value of an ambiguous idiom is the compositional reading, only this reading will be processed. If the phrasal reading is most accessible, only the phrasal reading will be processed (Recanati 1995, 230).

Secondly, there is *relevance theory* with Sperber, Wilson and Carston as its main representatives (Wilson & Sperber 1992; Sperber & Wilson 1996, 2004; Carston 2004). This theory is based on the claim “that an essential feature of most human communication is the expression and recognition of intentions” (Sperber & Wilson 2004, 607) and provides a distinction between linguistically decoded meaning and pragmatically inferred meaning. Utterances are pieces of evidence for the intended conveyance of meaning; thus, they raise expectations of relevance. The notion of relevance is described by the relation of processing effort and positive cognitive effect. The “relevance of an input to an individual” (Sperber & Wilson 2004, 609) can thus be measured by the following degrees:

- (a) The greater the cognitive effects achieved by processing an input, the greater its relevance.
- (b) The smaller the processing effort required to achieve these effects, the greater the relevance.

(Sperber & Wilson 2012, 102)

In other words: the smaller the processing effort and the greater the positive cognitive effect, the greater the relevance (Sperber & Wilson 1996, 123–132). Relevance theory has been applied to idioms by Vega Moreno (2001, 2003), outlining a “path of least effort hypothesis” where “idiomatic meaning is retrieved following considerations of relevance” (Vega Moreno 2001, 104).

Both approaches, the accessibility-based serial model and relevance theory, address the influence context has on the processing of language in general and idiomatic expressions in particular. The notions of salience and relevance are very useful to describe processes of ambiguity and disambiguation (see 3.3). However, both theories fail to answer how precisely various forms of context influence the processing of meanings and they both do not deal with cases of unresolved ambiguity.

## 2.5 Summary

The three-dimensional ambiguity model of RTG 1808 described in chapter 2.1 provides a heuristic tool for analyzing ambiguity in the language system as well as in discourse. In chapters 2.2 and 2.3 I have shown in which way a subgroup of idioms is ambiguous on the level of the language system, how the meanings are related and whether they are perceived as ambiguous out of context. Finally, I have addressed the question of how ambiguous idioms are processed, which will be relevant for analyzing the ambiguity of idioms not only on the level of the language system but also in discourse.

The overview of the various approaches to studying idioms clearly shows that context is an important factor when processing idioms. Nevertheless, only few linguistic experiments on idiom processing include context. In those experiments that do indeed include context, the contexts used are not the “realistic social contexts” Gibbs and Colston call for. I think studying idioms in contexts that were not constructed with the aim to investigate idioms experimentally will reveal new insight.

Furthermore, studying ambiguous idioms in realistic contexts also sheds light on the processing of idioms in general. There are contexts in which idioms retain their ambiguity, with both the compositional and the phrasal meaning being completely coherent and fitting the context (see 4.2 and 9.2). Neither *word-like models*, which predict that the phrasal meaning is not activated in these cases, nor *configuration models* can easily explain the upholding of the ambiguity. Thus, there is reason to believe that there is further influence on our processing of idioms – or that we process idioms differently altogether.

Before I go on to develop my theory of how the ambiguity potential of idioms may be employed by context, I will provide an overview of context types in the following chapter. I will define clearly what I refer to when using the term context and discuss the various influences context may have on the ambiguity and disambiguation of phrases.

## 3 Ambiguity and Context

Meibauer (2012, 12) points out that rich contexts are the norm in communication: “Without any contextual information, the hearer is at a loss with her interpretation. All real communication happens in rich contexts.” The previous chapter has confirmed the importance of context specifically for the processing of ambiguous idioms: Without at least some kind of context, it is not possible for a hearer to determine which of the meanings of an ambiguous idiom he is supposed to understand. However, Meibauer (2012, 9) calls attention to the fact that, while context is a core notion in linguistics, there is no standard definition or comprehensive theory of context.

The present thesis does not aim at defining the notion of context in a new way or in every detail. There have been and are many attempts to do that.<sup>51</sup> Yet it has been shown that research on idioms and research on ambiguity overlaps when the influence of context is taken into consideration. With my focus on ambiguous idioms, a context-based linguistic approach is thus not only suitable but even desirable. I therefore deem it essential to consider the possible implications of the term and to explain how I will use it from here on.

In the following, I will briefly discuss context approaches and narrow down the aspects of context that I will focus on (3.1). I will then go on to describe what happens if we encounter ambiguity in context, arguing that there are aspects of context and contextual influence on processing that cannot be studied in experimental contexts (3.2). Last but not least, I will explore mechanisms of ambiguity and disambiguation in relation to context (3.3).

### 3.1 Types of Context

*Context* is a term frequently used in scientific research as much as it is in everyday discourse. Often it is employed without discussing or defining it, or as Asher (1994, 731) puts it: “Context is one of those linguistic terms which is constantly used in all kinds of context but never explained.” This may be due to the fact that different perspectives on context highlight different aspects of it. Depending on the perspective, or – in other words – depending on the context in which one uses the term, context may be either given and thus not regarded as part of

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51 For instance, SFB 833 Tübingen, Fetzer (2007a), Fetzer & Oishi (2011), Finkbeiner et al. (2012), and Dijk (1977).

the utterance, or it may be subject to change when it is negotiated during the process of communication.

The scope of this thesis does not allow for an in-depth discussion of all research done on context. I will focus on two more recent papers: Fetzer (2007b), who gives a comprehensive discussion on the phenomenon of context, and Meibauer (2012), who offers a standard reference for those interested in linguistic approaches to context. While Fetzer provides a broader perspective on the phenomenon of context and is therefore more easily adaptable to the literary contexts I will investigate, Meibauer allows for a more fine-grained account of the language-based aspects of context necessary for a linguistic analysis. Fetzer (2007b) distinguishes between three main views: (A) context as a frame, (B) context as a dynamic construct, and (C) context as common ground or background information (Fetzer 2007b, 4f).

View (A) sees context “as a frame whose job it is to frame content by delimiting that content while at the same time being framed and delimited by less immediate adjacent frames” (Fetzer 2007b, 4). From this view, there is not one context but multiples that are built up in nested layers. Each layer, while being context to the layer below, has its own context in the layer above, comparable to a matryoshka doll. This view is dominant in relevance-theoretic accounts (e.g. Sperber & Wilson 1996), as it is the basis for explaining accessibility. Many of the linguistic studies investigating idioms discussed above refer to context as in view (A): Context is the text that surrounds (or even only the text that precedes) the idiom in question. If factors like frequency are included, these are part of the wider context, or, in keeping with the picture of the matryoshka doll, part of an exterior layer.

According to view (B), context is a dynamic construct (Fetzer 2007b, 4).<sup>52</sup> In contrast to view (A), which does not take communication into account, this perspective focuses on the communication participants in whose interaction a common context is created and constantly undergoes change as long as the communication continues. In the study contexts discussed above, no communication takes place, there is no interaction, and, therefore, context could not be viewed there as a construction in the way view (B) suggests.

View (C), by contrast, presupposes background information<sup>53</sup> in the form of “a set of propositions which participants take for granted in interaction. This

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<sup>52</sup> Fetzer (2007b, 4) cites as exemplary representatives in ethnomethodology Garfinkel (1994), Goodwin & Duranti (1992), Heritage (1984), and Schegloff (1992), in interactional sociolinguistics Gumperz (1996, 2003), and in sociopragmatics Fetzer (1999, 2004).

<sup>53</sup> See also Stalnaker (1999).

allows for two different conceptions of context: a static conception in which context is external to the utterance, and an interactive one, in which context is imported into the utterance while at the same time invoking and reconstructing context” (Fetzer 2007b, 5). However, the static conception is refuted in pragmatics (e.g. Levinson 2003, 33).

Proceeding from the representation of context as a parts-whole construction, Fetzer goes on to distinguish between different types or aspects of context: *linguistic context*, *cognitive context*, *social context*, and *sociocultural context* (Fetzer 2007b, 5). By contrast, Meibauer’s approach is characterized by the linguist’s point of view. His first three “dimensions of context” (*intratextual context*, *infratextual context*, *intertextual context*) provide a more fine-grained division of Fetzer’s linguistic context, while *extratextual context* (or ‘situational context’), defined as “the relation of a text to aspects of the situation in which the text has been produced or interpreted” (Meibauer 2012, 11), subsumes Fetzer’s categories of *social* and *sociocultural context*.

I will illustrate the various types of context using the phrase “draw the drapes” in an example from *Amelia Bedelia*, transcribed in (65), depicted in Figure 3 (p. 57). The phrase, while not an idiom, has the two possible readings “pull the drapes over the window” (OED: “draw, v.”, 11a) and “make a picture of the drapes” (OED: “draw, v.”, 60a) and interacts with the context in a way similar to the idioms analyzed in chapter 9.

(65) **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.

(Parish 1963; waw190065)

*Amelia Bedelia* is the first book in an illustrated children’s book series written by Peggy Parish and – after her death – by her nephew Herman Parish. The title character comes from a very literal-minded family; hence, Amelia Bedelia always understands figurative language literally, which leads to various comical situations.

### 3.1.1 Linguistic Context

*Linguistic context* or, in reference to Beaugrande & Dressler (1981), co-text, “comprises the actual language used within discourse. Language is composed of linguistic constructions (or parts) embedded in adjacent linguistic constructions composing a whole clause, sentence, utterance, turn or text” (Fetzer 2007b, 5). Meibauer subdivides linguistic context into *intratextual* and *infratextual context*. *Intratextual context* or *co-text* is defined as “the relation of a piece of text to its surrounding text” (Meibauer 2012, 11) and *infratextual context* as “the relation of a piece of text to the whole of the text” (Meibauer 2012, 11). Furthermore, Meibauer’s *intertextual context*, which refers to “the relation of a text to other texts” (Meibauer 2012, 11), is partially included in linguistic context, with intertextual context being an additional layer according to the view of context as a frame.

For the example from *Amelia Bedelia*, the *linguistic context* is the whole text of the book. The *co-text* is the text immediately surrounding the phrase in question. Thus, when the phrase first occurs, the co-text is “when the sun comes in”; for the second occurrence, the co-text consists of the sentences “Amelia Bedelia looked at the list again.” and “That’s what it says.” The term may also be taken a bit more broadly as including the whole paragraph transcribed in (65) above, and this is how I will use it from here on.

The *infratextual context* describes the relationship of this one paragraph to the whole of the book. This aspect of context allows us, among other things, to understand that “Draw the drapes when the sun comes in” is part of a list of tasks which Amelia Bedelia is to fulfil while her employers are not at home.

The *intertextual context* is less relevant for *Amelia Bedelia*, which is the first book in a long series, but it is very important for all the following books: They all rely on the established character of Amelia Bedelia, who always understands everything literally, and on the love of her employees for her pie, which ensures that she is never let go.

### 3.1.2 Non-linguistic Co-text

There is a form of context not discussed in either Fetzer or Meibauer: non-linguistic co-text. This type of context includes e.g. images, typesetting, and typography, but also the form of publication (book, magazine, newspaper, advertisement, etc.) or the material the text is printed on. In short, ignoring the materiality of a text may leave out important aspects of it. I will not go into de-

tail here<sup>54</sup>, but some of these aspects are relevant for my analyses: children’s literature commonly includes various forms of images which often are more than “simple illustrations”. Images may influence the interpretation of the text: In cases of ambiguity in the text, they may e.g. represent only one of the possible readings or both.



**Fig. 3:** Page layout of (65), “draw the drapes 1” (Amelia Bedelia; Parish 1963, 11f)

The example from *Amelia Bedelia* shows the relevance of the non-linguistic context for the interpretation. The reader can only be sure how the character interprets the ambiguous phrase “draw the drapes” because there is an image showing her interpretation (right page in Figure 3). Only looking at the text in (65) makes the interpretation “make a picture” more likely because it is unusual to sit down to “pull the drapes over the window” but the reader cannot be entirely sure without the image. Furthermore, the arrangement of the double page spread has to be taken into account as the arrangement of the individual elements in relation to each other influences the reading and interpretations pro-

<sup>54</sup> For a detailed discussion, please see Potysch (2018, 119–121 and 159–172).



cess. On the top of the left page there is an image of Amelia Bedelia reading the list. Similar images are found at the beginning of each new sequence, i.e. when Amelia Bedelia moves on to the next item on her list. The image precedes the sentence “Draw the drapes when the sun comes in”, which is her next task. Printed in a font that looks like handwriting, it stands out from the regularly printed text below. The last sentence on the left page (“I’m not much of a hand at drawing, but I’ll try”) still leaves her reading open: will she try to pull the drapes over the window or will she try to make a picture of them? On the right side of the double page spread there is a large illustration of Amelia Bedelia sketching the drapes with the sentence underneath “So Amelia Bedelia sat right down and she drew those drapes”. When reading this last sentence, the reader thus already knows which reading Amelia Bedelia got – without the images this would not necessarily be the case. Moreover, this image is so prominent that it may influence the reader from the moment he turns the page. Thus, this example shows that, while non-linguistic co-text may not be central to my analyses, it should not be completely ignored.

### 3.1.3 Cognitive Context

*Cognitive context* is, among other aspects, “of immense importance for language processing and the corresponding inference processes involved” (Fetzer 2007b, 11). It includes mental representations of what is processed as well as assumptions that are read, written, and deleted according to context. Expectations and implications that are invoked by context may be raised or lowered in strength or be erased completely. Inferencing processes depend on cognitive context as well.

For the example from *Amelia Bedelia*, the reader can follow the thought process of the main character: (1) She received a list of things to do. (2) The list says to draw the drapes if (and only if) the sun comes in. (3) The sun is coming in. (4) She determines that, in this case, she has to draw the drapes.

Cognitive context is partly influenced by the social groups one is part of, partly it is unique to each individual. For communication, it follows that speaker and hearer do not only have to take their own cognitive context into account but that of their communication partner as well – as far as it may be determined.

### 3.1.4 Social Context

“Social context is often considered to comprise the context of a communicative exchange and is defined by deducting linguistic context and cognitive context from a holistic conception of context” (Fetzer 2007b, 12). This corresponds with Meibauer’s *extratextual context*, which refers to “the relation of a text to aspects of the situation in which the text has been produced or interpreted” (Meibauer 2012, 11). This kind of context is also called ‘situational context’ or ‘communicative context’ and it includes inter alia: knowledge of the language and general knowledge of the conventions of appropriate language use, the participants of a communicative situation, and the physical setting (i.e. time and location). In conjunction with linguistic context it is, for instance, necessary to resolve deictic references like temporal deixis, local deixis, or participant deixis. Furthermore, within a specific communication, social context adds to the simple roles of speaker and hearer, “they subcategorize into social roles and their gendered and ethnic identities, to name but the most prominent ones” (Fetzer 2007b, 13).

The physical setting of the communicative situation of the example from *Amelia Bedelia* is a fancy house somewhere in the U.S. sometime in the 1950s or 1960s. Amelia Bedelia is the housemaid. The participants of the communicative situation are Amelia Bedelia and her employers, Mr. and Mrs. Rogers. Their communication takes place in written form: Mrs. Rogers provides Amelia Bedelia with a list of tasks to be performed. The form of communication reflects the roles of employer and employee, with the employer giving instructions and the employee following these instructions. Additionally, there is the extratextual setting of the author and her readers, which – on the readers’ side – may vary considerably.

### 3.1.5 Sociocultural Context

This variation is captured in what Fetzer calls *sociocultural context*. While “social context is conceived of as an unmarked type of context or as a default context, sociocultural context is conceived of as a marked type of context in which particular variables, such as time, location or individual, are interpreted in a particular mode” (Fetzer 2007b, 14f). This mode depends on the specific social or historical setting and on the individual’s background knowledge. For Meibauer, sociocultural context is part of the *extratextual context*. Furthermore, the knowledge of other texts, which are part of the *intertextual context* (Meibauer 2012, 11), may influence the mode as well.

For the example from *Amelia Bedelia* it follows that the way the list was written and the way the list is read are influenced by the respective roles of the participants of the communication: Mrs. Rogers writes the list in her role as employer, Amelia Bedelia reads it in her role as employee. Additionally, Amelia Bedelia comes from a very literal-minded family (if they remove dust from furniture, they do not “dust” it, they “undust” it, for example). This personal background is also part of her sociocultural context. The roles, the knowledge of the characters, and the physical setting always stay the same within the text: employer and employee in a well-to-do American household in the 1950s or 1960s. The setting outside of the text does not: While the author is always a thirty-six-year-old American in 1963, her readers vary. A reader then and a reader now will view the text differently,<sup>55</sup> so will readers with less or more experience in reading and life, and also someone who knows some or all of the other Amelia Bedelia stories in comparison to someone who does not.

### 3.1.6 Concluding Remarks

The main conclusion I would like to draw from this short overview of aspects of context is that the notion of context that matters for my analysis is broader than just linguistic context. For the examples I will discuss in part III, which are mostly taken from literary texts, more specifically from children’s literature, different aspects of context are relevant at different points in the analysis. In chapter 4, I will discuss the question in which way the direct co-text can influence our perception of the ambiguity of ambiguous idioms. Therefore, I will focus on co-text and cognitive context in this chapter.

The above example from *Amelia Bedelia* shows that authors may use expected social knowledge of their readers to create characters or situations. Most readers will know that in this situation, where a housemaid is given a list of tasks, “draw the drapes” can only mean “pull the drapes over the window”. *Amelia Bedelia*, however, is different, which brings humour to the story as well as quite a number of comic effects. It also promotes linguistic awareness (see chapter 8). Therefore, part III, where I will discuss literary texts as a specific

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<sup>55</sup> Readers in different historical settings have a different sociocultural context. For example, the average contemporary reader in the 1960s, when *Amelia Bedelia* was written, can be assumed to be better acquainted with the roles of the lady of the house and the housekeeper than a present-day reader.

kind of context in more detail, will incorporate aspects of social and sociocultural context as well.

### 3.2 The Relevance of Context for Ambiguity Processing

In processing words, phrases, or sentences that have the potential to be ambiguous, the hearer is confronted with the challenge to find the “right” meaning, the one he is supposed to understand. In the case of idioms, there are two distinct possibilities (cf. 2.2): With ill-formed idioms (i.e. idioms that do not have a well-formed compositional meaning), the challenge of processing is reduced to the question whether the hearer is familiar with the idiom or not. There are no two sensible meanings and, hence, if the hearer does not know the phrasal meaning, the result of processing will be incohesive. Ambiguous idioms, by contrast, have a well-formed compositional meaning in addition to the phrasal meaning. Most times when encountering an ambiguous idiom, the hearer will thus face the challenge of choosing one of the meanings. In theory, every time we encounter an ambiguous idiom, there are three possible scenarios:

- (a) Only meaning A is relevant.
- (b) Only meaning B is relevant.
- (c) Both meaning A and meaning B are relevant.<sup>56</sup>

It is unclear how exactly we know which of the scenarios we face when reading a text. One possible hypothesis is that we rely on various aspects of context to tell us which scenario is most likely. From a pragmatic point of view, ambiguity is only recognizable in context. If we encounter a phrase with the potential to be ambiguous without any context, and we are asked to determine its meaning, we have to construct possible contexts in order to determine possible meanings.

In the example from *Amelia Bedelia* cited above ((65) and Figure 3), the phrase “draw the drapes” may be interpreted either as “pull the drapes over the window” (meaning A) or “make a drawing of the drapes” (meaning B). If we encounter this phrase without any context (e.g. written on a piece of paper and we do not know who wrote a message to whom in which kind of setting), the only factors that allow us to favour one or the other meaning are familiarity or

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<sup>56</sup> This last scenario is frequently encountered in literary texts when language play is involved. Often, this is combined with a doubling of the communication level. I will discuss this in detail in chapter 4.2 and part III.

frequency.<sup>57</sup> These factors are not reliable, as they only give us the statistic likelihood for one or the other meaning. Additionally, this likelihood may vary from reader to reader: while “draw the drapes” would more frequently be interpreted as “pull the drapes over the window”, someone who draws regularly will think of “make a picture” more easily than of “pull over the window”. Without context, there is no way to decide whether we face scenario (a), (b) or (c): both meanings are theoretically possible, but we do not know which of them is right or if both are right in this specific situation. Within the context given in *Amelia Bedelia*, different characters face different scenarios. As detailed above, Mrs. Rogers faces scenario (a), Amelia Bedelia faces scenario (b), and the readers, able to identify with both characters, may face scenario (c).<sup>58</sup> Linguistic analysis of words or phrases with the potential to be ambiguous thus needs to include some form of context in order to know (or, in experimental settings, control) which of the scenarios we face.

As discussed above (2.4), there is experimental evidence to show that context facilitates the processing of ambiguous idioms. Even those experiments that do not highlight their reference to context have to include factors like familiarity or frequency, i.e. aspects of social or sociocultural context. Yet, whenever context is explicitly included, it is limited in three respects. Firstly, there is no comprehensive definition of the notion of “context”: mostly, context is limited in type, only referring to linguistic context (i.e. the linguistic material preceding or surrounding the idiom), while other aspects of context are excluded without this being addressed. Secondly, the linguistic context is limited in extent, mostly comprising one sentence only in which the idiom is included, sometimes one or two sentences preceding this idiomatic sentence. Only rarely do we find very short stories considered (e.g. Gibbs 1980), but never longer texts. Thirdly, context is limited as to effect: all contexts included in experimental items are either meant to be clearly disambiguating or to be clearly ambiguous. Furthermore, researchers rarely state how exactly they constructed their contexts, which context features were relevant for their study, and whether they expressly excluded other context features from their investigation. In the following, I will illustrate these points of criticism with three studies where the researchers ex-

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<sup>57</sup> cf. Katz (1977, 14): “The anonymous letter situation is the case where an ideal speaker of a language receives an anonymous letter containing just one sentence of that language, with no clue whatsoever about the motive, circumstances of transmission, or any other factor relevant to understanding the sentence on the basis of its context of utterance.” The scenario I describe enhances this situation insofar as even the intended reader is not known.

<sup>58</sup> The knowledge of the series may in fact influence readers’ expectations in a particular direction – though certainly not at the beginning of the first volume of the series.

plicitly state that they investigate effects of context: Bobrow & Bell (1973), Colombo (1998), and Ortony et al. (1978).

Bobrow & Bell's (1973) contexts consist of four sentences preceding the test sentence. The test sentence always contains an ambiguous idiom that may be read either idiomatically or literally. The prediction is that it is possible to induce idiomatic or literal processing, depending on the types of sentences preceding the test sentence. To induce idiomatic processing, these four sentences include ambiguous idioms, e.g. "John gave Mary the slip", "John let the cat out of the bag", "John was in hot water" (Bobrow & Bell 1973, 344). To induce literal processing, the four sentences contain literal ambiguities: "Mary fed her dog biscuits", "John observed the wild Indian dance", "John and Mary know how many people fail" (Bobrow & Bell 1973, 344). Because the context sentences are not related content-wise to the test sentence, it seems that the content of the linguistic context is irrelevant. Thus, only cognitive context is considered: the expectations for encountering literal or idiomatic expressions are raised or lowered depending on the preceding set. Social and sociocultural context are not discussed at all.

Colombo reports that "there are important effects of the sentence context on the comprehension of ambiguous idiomatic expressions" (Colombo 1998, 400). Her contexts are very short, just one sentence ending in the target. In contrast to most researchers in this area, her sentence contexts are not only biased towards either the compositional or the phrasal meaning, she also includes neutral sentence context. The biases are heavily based on co-text. She also includes plausibility as a factor, which relies on cognitive context. Social and sociocultural context are not included, only frequency is remarked upon.

Ortony et al. (1978) argue that both of their experiments "can be accounted for in terms of contextually generated expectations" (Ortony et al. 1978, 465). Their contexts for testing idioms consist of one sentence ending in the target (either an idiomatic phrase or a literal paraphrase) plus one preceding sentence. Contexts are biased either toward the compositional or the phrasal meaning, control versions use the idiomatic inducing context with literal paraphrases of the phrasal meaning as targets. In contrast to many other researchers, they explicitly state their guidelines for creating their contexts:

- (a) contexts should induce either clearly metaphorical or clearly literal interpretations of the targets;
- (b) the contexts themselves should be written using only literal language;
- (c) the target should not merely repeat or translate one of the context sentences but should be a continuation or summary sentence; and
- (d) the degree to which the target follows from

the context should be as equal in the metaphor and literal versions as possible. (Ortony et al. 1978, 468)<sup>59</sup>

In addition, they conducted pre-tests to confirm that their contexts adhered to these guidelines. Still, I have three main issues with the way they created their contexts: Firstly, they do not state in which way this “inducing” of one meaning or another is achieved. Which context factors are tweaked? Which linguistic elements do have an influence? Secondly, to write something using only “literal language” (guideline (b)) is challenging. As stated in chapter 2.2, the literal meaning of individual words is not always clear, and we are so used to figurative language that we often do not even recognize it as figurative any more. Thirdly, only co-text is overtly considered. Some forms of cognitive, social and sociocultural context have an influence on processing, but they are not set out in detail.

There are, of course, also researchers who created longer contexts (e.g. Gibbs 1986; Levorato & Cacciari 1999; Holsinger 2013) for their studies. Still, the setting of an experiment poses restrictions, e.g. regarding length of co-text and the possibility to determine and include aspects of social and sociocultural context. Consequently, there are aspects of context and contextual influence on processing that are difficult to be studied in experimental contexts. We can study them, however, in other settings, e.g. in literary texts which imitate everyday language and life (see part III).

### 3.3 Context Matters: Ambiguation and Disambiguation

Studying ambiguity out of context, i.e. the potential of certain words, phrases, etc. to be ambiguous, yields important information on structural requirements for ambiguity. Turning from there to the question of how ambiguous words, phrases, etc. are embedded into larger units, opens up a much larger field of research: in which way is the ambiguity potential functionalized?

To answer this question, I will in this chapter first argue against studying ambiguation and disambiguation independently (3.3.1). The theories that deal with the ambiguity of idioms discussed so far (2.4) are mostly concerned with ambiguity resolution. To reduce this imbalance, I will turn to theories that may help to describe or explain the creation of ambiguity (3.3.2). The play between

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<sup>59</sup> The guidelines are phrased for their metaphorical contexts. They are equally used for creating contexts for testing idiomatic phrases.

ambiguation and disambiguation becomes more relevant in more complex texts, especially in the interaction between communication partners. Therefore, I will discuss certain parameters that help to systematize ambiguation and disambiguation in communication (3.3.3) as well as context features that may influence ambiguation and disambiguation (3.3.4).

### 3.3.1 The Interdependency of Ambiguation and Disambiguation

Research on ambiguity in everyday communication is mostly concerned with the resolution of ambiguity. It has been noted that – in contrast to Grice’s theory (Grice 1975) – ambiguity is rarely problematic in a specific discourse situation (Wasow 2015a). The participants in a communication situation either use various forms of context to resolve the ambiguity (consciously or unconsciously), or they negotiate the correct (or intended) meaning with each other (cf. Schole in prep.). My corpus of examples from literary texts differs from everyday communication especially with regard to one feature: mostly, there is more than one level of communication, i.e. that related to the text-internal characters, and that external to the text (i.e. the ‘real’ author and his readers).<sup>60</sup> Because of this multi-layered communication, disambiguation and ambiguation should not be considered separately. They interact in complex ways and aspects of each may influence the other. I will illustrate in the following in which way(s) the various aspects of context (cf. 3.1) contribute not only to the resolution of ambiguity but to the creation of ambiguity as well. Often, both happen at the same time.

The example from *Amelia Bedelia* discussed above ((65) and Figure 3) shows that disambiguation and ambiguation may go hand in hand. Partially, this may be due to the doubling of the communicative situation. On the level of the characters, Mrs. Rogers clearly intends “draw the drapes” to be interpreted as “pull the drapes over the window”. This follows, firstly, from her position as the lady of the house giving instructions to her housemaid (social and sociocultural context), secondly, we can be sure that she intended it thus when she remonstrates Amelia Bedelia at the end of the story for not having closed them (linguistic context). Amelia Bedelia, by contrast, interprets the phrase as “make a drawing of the drapes”. This may be due to her family background of literalizing (sociocultural context). Furthermore, she ignores social expectations pertaining to the roles of lady of the house and housemaid (social context). She thus re-

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<sup>60</sup> Sometimes, there may even be more than two levels of communication, cf. e.g. Ebert (2020).



solves the ambiguity unwittingly, i.e. without even perceiving it, because her personal context disambiguates the phrase and leaves only this one option.

From the preceding co-text as well as social and sociocultural context, most readers' preferred and unmarked interpretation of the phrase is "pull the drapes over the window". The illustration (depicted in Figure 3) depicts the less likely, unexpected meaning. Thus, both meanings are made available for the reader, ambiguating the phrase on the level of the author and readers (non-linguistic co-text). The same aspects that show that ambiguity resolution happens on one level are responsible for the ambiguation on another. For this reason, techniques of ambiguation and disambiguation can and should not be studied independently.

### 3.3.2 Salience and Relevance

Above, I have shown that most theories related to the processing of ambiguous idioms are concerned with ambiguity resolution and, thus, may be helpful to explain conscious disambiguation: As the example from *Amelia Bedelia* shows, the ambiguity resolution on one level forces a conscious disambiguation on the other which, in turn, leads to the ambiguation of the phrase on that level ("what is intended" vs. "what does Amelia Bedelia understand"). Theories that may be able to help describe or explain the creation of ambiguity further – even though this may not be their aim – are those that include various forms of context into their framework, e.g. Giora's *graded salience view*, Recanati's *accessibility-based serial model*, or Sperber & Wilson's *relevance theory* (cf. 2.4.4). All three theories rely on the notions of *salience* and *relevance* for the processing of language in general and ambiguous language in particular. Both these notions rely, in their own turn, on various contextual features.

#### Salience

There are varying notions of salience, depending on the frame in which it is used. On the one hand, it may refer to the general salience of information in a certain linguistic community or in the mind of one individual:

The more frequent [...], familiar [...], conventional [...], or prototypical/stereotypical [...] the information in the mind of the individual or in a certain linguistic community, the more salient it is in that mind or among the community members. (Giora 2003, 15f)

From this point of view, the respective salience of the phrasal and the compositional reading of a specific idiom are fixed per individual or per linguistic com-

munity. On the other hand, the term may refer to the specific salience of information, or the relative accessibility of the readings in one particular context. For example, if the phrase “draw the drapes” is used in the context of drawing lessons, the reading “make a picture of the drapes” is much more salient than the reading “pull the drapes over the window”.

Both viewpoints (general salience as well as specific salience) have their justification. Considering the example from *Amelia Bedelia* in isolation, we can predict that the reading “pull the drapes over the window” is more salient for the reader due to its greater general salience in the linguistic community as well as due to linguistic co-text and social and sociocultural context within the text. For *Amelia Bedelia*, however, the reading “make a picture of the drapes” is more salient due to her specific sociocultural context. The general salience of the readings guides the understanding on both the (external) level of the readers and the (internal) level of the characters. However, the specific salience of the reading “make a picture of the drapes” is raised for the reader due to the non-linguistic co-text: the image of *Amelia Bedelia* sketching the drapes is very prominent in the double page spread. Furthermore, the general salience does not hold on both levels throughout the book. The character *Amelia Bedelia* is designed in such a way that she always favors the compositional reading. This is her personal general salience. As she moves through her list of tasks, the general salience accordingly loses significance on the level of the readers. In view of the character with its specific sociocultural background, the generally less salient reading gains salience in the readers’ mind. Readers will in the course of the book and/or series start to expect *Amelia Bedelia* to understand things “wrongly”, i.e. expect her to prefer the generally less salient, compositional reading. Thus, readers will be sensitized for the potential of certain phrases to be ambiguous.<sup>61</sup>

Consequently, there are always three aspects with respect to salience that we have to consider when analyzing readings of idiomatic phrases in literary texts: Firstly, we have to take into account the general as well as the specific salience of the potential readings. Secondly, we have to examine the various forms of context which may influence the salience of the readings. Thirdly, we have to study whether there are differences in salience between the levels of communication and whether the salience on one of the levels influences the salience on another.

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**61** This may not yet be the case in Volume 1, but as the series continues, readers will certainly be primed more and more for the less salient readings.

## Relevance

Relevance theory assesses any form of input (sight, sound, utterance, etc.) according to the relevance it has for the individual. Utterances always “raise expectations of relevance [...] because the search for relevance is a basic feature of human cognition, which communicators may exploit” (Sperber & Wilson 2004, 608). This observation is summed up in two principles:

*Cognitive Principle of Relevance:*

Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance.

[...]

*Communicative Principle of Relevance*

Every act of inferential communication conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance. (Sperber & Wilson 2012, 103f)

However, if we always strive for maximal relevance on the one hand and, on the other hand, all communication is presumed to be relevant, we would soon be overwhelmed. So the challenging question is: how do we know whether an input is relevant? Sperber & Wilson (2004) state that “an input [...] is relevant to an individual when it connects with background information he has available to yield conclusions that matter to him” (Sperber & Wilson 2004, 608). How the input connects and what kind of conclusions it yields may differ: it may be “answering a question he had in mind, improving his knowledge on a certain topic, settling a doubt, confirming a suspicion, or correcting a mistaken impression” (Sperber & Wilson 2004, 608).

Most often, relevance theory is applied to describe communication processes. With two (or more) people communicating, both communication partners have the possibility to modify their utterances, to ask questions, etc. Thus, the relevance of (parts of) the utterances can be questioned and modified after they have been uttered. Speaker and hearer work together to maximize relevance and understanding. This possibility is missing in literary texts, as readers do not have, for example, the option to ask questions. The reader has this one version of the text with all its elements and has to decide whether some parts of it are more relevant than others or which possible meanings are more relevant than others. The reader will always assume that the author only produced relevant input, i.e. that each part of the information put before him has some relevance for the whole (communicative principle of relevance). Furthermore, the reader’s striving for maximisation of relevance will lead him to construct a maximally relevant whole which includes all the parts and takes all available contextual information into account (cognitive principle of relevance). Accordingly, relevance theory stays very close to the text (be it written or spoken), taking all

possible information from the text, and including all elements of the text in its interpretation.

Looking at the example from *Amelia Bedelia* in light of these considerations, we have to observe three things: Firstly, the ambiguity of the phrase “draw the drapes” must be deliberate on the author’s part as it is of great relevance for the development of the episode. Secondly, the individual context has a great impact on the perception of relevance; while the reader grasps the intended reading of “pull the drapes over the window” due to the social context of the setting, *Amelia Bedelia*, with her specific sociocultural context, does not. Thirdly, the composition of the double page spread may be seen as guiding the reader in his reading experience. As described in the chapter on non-linguistic co-text (p. 60f), the images convey important information which the text does not provide. Thus, the images are necessary for understanding the text, they are not “mere illustrations”, which would, indeed, be against the principles of relevance.

### 3.3.3 Parameters for Analyzing Ambiguity in Discourse

Whenever ambiguity is not only a possibility in the language system but occurs in discourse, the ambiguity itself has to be described and analyzed as well as how the ambiguity is embedded in discourse. We have already seen that ambiguity may appear in various forms, even if all cases of ambiguity considered are based on idiomatic language. In view of the differences in discourse situations as well as ambiguity use, it is desirable to be able to describe the subtle differences systematically and accurately, in order to make them comparable. Based on the ambiguity model of RTG 1808,<sup>62</sup> Winter-Froemel & Zirker (2015) develop a set of parameters (P) that allows just that: the parameters distinguish different cases of ambiguity in detail. Thus, they provide a basis for systematically describing ambiguation and disambiguation in communicative situation, which will help structure the analysis of my examples. I will discuss those parameters that are relevant for my analysis: P4–P9, which focus on ambiguity in discourse, and P10, which describes ambiguity in relation to (changes in the) levels of communication.

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<sup>62</sup> Cf. Winkler (2015b, 6).

**P4: Perceived vs. Non-perceived Ambiguity**

The first parameter (P4) that is relevant for my research questions focuses on whether the ambiguity under consideration is perceived by the participants of the communicative situation or whether speaker and/or hearer simply miss it:

- P4 Do the communication partners (speaker and hearer) perceive the ambiguity of the utterance or not?  
 ⇒ perceived vs. non-perceived ambiguity (for both S and H) (Winter-Froemel & Zirker 2015, 311)

In the *draw the drapes* example from *Amelia Bedelia* that has been discussed over the last pages, the ambiguity is (on the level of the characters) missed by both speaker (Mrs. Rogers) and hearer (Amelia Bedelia). This is a case of non-perceived ambiguity for both S and H. In the following example from the sixth volume of Alan Bradley's *Flavia de Luce* series, the speaker is aware of the ambiguity:

- (66) "I am *not* being tetchy!" she shouted.  
 "If you're not being tetchy," I said, "then your brain is most likely being devoured by threadworms."  
 Threadworms were one of my latest enthusiasms. I had recognized at once their criminal possibilities when Daffy had **brought them up** one morning at the breakfast table. Not **brought them up** in the sense of vomiting, of course, but mentioned that she had been reading about them in some novel or another where they were being bred by a mad scientist with nefarious intentions who reminded her of me.

(Bradley 2014, Ch. 11; waw190053)

Flavia's explanation of which meaning she intended to convey shows clearly that she perceived the ambiguity of "brought them up". Thus, this is a case of perceived ambiguity for S.

**P5: Strategic vs. Non-strategic Ambiguity**

Within the Ambiguity Model of RTG 1808 the differentiation between strategic and non-strategic use of ambiguity is an important feature (cf. 2.1), reflected in parameter 5:

P5 Is the ambiguity strategically used by the communication partners (speaker and hearer)?

⇒ strategic vs. non-strategic ambiguity (for both S and H)

The strategic use of ambiguity can be either acknowledged by the hearer or ignored by him/her – at the same time, an ambiguity may also be used by a speaker non-strategically, which means unintentionally or by mistake, while it is, again, either ignored by the hearer or recognized and then understood in a manner different than the one intended by the speaker. (Winter-Froemel & Zirker 2015, 313)

A non-strategic use of ambiguity by both the speaker and the hearer is found in the example from *Amelia Bedelia* on the level of the characters: neither does Mrs. Rogers produce the ambiguity strategically, nor does Amelia Bedelia recognize the ambiguity.

### **P6: Non-resolved vs. Resolved Ambiguity**

In discourse, ambiguity may not only be viewed at one point in time; rather, its dynamic development has to be considered. The central question here is whether the ambiguity is resolved or not, captured in parameter 6:

P6 Does the utterance remain ambiguous, or is the ambiguity resolved at a certain point in the communication process?

⇒ non-resolved vs. resolved ambiguity (Winter-Froemel & Zirker 2015, 315)

I will refer to cases where the ambiguity is not resolved as global ambiguities. In the following example, the ambiguity of “end of the line” is global. The phrase can refer either to “the point where it is no longer possible to continue with a process or activity” (phrasal reading; OED: “line, n.2”, 26j) or to “the last stop of the train line” (compositional reading). Both readings fit the context, there is no indication that only one reading is intended. Thus, this is a case of non-resolved ambiguity.

(67) Twenty-four hours later we found ourselves on the platform of Central Station in Amsterdam. We’d paid our bill at the Van Bates Motel and bought two tickets to England. That was the end of our money. And here we were at the **end of the line**.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 12; waw190017)

In the case of a resolution of the ambiguity, various factors may be involved in disambiguation. Winter-Froemel & Zirker (2015, 315) distinguish between three

basic types: time, context, and metalinguistic strategies. These are addressed in parameters 7, 8, and 9.

### **P7: Disambiguation by Time vs. No Disambiguation by Time**

Sometimes, successful disambiguation is due to language processing: during the course of the processing of an utterance a temporary ambiguity may appear, which is then resolved due to the continuation of the utterance. The second meaning, which was possible for a short moment, is completely suppressed. I will refer to this type of resolved ambiguity, represented in parameter 7, as a local ambiguity.

- P7 For cases of disambiguation: Is ambiguity immediately resolved through the continuation of the utterance, once the hearer has mentally processed the utterance?  
 ⇒ disambiguation by time vs. no disambiguation by time (Winter-Froemel & Zirker 2015, 317)

The resolution may be triggered by syntactic or semantic features. In the classic example of a garden path sentence “The horse raced past the barn fell” (Bever 1970, 316), the syntactic structure of the sentence only allows the reduced relative clause reading. In the following example, the ambiguity resolution is triggered by semantics. There are two occurrences of the verb “enter”. This verb has many possible readings (OED “enter, v”). In both cases, the potential ambiguity of “enter” is immediately resolved during processing, as the collocations only allow specific readings (see 9.4.2 for more details). Thus, this are two cases of local ambiguity.

- (68) Gregor, the school porter, had been disqualified from javelin throwing. He had strolled across the field without looking, and although he hadn’t actually **entered** the competition, one of the javelins had unfortunately **entered** him.

(Horowitz 1988, Ch. 1; waw190018)

### **P8: Disambiguation by Context vs. No Disambiguation by Context**

The immediate sentential context does not always force disambiguation during language processing. Still, the wider context often allows the determination of the most plausible reading. If the hearer is cooperative, he will use context to do

so and consequently interpret the utterance as unambiguous. This phenomenon is captured in parameter 8:

- P8 For cases of disambiguation: Is the ambiguity resolved by context or not?  
 ⇒ disambiguation by context vs. no disambiguation by context (Winter-Froemel & Zirker 2015, 319)

Various contextual factors that may contribute to resolving an ambiguity have been mentioned in chapter 3.1 and will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3.3.4.

### **P9: Disambiguation by Metalinguistic Strategies vs. No Disambiguation by Metalinguistic Strategies**

Disambiguation may also be achieved through the use of metalinguistic strategies. This is captured in parameter 9:

- P9 For cases of disambiguation: Is the ambiguity resolved by metalinguistic strategies?  
 ⇒ disambiguation by metalinguistic strategies vs. no disambiguation by metalinguistic strategies (Winter-Froemel & Zirker 2015, 321)

Employing metalinguistic strategies marks clearly that the speaker and/or hearer is aware of the ambiguity potential of an utterance. Metalinguistic comments may, for example, refer to orthography or add semantic information, thus specifying the intended meaning. Metalinguistic strategies used by communication partners on various communicative levels will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3.3.4.

### **P10: One-level Ambiguity vs. Multi-level Ambiguity**

We have seen above that (65), the “draw the drapes” example from *Amelia Bedelia*, involves several levels of communication. On one level, Mrs. Rogers and Amelia Bedelia interact, not recognizing the ambiguity in their conversation. On the other level, the author interacts with the readers, sharing the humor in the situation with them. “This use of ambiguity can be described as a typical feature of literary texts [...] and it leads us to another key parameter of analyzing ambiguity:



- P10 Does the ambiguity involve only one or various levels of communication?  
 ⇒ one-level ambiguity vs. multi-level ambiguity (Winter-Froemel & Zirker 2015, 322)

The multiplication of communication levels is further discussed in chapters 5.2.3 and 8.1.5.

### 3.3.4 Context Features

We have seen that context may influence the processing of phrases that have the potential to be ambiguous. Contexts may influence the salience of readings. They may completely suppress one reading while reinforcing the other. They may create expectations on both the internal and the external level of communication. They may trigger a process of reanalysis, where the recipient discovers that his first interpretation was wrong (for whatever reason) and subsequently re-analyzes the phrase, sentence, or paragraph in question.<sup>63</sup> They may suddenly highlight a reading that has been suppressed up to that moment, thus ambiguating the phrase for the hearer.

The influence of context on ambiguity perception has been included in the parameters presented above. Parameter 8 refers to disambiguation by context, with context being “understood in a broad sense here, including both the linguistic and the extra-linguistic context” (Winter-Froemel & Zirker 2015, 319). Some aspects of context named are “knowledge of the language system and the conventional meanings of the words, knowledge of frequent collocates, cultural knowledge etc.” (Winter-Froemel & Zirker 2015, 319). Parameter 9 specifies one further contextual feature, namely meta-language.

In the following, I will shortly discuss the context features that will be relevant for my analyses in part III. Focusing on the aspects of context that may influence disambiguation and ambiguation, I will structure this overview according to the context types specified in 3.1.

#### Linguistic Context

Through carefully shaping the linguistic context preceding and following a phrase with the potential for ambiguity, the speaker may determine whether

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<sup>63</sup> I will discuss the term reanalysis in more detail, in relation to idioms and my examples, in chapter 4.3.

this potential is realized at all and which reading(s) the hearer processes. He may also trigger a process of reanalysis, if the preceding context and the following context favour different readings.

The most obvious use of the linguistic context to disambiguate is the application of *metalinguistic* strategies. Only rarely are metalinguistic strategies used for ambiguation. These strategies include the giving of the two (or more) possible readings, explanations of the intended meanings, or the use of paraphrases next to the phrase in question, without pointing out that they are paraphrases.

Often, the processing is influenced less directly by the hearer's *knowledge of the language system*, e.g. knowledge of syntax and semantics. Sometimes syntax influences the possible readings. In the English language it is not uncommon for a noun and a verb to be indistinguishable, as there is no capitalization as in German. Only the immediate linguistic context may distinguish between the readings through differences in the syntactic structure. Also, an uncommon syntax may sometimes be a sign for fixed phrases (see 1.2). Furthermore, semantic knowledge plays an essential part. Language users have to be aware of the conventional meanings of words. The comparable frequency of possible readings may also influence the preference for one or the other, thus knowledge of the respective frequency is also part of the relevant language knowledge. Additionally, different readings may have different requirements for semantic roles: while the compositional reading of "kick the bucket" requires an agent (someone who kicks), the phrasal reading requires a patient (someone who dies). Knowledge of frequent *collocates* and typical *co-occurrences* also influences the processing of language. With the "draw the drapes"-example discussed above, the reading "pull over the window" depends on the co-occurrence of "draw" with a curtain, cloth, veil, or a similar object. In a similar way, the co-occurrence of words determines the meanings these words may have in this particular context. For example, *lay* in co-occurrence with *law* ("lay down the law") has a different meaning than in co-occurrence with *egg* ("lay an egg"). The effects of co-occurrences of certain words may change the *salience* (see below, social context) or have a *priming* effect.

### **Non-linguistic Co-text**

Typically, non-linguistic co-text is used in my corpus to complement the written text with *pictures* or *illustrations*. These mostly show the actions of characters or details in the setting. If they refer to phrases with two (or more) potential readings, different scenarios are possible: Either the illustration shows the expected, more salient reading, or it shows the unexpected, less salient reading. Furthermore, the illustration may either support the written text or contradict it. If an

illustration shows the less expected reading, and that reading is also manifest in the text, it will make the reader further aware of the ambiguity of the phrase but disambiguate at the same time. If the illustration contradicts the written text, it will create ambiguity in the mind of the reader.

In addition to pictures and illustrations, the *arrangement* of the written text, or the written text and illustrations, on the pages may influence the perception of ambiguity. For example, seeing a disambiguating illustration before the ambiguity is created and resolved in the written text may not let the ambiguity arise at all. Conversely, having to turn a page before the linguistic context or non-linguistic co-text resolves the ambiguity may strengthen its perception. Thus, the specific edition of a text may have an influence on the ambiguity and disambiguation within it.

### **Cognitive Context**

While reading a text, readers create mental representations of the world presented within the text. This mental representation is put together from a variety of sources. Readers use the information given in the text, refer to their knowledge of the world to fill out the mental representation, and infer things that are not explicitly stated. The more readers know about a situation or a (literary) world, the more likely they are to expect certain things. They are, in a way, *primed* to expect them. New information gained from the text is constantly used to update it. Every time a reader encounters new information, he faces the question as to whether this information is *coherent* with what he already constructed. Does this information fit his world knowledge? Does it fit the literary world he is currently reading about? Would he expect this behaviour of a character or not? If the new information is coherent with the mental representation at that point, updating is straight forward: it is simply added to what is already there. If it is incoherent, readers have two possibilities: either they reject the new information, which is difficult in view of the observations on relevance above (see 3.3.2). Or they change what they constructed so far, which often results in the reanalysis of linguistic material which was thought to be unambiguous before. This kind of reanalysis may for example be triggered by metalinguistic information in the linguistic context which changes what was assumed before. Unresolved ambiguity is only possible if both meanings can be integrated into the mental representation that has been constructed.

### Social Context

The social context comprises all *cultural knowledge*, for example the knowledge of typical situations or typical patterns of behaviour. I have already shown above (3.1) how the knowledge about the tasks typically given to a housemaid shapes readers' expectations. In cases where these expectations are met, the potential for ambiguity is not perceived. In cases where these expectations are not met, the ambiguity is highlighted. Thus, cultural knowledge shapes readers' perception of ambiguity.

In combination with the knowledge of conventional meanings of words and phrases (part of language knowledge), *frequency* of readings plays a significant role as well. For most idioms, the general *salience* of the phrasal readings is much higher than that of the compositional reading, as most readers encounter the phrasal readings more frequently in their life than the compositional reading (cf. the phrasal and compositional meanings of *break the ice*, *kick the bucket*, *bury the hatchet*).

### Sociocultural Context

In contrast to social context, which refers to general information available to a large group of people (language community, regional community, etc.), sociocultural context takes personal and situational aspects into account. With regard to literary texts, the most prominent feature of sociocultural context are the *character traits*. From the descriptions and actions of characters, readers create expectations of things characters would or would not do as well as things characters would or would not know. These expectations play out on two levels of communication. On the level of the characters, we have to distinguish between characters who are likely to strategically produce ambiguity or notice it when confronted with it, and those who are not likely to do either. In turn, the expectations readers have with regard to the level of the characters influences their perception of ambiguity on the communication level of author and readers.

## 3.4 Summary

This chapter served to show that context in all its facets has an immense influence on the processing and perception of ambiguity. I will expand upon the ideas I delineated here in the following chapters. In chapter 4, I will present four possible types of employing ambiguous idioms in context, mainly focusing on the question in which way the immediate co-text may influence the percep-

tion of the ambiguity. In part III, I will use the theories presented here for exemplary analyses of ambiguous idioms in context. As we have seen, the research available on the processing of ambiguous idioms in context is limited (2.4), and contexts created for the purpose of studying idioms are not always adequate (3.2). This is why I will turn to literary texts as a specific form of context. Literary texts are known for the creation of contexts that are similar to natural contexts and, hence, recognizable for readers. While fulfilling this requirement, they still allow the creation of contexts that will not occur in reality.<sup>64</sup> Thus, they may be used strategically to transport specific information, for instance to highlight idioms and their potential for ambiguity and through that imparting language knowledge. Amelia Bedelia, who we have met above, is a prime example for a character created in such a way as to allow for maximal ambiguity. I will come back to the reasons for choosing literary texts as my source material in chapter 8, before analyzing in detail the production and perception of ambiguity as well as the influence of the various context features in chapter 9.

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**64** For further elaboration on this aspect, see, for example, Bauer et al. (2015) and Bauer & Beck (2009, 2014).

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## **Part II: Ambiguous Idioms in Context: A Theoretical Contribution**



Idioms have been of interest to linguists for a long time: they have discussed their features, disputed possible definitions, and studied their behaviour. I have given an overview of possible criteria for defining idioms in chapter 1. However, as idioms are such a varied category of language, I have concluded that they are best captured as a radial category, with more and less prototypical members (chapter 1.6). A subgroup of idioms has a well-formed and plausible compositional meaning in addition to the phrasal meaning and, hence, is ambiguous. Experimental evidence on the processing of these ambiguous idioms is not universally convincing. In natural settings, we never encounter language without some form of context. Ambiguous language in particular needs context in order to be resolved: without context, there is no way to settle on one meaning. Therefore, I have presented an overview of context features that may influence the perception of ambiguity (chapter 3).

Now the question remains: How may ambiguous idioms be embedded in larger contexts in a way that makes use of their ambiguity potential? One possible treasure trove for studying how ambiguous idioms function is found in literary texts. They provide a realistic, albeit fictional, context, embedding ambiguity in speaker-hearer interaction, and were created by authors well-versed in strategically manipulating language to their end.<sup>65</sup> Investigating ambiguous idioms in literary contexts provides much needed evidence of how specific readings are evoked by particular contexts and, thus, how contexts must be designed so that specific readings become available. At a first glance, it may seem that there are myriad ways to play with this kind of ambiguity. However, I have come to the conclusion that all of the uses fall into patterns and that there is, in fact, only a limited number of ways to use the ambiguity of idioms in context. The four types of ambiguity use in context I propose are presented in chapter 4.

In part III, I will complement the psycholinguistic investigation of how ambiguous idioms function in context by an analysis of examples of all four types as they can be found in texts for children. I will show that authors of children's books succeed in creating contexts that highlight the ambiguity of idioms in natural and realistic surroundings. The texts I will investigate show that there are various possible types of contexts that induce different kinds of readings of ambiguous idioms. My analyses will provide indications as to how contexts need to be constructed in order to produce, perceive and resolve ambiguity.

First, however, I would like to introduce the tool I use in order to analyze the examples: The *Tübingen Interdisciplinary Corpus of Ambiguity Phenomena*

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**65** For a detailed discussion of why literary texts provide good material for analyzing ambiguity in discourse, please refer to chapter 8.



(TInCAP 1.0). The corpus has been developed to collect and annotate ambiguity examples of any kind and across disciplines. I present the corpus and all its current features in chapter 5. In chapter 6, I focus on the analysis of ambiguous idioms in literary texts using TInCAP and propose three adaptations to the annotation scheme that will allow the visualization of patterns of ambiguity, especially as they appear in larger contexts.

## 4 Idioms in Context: Four Types of Ambiguity Use

All idiomatic expressions that are literally well-formed or plausible (see 2.2) have a compositional as well as a phrasal reading. This means that they have the potential to be ambiguous. The immediate linguistic context in which a potentially ambiguous idiomatic expression appears determines whether the ambiguity is functionalized (see 3.3.4) and influences the classification of the ambiguity (see 3.3.3). Therefore, I propose a distinction of the use of idiomatic expressions according to how their ambiguity potential is used in the particular context. From what has been discussed in part I, there is only a limited number of configurations that may be expected. These are shown in Figure 4:

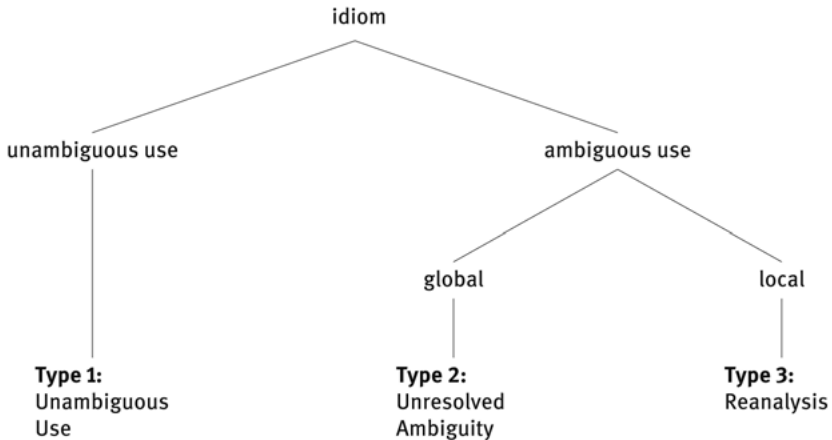


Fig. 4: Types of ambiguity use (expected)

We have seen that a phrase which has the potential to be ambiguous does not have to be ambiguous in every context. Thus, the first distinction to be made is between an unambiguous use, where the ambiguity potential is not realized, and a use in which the ambiguity of the expression becomes functional. I introduce the first case, where the idiomatic expression is *used unambiguously* (type 1), in chapter 4.1. While all cases of type 1 are always globally unambiguous (i.e. there is no moment in processing where the ambiguity is perceived and, possibly, resolved), cases of ambiguous use of idiomatic expressions fall into two categories: cases of global and cases of local ambiguity. Typically, this term is used in reference to the sentence frame: If a sentence retains the ambiguity

<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110685459-007>

beyond the sentence boundary, the ambiguity is global; if the ambiguity is only temporary and is resolved within the sentence, it is local (cf. Bauer et al. 2010, 40). However, as the ambiguities I am concerned with operate not on the level of the sentence but on that of the paragraph, I will use the terms slightly differently. In the following, local ambiguity will refer to cases where the ambiguity is resolved within the section of text under consideration. Global ambiguity refers to cases where the ambiguity is not resolved.

In cases of global ambiguity, both readings are equally plausible, and there is no indication, either before or after the occurrence of ambiguity, which of the readings is the intended, i.e. strategic one. A resolution of the ambiguity is not possible in this particular context. Instances of *unresolved ambiguity* (type 2) are presented in chapter 4.2. In cases of local ambiguity, the idiom is used ambiguously at first but a resolution is achieved within the relevant section of text. Often, a local ambiguity is not noticed at first and only the resolution prompts a reanalysis of the ambiguous expression. I discuss cases of *reanalysis* (type 3) in chapter 4.3.<sup>66</sup>

Literary texts explore the full potential of language use. Taking my cue from everyday language use, I therefore expected to find these three types of the use of potentially ambiguous idiomatic expressions equally in literary texts. These expectations were fulfilled. However, a fourth type occurs in literary texts.

In cases of type 4, one idiomatic expression is used twice in close proximity. Each of the occurrences is a case of unambiguous use; however, the two occurrences have two different readings. Accordingly, the effect is similar to the cases of reanalysis, but the surface structure looks different. This special case of *contrastive readings* (type 4) is introduced in chapter 4.4. Figure 5 shows all four types of ambiguity use, which I will describe in the following, giving definitions as well as an example for each type. All four types and the examples used to illustrate them in the following four chapters will be discussed and analyzed in detail in chapter 6.2.1, in chapter 9, or in the appendix, using the annotation scheme of TInCAP (cf. chapter 5).<sup>67</sup>

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**66** Of course, there may be differences in the perception of ambiguity between the levels of communication. An ambiguous idiom may be used unambiguously (type 1) on the level of the characters but prompt a reanalysis (type 3) on the level of the author and the readers. I will discuss this in chapters 5.2.3 and 8.1.5 as well as in the analyses in chapter 9.

**67** The analyses will also include the adaptations to the annotation scheme I propose in chapter 6.2.1.

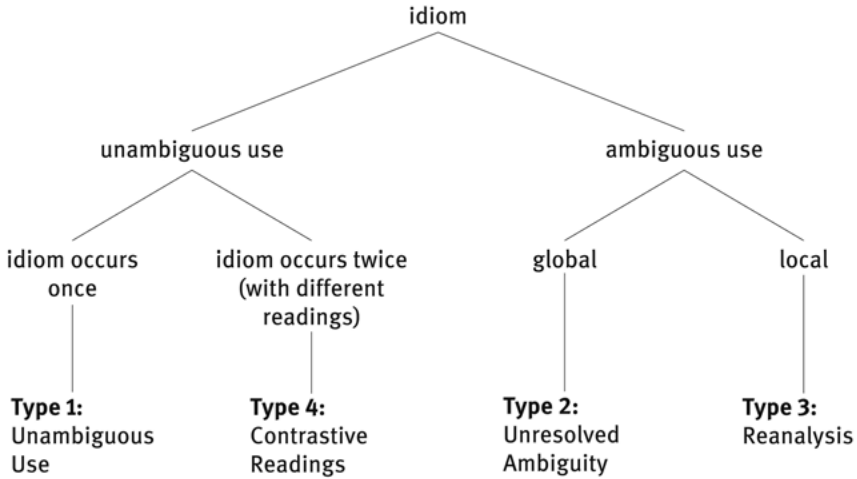


Fig. 5: Types of ambiguity use (found)

## 4.1 Type 1: Unambiguous Use

The ambiguity of an idiom that occurs in discourse often goes unnoticed. I refer to this kind of occurrence as the *unambiguous use* of an idiom, with the definition given in (69):

(69) The idiom appears only once. The specific context disambiguates; therefore, there is only one plausible reading. This reading can be either the phrasal or the compositional one.

Most theories discussing the processing of idioms (see 2.4) agree that language users do not consciously process the different meanings when processing idioms in disambiguating contexts. Even if language users process one of the meanings first (e.g. the compositional one according to the standard pragmatic view), this processing happens online, in fractions of a second. If they switch to the secondary meaning, hearers are not consciously aware of the meaning that is being suppressed. Because only one meaning is perceived by the language user, the ambiguity potential of the idiom is not functionalized, and there is no ambiguity in discourse. An example for the unambiguous use of an idiomatic expression is the occurrence of “on your own head be it” given in (70). This section of text is taken from the fifth volume of the *Harry Potter* series. Harry’s

godfather Sirius wants to accompany him to the station in the guise of a dog, even though he is wanted for murder:

(70) “Leave your trunk and your owl, Alastor’s going to deal with the luggage ... oh, for heaven’s sake, Sirius, Dumbledore said no!”

A bear-like black dog had appeared at Harry’s side as he was clambering over the various chunks cluttering the hall to get to Mrs Weasley.

“Oh honestly ...” said Mrs Weasley despairingly. “Well, **on your own head be it!**”

She wrenched open the front door and stepped out into the weak September sunlight. Harry and the dog followed her. The door slammed behind them and Mrs Black’s screeches were cut off instantly.

(Rowling 2003, Ch. 10; waw190019)

The idiom “on your own head be it” has the two potential readings “be held responsible for something, or accept any unpleasant consequences of a chosen course of action” (phrasal; OED: “head, n.”, P1, i(iii)) or “it has to be on one’s own head” (compositional). This idiom appears only once in this section of text. The context is disambiguating: Mrs Weasley is talking about Sirius’ actions and that he has to take full responsibility for any consequences that arise from them. In combination with linguistic knowledge (unusual word order, semantic knowledge), the only plausible reading in this setting is the phrasal one.<sup>68</sup> Even though the idiom “on your own head be it” has the potential to be ambiguous, this potential is not realized in the specific context of (70). The idiomatic expression is used unambiguously. Further examples of unambiguous use as well as strategies employed for achieving this kind of use are discussed below in chapter 9.1.

## 4.2 Type 2: Unresolved Ambiguity

The second type describes cases of an ambiguous use of idiomatic expressions where the ambiguity is global. This is the case whenever the phrasal and the compositional reading are equally plausible, and if the ambiguity is not resolved within the section of text considered. I refer to this kind of occurrence as an *unresolved ambiguity*, with the definition given in (71):

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<sup>68</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this example and the context features influencing the unambiguous processing, please see 9.1.1, p. 156–158.

- (71) The idiomatic expression occurs once. Both readings, the phrasal and the compositional, are equally plausible, i.e. there is no indication in the immediate linguistic context (either preceding or following the idiomatic expression) that only one of the readings is aimed at.

In cases of unresolved ambiguity, a conclusive resolution of the ambiguity is not possible. (72), taken from Anthony Horowitz's *South by Southeast*, includes three idioms: "getting away with it", "dead on our feet", and "had been through the mill". I will focus here on the last, a case of unresolved ambiguity. Immediately before this paragraph, there is a three-page long description of Nick (the narrator) and his brother Tim being chased through a windmill:

- (72) We stalked out of the windmill, Tim leaving white footprints behind him. The sails were still turning slowly behind us.  
 In the last twelve hours we'd been machine-gunned through a cornfield and stitched up by a vet. We'd found Charon's headquarters and we'd come infuriatingly close to seeing Charon. We'd stolen Mr Waverly's cheque and we'd almost been shot getting away with it.  
 And now we were dead on our feet. We needed a bath and a long, long sleep. Because you had to admit – both of us **had been through the mill**.  
 (Horowitz 1991, Ch. 11; waw190006)

The idiom "we had been through the mill" appears just once within this section of text. It has the two possible readings "we had undergone an unpleasant experience" (phrasal; OED: "mill, n.", P7) or "we had moved through the mill, from one end to the other or from top to bottom" (compositional). Both of the readings are equally salient: Having been chased through the mill has been a very unpleasant experience for the narrator Nick and his brother. There is no indication in the context that only one of the readings is strategically aimed at by the author.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, this is an ambiguous use of an idiom and the ambiguity is not resolved. Further examples of unresolved ambiguity as well as strategies employed for achieving this kind of use are discussed below in chapter 9.2.

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<sup>69</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this example (including the idioms "getting away with it" and "dead on our feet"), please see chapter 6.2.1, p. 125f.

### 4.3 Type 3: Reanalysis

In many cases of ambiguous use of idioms, the ambiguity is local, i.e. it is resolved within the section of text that is being considered. In these cases, both readings, the phrasal and the compositional one, are possible when first encountering the ambiguous idiom (even if one might be more plausible). Then, the context following the idiomatic expression indicates that only one of the readings is actually intended by the speaker. This resolves the ambiguity, and, therefore, the ambiguity is only local, not global. There are two possible courses of perception for this kind of context:

- (i) the hearer initially perceives the reading that was intended by the speaker when first encountering the idiom *or*
- (ii) the hearer initially perceives the reading that was not intended by the speaker when first encountering the idiom<sup>70</sup>

In cases of (i), the reading that is indicated by the context immediately following is identical with the one perceived by the hearer. Therefore, the reading does not change, and the first reading remains to be the only reading. In these contexts, it depends on the individual hearer whether the potential of the idiomatic expression to be ambiguous is recognized or not.<sup>71</sup> Accordingly, all cases of (i) are unambiguous uses of idiomatic expressions (Type 1, 4.1).

For all cases of (ii), by contrast, the setup ensures that the ambiguity is noticed. When encountering the context following the idiomatic expression, the hearer has to realize that his initial analysis was inaccurate. The phrase has to be analyzed again and in a way different from the first reading in order to achieve a meaning that fits the context. The original commitment to one meaning has to be revised in favour of the other. I will refer to cases of (ii) as cases of *reanalysis*, with the definition given in (73):

- (73) The idiom appears once. The linguistic context preceding the idiom allows for both the phrasal as well as the compositional reading. However, one of

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**70** As we have seen above (2.4 and 3.1), there are various factors that may influence which reading is more likely to be chosen initially: general salience, the frequency of the respective readings, the cognitive context (story), the linguistic context immediately preceding the idiomatic expression, or the individual world knowledge. I will discuss the various influences in detail in the analyses in chapter 9.

**71** The hearer thus turns out to be another potential context feature influencing perception of ambiguity. This would be an interesting starting point for further empirical investigation.

the readings is more salient. The linguistic context following the idiomatic expression only fits with the less salient reading and forces the reanalysis of the linguistic expression.

My focus is on what happens on the surface of perception, on what the hearer is (intradiegetically) aware of. It is possible, probable even, that both readings are initially activated, and an empirical experiment could prove or disprove this thesis. Although I will not be conducting psycholinguistic experiments and thus will not make statements on the processing of idioms, I will still use the term *reanalysis*, which in psycholinguistics is used to describe what happens when so-called garden-path sentences are processed: “at some points in comprehending a sentence, a reader may assign a unique structural analysis to the sentence up to the point in question. If later information forces the reader to attempt to revise that analysis, we will say that reanalysis occurs” (Meseguer et al. 2002).<sup>72</sup> However, for my research the focus on the sentence level falls short. I am interested in ambiguity in discourse, and there, sometimes, the process of reanalysis is not triggered within the span of a sentence. Because of this, I will use the term *reanalysis* in a broader sense, referring to all cases where “the processor discovers that the initial analysis is inconsistent with subsequently processed disambiguating information and has to reanalyze (i.e., [...] has to construct an alternative analysis)” (Pickering & van Gompel 2007, 291), no matter whether the reanalysis takes place within the scope of a sentence or not.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, the reanalysis is not always structural, i.e. syntactic. With idioms, the syntax is often not reanalyzed, only the semantic analysis has to be changed from the phrasal to the compositional reading.

An example for the reanalysis of an idiom is the occurrence of “walk in someone else’s shoes” in one of Terry Pratchett’s *Tiffany Aching* novels, given in (74):

(74) That was the thing about thoughts. They thought themselves, and then dropped into your head in the hope that you would think so too. You had to

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**72** For further reading on *reanalysis* as a form of self-correction in syntactic parsing, please see Fodor & Frazier (1980) and Pickering & van Gompel (2006). The term *reanalysis* is also used in historical linguistics, where it refers to a type of linguistic innovation or changes at the level of the language system (Detges et al. (to appear), 1). For further reading on reanalysis as used in historical linguistics, please see Langacker (1977), Detges & Waltereit (2002), Hopper & Traugott (2003), De Smet (2009), and Detges et al. (to appear).

**73** The term is used similarly, referring to jokes, by Dynel (2009), Mayerhofer & Schacht (2013, 2015), Mayerhofer (2015), Mayerhofer et al. (2016).



slap them down, thoughts like that; they would take a witch over if she let them. And then it would all break down, and nothing would be left but the cackling.

She had heard it said that, before you could understand anybody, you needed to **walk a mile in their shoes**, which did not make a whole lot of sense because, probably after you had walked a mile in their shoes you would understand that they were chasing you and accusing you of the theft of a pair of shoes – although, of course, you could probably outrun them owing to their lack of footwear.

(Pratchett 2010, 58f; waw190075)

The idiomatic expression appears once. The expression has the following two possible readings: In its phrasal reading, it refers to being in someone else's unenviable condition or plight (OED: "shoe, n.", 2k). In its compositional reading, it refers to wearing someone else's shoes and walking a mile in them. Both readings are possible with the preceding context. However, the phrasal meaning is more salient: it is less common to think about wearing someone else's shoes than to think about being in his or her situation. Therefore, the phrasal meaning is initially perceived. In the co-text following the idiomatic expression, Tiffany's thoughts (on the internal communication level) reanalyze the expression, thus promoting the compositional reading for the reader (on the external communication level). This leads to reanalysis.<sup>74</sup> Further examples of reanalysis as well as strategies employed for achieving this kind of use will be discussed below in chapter 9.3.

#### 4.4 Type 4: Contrastive Readings

This fourth type of ambiguity use differs from the other three on the textual surface: here, the idiom occurs not once but (at least) twice. The occurrences do not trigger the same reading. The definition for *contrastive readings* is given in (75):

- (75) The idiom occurs (at least) twice in close proximity. Each occurrence is a case of unambiguous use. The two (or more) occurrences do not share the same reading: One of them is the phrasal and one is the compositional reading.

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<sup>74</sup> The complete analysis of this example can be found in the appendix, p. 261f.

Even though each of the occurrences is in itself a case of unambiguous use (type 1), the effect is similar to cases of reanalysis (type 3) because the two instances of the same idiomatic expression do not share the same reading. The first occurrence clearly permits only one reading, generally the more salient one, and, consequently, this reading is foregrounded even further. The context of the second occurrence, however, only allows for the other reading.

The phrase “shot in the arm” in (76), an example taken from Anthony Horowitz’s *South by Southeast*, is an example for contrastive readings:

(76) “If it was Charon,” he muttered, “he’ll think we’re dead now. And if he thinks we’re dead, he won’t try and kill us.”

“Right,” I agreed.

Tim brightened. “Well, I suppose that’s a **shot in the arm**.” Then he saw the blood.

“Nick!”

“What?”

“You’ve been **shot in the arm**.”

“I know.”

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 10; waw190027)

The idiomatic expression “shot in the arm”, which appears twice in close proximity, has the possible readings “a much needed stimulant or encouragement” (phrasal; OED: “shot, n.1”, 7g(b)) or “being hit with a bullet in the arm” (compositional). In the phrasal reading “shot” is a noun, in the compositional reading it is a verb. The two occurrences in (76) do not share the same reading: in the first instance, only the phrasal reading fits, while in the second instance only the compositional reading is plausible. Therefore, this is a case of contrastive readings.<sup>75</sup>

The use of the same phrase with two different readings in such close proximity promotes the ambiguity of the phrase in a way the other uses do not. It does not allow the hearer to ignore the ambiguity, almost forcing it onto his awareness. This seems to be a use of ambiguity that has not been discussed before. I will discuss further examples of contrastive readings as well as strategies employed for achieving this kind of use below in chapter 9.4.

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<sup>75</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this example, please see chapter 9.4.1, p. 184–186.

## 5 TInCAP: A Corpus for Annotating Ambiguity

All projects within RTG 1808 investigate ambiguity in various medial forms: in written language (e.g. literary texts, bible texts) and in spoken language (e.g. every day communication, speeches) as well as in pictorial form (e.g. paintings, illustrations). These different medial forms may also be mixed (e.g. illustrated texts, comics, advertisements). Despite coming from different disciplines and working with different types of examples of ambiguity, all projects are concerned with similar questions and challenges. Therefore, it was indispensable that we find a way to bring all our data together in a corpus that collects ambiguity examples from every discipline. Such a corpus guarantees the sustainability of research data, facilitates communication between disciplines, and makes ambiguity phenomena from different disciplines comparable. Especially the latter two represent a particular gain from this interdisciplinary project as it helps gain new cross-disciplinary insights into ambiguity, as I will show below.

It has been central to the development of this corpus to ask the question how ambiguous examples of different provenance can be annotated in such a way that the annotation is effective, transparent, and profitable for all the participating disciplines. The resulting corpus is the *Tübingen Interdisciplinary Corpus of Ambiguity Phenomena* (TInCAP), created by the TInCAP team<sup>76</sup> in collaboration with the entire RTG. I will present version 1.0 of this corpus with all its features below, with 5.1 focusing on sustainability and accessibility, 5.2 on the interdisciplinary terminology and framework, and 5.3 on the possibilities offered to search within TInCAP.<sup>77</sup>

In chapter 6, I will show how various examples of idiomatic expressions are analyzed within TInCAP. My central claim is that TInCAP facilitates the analysis of ambiguity in general by highlighting patterns and hence enabling generalizations and cross-disciplinary comparability (6.1). In chapter 6.2, I propose three adaptations to the annotation scheme of TInCAP which visualize the paradigm of the four types of ambiguity introduced in chapter 4.

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<sup>76</sup> The TInCAP-team during my time at RTG 1808: Jutta Hartmann, Lisa Ebert, Gesa Schole, Raphael Titt, Wiltrud Wagner, Susanne Winkler.

<sup>77</sup> For more information on the Tübingen Interdisciplinary Corpus of Ambiguity Phenomena (TInCAP), please visit the projects webpage at <http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/en/research/core-research/research-training-groups/rtg-1808-ambiguity-production-and-perception/data-base-tincap.html> (last accessed on 31.08.2020) and see Hartmann et al. (submitted).

## 5.1 Technical Aspects of TInCAP 1.0

From the outset, the corpus of RTG 1808 was developed to be sustainable and accessible. All examples, transcripts, and annotations are stored as XML files whose structure is TEI-conform as far as possible.<sup>78</sup> For image, audio, and video files we adhere to the prevailing standards for sustainable data formats: they are non-proprietary and will be available and usable for the foreseeable future. All collected data is stored long-term within the University of Tübingen's infrastructure, in cooperation with the university's eScience-Center and CLARIN-D Tübingen. It is possible to import and export the whole corpus or subcorpora, which then are stored with their own PIDs. This ensures that all data will be available for present and future researchers working in the field of ambiguity.

As the promotion of an interdisciplinary discussion about the topic of ambiguity is one of the main goals of TInCAP, we have designed and constructed a web-based interface which uses an LDAP database and implemented by an external partner, DAASI International GmbH. This interface allows easy access for all members of RTG 1808 as well as for the international research community. Via the interface, new entries can be created, and existing ones can be edited. The automatic setting allows every user to see every entry, but only the one who has entered an annotation may modify it. It is, however, possible to individually specify viewing and editing rights for each entry and annotation. This feature facilitates the cooperation between researchers working on a joint project. The complex criterion-oriented search engine makes it possible to search for specific entries as well as criteria. I will elaborate on the search function with all its aspects in section 5.3, after having presented the interdisciplinary framework. For further information concerning details of both sustainability and accessibility, please refer to Hartmann et al. (submitted).

## 5.2 Terminology and Framework of TInCAP 1.0

The interdisciplinary line-up of RTG 1808, with a wide array of examples studied from different disciplinary perspectives, leads to a very different set of questions: What terminology can we use to communicate effectively across disci-

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<sup>78</sup> The Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) provides “a standard for the representation of texts in digital form” (<http://www.tei-c.org/index.xml>, last accessed on 31.08.2020). We adhere to this standard as far as possible but have expanded the xml-scheme with a customized scheme for the annotation of ambiguity. The development process of this scheme is documented and will be made freely available in open access.

plines? In which way can such a variety of examples<sup>79</sup> be annotated within one corpus? What kind of interdisciplinary framework for annotating ambiguity will be profitable for all participating disciplines?<sup>80</sup>

Finding terminology that works for every discipline is one of the great challenges within an interdisciplinary project. Even in philological disciplines as closely linked as linguistics and literary studies, terms are not always used in the same way, which may lead to miscommunication. Accordingly, one of the TInCAP-team's first objectives was the development of a common labelling scheme that works within and across every discipline represented in RTG 1808. Our goal was to find terms as abstract and neutral as possible that may be easily integrated into every discipline's terminology but still allow for the precise description of individual phenomena.

In a parallel process, we created an interdisciplinary framework for the annotation of ambiguity that meets the necessary requirements, i.e. it allows for an annotation that is effective and transparent without being superficial. Thus, the annotation is profitable for all the participating disciplines and, along with the terminology, the comparison of examples from the various disciplines is facilitated.

In the following, the framework's details and its terminology will be explained and illustrated with two examples containing an ambiguity.<sup>81</sup> The passage from *Winnie-the-Pooh* quoted in (77) follows a search for Eeyore's tail:

- (77) "I just came across it in the Forest. It was hanging over a bush, [...] and as nobody seemed to want it, I took it home, and –"  
 "Owl," said Pooh solemnly, "you made a mistake. Somebody did want it."  
 "Who?"  
 "Eeyore. My dear friend Eeyore. He was – he was fond of it."  
 "Fond of it?"  
 "**Attached to it,**" said Winnie-the-Pooh sadly.

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<sup>79</sup> Different languages and different medial forms as well as different concepts of ambiguity (see 5.1).

<sup>80</sup> During my time at RTG 1808: Linguistics, Literary Criticism, Rhetoric, Law & Legal Studies, Theology, Psychology, Media Studies, and Philosophy/Ethics.

<sup>81</sup> Both examples are taken from literary texts because this type of example is most relevant for my study. This does in no way indicate that the corpus is only useful for examples from written language. Please refer to Hartmann et al. (submitted) or to TInCAP itself (<https://tincap.uni-tuebingen.de>, last accessed on 31.08.2020) for examples of other medial types.

So with these words he unhooked it, and carried it back to Eeyore; and when Christopher Robin had nailed it on its right place again, Eeyore frisked about the forest, waving his tail so happily that Winnie-the-Pooh came over all funny, and had to hurry home for a little snack of something to sustain him.

(Milne 1926, 59-61; waw190001)

The ambiguous element “attached to it” can be paraphrased in two ways: either as “fond of it” (OED: “attach, v.”, 8a) or as “connected with it” (OED: “attach, v.”, 5a). In this specific context both readings are possible: Eeyore’s tail is (usually) attached to him (and he to it) by a nail, but he is also fond of it and misses it now that he lost it.

The passage in (78) is quoted from Terry Pratchett’s *The Light Fantastic*:

(78) “[...] I’ve lost count of the times I’ve nearly been killed –”

“Twenty-seven,” said Twoflower.

“What?”

“Twenty-seven times,” said Twoflower helpfully. “I worked it out. **But you never actually have.**”

“What? Worked it out?” said Rincewind, who was beginning to have the familiar feeling that the conversation had been mugged.

“No, been killed. Doesn’t that [...]”

(Pratchett 1986, 119; waw190058)

In this context, the elliptical sentence “But you never actually have” has two possible VP-antecedents. The sentence can either be understood as “But you never actually have been killed” or as “But you never actually have worked it out”.<sup>82</sup> At first sight, the linguistic ambiguity in both these examples seems straightforward. However, the annotation within TInCAP can tell us much more about these passages. On the basis of examples (77) and (78), I will show the construction of a complete entry, consisting of ENTRY DATA<sup>83</sup>, BIBLIOGRAPHY DATA, and MEDIA DATA (5.2.1), the ANNOTATION DATA (5.2.2) and – if applicable – information on CONNECTED ANNOTATIONS or CONNECTED ENTRIES (5.2.3).

<sup>82</sup> On ellipsis and ambiguity, see e.g. Winkler (2019).

<sup>83</sup> All labels of fields within TInCAP will be printed in small capitals.

### 5.2.1 Entry Data, Bibliography Data, and Media Data

The ENTRY DATA consists of the example itself as well as the relevant metadata. The QUOTE, i.e. the text passage, image, audio, or video file containing an ambiguity, is simply typed or copied into the form provided, if it is in textual form. In all other cases, the files may be uploaded in the section MEDIA DATA. Ideally, the upload of an audio or video file is supplemented with a transcript of the relevant passage and the upload of an image file with a short description. This enables searching for these entries. Without a transcript or description, relevant entries may not be found, as a search cannot be conducted within these formats. A COMMENT may support the perception of the ambiguity by other users or add further information on, for instance, the source.

The metadata that accompanies the QUOTE enables users to identify the original source, find specific entries, and to group or narrow down search results (e.g. according to a time frame or language). In addition to the example's bibliographical information (PRIMARY SOURCE), we collect, if applicable, the bibliographical information of the article, book, etc. where the example was found and discussed before (CITED FROM). Furthermore, the medial type of the quote, i.e. if it is written or spoken language, pictorial, audio-visual etc. (MODE OF EXPRESSION), is provided as well as information on the specific EXPRESSION TYPE(S). This latter field allows for multiple entries, as it refers to genres as well as form, age categories, etc.<sup>84</sup> Additional information is the year or – in case the year cannot be specified indisputably – the period the example was first produced (PERIOD FROM/TO) and the LANGUAGE it was produced in. The ID is automatically assigned to allow each entry to be identified and retrieved. It consists of the login name of the user and six numerals (e.g. waw190001).

Table 1 shows the completed metadata form for (77), Table 2 the one for (78).<sup>85</sup>

**Tab. 1:** Example and Metadata for (77), “be attached” (Winnie-the-Pooh)

ID: waw190001	Entry Data
Quote	[...] So Winnie-the-Pooh went off to find Eeyore's tail. [...] “I just came across it in the Forest. It was hanging over a bush, [...] and

<sup>84</sup> See Hartmann et al. (2019,4) for further information.

<sup>85</sup> I will not give the complete metadata form for each example. Interested readers may always find this information within TInCAP, using the ID provided.

ID: waw190001	Entry Data
	as nobody seemed to want it, I took it home, and –” “Owl,” said Pooh solemnly, “you made a mistake. Somebody did want it.” “Who?” “Eeyore. My dear friend Eeyore. He was – he was fond of it.” “Fond of it?” “Attached to it,” said Winnie-the-Pooh sadly.
Primary Source	A. A. Milne: Winnie-the-Pooh, 1926, p. 59-61.
Mode of Expression	written
Expression Type	children's literature; illustrated text (prose); narrative text
Period From	1926
Language of Quote	English

**Tab. 2:** Example and Metadata for (78), “you never have” (Light Fantastic)

ID: waw190058	Example and Metadata
Quote	“[...] I’ve lost count of the times I’ve nearly been killed, I ...” “Twenty-seven,” said Twoflower. “What?” “Twenty-seven times,” said Twoflower helpfully. “I worked it out. But you never actually have.” “What? Worked it out?” said Rincewind, who was beginning to have the familiar feeling that the conversation had been mugged. “No, been killed. Doesn’t that [...]”
Primary Source	Terry Pratchett: The Light Fantastic, 1986, p. 119.
Quote Type	written
Quote Subtype	narrative text
Period From	1986
Language of Quote	English

All metadata we collect for the examples is consistent, i.e. it is not influenced by the discipline of the annotator or contingent on choices made in the process of annotation. This is not true for the annotations of the examples themselves, as they may change depending on discipline, communication level, etc. Therefore, example and metadata are collected and stored separately from the annota-



tions. The annotations are connected with the entry they belong to, but there may be more than one annotation.<sup>86</sup>

With the specification of all relevant metadata, TInCAP not only meets the criteria for scientific work; metadata also provides crucial material for various search queries. In turn, these search queries provide added value for the interdisciplinary discussion.<sup>87</sup>

### 5.2.2 Annotation Data

The annotations mark the ambiguous part of the example (RELEVANT PART) and give the possible readings (PARAPHRASES). The level of communication which the annotation relates to is given (COMMUNICATION LEVEL), and the annotator determines whether the ambiguity is employed strategically in its production or perception (DIMENSION). The following quantitative classification specifies on which level the ambiguity is triggered (TRIGGERING LEVEL), and up to which level it has an effect within its given context (RANGE). The classification according to the TYPE OF PARAPHRASE RELATION provides a discipline-independent qualitative classification which is accompanied by a discipline-specific selection of the PHENOMENA involved. In order to be unambiguously identifiable within the corpus, each annotation receives its own ID, consisting of a prefix according to annotation number (i1, i2, etc.) added to the ID of the corresponding entry.

#### Relevant Part and Paraphrases

Every annotation always begins with the identification of the element or section of the QUOTE that is at the centre of the annotation, i.e. the part of the QUOTE that is ambiguous. This is called the RELEVANT PART.

If the MODE OF EXPRESSION is “written” or “spoken”, the RELEVANT PART may be a morpheme, a word, a phrase, a sentence, or even a longer section of text. For pictorial QUOTES, the RELEVANT PART may be a dot, a line, a figure, a section of the whole picture, the whole picture, etc. This concept is transferable to any medial type. Sometimes, the RELEVANT PART will be the whole QUOTE, but often it is just a small section of it, as in (77) the verb phrase “attached to it” or the elliptical sentence “But you never actually have” in (78).

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**86** For further discussion of such cases and how TInCAP deals with them, please see chapter 5.2.3 on CONNECTED ANNOTATIONS.

**87** For further information on the different search functions and their impact, please see chapter 5.3.

To clearly show in which way the QUOTE is ambiguous, the PARAPHRASES are given next. The aim of the PARAPHRASES is to state the two (or more) possible readings of the QUOTE. This can be achieved either by rephrasing the section of the QUOTE, if possible, or by explaining or describing the two readings. Which method is to be preferred depends on the nature of the QUOTE as well as the nature of the ambiguity. For example, it is often possible to use different words or syntactic structures in the case of lexical or syntactic ambiguities, whereas a description is needed for pictorial ambiguities. The annotation scheme allows for more than two PARAPHRASES, if needed.

For the RELEVANT PART in (77), the verb phrase “attached to it”, the two possible PARAPHRASES are “fond of it” and “connected with it”. In (78), the RELEVANT PART is the elliptical sentence “But you never actually have”. The ellipsis has two possible resolutions and therefore two PARAPHRASES: The sentence can either be understood as “But you never actually have been killed” or as “But you never actually have worked it out”. The RELEVANT PART and the PARAPHRASES of the annotations for (77) and (78) are shown in Table 3 and Table 4 respectively.

**Tab. 3:** Annotation of (77), “be attached” – Relevant Part and Paraphrases

<b>Annotation, <i>i2waw190001</i></b>	
Relevant Part	attached to it
Paraphrase 1	fond of it [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	connected with it [compositional]

**Tab. 4:** Annotation of (78), “you never have” – Relevant Part and Paraphrases

<b>Annotation, <i>i1waw190058</i></b>	
Relevant Part	But you never actually have [VP-ellipsis]
Paraphrase 1	But you never actually have been killed
Paraphrase 2	But you never actually have worked it out

This is the basis for the further annotation. The annotator identifies here what will be at the centre of the annotation (RELEVANT PART). This is particularly important in cases where there is more than one ambiguity within the QUOTE. Giving the PARAPHRASES indicates how the ambiguity might be resolved. In my an-

notations, I will always paraphrase the generally more salient reading first, if there is one. For idioms, this mostly is the phrasal reading (cf. 2.4 and 3.3.2).

### Communication Level

As has been shown above (3.3.3, P10), it may be necessary to distinguish between various communication levels, as the annotation of ambiguity may not be the same for every level. For TInCAP, we decided to differentiate between three levels of communication, illustrated in Figure 6: the INNERMOST LEVEL, the MEDIATING LEVEL, and the OUTERMOST LEVEL.<sup>88</sup> In narrative texts, we always find the fictional characters on the INNERMOST LEVEL, authors and readers on the OUTERMOST LEVEL, and if there are narrators, they are situated on the MEDIATING LEVEL.<sup>89</sup>



**Fig. 6:** Communication Levels used<sup>90</sup>

In (78), the ambiguity in the speech of the characters is part of the conversation on the level of the characters. It leads to a misunderstanding, and at the end of the section of text we are looking at, Twoflower and Rincewind are both aware of this ambiguity. Thus, I will annotate (78) on the INNERMOST LEVEL, as shown in Table 5:

<sup>88</sup> Hartmann et al. (submitted, 13).

<sup>89</sup> The MEDIATING LEVEL may be split up further if there is more than one narrating instance. As this is not relevant for my examples, I will not go into detail here. For those interested in this aspect, please see Hartmann et al. (submitted, 7–11) and Ebert (2020).

<sup>90</sup> For a detailed discussion about the development of this communication model and its application to examples from various disciplines, please see Hartmann et al. (submitted, 7–11).

**Tab. 5:** Annotation of (78), “you never have” – Communication Level

<b>Annotation, <i>i1waw190058</i></b>	
Relevant Part	But you never actually have [VP-ellipsis]
Paraphrase 1	But you never actually have been killed
Paraphrase 2	But you never actually have worked it out
Comm. Level	innermost

However, an ambiguity may also be created solely by the author of the text in such a way that the characters do not have any knowledge of the ambiguity delegated to them.<sup>91</sup> If this is the case, the OUTERMOST LEVEL is chosen for the annotation. In cases where more than one communication level is relevant, the annotator has to choose one possibility for each annotation. Multiple annotations may be created in such a case.<sup>92</sup> For now, I will annotate (77) on the level of the author/reader(s); therefore, the OUTERMOST COMMUNICATION LEVEL is shown for this example in Table 6.<sup>93</sup>

**Tab. 6:** Annotation of (77) – “be attached” – Communication Level

<b>Annotation, <i>i2waw190001</i></b>	
Relevant Part	attached to it
Paraphrase 1	fond of it [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	connected with it [compositional]
Comm. Level	outermost

### Dimension

The decision in favour of one communication level or another has consequences for the subsequent annotation because there are different participants of the communication on every communication level (e.g. authors and readers on the OUTERMOST and fictional characters on the INNERMOST). However, independent

<sup>91</sup> This may for example be the case with dramatic irony (cf. e.g. Bauer (2015a)).

<sup>92</sup> I come back to this option in 5.2.3, where I discuss how TInCAP handles multiple annotations of one example.

<sup>93</sup> There is, of course, also the possibility of annotating this example on the communication level of the fictional characters (INNERMOST), see 9.2.2.

from the communication level there are always two DIMENSIONS to every conversation: the DIMENSION of production (P) and the DIMENSION of perception (R).<sup>94</sup>

Within RTG 1808 we are interested in the question how ambiguities are used by the participants in a communication. More precisely, we ask whether ambiguities are produced and perceived strategically. Therefore, once the annotator has decided on which communication level he will annotate the ambiguity in question, it has to be determined whether this ambiguity is produced and/or perceived strategically on the chosen level. Both DIMENSIONS have to be included in the analysis.

For each of the two DIMENSIONS three choices are given: strategic ( $S^+$ ), not strategic ( $S^-$ ) or strategy not assigned ( $S^0$ ). The definitions for  $PS^+$  (strategic production),  $PS^-$  (non-strategic production),  $RS^+$  (strategic perception), and  $RS^-$  (non-strategic perception) are given above in chapter 2.1. The categories  $PS^0$  and  $RS^0$  (strategy not assigned) are important additions to the annotation. It is not always possible to distinctly determine if an ambiguity was either produced or perceived strategically. By giving the option of not assigning the strategy to the DIMENSIONS, we ensure that no annotator chooses either  $S^+$  or  $S^-$  simply because he has to make a choice. Giving the option not to fill in this field would not have the same effect. By choosing  $S^0$  (not assigned) the annotator marks that he could (or would) not decide in favour of either  $S^+$  or  $S^-$ . Leaving the field empty would not tell us this; it could also be the cause of a mistake or even laziness. Furthermore, there are many examples where annotators may decide to focus solely on production or perception respectively. In these cases, annotators may also give  $S^0$  for the other DIMENSION.

There are, of course, examples of ambiguity that operate on the intersection of production and perception, where the interaction of both dimensions either creates the ambiguity, or makes it noticeable. A possible solution for the annotation of this intersection is the introduction of separate categories for the intersections, e.g. a combined category  $PS^+/RS^-$ . However, we decided in favour of a separate flagging of strategy for production and perception, because this has the double advantage of providing a more detailed analysis and allowing for a more fine-grained search.<sup>95</sup>

What does this mean for my present examples from *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *The Light Fantastic*? Above, I decided to analyze the first on the OUTERMOST COMMUNICATION LEVEL (author/reader). The context in which this example is set gives

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<sup>94</sup> Cf. 2.1 on the three-dimensional ambiguity model used in RTG 1808. P stands for German *Produktion* (= production) and R for German *Rezeption* (= perception).

<sup>95</sup> For further information on the different search functions, please see chapter 5.3 below.

clear indications that the ambiguity was produced strategically not by Pooh but by the author: Eeyore misses his tail, the properties of the tail (it being nailed on etc.) are discussed, and Winnie-the-Pooh searches for it. The whole chapter is a set-up for the use of the ambiguity of “being attached to something”. Therefore, PS<sup>+</sup> is chosen.

For this example, assigning whether the ambiguity is perceived strategically or not might be speculative, as there are no clues in the text. I might presume that the ‘ideal’ reader<sup>96</sup> recognizes the ambiguity, and that he might even be looking for potential ambiguities owing to the kind of text he is reading. If there were no indications for one or the other reading, I still would have to assign S<sup>0</sup> for the DIMENSION of perception. In this case, however, various context features indicate each of the readings (see 9.2.2) and I am able to assume that most readers will perceive the ambiguity non-strategically (S<sup>-</sup>). The current stage of the annotation of (77) is shown in Table 7:

**Tab. 7:** Annotation of (77), “be attached” – Dimension

<b>Annotation, <i>i2waw190001</i></b>	
Relevant Part	attached to it
Paraphrase 1	fond of it [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	connected with it [compositional]
Comm. Level	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>

For the annotation of the ambiguity in (78), I chose the COMMUNICATION LEVEL of the characters (INNERMOST). On this level, the ambiguity is neither produced strategically by Twoflower nor perceived strategically by Rincewind (PS<sup>-</sup>/RS<sup>-</sup>), as indicated by their conversation. The resulting annotation is provided in Table 8:

<sup>96</sup> “Simplifying a little, the *Ideal Reader* is someone who knows, at each point in a text, everything that the text presupposes at that point, and who does not know, but is prepared to receive and understand, what the text introduces at that point. Real readers, then, can differ from the text’s *Ideal Reader* in two directions. With respect to any given point in the text, they may be underqualified, in that they do not know that the text assumes they know at that point, or they may be overqualified, in that they already know what the text introduces” (Fillmore 1982, 253).

**Tab. 8:** Annotation of (78), “you never have” – Dimension

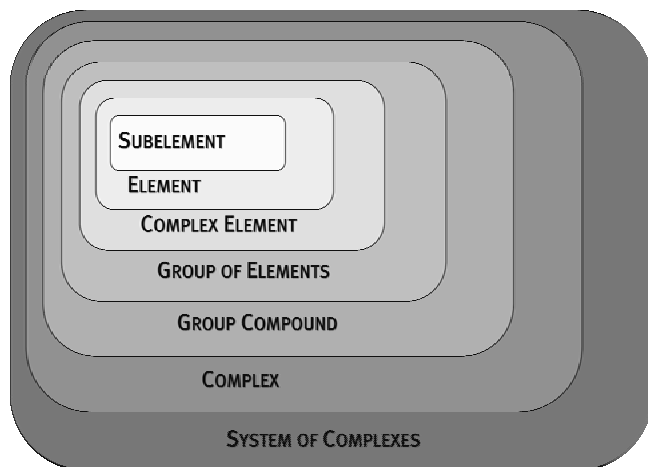
Annotation, <i>j1waw190058</i>	
Relevant Part	But you never actually have [VP-ellipsis]
Paraphrase 1	But you never actually have been killed
Paraphrase 2	But you never actually have worked it out
Comm. Level	innermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>

The selection of the COMMUNICATION LEVEL, in combination with the indication of the RELEVANT PART allows other users of TInCAP to reconstruct the process of annotation because much of the following annotation is dependent on these two aspects. I have already rudimentarily shown that this is true for the choice of DIMENSIONS, I will discuss strategy assignment in detail below in chapter 8. Furthermore, both are crucial for all examples with CONNECTED ANNOTATIONS. A detailed discussion of this feature will follow in section 5.2.3.

### Quantitative Classification: Trigger and Range

In this section, I will consider the following challenging question: How can we go beyond the boundaries of the individual disciplines and facilitate a comparison of the ambiguous examples across disciplines? One step towards this is the introduction of a *quantitative classification* that gives us an instrument for comparing entries from different disciplines and of different medial types. To achieve this, we determine the scale of the trigger of the ambiguity (TRIGGER) and the scale of the area influenced by this ambiguity (RANGE). The combination of both allows the comparison of examples on a quantitative level.

To give an example: We might have an entry from media science, in which a figure within an image is the ambiguity TRIGGER. We also might have an entry from linguistics with a single phrase being the TRIGGER of an ambiguity within a paragraph. If now these two TRIGGERS are categorized as being on the same level, we are suddenly able to compare two examples that seemed to be very incomparable before.



**Fig. 7:** Levels for the Quantitative Classification<sup>97</sup>

The possible levels for the quantitative classification are shown in Figure 7. To facilitate the application of our quantitative classification to entries from every discipline, the levels' names were chosen to be as neutral as possible, i.e. not to be rooted in one of the participating disciplines. The levels' structure mirrors the division of the human body (biological perspective), with the inner levels being part of and building up the outer levels.

The smallest and core level in our annotation system is the SUBELEMENT. SUBELEMENTS are dependent elements, which may differentiate between meanings or carry meaning themselves. In the human body, this is the level of the nucleus and the electrons. In linguistics and literary studies, SUBELEMENTS are phonemes, graphemes, and morphemes.

The second level is the level of the ELEMENT. ELEMENTS are independent and clearly distinguishable from each other. They may consist of SUBELEMENTS, and they carry meaning. In the human body, we find the atom on this level. In linguistics and literary studies, ELEMENTS are words.

One level up, we find the COMPLEX ELEMENT. COMPLEX ELEMENTS consist of two or more ELEMENTS. They form a structure which is not self-contained and therefore expandable. COMPLEX ELEMENTS may be composed ad hoc or be established components. In the human body, COMPLEX ELEMENTS are molecules. In linguistics and literary studies, the term refers to individual phrases or phrasemes.

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<sup>97</sup> See Hartmann et al. (submitted, 20).



On the fourth level is the GROUP OF ELEMENTS. A GROUP OF ELEMENTS is composed of one or more ELEMENTS and/or COMPLEX ELEMENTS, which may be structurally linked. They form a self-contained unit of meaning. In the human body, a GROUP OF ELEMENTS refers to a cell. In linguistics and literary studies, it refers to a sentence.

The next level is the GROUP COMPOUND. We consider as a GROUP COMPOUND the part of a whole which carries a message, is thematically essentially self-contained and structurally and/or thematically separated from the whole it belongs to. In the human body, the GROUP COMPOUND is the tissue. In linguistics and literary studies, it refers to a thematically linked, limited sequence of expressions, i.e. a passage of a text or discourse.

The sixth level is the COMPLEX. A COMPLEX is a network of thematically, structurally and/or functionally linked sub-units (GROUPS OF ELEMENTS, GROUP COMPOUNDS). It is separated and independent from other COMPLEXES and complete in itself. In the human body, the COMPLEX is an organ. In linguistics and literary studies, it is a single completed text or discourse (e.g. a conversation, a poem, a dramatic text, etc.).

On the final level, there is the SYSTEM OF COMPLEXES. A SYSTEM OF COMPLEXES denotes an in principle indefinite amount of thematically, structurally and/or functionally comparable COMPLEXES. In the human body, this is an organ system. In linguistics and literary studies, we use this level when we compare texts and discourses that are thematically, structurally and/or functionally linked.

For every entry that is to be annotated, the TRIGGER as well as the RANGE of the ambiguity have to be determined. The TRIGGER refers to the root of the ambiguity; we have to ask: On which level is the ambiguity triggered? In example (77) from *Winnie-the-Pooh*, the ambiguity within the quote is triggered by the phrase “attached to it”, which has the potential to be ambiguous. Therefore, the TRIGGER is a COMPLEX ELEMENT. To determine the RANGE of an ambiguity, we have to ask: On which level does the ambiguity have an effect? or: Up to which level does the ambiguity matter? In the case of (78), the TRIGGER “attached to it” realizes its potential to be ambiguous in the context in which it is used. This ambiguity is relevant for this passage of the text, but not for any of the other chapters or even the whole book. Therefore, I choose GROUP COMPOUND as the RANGE of this ambiguity. Table 9 shows the current state of the annotation of (77), including the quantitative classification.

**Tab. 9:** Annotation of (77), “be attached” – Quantitative Classification

<b>Annotation, <i>i2waw190001</i></b>	
Relevant Part	attached to it
Paraphrase 1	fond of it [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	connected with it [compositional]
Comm. Level	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element
Range	group compound

The ellipsis in “But you never actually have” is the TRIGGER of the ambiguity in (78). This means that in fact the ambiguity is triggered by the part of the sentence that is not there and now refers to two possible targets in the context: “been killed” and “worked it out”. Both possible resolutions are phrases. Therefore, the TRIGGER of (78) is on the level of COMPLEX ELEMENT. The misunderstanding caused by the ambiguous ellipsis is resolved at the end of the paragraph. It does not affect the characters or the story afterwards. Therefore, GROUP COMPOUND is the RANGE of the ambiguity. The current state of the annotation of (78) is depicted in Table 10:

**Tab. 10:** Annotation of (78), “you never have” – Quantitative Classification

<b>Annotation, <i>i1waw190058</i></b>	
Relevant Part	But you never actually have [VP-ellipsis]
Paraphrase 1	But you never actually have been killed
Paraphrase 2	But you never actually have worked it out
Comm. Level	innermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element
Range	group compound

With the quantitative classification, TInCAP creates a tool for comparing ambiguous examples across disciplines, and more particularly across different

medial types.<sup>98</sup> The individual determination of both the level of the TRIGGER and the level of the RANGE of an ambiguity, allows us to consider them separately as well as in relation to each other. A large collection of annotations will yield information on the typical levels of TRIGGER and RANGE respectively as well as typical relations between them.

### **Qualitative Classification: Relation and Phenomenon**

The quantitative classification of the examples of ambiguity by means of the seven levels allows for an interdisciplinary comparison with regard to the scale and proportion of the ambiguity within its context. However, it is also desirable to have the possibility to compare examples with regard to the quality or type of the ambiguity. Intuitively, a qualitative comparison would be based on different ambiguous phenomena. However, the range of phenomena associated with ambiguity differs across disciplines. A classification based solely on these phenomena would not yield the desired result of interdisciplinary comparison. We therefore introduced the category TYPES OF PARAPHRASE RELATION that are independent of phenomena and disciplines. The types describe the relation of the potential interpretations of the ambiguous item to each other.

There are three TYPES OF RELATION between the paraphrases of an ambiguous item: either the interpretation is OPEN, or the various interpretations are RELATED, or they are UNRELATED. All entries with multiple simultaneously possible readings or variations of readings in every single context, e.g. cases of vagueness, are examples for the OPEN type of relation. In both the case of UNRELATED and the case of RELATED paraphrases, the ambiguous item has two (or more) clearly distinct readings. In the case of RELATED paraphrases, one of the readings is derived from the other. The derivation may e.g. be due to similarity, a part-whole-relationship, or figuration. (77) falls into the latter category, because the reading “fond of it” is a figurative derivation of the reading “connected with it”. In the case of UNRELATED paraphrases, these readings are not derived from each other, they are independent. For example, homonyms fall into this category as well as referential ambiguities like the ellipsis in (78). We also request the annotator to record the PHENOMENON of the example of ambiguity. Annotators are welcome to use discipline-specific terminology here, and they may enter more than one PHENOMENON for each example. A glossary of possible PHENOMENA is provided to function as guideline for both the analysis and the search (Hartmann et al. 2019, 7–10). This list is expandable. With the stipulation of the RELATION and the PHE-

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<sup>98</sup> See Hartmann et al. (submitted) for more details.

NOMENON, the annotations of (77) and (78) are complete and shown in Table 11 and Table 12 respectively:

**Tab. 11:** Annotation of (77), “be attached” – Qualitative Classification

<b>Annotation, <i>i2waw190001</i></b>	
Relevant Part	attached to it
Paraphrase 1	fond of it [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	connected with it [compositional]
Comm. Level	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element
Range	group compound
Relation	related
Phenomenon	figurative language

**Tab. 12:** Annotation of (78), “you never have” – Qualitative Classification

<b>Annotation, <i>i1waw190058</i></b>	
Relevant Part	But you never actually have [VP-ellipsis]
Paraphrase 1	But you never actually have been killed
Paraphrase 2	But you never actually have worked it out
Comm. Level	innermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element
Range	group compound
Relation	unrelated
Phenomenon	ellipsis; referential ambiguity

The qualitative classification of examples of ambiguity is twofold. The division by means of the RELATIONS (OPEN, RELATED, UNRELATED) is independent of individual disciplines and therefore promotes comparability between disciplines. The discipline specific terminology (PHENOMENON) facilitates the retrieval of similar examples within one discipline. Furthermore, this allows the users to investi-

gate whether one phenomenon always occurs within one type of relation or not, e.g. if all ambiguity that is due to figurative language use has related readings.<sup>99</sup>

### Comments

For giving additional information that is not captured in the annotation scheme, we provide two COMMENT fields: One within the ENTRY DATA and one within the ANNOTATION DATA. The first may be used to provide information on the entry which is relevant for all annotations, if there are multiple ones. This may, for instance, include information on the author, on the circumstances of reception (e.g. form of publication, historical events), or on language change. The field COMMENT TO ANNOTATION is intended for clarifying the annotation, i.e. giving information on why and how the specific annotation was made. Furthermore, this field may be used for additional annotation features, as I will show in chapter 6.2.

### 5.2.3 Connected Annotations and Entries

We often find that one example allows for several analyses. How can we make this fact not only transparent but also implement it in the corpus in a fruitful way? It is of course possible to enter the same example twice, with two different annotations. However, it would then not be apparent that there are two possible annotations when we look at one of these entries. Thus, we decided to offer the option to connect annotations and entries. For every single annotation, the annotator has to decide for one of the possible analyses. A second annotation with a different analysis may then be added. Both annotations are complete in themselves; however, the annotator has to specify that the different annotations are connected and why by entering the ID of the connected entry or annotation in the field of the fitting type. So far, the three types of connections that have been requested most frequently by users of the corpus have been implemented: CHANGE OF COMMUNICATION LEVEL, ADDITIONAL AMBIGUITY, and CONNECTED ENTRIES. I will give details for these in the following.

#### Change of Communication Level

We speak of CHANGE OF COMMUNICATION LEVEL if the connection of two or more annotations of one instance of ambiguity is due to a change with regard to the

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<sup>99</sup> Or if all ambiguous idioms have related paraphrases – which they do not, see 2.3.

COMMUNICATION LEVEL. As I have shown above, the assignment of strategy for the DIMENSIONS P and R may depend on the communication level. Therefore, changing the level may influence the further annotation, e.g. yield different annotations on the level of the fictional characters (INNERMOST) than on the level of the author/reader(s) (OUTERMOST).

Looking again at (78) and its annotation shown in Table 12 (repeated in Table 13 as ANNOTATION 1), we can see that the annotation will look different if we change the COMMUNICATION LEVEL from the characters (INNERMOST) to the author and reader(s) (OUTERMOST). The RELEVANT PART and the PARAPHRASES stay the same as well as the quantitative and qualitative classifications. However, the DIMENSIONS change. While the characters in example (78) produce and receive the ambiguity without any strategy, the author certainly produced the ambiguity strategically. There is no indication whether the actual individual reader perceives this ambiguity strategically or not. Therefore, I assign  $S^0$  for the DIMENSION of perception. Finally, the TYPE OF CONNECTION has to be indicated. As shown, the differences in the annotations come about through a CHANGE OF COMMUNICATION LEVEL, so that is the type to select.

Table 13 gives the complete CONNECTED ANNOTATIONS for (78) including the TYPE OF CONNECTION. The change that leads to the different annotations is marked in bold.

**Tab. 13:** Connected Annotations of (78), “you never have” – Change of Communication Level

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190058</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190058</i></b>
Relevant Part	But you never actually have.	But you never actually have.
Paraphrase 1	But you never actually have been killed.	But you never actually have been killed.
Paraphrase 2	But you never actually have worked it out.	But you never actually have worked it out.
<b>Comm. Level</b>	<b>innermost</b>	<b>outermost</b>
Dimension	$PS^- / RS^-$	$PS^+ / RS^0$
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	ellipsis; referential ambiguity	ellipsis; referential ambiguity
Connection	change of communication level	

### Additional Ambiguity

Sometimes two or more instances of ambiguity occur within the same paragraph, the same picture, etc. In such cases, we annotate each ambiguity on its own. Then we connect both annotations with the label ADDITIONAL AMBIGUITY. The clustering of ambiguities within one section of a text or within one picture has an effect that goes beyond the effect of the individual ambiguities. This effect would go unnoticed if the annotations were entered separately and without connection. In contrast, connecting the annotations and marking them as ADDITIONAL AMBIGUITIES highlights the effect.

I will illustrate this type of connection with (79), a scene from Anthony Horowitz's *South by Southeast*, where the main characters, brothers Tim and Nick, are spying on a suspect who has a missing finger:

- (79) We broke cover and sprinted across the lawn to the side of the house. Our shadows reached it first. There was nobody in sight, but now I could hear the sound of a piano drifting out of one of the windows. I recognized the music — but only just. It was Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata", but played very badly. It occurred to me that the pianist might be missing a finger. "Listen!" I nudged Tim.  
 "Is it a **record**?" Tim asked.  
 "Yes. Nobody's ever played it that badly."  
 Tim's mouth dropped open. "Charon!"  
 "It figures. He killed McGuffin. And now he's **murdering Beethoven.**"  
 (Horowitz 1991, Ch. 11; waw190064)

There are two ambiguities within this short section of text and therefore (at least) two annotations. ANNOTATION 2<sup>100</sup> is centered on the RELEVANT PART "record". The sentence containing it can either be PARAPHRASED as "Is it a recording?" (OED: "record, n.1", 8a,b) or as "Is it the best/worst/most remarkable performance?" (OED: "record, n.1", 7). On the COMMUNICATION LEVEL of the author and the reader(s) (OUTERMOST), I can attest a strategical production (PS<sup>+</sup>), while I cannot say whether a strategical perception occurs (RS<sup>0</sup>). The ambiguity is triggered only by the word "record" with its two possible readings, therefore the TRIGGER is ELEMENT. The range of the ambiguity goes beyond the sentence because Nick, the narrator, refers to the ambiguous word in the following sentence. However, the ambiguity does not influence the conversation beyond this

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**100** Annotation numbers are given according to the Annotation IDs used in TInCAP. In total, there are four annotations for this example (see Table 15 on p. 116).

paragraph; therefore, the RANGE is GROUP COMPOUND. The two possible readings are RELATED, “record” being a polysemous word.<sup>101</sup>

ANNOTATION 4 focuses on the second possible RELEVANT PART “murdering Beethoven”, with the whole sentence either being read as “And now he’s killing the person called Beethoven” (OED: “murder, v.”, 1a) or as “And now he’s spoiling the music written by Beethoven” (OED: “murder, v.”, 5). On the OUTERMOST COMMUNICATION LEVEL, the DIMENSIONS are the same as in ANNOTATION 2, PS<sup>+</sup> and RS<sup>0</sup>. The ambiguity in this case is due to a combination of two aspects. On the one hand, the phrase “to murder s.b. or s.th.” has two possible readings: in combination with s.b. it has to be understood as “to kill”, while in combination with s.th. it refers to “spoiling s.th.”. “Beethoven”, on the other hand, can either be read as the real person or metonymically as the music written by Beethoven. Accordingly, “to murder s.b. or s.th” in combination with the reading of Beethoven as a real person is understood as “to kill the person called Beethoven”, while in combination with the metonymical reading, it is understood as “to spoil the music written by Beethoven”. Therefore, the TRIGGER is a COMPLEX ELEMENT, the two meanings are RELATED and the PHENOMENON is figurative language, more specifically, a combination of an idiom with metonymy. As before, the ambiguity does not go beyond the paragraph, the RANGE is the GROUP COMPOUND. Both annotations are shown in Table 14, with the starting point for the different annotations marked in bold:

**Tab. 14:** Connected Annotations of (79), “record/murdering Beethoven” (South by Southeast) – Additional Ambiguity

	<b>Annotation 2, i2waw190064</b>	<b>Annotation 4, i4waw190064</b>
<b>Relevant Part</b>	<b>record</b>	<b>murdering Beethoven</b>
Paraphrase 1	Is it a recording?	And now he is spoiling the music written by Beethoven. [phrasal]

<sup>101</sup> According to Ravin & Leacock (2000, 2), “polysemes are etymologically and therefore semantically related, and typically originate from metaphoric usage”. The defining criteria for polysemy set out by Fillmore & Atkins (2000, 100) have been discussed above (2.3). All of these aspects apply to “record”: The OED (“record, n.1”) shows that the term “record” comes from Middle French “piece of evidence about past events, memory, account, story, etc.”. The reading “anything preserving information and constituting a piece of evidence about past events” is first documented in the late 14th century. The reading “item carrying recorded sound, typically music” is first attested 1878. The first use with the reading “best performance or most remarkable event of its kind” is from 1860.



	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190064</i>	Annotation 4, <i>i4waw190064</i>
Paraphrase 2	Is it the best/worst/most remarkable performance?	And now he is killing the person called Beethoven. [compositional]
Comm. Level	outermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>
Trigger	element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	polysemy	figurative language; idiom; metonymy
Connection		additional ambiguity

### Connected Entries

The idea of the exponential effect of multiple ambiguities is taken even further in the case of CONNECTED ENTRIES. In these cases, the entries and annotations that are connected may or may not be ambiguous in themselves. However, taken together, they lead to an ambiguity that spans the whole text, picture, etc. In contrast to the other types of connections it is not only ANNOTATIONS that are connected here, but complete ENTRIES. This type of connection is, for instance, used in cases in which the utterances and/or actions assigned to a fictional character in a drama or in narrative fiction are ambiguous and in which this ambiguity in turn makes the entire character ambiguous as the interpretation of the character depends on how we resolve the ambiguity of the character's utterances and/or actions. One example for this is Polonius in Hamlet.<sup>102</sup> If every individual ambiguity is annotated by itself, the ambiguity of the character cannot be seen in the corpus. Connecting the annotations and entries highlights the complexity and ambiguity of this character.

The individual QUOTES of the entries connected may be ambiguous themselves, but they do not have to be. It is also useful to employ this function to connect entries if the ambiguity is created in one of the entries and resolved in the other. This is, for example, the case with the *draw the drapes* example from *Amelia Bedelia*.

(80) **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

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Bross (2017, 151–192) and within TInCAP brm020001 and brm020009.

not much of a hand at drawing, but I'll try."

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

(Parish 1963; waw190065)

(81) "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.

(Parish 1963; waw190013)

The phrase is used ambiguously twice, with the first occurrence (transcribed in (65, here repeated as (80)) creating and the second (transcribed in (81)) resolving the ambiguity on the INNERMOST COMMUNICATION LEVEL. Using the function CONNECTED ENTRY makes the connection between the entries visible within TInCAP.

### Multiple Connections

Sometimes there are more than two possible annotations. Looking at (79) more closely, it is clear that at least four alternative annotations are possible. There are not only two ambiguities within this short paragraph, a change of the COMMUNICATION LEVEL allows the annotation of both instances of ambiguity on the level of the fictional characters (INNERMOST COMMUNICATION LEVEL) as well. ANNOTATION 1 annotates the RELEVANT PART "record" on the level of the fictional characters. In the story, the characters are wondering whether someone is in the house, so Tim is unambiguously asking if what they hear is a recording. This means that his production of the ambiguity does not happen strategically (PS<sup>-</sup>). However, his brother Nick is a type of character that frequently plays with double meanings, often at Tim's expense. His explicit reaction to the unlikely meaning of Tim's preceding statement reveals his strategic perception of this ambiguity (RS<sup>+</sup>). In all other respects, ANNOTATION 1 does not differ from ANNOTATION 2.

ANNOTATION 3 corresponds to ANNOTATION 4. For the RELEVANT PART "murdering Beethoven" the CHANGE OF COMMUNICATION LEVEL does not have the same effect as for "record". It is Nick who produces this ambiguity. In the given context, with him uttering "He killed McGuffin" just before, and taking his character into account, he produces the ambiguity strategically (PS<sup>+</sup>). Tim, on the other hand, does not react to the ambiguity at all, so I cannot determine if the perception is strategic or not (RS<sup>0</sup>). In all other respects, ANNOTATION 3 does not differ from ANNOTATION 4.

Table 15 with ANNOTATIONS 1 through 4 for (79) illustrates the combination of the different types of CONNECTED ANNOTATIONS:

**Tab. 15:** Connected Annotations of (79), “record/murdering Beethoven” (South by Southeast) – Additional Ambiguity and Change of Communication Level

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190064</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190064</i></b>	<b>Annotation 3, <i>i3waw190064</i></b>	<b>Annotation 4, <i>i4waw190064</i></b>
Relevant Part	record	record	murdering Beethoven	murdering Beethoven
Paraphrase 1	Is it a recording?	Is it a recording?	And now he is spoiling the music written by Beethoven. [phrasal]	And now he is spoiling the music written by Beethoven. [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	Is it the best/worst/most remarkable performance?	Is it the best/worst/most remarkable performance?	And now he is killing the person called Beetho- ven. [composit.]	And now he is killing the person called Beetho- ven. [composit.]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>
Trigger	element	element	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related	related	related
Phenomenon	polysemy	polysemy	figurative lan- guage; idiom; metonymy	figurative lan- guage; idiom; metonymy
Connection	change of communication level		change of communication level	
Connection	additional ambiguity			

The functions CONNECTED ANNOTATIONS and CONNECTED ENTRIES allow us to visualize the various types of connections between annotations and entries within TInCAP. Users of the web interface see with one glance if there are CONNECTED ANNOTATIONS or ENTRIES for an annotation or entry and for what reason these are connected. Most importantly, patterns become visible, as I will show in the practical application of TInCAP to text analyses in part III.

### 5.3 Search Functions of TInCAP 1.0

Via the web interface, users may not only enter and modify entries and annotations, they can also search for specific entries as well as for specific kinds of annotations. Every piece of data that is entered into TInCAP is also searchable. The search interface is split into the blocks already familiar from entering data: ENTRY DATA, BIBLIOGRAPHY DATA, MEDIA DATA and ANNOTATION DATA. Additionally, users can run complex searches via EXPERT SEARCH using LDAP filters. The search functions are augmented by features for statistical evaluation, sorting and filtering mechanisms, and possibilities for export (xml, csv, pdf).

The block ENTRY DATA enables the user to search for entries or types of entries. If the ID is known (e.g. on the basis of a publication which contains a corresponding reference), users may retrieve specific entries directly. The field FREE TEXT searches within QUOTE and COMMENTS, thus also providing the possibility to search for specific entries or for specific types of entries if the comment field is used strategically, e.g. for additional annotations, as I will show below (6.2). Searching for the additional information provided in the ENTRY DATA allows the user to narrow down the search to specific types of QUOTES (MODE OF EXPRESSION, EXPRESSION TYPE), QUOTES from a specific time frame (PERIOD, PERIOD FROM, PERIOD TO), QUOTES in a specific LANGUAGE or from one or more OWNERS. Furthermore, the user has the possibility to limit results to only those with CONNECTED ENTRIES.

The section BIBLIOGRAPHY DATA provides a FREE TEXT field which searches within all bibliographic information provided. Additionally, users may limit their search to a specific TYPE of publication (book, article, etc.). MEDIA DATA allows the search for media data which is either the QUOTE or RELATED MATERIAL, thus allowing the limitation of search results to only those that do not annotate written text.

ANNOTATION DATA provides the possibility to search for every feature of the annotation scheme, on its own or in combination. Users searching for a specific kind of ambiguity use may enter the desired combination of annotation features and the search will yield only entries that show this combination. For instance, searching within DIMENSION for PS<sup>+</sup> only will yield all annotations with strategic production, no matter whether the ambiguity is perceived strategically or not. However, if a user is, for instance, interested in examples where a strategic production is combined with a non-strategic perception, he has the option to fill in both fields in the search form (PS<sup>+</sup>, RS<sup>-</sup>). This search will then yield only examples operating at this intersection. With CONNECTED ANNOTATIONS, the user may limit the search results to those of one type of connection (ADDITIONAL AMBIGUITY, CHANGE OF COMMUNICATION LEVEL). This may reveal patterns of ambiguity use, as I will show in part III.

## 5.4 Summary

A complete entry within TInCAP provides the example (QUOTE) including relevant metadata about the source in combination with an annotation of the potential interpretations of the particular instance of ambiguity. The starting point for every annotation is the determination of the RELEVANT PART, the PARAPHRASES of the ambiguity in question as well as the specification of the COMMUNICATION LEVEL on which the annotation takes place. The indication of these three elements allows every user of TInCAP to perceive and understand the ambiguity in a given entry. Furthermore, it allows the user to reconstruct the annotation process of the original annotator: if these three are fixed and the annotators are from the same discipline, the other parts of the annotation should be consistent. Identification of the strategic or non-strategic production or perception of ambiguity (DIMENSION) gives insight into the speaker-hearer relationship. The quantitative (TRIGGER, RANGE) and qualitative (PARAPHRASE RELATION, PHENOMENON) classifications facilitate a comparison of ambiguous examples across disciplines and medial types. They form a representative image of ambiguity independent of external factors. In combination with the use of CONNECTED ANNOTATIONS and a discipline-independent terminology, this annotation scheme provides the framework for an interdisciplinary classification of ambiguity.

Every individual user of TInCAP will profit in two ways. Firstly, he will be able to collect and store all of his examples with all relevant information in a system that allows for easy retrieval via the search interface. The comment fields are not only useful for the clarification of the annotation and the process of annotating for other users; they also provide room for individual notes and additional annotations. Secondly, all users of TInCAP have the possibility to find, via the search function, examples with the same or similar annotations. These examples may come from the same discipline or – if the discipline-specific fields are left empty in the search – from any other discipline. This yields a broad picture of the phenomenon that the user is researching, a picture that could hardly be arrived at in any other way. I will demonstrate this in more detail below, in chapter 9.

Annotating examples of ambiguity within TInCAP helps not only individual users but whole disciplines as well. As with individual users, the benefits of working with TInCAP are twofold: intradisciplinary as well as inter- and transdisciplinary. Intradisciplinarily, TInCAP allows a broader view on ambiguity phenomena researched within a specific discipline, and it reveals patterns of ambiguity typical for this discipline. Furthermore, TInCAP facilitates exchange and communication between researchers on ambiguity within the individual disciplines and beyond. From an inter- and transdisciplinary perspective, the

findings obtained with TInCAP can easily be communicated to other disciplines. This in turn may reveal similarities with as well as differences to other disciplines. Thereby, each discipline positions itself within the interdisciplinary field of ambiguity research.

When we started out, our hope was that the annotation in TInCAP would make ambiguity phenomena from different disciplines comparable. Our findings so far support this. For instance, TInCAP has revealed parallels between my project and the dissertation projects of other members of RTG 1808. In jokes, which also exploit the differences between the communication levels, ambiguity is employed similarly to my types 2 (unresolved ambiguity) and 3 (reanalysis), with the ambiguity either not being resolved or being resolved in the unexpected way (cf. e.g. kes060005, kes060007, kes060015). In illustrated novels, the same image may be used more than once in different contexts; the effect is similar to that of my type 4 (contrastive readings) (Potysch 2018). The experimental data created for a project about prosodic ambiguity resolution shows the same patterns in strategy use between the communication levels as many of my examples (Remmele 2019), as does a project about the ambiguity of death in Paul's letters in the New Testament (Kohler in prep.). Thus, TInCAP creates comparability across disciplines and medial types.

Furthermore, we wanted to provide a platform as well as the necessary terminology to facilitate and promote interdisciplinary communication concerning ambiguity. Within RTG 1808 this has proven and continues to be successful, and the interdisciplinary orientation has emerged to be the special strength of our corpus. We anticipate that TInCAP will be widely used by ambiguity researchers from every discipline, as it provides a platform to collect and annotate ambiguous examples in such a way that they yield results that are effective, transparent, and of interdisciplinary relevance.

## 6 Annotation of Idioms in Literary Texts with TInCAP

In this chapter, I will expand upon the benefits of using TInCAP and show in which way an analysis of idioms in literary texts profits from this corpus. The challenge this kind of analysis encounters is the balancing act at the interface between linguistics and literary studies. This interdisciplinary approach is supported by TInCAP. On the one hand, it uses unbiased terminology, which promotes communication between the disciplines and allows me to position myself in both fields. On the other hand, TInCAP draws on approaches from both linguistics and literary studies, e.g. by combining linguistic theories of ambiguity with aspects of literary theory (e.g. communication levels). Thus, TInCAP supports the process of finding answers to specific research questions. In this chapter, I will shortly discuss from a theoretical point of view which features of TInCAP are especially useful for my research (6.1). Furthermore, I will present the adaptations of TInCAP I suggest in order to fully capture the complexity of this kind of examples (6.2). Both aspects will be explored more fully with regard to their practical use in part III.

### 6.1 General remarks

With its interdisciplinary foundation, TInCAP is the ideal tool for the documentation and annotation of idioms used in literary texts. It provides all the features needed for the systematic recording of linguistic as well as literary examples and is optimized for examples operating at the interface. Examples recorded and annotated within TInCAP are easily retrieved, not only via parts of the examples (words, phrases, etc.) but also via annotation features. As has been shown, these annotation features have been developed specifically with a range of ambiguity phenomena in various disciplines in mind. For instance, the determination of the RELEVANT PART and the PARAPHRASES yields relevant information for any kind of ambiguity in any context or discipline. The same is true for the QUANTITATIVE CLASSIFICATION through assigning the TRIGGERING LEVEL and the RANGE.

With regard to my project, the examples profit from a general analysis within TInCAP, because it is an inherent characteristic of a certain group of idiomatic expressions to have the potential to be ambiguous (see 2.2). The annotation of these idiomatic expressions' occurrences with TInCAP reveals a bigger picture of the ways in which they may be used. This includes those examples where the

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potential to be ambiguous is not realized. Furthermore, the QUALITATIVE CLASSIFICATION sheds new light on the classification of idioms. Here, the relationship between phrasal and compositional meaning (see 2.3) is recorded (TYPE OF PARAPHRASE RELATION) as well as the PHENOMENON. Annotating both enables me to use the search function to reveal patterns of idioms, e.g. the combined search for TYPE OF PARAPHRASE RELATION and PHENOMENON restricts the results to either opaque idioms (RELATION = unrelated; PHENOMENON = idiom) or transparent ones (RELATION = related; PHENOMENON = idiom). This, in turn, allows me to analyse whether the ambiguity of opaque and transparent idioms is employed or explored differently in context.

As all my examples are taken from literary texts, they further benefit from the additional annotation features. The function CONNECTED ANNOTATIONS enables the representation of e.g. a CHANGE OF COMMUNICATION LEVEL from the characters in the text (INNERMOST) to the author and the reader of the text (OUTERMOST). This change of communication level may in turn lead to two very different annotations, e.g. regarding the strategic or non-strategic use of an ambiguity. I will analyse the resulting effect in detail in part III.

## 6.2 Adaptations of TInCAP

The features already implemented in TInCAP are those that are relevant for most members of RTG 1808. However, a few more features could be included, which might be relevant to more than just my project. There are three aspects I will add to my annotations: The TYPE OF AMBIGUITY USE (TYPE, 6.2.1), the ORDER OF PERCEPTION (ORDER, 6.2.2), and the relevant CONTEXT FEATURES (CONTEXT, 6.2.3). TYPE reflects how the ambiguity of the idiomatic expression is used in this specific occurrence (compare the types introduced in chapter 4 above). ORDER notes whether one of the possible readings is promoted by the context or is perceived first, and whether a switch occurs between the readings. CONTEXT records which context features influence the readers' understanding and manipulate the readings. As these three annotation fields are not yet available in the web interface of TInCAP, I will use the field COMMENT TO ANNOTATION for now. This field is searchable via the regular search functions and is included in the various export functions (xml, csv, pdf). Thus, this provides a temporary solution for testing the usefulness of these adaptations.



### 6.2.1 Types of Ambiguity Use in Context

The potential of idioms to be ambiguous is employed in contexts in various ways. I introduced the four possible types of use (unambiguous use, unresolved ambiguity, reanalysis, contrastive readings) in chapter 4. Including these four types as an annotation feature in TInCAP allows the annotator to indicate whether the ambiguous element appears once (type 1, 2 and 3) or more often (type 4), whether the ambiguity is only potential (type 1) or is functionalized in this specific context (type 2, 3 and 4), and, if it is functionalized, whether a shift between the readings takes place (type 3 and 4) or not (type 2). I will call this annotation category TYPE OF AMBIGUITY USE, abbreviated as TYPE in the annotation tables used here. In the following, I will illustrate how to use the four types when annotating examples.

#### 6.2.1.1 Type 1: Unambiguous Use

This type of occurrence of a potentially ambiguous expression does not lead to an ambiguity. However, it is still profitable to annotate these types of examples with TInCAP. I will illustrate the reason with two different occurrences of the idiomatic expression “on your own head be it”, (70) (repeated as (82)) and (83):

- (82) “Leave your trunk and your owl, Alastor’s going to deal with the luggage ... oh, for heaven’s sake, Sirius, Dumbledore said no!”

A bear-like black dog had appeared at Harry’s side as he was clambering over the various chunks cluttering the hall to get to Mrs Weasley.

“Oh honestly ...” said Mrs Weasley despairingly. “Well, **on your own head be it!**”

She wrenched open the front door and stepped out into the weak September sunlight. Harry and the dog followed her. The door slammed behind them and Mrs Black’s screeches were cut off instantly.

(Rowling 2003, Ch. 10; waw190019)

- (83) 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, Ch. 1; waw190004)

The phrase “on your own head be it” is the RELEVANT PART in both examples. There are two possible PARAPHRASES: Either someone is to “be held responsible for something, or [has to] accept any unpleasant consequences of a chosen course of action” (OED: “head, n.”, P1, i(iii)) or “it (whatever ‘it’ is) has to be on his own head”. These two PARAPHRASES are RELATED and the PHENOMENON is an idiom or, more general, a case of figurative language. So far, the two examples are the same.

A close look at (82) reveals that, in this example, the potential of the idiomatic expression to be ambiguous is not realized. There is no ambiguity, therefore there is no strategic production or perception of ambiguity (DIMENSION: PS<sup>-</sup>/RS<sup>-</sup>). However, even if there is no ambiguity in this case, it is still possible to determine the TRIGGER that could potentially cause an ambiguity: the phrase “on your own head be it” (COMPLEX ELEMENT). This effect can be compared to a lamp and a light switch. The switch is there, even if it is not flipped. However, just as a lamp is not turned on if the switch is not flipped, it is not possible to determine the RANGE in (82) because the ambiguity is not actually triggered. I chose the same level as for the *Trigger*, because the ambiguity does not go beyond it. The completed ANNOTATION of (82) is shown in Table 16.

**Tab. 16:** Annotations of (82), “on your own head be it” (Harry Potter)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190019</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190019</i></b>
Relevant Part	on your own head be it	on your own head be it
Paraphrase 1	you have to take full responsibility for what you plan to do [phrasal]	you have to take full responsibility for what you plan to do [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	it has to be on your own head [compositional]	it has to be on your own head [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Connection	change of communication level	

This ANNOTATION stays the same on every LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION. A CHANGE OF COMMUNICATION LEVEL does not change the DIMENSION, as with (78) and (79), or any other aspect of the annotation.

Looking at (82) only, an annotation of unambiguous uses of potentially ambiguous examples within TInCAP might be deemed theoretically interesting but unnecessary. This is not generally the case, however, and I will use (83) to illustrate this. The annotation of (83) reveals a pattern that is typical for a wide range of examples in my corpus: the different communicative levels use the ambiguity in different ways. If I annotate the example on the level of the characters (INNERMOST), the annotation is the same as for the annotations of (82) (cf. Table 17, ANNOTATION 1).

**Tab. 17:** Annotations of (83), “be it on your own head” (Sir Nobonk)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190004</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190004</i></b>
Relevant Part	be it on your own head	be it on your own head
Paraphrase 1	you have to take full responsibility for what you plan to do [phrasal]	you have to take full responsibility for what you plan to do [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	it (the licence) has to be on your own head [compositional]	it (the licence) has to be on your own head [compositional]
<b>Comm. Level</b>	<b>innermost</b>	<b>outermost</b>
<b>Dimension</b>	<b>PS<sup>-</sup> / RS<sup>-</sup></b>	<b>PS<sup>+</sup> / RS<sup>-</sup></b>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
<b>Range</b>	<b>complex element</b>	<b>group compound</b>
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
<b>Type</b>	<b>1: unambiguous use</b>	<b>3: reanalysis</b>
Connection	change of communication level	

However, ANNOTATION 2, on the COMMUNICATION LEVEL of the author and the reader(s) (OUTERMOST), differs significantly from ANNOTATION 1. On this level, the potential of the idiomatic expression to be ambiguous is realized.<sup>103</sup> I am able to assign a strategic use (at least on the production side, PS<sup>+</sup>/RS<sup>-</sup>) as well as to determine the RANGE of the ambiguity, which is the complete paragraph (GROUP

**103** This is a case of reanalysis (type 3). I will discuss the annotation of this type below in 6.2.1.

COMPOUND). Table 17 shows both annotations, with the differences between the annotations marked in bold.

The annotations of (82) and (83) show that the benefit of annotating a potential ambiguity is twofold. Firstly, the annotation has theoretical value because it identifies and visualizes language structures. This is true for both examples. Secondly, there is also an analytical value because the effects a change of communication level may have are visualized, as in (83). A more detailed discussion of this effect will follow in chapter 8.1.5.

### 6.2.1.2 Type 2: Unresolved Ambiguity

In cases of unresolved ambiguity, both readings, the phrasal and the compositional, are equally plausible. (72) (repeated as (84)) includes two such cases of unresolved ambiguity:

(84) We stalked out of the windmill, Tim leaving white footprints behind him.

The sails were still turning slowly behind us.

In the last twelve hours we'd been machine-gunned through a cornfield and stitched up by a vet. We'd found Charon's headquarters and we'd come infuriatingly close to seeing Charon. We'd stolen Mr Waverly's cheque and we'd almost been shot **getting away with it**.

And now we were **dead on our feet**. We needed a bath and a long, long sleep. Because you had to admit – both of us **had been through the mill**.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 11; waw190006)

Before these paragraphs, there is a three-page long description of Nick (the narrator) and his brother Tim being chased through a windmill. Within this short section of text there are three idiomatic expressions: “to get away with s.th.”, “to be dead on one's feet”, and “to have been through the mill”. Here, I will look closely at the annotations of the first and the last expression. The second one is used unambiguously, and the corresponding annotation is shown in Table 18 as ANNOTATION 2.

For ANNOTATION 1, the RELEVANT PART is “getting away with it”. This expression can be read in its compositional meaning “to escape, taking something with one” or in its phrasal meaning “to succeed in what one tries without being detected or punished” (phrasal; OED: “get, v.”, PV1, 1c). For ANNOTATION 3, the RELEVANT PART is “had been through the mill”. This expression can be read in its compositional reading “had moved through the mill, from one end to the other or from top to bottom” or in its phrasal reading “we had undergone an unpleasant experience” (phrasal; OED: “mill, n.”, P7). On the COMMUNICATION LEVEL of

the author and the reader (OUTERMOST), both readings are equally salient in both cases: Nick and Tim have gotten away with getting away with the cheque and they have been chased through the mill and therefore feel badly treated, abused, and exhausted.

In all other aspects, the annotations are the same as well. In analogy to the analyses in 5.2.2, the ambiguity is produced strategically by the author (PS<sup>+</sup>), while I have to assign S<sup>0</sup> for the DIMENSION of perception (RS<sup>0</sup>). The ambiguity is triggered by the idiomatic phrases themselves, therefore both TRIGGERS are COMPLEX ELEMENTS. The ambiguity is not resolved but it is not relevant beyond this passage of the text, therefore the RANGE is the GROUP COMPOUND. The PARAPHRASE RELATION IS RELATED in both cases and we have the same PHENOMENA as well (figurative language; idiom). Table 18 shows the complete annotations of (84):

**Tab. 18:** Annotations of (84), “getting away with it” / “dead on our feet” / “through the mill” (South by Southeast)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190006</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190006</i></b>	<b>Annotation 3, <i>i3waw190006</i></b>
Relevant Part	getting away with it	dead on our feet	had been through the mill
Paraphrase 1	We stole Mr Waverly’s cheque and were not punished for it [phrasal]	We were really, really tired and exhausted [phrasal]	We had been badly treated and were abused and exhausted [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	We stole Mr. Waverly’s cheque and escaped, taking it with us [compositional]	We were dead and still standing [compositional]	We had moved through the mill, from one end to the other/from top to bottom [compositional]
Comm. Level	outermost	outermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	complex element	group compound
Relation	related	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity	1: unambiguous use	2: unresolved ambiguity
Connection		additional ambiguity	

### 6.2.1.3 Type 3: Reanalysis

With this type of ambiguity use the ambiguous item appears once and the context leads to reanalysis. In the section on type 1, unambiguous use (p. 122–124), we already encountered example (83), where the knight Sir Nobonk straps the licence to his own head, which includes a case of reanalysis on the OUTERMOST LEVEL. Another occurrence of reanalysis is found in (85) and Figure 8, which features one more instance of Amelia Bedelia’s literal mindedness:

(85) **Put the lights out** when you finish in the living room.

Amelia Bedelia thought about this a minute. She switched off the lights. Then she carefully unscrewed each bulb.

And Amelia Bedelia put the lights out. “So those things need to be aired out, too. Just like pillows and babies. Oh, I do have a lot to learn.”

(Parish 1963, 13f; waw190007)



Fig. 8: Page layout of (85), “put the lights out” (Amelia Bedelia; Parish 1963, 13f)

The RELEVANT PART in this example is “put the lights out” at the beginning of the paragraph. This may either be understood in its phrasal verb reading “extinguish the lights” (OED: “put, v.”, PV1, 7b) or in its compositional reading “bring

the lightbulbs outside” (OED: “put, v.”, II). For the compositional reading, a metonymic shift from the light to its source is necessary. The two readings are RELATED: the phrasal reading is a figurative use of the compositional one. The TRIGGER for the ambiguity is a phrase and thus located on the level of the COMPLEX ELEMENT for both levels of communication. The RANGE goes up to the level of the paragraph but not beyond (GROUP COMPOUND). On the OUTERMOST LEVEL (ANNOTATION 2), the ambiguity is produced strategically (the author places it in the text). For the readers, the ambiguity is perceived through a process of reanalysis, triggered by the linguistic context (the description of Amelia Bedelia’s actions) as well as the non-linguistic co-text (the depiction of Amelia Bedelia’s actions). Through the process of reanalysis, the ambiguity is perceived by the readers but not strategically. On the INNERMOST COMMUNICATION LEVEL, the ambiguity is produced and perceived non-strategically (ANNOTATION 1). The complete ANNOTATIONS are shown in Table 19:

**Tab. 19:** Annotations of (85), “put the lights out” (Amelia Bedelia)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190007</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190007</i></b>
Relevant Part	put the lights out	put the lights out
Paraphrase 1	extinguish the lights [phrasal]	extinguish the lights [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	bring the lightbulbs outside [compositional]	bring the lightbulbs outside [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; metonymy; phrasal verb	collocation; metonymy; phrasal verb
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Connection	change of communication level	

#### 6.2.1.4 Type 4: Contrastive Readings

In the fourth type of ambiguity use, the ambiguous item appears (at least) twice in close proximity, once with the phrasal and once with the compositional reading. This type of use, which differs on the textual surface from the other types, makes the ambiguity particularly visible. The following example from *Winnie-*

*the-Pooh* includes a case of contrastive readings, using the preposition “after” with two different readings:

- (86) Next to his house was a piece of broken board which had: “TRESPASSERS W” on it. When Christopher Robin asked the Piglet what it meant, he said it was his grandfather’s name, and had been in the family for a long time. Christopher Robin said you couldn’t be called Trespassers W, and Piglet said yes, you could, because his grandfather was, and it was short for Trespassers Will, which was short for Trespassers William. And his grandfather had had two names in case he lost one – Trespassers **after** an uncle, and William **after** Trespassers.

(Milne 1926, 37; waw190021)

The RELEVANT PART “after” has various possible RELATED readings, depending on the immediate co-text. In collocation with having a name, it is usually read as “being named after s.o. or s.th”, in this specific case as “having the name Trespassers in imitation or memory of an uncle” (OED: “after, prep”, 10b). In the second construction within this paragraph, it has to be read in the more general sense of “behind” or “following” (OED: “after, prep”, 1a). As the contrastive readings are part of the characters’ dialogue, they are present on both COMMUNICATION LEVELS (INNERMOST and OUTERMOST): Characters and author/readers share the same linguistic context which determines the possible readings. The TRIGGER for the ambiguity is the preposition “after” (ELEMENT), the RANGE of the ambiguity does not go beyond the sentence (GROUP OF ELEMENTS). The ambiguity is not produced strategically on the INNERMOST LEVEL and it is unclear whether Winnie-the-Pooh perceives it, as he does not react to it. On the OUTERMOST LEVEL, the ambiguity is produced strategically and perceived non-strategically. The complete annotations are shown in Table 20:

**Tab. 20:** Annotations of (86), “after an uncle/after Trespassers” (Winnie-the-Pooh)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190021</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190021</i></b>
Relevant Part	after an uncle/after Trespassers	after an uncle/after Trespassers
Paraphrase 1	after an uncle = in imitation/memory of an uncle	after an uncle = in imitation/memory of an uncle
Paraphrase 2	after Trespassers = behind/following Trespassers	after Trespassers = behind/following Trespassers
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost



	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190021</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190021</i>
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	element	element
Range	group of elements	group of elements
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; polysemy	collocation; polysemy
Type	4: contrastive readings	4: contrastive readings
Connection	change of communication level	

### 6.2.2 Order of Perception

Giving the RELEVANT PART and the possible PARAPHRASES for each ANNOTATION indicates the ambiguity or ambiguity potential of the QUOTE. However, it does not reveal whether both readings are perceived by the speaker and/or hearer, and, if they are, whether they are perceived at the same time. The annotation category TYPE OF AMBIGUITY USE, while providing information on the surface structure and the question whether the ambiguity is functionalized, does neither indicate differences between hearer and speaker nor on the perception of readings. Annotating which of the readings are perceived by speaker and/or hearer, and whether a change takes place in the course of reading, may reveal typical patterns of ambiguity perception. Thus, I introduce the annotation category ORDER OF PERCEPTION, abbreviated as ORDER here. For now, these annotations remain hypotheses, based on a close reading of the texts and an analysis of specific context features (see 6.2.3). They may be used as the basis for psycholinguistic experiments. The notation I propose to use is shown in Table 21:

**Tab. 21:** Notation used for the annotation category *Order of Perception*

Notation	Definition
P	Production; which readings are perceived by the speaker?
R	Perception; which readings are perceived by the hearer?
Par1	Paraphrase 1
Par2	Paraphrase 2
?	Unclear which/if this paraphrase is perceived.
+	Both paraphrases are perceived simultaneously.
>	Both paraphrases are perceived, but one reading is predominant

Notation	Definition
/	Both paraphrases are perceived, but each reading is restricted to a specific section of the QUOTE.
→	There is a change of perception.
---	There is no perception (e.g. if there is no hearer on one of the levels).

In the following, I will illustrate this notation with three examples. I will begin with example (83), repeated here as (87):

(87) 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.

Sir Nobonk had been in many wars. Usually [...]

(Milligan 1982, Ch. 1; waw190004)

In this example, the perception of readings by speaker and hearer differs between the communication levels. On the INNERMOST LEVEL, the hearer’s, Sir Nobonk’s, only reading is that of strapping the licence to his head (**R: Par2**). Because the king, the producer of the ambiguity, does not react to Sir Nobonk’s action, we have to assume that the only reading perceived by him is also the second one, but we cannot be sure (**P: Par2?**). On the OUTERMOST LEVEL, the author, who places the ambiguity strategically in the text, is certainly aware of both readings throughout (**P: Par1+Par2**). For the reader, a switch takes place. Only the generally more salient reading of paraphrase 1 is perceived at first. Sir Nobonk’s action then makes the second reading available as well. However, knowing that this second reading is not the socially expected one, the first reading will not be cancelled out, and both readings will stay available to the reader (**R: Par1→Par1+Par2**).<sup>104</sup>

The second example is taken from Terry Pratchett’s *I Shall Wear Midnight*, the fourth of the *Tiffany Aching* novels. Tiffany is talking with Amber, who ran away from her abusive father:

<sup>104</sup> The complete annotation is cited below in Table 26, p. 151.

(88) And I don't blame you, thought Tiffany, but now I can pass for being a grown-up and I have to say some stupid grown-up things. "But you do have a mother and father, Amber. I'm sure they **miss you**." She winced at the look of scorn the girl gave her. "Oh aye, and if the old scunner misses me, he'll aim another blow!" "Maybe we can go together, and help him change his ways?" Tiffany volunteered, despising herself, but the image of those thick fingers heavy with nettle stings from that awful bouquet wouldn't go away.

This time Amber actually laughed.

(Pratchett 2010, Ch. 10; waw190014)

The possible paraphrases of the RELEVANT PART "miss you" are "notice with regret your absence" (PARAPHRASE 1; OED: "miss, v.1", 19) or "chance not to hit you" (Paraphrase 2; OED: "miss, v.1", 2d). On the INNERMOST COMMUNICATION LEVEL in this example, Tiffany does not produce the ambiguity strategically and, thus, only perceives the first reading (**P: Par1**). Amber perceives the ambiguity and employs it strategically. She is aware of both readings, with the second one being stronger in her mind due to her having repeatedly been hit by her abusive father (**R: Par2>Par1**). On the OUTERMOST COMMUNICATION LEVEL, the author produces the ambiguity strategically, both readings are simultaneously available to him (**P: Par1+Par2**). The reader perceives the ambiguity non-strategically. He is only made aware of the second reading by Amber's retort which, in view of earlier events, significantly strengthens the second reading without cancelling the first one out (**R: Par1→Par2>Par1**). Table 22 shows the complete annotations for this example, including the category ORDER OF PERCEPTION.

**Tab. 22:** Annotations of (88), "miss you" (I Shall Wear Midnight)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190014</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190014</i></b>
Relevant Part	miss	miss
Paraphrase 1	notice with regret your absence	notice with regret your absence
Paraphrase 2	chance not to hit you	chance not to hit you
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	element	element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	polysemy	polysemy

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190014</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190014</i>
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2>Par1	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par2>Par1
Connection	change of communication level	

The third example is from Terry Pratchett as well, from his fifth *Discworld* novel *Sourcery*:

(89) Rincewind glanced at his sock. It was a stub of burnt wool, its brief career as a weapon of war having sent it beyond the help of any darning needle.  
*Now kill him.*

Rincewind **held his breath**. The watching wizards **held their breath**. Even Death, who had nothing to hold but his scythe, **held it** tensely.

“No,” said Coin.

*You know what happens to boys who are bad.*

Rincewind saw the sourcerer’s face go pale.

(Pratchett 1988a, Ch. 12; waw190015)

Depending on the collocation, the ambiguous element “held” may have different readings. In the co-texts cited above, it may either refer to “suspending the act of respiration” (PARAPHRASE 1; OED: “breath, n.”, 5b) or to “keeping from falling or supporting with the hand” (PARAPHRASE 2; OED: “hold, v.”, 3a). The ambiguity, as part of the narrator’s speech, is not part of the characters’ linguistic context, hence, there is no annotation on the INNERMOST COMMUNICATION LEVEL. On the MEDIATING COMMUNICATION LEVEL, the ambiguity is produced strategically by the narrator who, thus, has both readings available to him (**P: Par1+Par2**). There is no perception depicted on this level (**R: ---**). On the OUTERMOST COMMUNICATION LEVEL, it is the author who produces the ambiguity strategically and has both readings simultaneously available (**P: Par1+Par2**). The reader, by contrast, is not directly aware of the ambiguity. Within the context of the first two occurrences of “held”, in collocation with “breath”, only PARAPHRASE 1 is possible. When “held” occurs for the third time, it is combined with “it” which here can only refer to “scythe”. Thus, only PARAPHRASE 2 is possible in this immediate context. The reader now perceives the ambiguity of “hold”. Both readings are perceived, but with a clear distribution according to context (**R: Par1→Par1/Par2**). Table 23 shows the complete annotations for this example, including the category ORDER OF PERCEPTION.

**Tab. 23:** Annotations of (89), “hold breath/scythe” (Sorcery)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190015</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190015</i></b>
Relevant Part	held his/their breath / held it (scythe)	held his/their breath / held it (scythe)
Paraphrase 1	suspending the act of respiration	suspending the act of respiration
Paraphrase 2	keeping from falling or supporting with the hand	keeping from falling or supporting with the hand
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	element	element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; polysemy	collocation; polysemy
Type	4: contrastive readings	4: contrastive readings
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: ---	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1/Par2
Connection	change of communication level	

### 6.2.3 Context Features

Annotating the ORDER OF PERCEPTION is very useful for revealing patterns of ambiguity perception. It does not tell us, however, why one or the other reading is available or not, and why a switch between availabilities takes place. In order to fill this gap, I introduce the annotation category CONTEXT FEATURES, abbreviated as CONTEXT in the annotation tables used here. I annotate the context features presented above in 3.3.4, always giving the type of context, and, if relevant, the specific feature(s) influencing the perception as well. An overview of the types and respective features is given in Table 24.

**Tab. 24:** Context types and features, annotation category *Context Features*

<b>Type of context</b>	<b>Context features</b>
linguistic context	collocations/co-occurrences language knowledge meta-language / metalinguistic strategies salience (context specific)

Type of context	Context features
non-linguistic co-text	illustrations page layout
cognitive context	coherence priming
social context	cultural knowledge frequency salience (general)
sociocultural context	characters

Multiple examples with detailed descriptions of the context features influencing ambiguity production and perception will be presented in chapter 9.

### 6.3 Summary

In this chapter, I have proposed three adaptations to the annotation scheme of TInCAP: TYPE OF AMBIGUITY USE, ORDER OF PERCEPTION, and CONTEXT FEATURES. The first of these categories provides information about the surface structure of the example (how often does the ambiguous item appear) as well as information on whether the ambiguity is functionalized and whether a shift in readings takes place. The second category complements the first by adding details on the perception of the individual readings by speaker and hearer. The third category provides specifics on what influences ambiguity production and perception, showing why specific readings are perceived and what it is that influences changes with regard to perception.

Adding these three new annotation features may reveal typical patterns of ambiguity perception and is a first step towards modelling the perception of ambiguity. I will test the usefulness of these adaptations by applying them to examples of ambiguous idioms in literary contexts in the following part.



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## **Part III: Ambiguous Idioms in Context: Exemplary Analyses**





In this part, I will show that the theoretical framework I have discussed and developed in parts I and II does not merely present theory or theoretical considerations but does become relevant in its application to “real” contexts. In part I, I have touched on the differences between ambiguity in the language system and ambiguity in discourse (2.1). So far, the ambiguity of idioms has mainly been discussed on the level of the language system (2.2 and 2.3), even if chapter 3 focuses on the influence of context on ambiguity processing. In this chapter, I will turn to the effects that the ambiguity of idioms has for communication i.e. ambiguity in discourse. I will investigate some of the consequences of my earlier considerations that can be observed for the actual use of language, examine whether the ambiguity of idiomatic language is used productively in (literary) texts, and finally ask which kinds of usage the ambiguity of idiomatic language allows, invites – or even provokes.

First, I will illustrate that the experimental studying of idioms should be complemented by an investigation in their “natural habitat”, using examples found on the web and in corpora (chapter 7). In chapter 8, I will specify the advantages of using literary texts (8.1) – or, more specifically, texts from children’s literature (8.2) – as source material for studying idioms. I will discuss how the examples were found and selected for consideration in this study as well as how they were annotated and where and how the annotations are accessible (8.3). Lastly, I will show the relevance of the theoretic framework developed in parts I and II through exemplary analyses of idiomatic expressions in natural contexts (chapter 9).

## 7 Idioms in Attested Contexts

Intuitions and experimental judgements on idioms often do not match with the data that we actually find in corpora. A major observation in early linguistic research has been that certain types of idioms cannot undergo syntactic change, i.e. they “lose their idiomatic interpretations when they are deformed, as in the passive” (Nunberg et al. 1994, 507). Often, semantic decomposability is seen as a condition for the formation of the passive (e.g. Nunberg et al. 1994; Gibbs & Nayak 1989). Even though *raise hell* (“cause a serious disturbance”) and *give the lie to X* (“show X to be a falsehood”) are semantically decomposable, Jackendoff (1997, 170) cites these two as idioms that do not retain their phrasal meaning when passivized: *hell was raised* and *the lie was given to X* supposedly cannot be understood in the idiomatic sense. Jackendoff (1997, 170) gives the following examples:

- (90) \*Hell was raised by Herodotus.
- (91) \*The lie was given to that claim by John.

However, a quick search on the internet gives us many counterexamples:

- (92) [...] Senator Specter is opening hearings on that bill and, he says, “I think it’s time that a little **hell was raised** about this subject.” Indeed, Senator Specter – it is time.<sup>105</sup>
- (93) [...] the casino had to close down for close to two hours. All types of **hell was raised**. Upset Locals and other boat patrons had to walk all the way around to the rear of the casino [...]<sup>106</sup>
- (94) [...] real improvements in people’s lives.” As you can expect, all **hell was raised** by conservative Kasich-backers, many of whom are planning to head to the polls in November to reelect the governor. Many on the right already believed [...]<sup>107</sup>

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**105** Retrieved from <http://www.santorumexposed.com/pages/issues/stemcells.php> on 17.09.2015; cf. Wasow (2015b).

**106** Retrieved from <https://books.google.de/books?id=3zMv5wN-6YOC&pg=PA78&dq=%22hell+was+raised%22&hl=de&sa=X&ved=0CDYQ6AEwA2oVChMI6OSw747-xwIVJYpyCh13hABe#v=onepage&q=%22hell%20was%20raised%22&f=false> on 17.09.2015.

**107** Retrieved from <http://hotair.com/archives/2014/10/21/john-kasich-furiously-backtracks-after-denouncing-obamacares-repeal/> on 17.09.2015.

- (95) [...] being broken up by Mary and her commissioners. If **the lie was given to** Hume, it was given by the public records, and, not by Tytler. By the records indeed it was given effectually [...]<sup>108</sup>
- (96) [...] Tarnae held improper familiarity. **The lie was given to** Chataigneraie's assertions, and supplication made to the king, to order a trial by combat to the last rigour. The ceremonials of this duel are to [...]<sup>109</sup>
- (97) [...] after a colossal effort, the English captured Boulogne. But **the lie was given to** English claims of benevolent overlordship. Subsequent Scottish campaigns avoided [...]<sup>110</sup>

The same is true for corpora. A search in the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA, Davies 2008–) gives us examples (98) and (99):

- (98) And, of course, that was the Ava period, you know, when such **hell was being raised** all the time.
- (99) But **the lie was given** dramatically **to** this assumption in a 1991 broadcast of the ABC program PrimeTime Live.

In the *Corpus of Global Web-Based English* (GloWbE, Davies 2013), there are even instances to be found where the classic example for an inflexible idiom, *kick the bucket*, is passivized and does retain its phrasal meaning ((100) and (101)):

- (100) That can only benefit my estate, should there be one, regardless of when **the bucket is kicked**; the farm, bought.
- (101) Simple as that. Your **bucket's been kicked**, baby.

The comparison of linguistic studies and naturally occurring examples shows that, while subjects in studies have judged these idioms as not retaining their

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**108** Retrieved from [https://books.google.de/books?id=e8IPAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA115&lpg=PA115&dq=%22the+lie+was+given+to%22&source=bl&ots=\\_5kTE7T86Y&sig=g4aDy\\_OhlyjDh5rG7lm\\_Ze0WSTU&hl=de&sa=X&ved=0CC8Q6AEwAmoVChMI3M-iu8z7xwIVxCVyCh1j1w12#v=onepage&q=%22the%20lie%20was%20given%20to%22&f=false](https://books.google.de/books?id=e8IPAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA115&lpg=PA115&dq=%22the+lie+was+given+to%22&source=bl&ots=_5kTE7T86Y&sig=g4aDy_OhlyjDh5rG7lm_Ze0WSTU&hl=de&sa=X&ved=0CC8Q6AEwAmoVChMI3M-iu8z7xwIVxCVyCh1j1w12#v=onepage&q=%22the%20lie%20was%20given%20to%22&f=false) on 17.09.2015.

**109** Retrieved from <https://books.google.de/books?id=f24PAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA230&lpg=PA230&dq=%22the+lie+was%20+given+to%22&source=bl&ots=Lri1PF5v4S&sig=KkKPDVq3FE1MgN3-TZ3rm8-zkek&hl=de&sa=X&ved=0CEQQ6AEwB2oVChMI3M-iu8z7xwIVxCVyCh1j1w12#v=onepage&q=%22the%20lie%20%20was%20given%20to%22&f=false> on 17.09.2015.

**110** Retrieved from <https://books.google.de/books?id=lxRVGzefSRcC&pg=PA87&dq=%22the+lie+was+given+to%22&hl=de&sa=X&ved=0CGUQ6AEwCWoVChMI17aG08z7xwIVSvRyCh29dQTb#v=onepage&q=%22the%20lie%20was%20given%20to%22&f=false> on 17.09.2015.

phrasal meaning when passivized (Gibbs & Nayak 1989; Pulman 1993), the passive forms of these idioms are used and understood in their phrasal meaning. However, the examples above only show that this kind of use occurs. The question now is: Where could the discrepancy between studies and actual usage stem from? The main difference between the occurrences is that the examples taken from the internet and corpora all appear within a larger context. Considered in isolation or in a short experimental context, the passive form is not judged to convey the phrasal meaning. Within most of the medium-sized to large contexts in which the passive form appears in the counterexamples, however, the idioms retain their meaning when passivized. Therefore, mere intuitions about idioms as well as judgements on idioms in isolation or in experimental contexts cannot be fully trusted, and we cannot, perhaps even should not, rely on them (see also Fellbaum 2015b, 2007; Geyken 2007; Moon 1998).

In order to study idioms and obtain reliable results, we therefore need medium-sized to large contexts that license different forms and usages of idioms. However, the creation of such a context is complex. Contexts created solely with the aim of manipulating idioms are constructs and not necessarily a true imitation of natural language use. If we want to study idioms “in their natural habitat”, we have to investigate real contexts that include and use idioms but that have not been created (only) with the strategic aim to manipulate idiomatic forms and meanings. This will allow us to find out more about how the optimal context should be constructed.

## 8 Compiling a Corpus

Ideally, one would find these kinds of contexts as described above (chapter 7) within existing corpora. There is a variety of corpora freely available, large or small, balanced or not, POS-tagged<sup>111</sup> or not.<sup>112</sup> One would expect to find plenty of examples of idioms used within contexts in either their phrasal or their compositional reading or even used ambiguously. However, as there is no large corpus that has annotated idioms, searching for idioms within a corpus poses some challenges (cf. e.g. Fellbaum 2015a; Simpson & Mendis 2003). Firstly, idioms come in a variety of syntactic structures. Even with a POS-tagged corpus, there is, therefore, no way to extract all idioms. One possibility is to focus on a certain type of idiom (e.g. VP-idioms as Nunberg et al. (1994) do). But even then much manual work is required to sort the results into idiomatic and non-idiomatic use. Secondly, I focus on ambiguous idioms. There is, therefore, the additional challenge of extracting only those idioms that have the potential to be used ambiguously – even if they are not used ambiguously in a certain context. There have been projects trying to extract ambiguous idioms (e.g. Hashimoto & Kawahara 2008; Sporleder et al. 2010). However, these projects focused on a certain subset of idioms, i.e. they chose some quite frequent idioms (e.g. based on idiom dictionaries and google ngrams<sup>113</sup>) and tried to extract all cases where these were used ambiguously. This approach certainly does yield some examples, but it is not very fruitful. Thirdly, idioms make up a large portion of everyday language use but each single idiom occurs quite infrequently (Fellbaum 2015a). This means that, even with a very large, balanced corpus like the COCA (Davies 2008–), it is likely that the search for an idiom (in any syntactic form) may not return any results at all. The likelihood of finding idioms used ambiguously is even smaller. In view of these challenges, I decided to create my own corpus of examples of ambiguous idioms in complex contexts.

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**111** POS-tagged means “part of speech tagged”, i.e. each token is tagged with the word class it belongs to.

**112** For instance, two of the best-known corpora for English are the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA, Davies (2008–)) and *The British National Corpus*, version 3 (BNC XML Edition) (2007).

**113** See <https://books.google.com/ngrams> for more information (last accessed: 31.08.2020).

## 8.1 Literary Texts as Source Material

I have argued above that we need to know more about why ambiguous idioms behave differently in more complex contexts than without a context or in simple experimental contexts (chapters 3 and 7). Knowing more about what the optimal context looks like may better enable us to construct contexts for experimental designs. If we look for settings that allow us to observe how ambiguous idioms behave in varying contexts, a promising source are literary texts. I will expand on five reasons why this is so: literary texts are fixed (8.1.1), they imitate everyday language use (8.1.2), they may exploit linguistic structures (8.1.3), they are produced strategically (8.1.4), and they include several levels of communication (8.1.5).

### 8.1.1 Literary Texts are Fixed

We allow for more variation of language in spoken than in written form. Listening closely to conversations that take place around us, we notice that speakers often form incomplete or syntactically incorrect sentences, that they interrupt or correct themselves, that they use incorrect grammar, unusual combinations of words or mix up fixed phrases. Still, we usually do not experience spoken language as deficient. In written language, by contrast, language use of this kind is much more easily perceived as incorrect. This might be why, without sufficient context, idioms in variation are often judged to lose their phrasal meaning – even if we do find the same variations in use retaining their idiomatic meaning (cf. chapter 7).

The consequence of these observations should be to study ambiguous idioms in oral contexts. However, oral communication has drawbacks as it is not easily recorded and analyzed. There are, of course, corpora of oral language use. But these are – in comparison to corpora of written language – rather small. Given the infrequency of single idioms, the likelihood of encountering idioms that are used ambiguously within such a corpus is quite small.

Literary texts, by contrast, have the advantage of being fixed in their written form. They are thus easily accessible, searchable, and allow a close analysis in ways many other contexts do not. Given all this, they still maintain more aspects of orality than most other written texts because they often imitate everyday language use and, hence, oral communication.

### 8.1.2 Imitation of Everyday Language Use

Literary texts imitate everyday use of language and communication: Aristotle in his *Poetics* defines poetry as a “medium of imitation”, as a form of art that seeks to duplicate or represent life (Aristotle 1898, 6–11). Moreover, literary texts not only imitate language use and everyday life – they also are part of it, especially if we look at texts that people from different social classes and reading levels come into contact with, e.g. bestsellers or children’s books. These types of literary texts only function if they reflect, build on, and maybe even enhance their reader’s knowledge of the world. If the language in these books was too far removed from what people expect from everyday language use (e.g. too complex), they could or would not be successful. In other words: the language in literary texts has to be recognizable and is therefore not basically different from the language we encounter in everyday and non-literary contexts.<sup>114</sup>

However, imitation often goes hand in hand with exaggeration. The condensed form in which we encounter language in literary texts confronts us with a typical yet idealized and formed use – showing us all the phenomena of everyday language use within close proximity. Furthermore, many phenomena we encounter only occasionally in everyday language use can be found much more often in literary texts. It has been noted that individual idioms usually occur only infrequently in their standard form, let alone in syntactic or other variations (cf. p. 143, but also Fellbaum 2015a, 2015b). In literary texts, the likelihood of encountering idioms in all their variations is much higher than it is in other corpora, making these the ideal hunting ground for examples of ambiguous idiom use.

### 8.1.3 Exploitation of Linguistic Structures

Literary texts may exploit particular linguistic structures to a greater extent than everyday language use. While they do imitate everyday communication and orality, they have been heavily edited. Therefore, literary texts are highly artificial constructions. They explore and exploit the possibilities of language to a much greater extent than what we expect from everyday language use. Often, they also emphasize linguistic aspects that are less frequent in everyday communication through cumulative use. For example, Lewis Carroll uses misunder-

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<sup>114</sup> Cf. e.g. Brockmann et al. (2017) on the similarities and differences of creating pragmatic meaning in everyday utterances vs. within a fictional framework.



standings in speaker-hearer interaction which are triggered by homophony to a great extent in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, as may be seen in (102):<sup>115</sup>

- (102) “Can you answer useful questions?” she [the Red Queen] said. “How is bread made?”  
 “I know that!” Alice cried eagerly. “You take some flour—”  
 “Where do you pick the flour?” the White Queen asked.  
 “Well, it isn’t picked at all,” Alice explained: “it’s ground—”  
 “How many acres of ground?” said the White Queen.  
 (Carroll 1998, 9227; zia230002)

Another aspect of language that may be exploited in literary texts is the ambiguity of figurative language. This type of exploitation is the staple of the *Amelia Bedelia* books already mentioned in chapter 3.1. In the first book of the series, where Amelia Bedelia starts her new job as a housemaid, she is given a list of quite normal household tasks to do while the couple she works for is out: *Put the lights out, dust the furniture, change the towels in the green bathroom, draw the drapes when the sun comes in, measure two cups of rice, trim the fat on the steak, dress the chicken* (Parish 1963). In an everyday (non-literary) context, every person would understand what she has to do. Amelia Bedelia, however, takes everything literally: she brings the lightbulbs outside (see 6.2.1), throws dust on the furniture, draws a picture of the drapes (see 3.1), etc. While this is hardly a realistic situation, the exploitation of one type of linguistic structure throughout the book (and the whole series) highlights this phenomenon.

The accumulation of similar ambiguities makes us readers aware of linguistic structures that we may already be familiar with from everyday language use (e.g. misunderstandings triggered by homophony, ambiguity of figurative language, etc.) but that occur less frequently there.<sup>116</sup> While this accumulation might be judged as strange in everyday communication, literary texts, as aesthetic constructs, allow writers to exploit the possibilities of language fully, even to the extreme.

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**115** This example is discussed in more detail in Zirker (2010, 220–264), and Winter-Froemel & Zirker (2015, 316).

**116** The cumulative use of specific linguistic structures may influence language acquisition, which is why it is often found in literary texts intended for children. See also 8.2.

### 8.1.4 Strategic Production

The fact that literary texts are aesthetic constructs which have been heavily edited also allows the conclusion that language in literary texts is the result of strategic production. Thus, if we encounter ambiguity, we can legitimately assume that it is not coincidental but produced strategically, i.e. that it is employed (on the level of the author, cf. 8.1.5) to reach a particular communicative goal (cf. 2.1). This is not to be confused with “what the author wants to tell us” – it simply refers to the fact that, in an edited (and aesthetically constructed) text, we can assume every language feature to play a meaningful part in the composition of the whole (cf. 3.3.2).

In chapter 4, I already discussed some indications that in literary texts the immediate co- and context of potentially ambiguous words or phrases is formed in such a way as to suppress or enhance the perception of ambiguity. In the case of examples belonging to type 1 (4.1), one of the readings is suppressed completely and the ambiguity is not perceived. In the case of examples belonging to type 2 (4.2), both readings are equally plausible. In the case of examples belonging to types 3 and 4 (4.3 and 4.4), both readings are salient at different points. I will illustrate this with example (68), here repeated as (103), from Anthony Horowitz’ *Return to Groosham Grange*:

- (103) Gregor, the school porter, had been disqualified from javelin throwing. He had strolled across the field without looking, and although he hadn’t actually **entered** the competition, one of the javelins had unfortunately **entered** him.

(Horowitz 1988b, Ch. 1; waw190018)

In this example of type 4, there are two occurrences of “enter”: *entered the competition* and *entered him*. The relevant possible interpretations for enter are either “Gregor had not put himself up as a contestant” (OED “enter, v”, 20c) or “Gregor had been pierced by a javelin” (OED “enter, v”, 3). The immediate linguistic context for each occurrence of enter determines the possible interpretations. In combination with “competition”, only the figurative reading of Gregor (not) having put himself up as a contestant is possible. For the second occurrence of “enter”, this (figurative) interpretation is not possible, as an animate subject is required to carry out the entering. Being inanimate, “javelin” only enables the second reading of Gregor having been (literally) pierced.

Various context features may influence the possible readings. For each individual example a careful analysis will have to show whether only one or more

readings are available. The availability may differ at various points in the example (see the different types). It may also vary depending on the communication level, with the readers being aware of readings the characters are not (yet) able to recognize.

### 8.1.5 Levels of Communication

Generally, we find at least two levels of communication in every literary text: (a) the communication between the characters which – (b) – serves as part of the communication between the author of the text and the readers of the text. There may be more levels, e.g. if there is an overt narrator.<sup>117</sup> The multiplication of communication levels facilitates a play with language that is based on the varying knowledge and awareness of context the participants have on the different communicative levels. I will illustrate this with the example from *Amelia Bedelia* used in chapter 3, for convenience's sake repeated here again as (104) and on the left of Figure 9 below:

(104) *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.

(Parish 1963, 11f; waw190065)

If we analyze (104) using TInCAP (see chapter 5), we notice that one annotation is not enough. The first annotation looks at the ambiguous phrase on the INNERMOST level of communication, the level of the characters. On this communication level we cannot find any signs that the ambiguity is either produced or perceived strategically. In fact, if we stay within the two pages of this example (see Figure 9 left), there is no ambiguity at all on the characters’ level; for them, the ambiguity only becomes apparent when the couple Amelia Bedelia works for comes back home (see (81), here repeated as (105), with the page layout shown on the right of Figure 9).

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**117** For more detailed comments on this aspect of literary texts, please see Bauer et al. (2010, 31–32), and Winter-Froemel & Zirker (2010, 88–94).

(105) “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.  
 (Parish 1963, 20; waw190013)

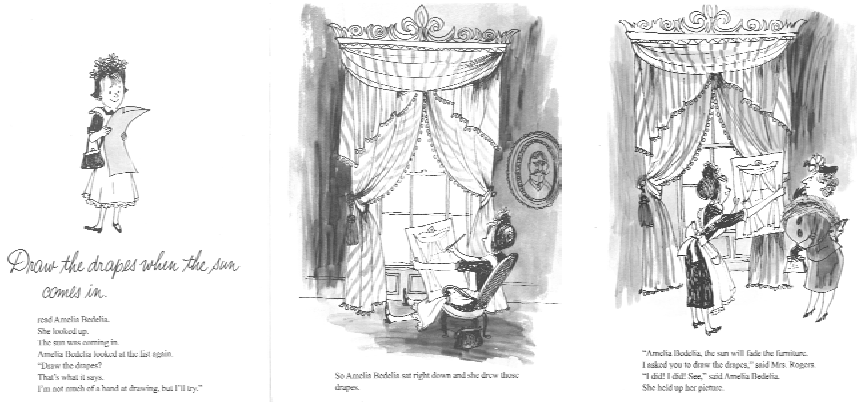


Fig. 9: Page layouts of (104) and (105), “draw the drapes” (Amelia Bedelia; Parish 1963, 11f, 20)

On the **OUTERMOST** communication level, where the communication of the author of the text with the (intended) readers takes place, we get a different view. In the context of the example within the story, we can argue for a strategic production of this ambiguity (cf. 8.1.4), while we can only make predictions about its perception, based on e.g. frequency and saliency (cf. 2.4), but also context (cf. chapter 3). The resulting analysis can be seen in Table 25, with the differences between the annotations marked in bold.

Tab. 25: Annotations of (104), “draw the drapes” (Amelia Bedelia)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190065</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190065</i>
Relevant Part	draw the drapes	draw the drapes
Paraphrase 1	pull the drapes over the window	pull the drapes over the window
Paraphrase 2	make a picture of the drapes	make a picture of the drapes
Comm. Level	<b>innermost</b>	<b>outermost</b>
Dimension	<b>PS<sup>-</sup> / RS<sup>-</sup></b>	<b>PS<sup>+</sup> / RS<sup>-</sup></b>

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190065</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190065</i>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; figurative language; formulaic language	collocation; figurative language; formulaic language
Type	<b>1: unambiguous use</b>	<b>3: reanalysis</b>
Order	<b>P: Par1</b> <b>R: Par2</b>	<b>P: Par1+Par2</b> <b>R: Par1→Par1+Par2</b>
Context	<b>sociocultural context</b>	<b>cognitive context; linguistic context;</b> <b>non-linguistic co-text (illustration);</b> <b>sociocultural context (character)</b>
Connection	change of communication level	

Based on this duplication of communicative levels, literary texts can show us how language and even how communication works – particularly when it fails on the INNERMOST LEVEL and we, the readers and the audience, recognize the failure and also the reasons for it. Peggy Parish is no exception in pursuing such a strategy in her works. Another author who frequently uses the discrepancy between the two levels of communication to humorous effect is Spike Milligan, as illustrated in (83), here repeated as (106):

(106) 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.

Sir Nobonk had been in many wars. Usually [...]

(Milligan 1982, Ch. 1; waw190004)

If we analyze this example in TInCAP, we also have to annotate twice, which is triggered by the two levels of communication that come into play here. The resulting analysis can be seen in Table 26 below, with the differences between the annotations marked in bold.

**Tab. 26:** Annotations of (106) – “be it on your own head” (Sir Nobonk)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190004</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190004</i></b>
Relevant Part	be it on your own head	be it on your own head
Paraphrase 1	you have to take full responsibility for what you plan to do [phrasal]	you have to take full responsibility for what you plan to do [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	you have to strap the licence to your head [compositional]	you have to strap the licence to your head [compositional]
Comm. Level	<b>innermost</b>	<b>outermost</b>
Dimension	<b>PS<sup>-</sup> / RS<sup>-</sup></b>	<b>PS<sup>+</sup> / RS<sup>-</sup></b>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	<b>1: unambiguous use</b>	<b>3: reanalysis</b>
Order	<b>P: Par2? R: Par2</b>	<b>P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2</b>
Context	<b>sociocultural context</b>	<b>social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; sociocultural context (characters)</b>
Connection	change of communication level	

No matter on which communication level we look at this paragraph, there are always the two possible readings of the phrase “be it on your own head”. However, on the level of the characters (INNERMOST LEVEL), we find no indication at all that this ambiguity is recognized. Neither of the characters gives any sign of understanding anything but the compositional meaning “you have to strap the licence to your own head”. That is exactly what Sir Nobonk does, and neither the king nor any other character reacts strangely – or at all – to his action. This can be taken as indication that the king does not produce the ambiguity with any strategic aims in mind, nor is there a strategic perception of the ambiguity on the level of the characters in the story. As a result, we can conclude that on the level of the characters there is no ambiguity, just the potential for one, and that the characters understand the idiomatic phrase in its compositional sense only.

Looking at the example on the communication level of the author and the readers (OUTERMOST LEVEL), we get a different view. The understanding depends on the individual reader, of course, but as we have seen in chapter 2.4, hearers are not likely to (only) understand the compositional meaning of an idiomatic

phrase. There are no indications in the preceding context that the phrasal reading does not correspond with the intended meaning, especially because the phrasal reading fits the context perfectly. Therefore, if the idiom is known to the readers, the phrasal reading “you have to take full responsibility for what you plan to do” will be much more prominent than the compositional reading “you have to strap the licence to your own head”. Unlike the characters, the readers will consequently be surprised by Sir Nobonk’s action, which will in turn trigger a process of semantic reanalysis. This process of reanalysis induces the readers to reflect upon the properties of language and language use, as does any perception of differences in language use and understanding. The fact that a reader may notice two (or more) different readings of a phrase by the characters or may notice differences in readings between the characters and himself enhances the perception of ambiguity many times over.<sup>118</sup>

## 8.2 Children’s Literature as Source Material

The texts I have chosen as the basis for my corpus of examples unite all the features discussed above: They are, while they imitate everyday communication,<sup>119</sup> also to a certain degree artificial, they emphasize linguistic aspects that are probably less frequent in everyday communication, and they often employ the play between different levels of communication. They also share one more feature: they are intended for children. A corpus of children’s literature lends itself particularly well for my purposes for three main reasons: Firstly, they are easily accessible for a wide range of readers. They refer to known social and sociocultural contexts while considering the specific cognitive context of children. Thus, they are close to the everyday environment of many readers. Secondly, children’s literature is a multi-faceted and differentiated field for playing with language, starting with very small children (e.g. Tedd Arnold’s *Parts* (1997)), catering to beginning readers (e.g. Tamara James’ and Emma SanCartier’s *The World Is Your Oyster* (2010)) and including texts for older children (e.g. the stories of *Sir Nobonk* (Milligan 1982)) but also addressing children and grown-ups alike (e.g. the German ABC-Book *machtWORTE* (Ballaschk et al. 2012)). Thirdly, meta-reflection about language is typical for children’s literature, perhaps due to the specific objectives authors of children’s literature pur-

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**118** As can be seen in Table 25 and Table 26, the differences between the annotations are the same for (104) and (106). I will discuss this in more detail, with different examples, in 9.3.

**119** For a detailed analysis of this aspect, please see Yos (1996).

sue. In the vein of the principle *docere et delectare* (Lerer 2008), these are – even if this is often assumed or suggested – not purely didactic but also supposed to entertain. Children's literature (like any literature) cannot be written without bearing in mind potential readers.<sup>120</sup>

Considering the potential readers of children's literature with regard to the phenomenon I am interested in, the ambiguity of idioms, two questions arise: first, whether children are aware of this ambiguity and second, from which age on. It is often argued that idiom learning takes place relatively late in language acquisition, with children acquiring a certain degree of competence between the age of six and ten (e.g. Danielsson 2007, 31-33).<sup>121</sup> Irrespective of the exact age when this happens, most instances of phrasal language (and thus idioms) have to be learned at some point as the phrasal reading is often not deducible from the parts of the phrase (cf. 2.3). At a point in language acquisition where the phrasal reading of an idiom has not yet been acquired, the idiom is either only understood in its compositional reading or the phrasal reading has to be derived from the context. As many idioms have strange compositional readings, the first option frequently leads to rather nonsensical scenarios. Therefore, it is to be expected that if idioms appear in children's literature, their ambiguity is employed in a productive way: Authors will make readers aware of this property of a phrase, for example through explaining the meaning, adding illustrations, or showing them the fun in double meanings through character interactions. These expectations have been confirmed in the course of my study. Thus, even though the language learner's perspective is not the focus, children's literature yields a wide array of examples for studying how phrasal and compositional readings of idioms are perceived.

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**120** The term children's literature is, in fact, not as straightforward as it may appear. Hunt (1994, 4) phrases it as follows: "Children's literature seems at first sight to be a simple idea: books written for children, books read by children. But in theory and in practice it is vastly more complicated than that. Just to unpack that definition: what does \_written for\_ mean?" For further reading, please refer to Lesnik-Oberstein (2003) and her list of works cited and further reading (27–29).

**121** For ongoing research in this field, see e.g. project B9-N "Getting a grip on non-literal meaning: the dynamics of understanding idiomatic expressions in language learners" of SFB 833 in Tübingen.



### 8.3 Selecting and Annotating Examples

As has been noted above, examples of ambiguous idioms in context cannot be found when using automated searches. Searching for specific expressions will be unfruitful as well. What should we search for? The very nature of the subject matter stipulates that the corpus of examples will have to be more or less random, not balanced, and not representative. Instead, it will show the range of possibilities ambiguous idioms present and that authors of children's literature have realized productively.

The books from which the examples are taken are all intended for young children up to the age of 12. From this age, researchers across-the-board attest children a high competence in idiomatic language. This means that the process of idiom acquisition seems to take place up to this time, and we can expect ambiguous idioms to play a role in language play. To find individual examples, I looked for authors who are noted for their playful use of language.<sup>122</sup> From there on, diligent reading was the only way to go. The examples I have collected can all be found in the appendix, sorted by type of ambiguity use.

All examples have been annotated within TInCAP 1.0 (cf. chapter 5). To include my suggested adaptations of TInCAP (6.2), I used the field COMMENT TO ANNOTATION. For each annotation, I entered the TYPE (Type 1: Unambiguous Use, Type 2: Unresolved Ambiguity, Type 3: Reanalysis, Type 4: Contrastive Readings) and the ORDER OF PERCEPTION (for production as well as perception). I also commented on the relevant CONTEXT FEATURES. The search function allows searching for (parts of) these comments: thus it is possible to find and export specific types of examples.<sup>123</sup> The subcorpus of my examples which are relevant here has been exported as XML-data and stored within the framework of CLARIN-D Tübingen, which guarantees long-term availability.<sup>124</sup>

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**122** My thanks to all colleagues, family and friends who suggested possible authors. Special thanks to everyone who answered my query to children-literature-uk@jiscmail.ac.uk from February 27, 2014.

**123** To retrieve my examples, you may use the interface at <https://tincap.uni-tuebingen.de/>.

**124** For the exported data, please go to <https://hdl.handle.net/11022/0000-0007-E7DF-A>.

## 9 Patterns of Ambiguous Use of Idioms

In this chapter, I will link my examples back to the theoretical framework which I have developed in the previous chapters and illustrate its relevance. The patterns identified hence will be structured according to the types presented in chapter 4 and further discussed in chapter 6.2.1. For each of the types defined, I will present exemplary analyses using TInCAP, which visualize similarities and patterns within the types as well as differences between them.

For each example I will explore how ambiguity is produced, if, how, and when it is perceived on the different levels of communication, and how the individual context features interact to achieve the observed effects. Every analysis will be structured as follows:

### *Analysis with TInCAP*

In this section, I will present the analysis with TInCAP in the simplified table format used in chapter 5 and giving the TInCAP-ID; with this ID, every analysis is easily accessible in full via the TInCAP web interface. I will shortly comment on specifics of the analysis.

### *Ambiguity Production and Perception*

This section serves to describe the production and perception of ambiguity for both speaker and hearer on the different communication levels (if relevant), using parameters P4–P10 as described in chapter 3.3.3. On the part of the speaker, it is always possible to deduce some aspects of the production process because we have the result of this process, the text, right in front of us to analyze. On the part of the hearer, this is not always the case. In some cases, processes of perception are analyzable through speaker-hearer-interaction (on the INNERMOST communication level, the level of the characters). In other cases, the perception of ambiguity has to be determined via assumptions pertaining to frequency, saliency, or specific context features (e.g. for the OUTERMOST communication level, the level of author and reader(s)). This then reflects a typical perception of an ‘ideal’ reader<sup>125</sup>, without being able to determine indisputably whether this corresponds to the actual perception.

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125 Cf. footnote 96 on p. 103.

*Relevant Context Features*

Finally, the context features relevant for each example will be discussed as well as the question how they interact. I will consider the mechanisms that are involved in the perception (or suppression) of the possible readings of the idiom, elaborating on differences between speaker and hearer as well as between the communication levels.

## 9.1 Type 1: Unambiguous Use

In the following examples, an idiom occurs that has the potential to be used ambiguously, but the ambiguity goes unnoticed.<sup>126</sup> The definition for this type of ambiguity use, as given in (69), is repeated here as (107):

- (107) The idiom appears only once. The context of occurrence disambiguates; therefore, there is only one plausible reading. This reading can be either the phrasal or the compositional one.

### 9.1.1 “on your own head be it” (Harry Potter)

I will begin with an example discussed before, (70), repeated here as (108), with the targeted idiom highlighted in bold:

- (108) “Leave your trunk and your owl, Alastor’s going to deal with the luggage ... oh, for heaven’s sake, Sirius, Dumbledore said no!”  
 A bear-like black dog had appeared at Harry’s side as he was clambering over the various chunks cluttering the hall to get to Mrs Weasley.  
 “Oh honestly ...” said Mrs Weasley despairingly. “Well, **on your own head be it!**”  
 She wrenched open the front door and stepped out into the weak September sunlight. Harry and the dog followed her. The door slammed behind them and Mrs Black’s screeches were cut off instantly.  
 (Rowling 2003, Ch. 10; waw190019)

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<sup>126</sup> More examples of this type may be found in the appendix, p. 210–243.

*Analysis with TInCAP*<sup>127</sup>**Tab. 27:** Annotations of (108), “on your own head be it” (Harry Potter)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190019</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190019</i></b>
Relevant Part	on your own head be it	on your own head be it
Paraphrase 1	you have to take full responsibility for what you plan to do [phrasal]	you have to take full responsibility for what you plan to do [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	it has to be on your own head [compositional]	it has to be on your own head [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	social context (salience); cognitive context (priming); linguistic context (language knowledge)	social context (salience); cognitive context (priming); linguistic context (language knowledge)
Connection	change of communication level	

*Ambiguity Production and Perception*

Out of context, the idiomatic phrase “on your own head be it” has two possible readings: the phrasal “be held responsible for something, or accept any unpleasant consequences of a chosen course of action” (OED: “head, n.”, P1, i(iii)) and the compositional “it has to be on your own head” (physically). The compositional reading is produced on neither the innermost nor the outermost communication level. On both levels, for speaker as well as hearer, the ambiguity of the phrase is neither produced nor perceived. Thus, this is a case of non-perceived ambiguity (P4) for both speaker and hearer on both levels of communication, which renders the other parameters inapplicable.

<sup>127</sup> For a detailed analysis of this example within TInCAP explaining the annotations, see chapter 6.2.1 above (p. 122–125).

### *Relevant Context Features*

Various context features work together to suppress the compositional reading in this example. They are the same on all communication levels.

First of all, the general salience of the phrasal reading is much higher than that of the compositional reading (social context), partially due to the uncommon syntax (linguistic knowledge). Secondly, the compositional reading requires something physical that can be on someone's (in this case: Sirius') head (linguistic knowledge). The immediate linguistic co-text does not provide any object that could be referred to; neither is there a non-linguistic co-text that could provide such an object. There is no text-based reason to perceive the compositional reading. Furthermore, the irresponsible behavior of Sirius has been a subject of discussion more than once in the wider context of the narrative (cognitive context). The hearers (within and outside the story) are thus primed for the phrasal reading when Mrs Weasley utters the phrase in question "despairingly". Taking all contextual information together, the only plausible reading is the phrasal one.

#### 9.1.2 "pulling my leg" (The Witches)

The following example from Roald Dahl's *The Witches* illustrates another unambiguous use of a potentially ambiguous idiom. The main character's grandmother is telling him that witches really exist and that they hate children and like to get rid of them:

(109) My grandmother was tremendously old and wrinkled, with a massive wide body which was smothered in grey lace. She sat there majestic in her armchair, filling every inch of it. Not even a mouse could have squeezed in to sit beside her. I myself, just seven years old, was crouched on the floor at her feet, wearing pyjamas, dressing-gown and slippers.

"You swear you aren't **pulling my leg?**" I kept saying to her. "You swear you aren't just pretending?"

(Dahl 1983, Ch. 2; waw190003)

*Analysis with TInCAP***Tab. 28:** Annotations of (109), “pulling my leg” (The Witches)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190003</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190003</i></b>
Relevant Part	pulling my leg	pulling my leg
Paraphrase 1	deceiving me humorously or playfully, teasing me [phrasal]	deceiving me humorously or playfully, teasing me [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	tugging on my leg [compositional]	tugging on my leg [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	social context (salience, frequency); sociocultural context; cognitive context (coherence)	social context (salience, frequency); cognitive context (coherence); sociocultural context (characters); linguistic context (meta-language)
Connection	change of communication level	

The phrase “to pull s.o.’s leg” (RELEVANT PART) can have two readings: either the phrasal “to deceive a person humorously or playfully; to tease a person” (PARAPHRASE 1; OED: “leg, v.”, P7) or the compositional “to tug on s.o.’s leg” (PARAPHRASE 2). These paraphrases are UNRELATED as the phrasal meaning cannot be derived from the compositional meaning without knowing the idiom (PHENOMENON). There are no differences in the annotation on the INNERMOST or OUTERMOST COMMUNICATION LEVEL. As there is no ambiguity (UNAMBIGUOUS USE), the production is non-strategic and the perception is unsolved, as it is not clear whether the hearers recognize the potential ambiguity (DIMENSION: PS<sup>-</sup>/RS<sup>0</sup>). The TRIGGER that could potentially cause an ambiguity is the whole phrase (COMPLEX ELEMENT), but as the ambiguity is not realized, the RANGE does not go beyond this level (COMPLEX ELEMENT).

*Ambiguity Production and Perception*

Within this specific context, the compositional reading of the phrase “pulling my leg” is not produced on either of the communication levels; accordingly, for both speaker and hearer, on both levels, the ambiguity of the phrase is not perceived. Thus, this is a case of non-perceived ambiguity (P4) for both speaker and hearer on both levels of communication, which renders the other parameters inapplicable.

*Relevant Context Features*

Various context features interact in this example to not let any ambiguity arise. Firstly, the general salience of the phrasal reading is higher than that of the compositional reading (social context). Neither the characters nor the readers often encounter the literal pulling of legs. Secondly, the grandson would feel and see it if his grandmother were literally pulling his leg, he would not have to ask (cognitive context). Thirdly, the grandmother has been described as a kind person who loves her grandson (INNERMOST: sociocultural context; OUTERMOST: linguistic and cognitive context). It is very unlikely that she would literally pull his leg. Fourthly, only the phrasal reading is coherent with the scene created in the linguistic context (cognitive context). The narrating grandson is sitting on the floor, at his grandmother’s feet, who is telling him stories about witches. In this setting, it simply is not possible that she is literally pulling his leg. Readers are thus unable to integrate this reading into their mental representation of what they processed previously. Lastly, the grandson goes on to say “you swear you aren’t just pretending”, indicating the phrasal meaning (linguistic context, meta-language). All contextual information taken together, the phrasal reading is the only plausible one.

**9.1.3 “let the cat out of the bag” (Flavia de Luce)**

Alan Bradley’s narrating character Flavia de Luce loves to play with figurative language. In the following example, she for once perceives it unambiguously when the vicar surprises her with his knowledge:

- (110) The vicar was silent for a long moment – and then he chuckled. “You’re having a game with me,” he said. “I remember distinctly officiating at your baptism. Flavia Sabina de Luce was the name we bestowed upon you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, amen, and Flavia Sabina de Luce you shall remain – until such time, of

course, as you choose to change it by entering into a state of Holy Matrimony, like your sister Ophelia.”

My jaw fell open like a bread box.

“Feely?”

“Oh, dear,” the vicar said. “I’m afraid I’ve **let the cat out of the bag.**”

Feely? My sister, Feely? Entering into a state of Holy Matrimony?

I could scarcely believe it!

(Bradley 2013, Ch. 3; waw190094)

### Analysis with TInCAP

**Tab. 29:** Annotations of (110), “let the cat out of the bag” (Flavia de Luce)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190094</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190094</i>
Relevant Part	let the cat out of the bag	let the cat out of the bag
Paraphrase 1	disclose a guarded secret [phrasal]	disclose a guarded secret [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	release the cat [compositional]	release the cat [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	linguistic context (co-text, language knowledge); cognitive context	linguistic context (co-text, language knowledge); cognitive context
Connection	change of communication level	

The RELEVANT PART of this example, the phrase “let the cat out of the bag”, may have the following two readings: “disclose a guarded secret” (PARAPHRASE 1, OED: “cat, n.1”, 13f) and “release the cat” (PARAPHRASE 2). The readings are UNRELATED: without having learned the phrasal reading, it cannot easily be understood. On both levels of communication, there is no ambiguity (UNAMBIGUOUS USE). Thus, both production and perception are non-strategic (DIMENSION: PS<sup>-</sup>/RS<sup>-</sup>). Because the potential to be ambiguous is not realized, TRIGGER and RANGE are the same, the phrase “let the cat out of the bag” (COMPLEX ELEMENT).



*Ambiguity Production and Perception*

As in the previous examples, the ambiguity potential of the phrase “let the cat out of the bag” is not realized here. The only meaning produced for speaker and hearer on both levels of communication is “release a guarded secret”. Therefore, this is also a case of non-perceived ambiguity (P4) in all instances and the other parameters do not apply.

*Relevant Context Features*

In this example, the linguistic and cognitive context enhance one reading and suppress the other. Not only is there no mention of a cat in the immediate context, there is not relevant cat in the infratextual context as well. Thus, there is no cat in the mental representation of the hearer on both levels of communication. Using their language knowledge, which includes the phrasal meaning of the phrase, neither characters nor readers perceive the potential ambiguity.

**9.1.4 Patterns Observable for Type 1**

These three exemplary analyses of an unambiguous use of phrases with the potential to be used ambiguously reveal some patterns. These patterns are applicable across all examples of this type of use that I have collected so far (see appendix, p. 210–243).

To begin with, the phrases considered in the examples above have the potential to be ambiguous, but they are used unambiguously. Thus, there is no strategic production or perception of ambiguity to be observed in these examples. For the same reason, no difference in the level of TRIGGER and RANGE can be observed.

Furthermore, if we encounter an unambiguous use on the OUTERMOST LEVEL, the phrase in question is used unambiguously on the INNERMOST LEVEL as well. This is to be expected. The participants on the OUTERMOST LEVEL are aware of the communication taking place on the INNERMOST LEVEL. Thus, if an ambiguity arises between the characters in any form, the author and readers will certainly be made aware of it. We will see in examples for the other types that there may well be differences in the use of ambiguity between the communication levels and that an unambiguous use on the INNERMOST LEVEL may well lead to an ambiguity on the OUTERMOST LEVEL.

Lastly, in cases of unambiguous use, it seems to be always PARAPHRASE 1, the generally more salient reading, that is used, with PARAPHRASE 2, the less salient reading, being suppressed completely. Both the linguistic context and

the sociocultural context of the characters work together to enforce the reading which, in the social context, is already more salient. In compliance with general frequencies for idioms, where the phrasal reading is more frequent than the compositional one due to conventionalization (cf. 2.4.4), the more salient reading is mostly the phrasal one. This finding is also not unexpected. Promoting the less salient reading over the more salient one requires great effort on the part of the speaker. Even if it is successful, the second reading often is not suppressed completely, as we will see in the analyses of examples of type 2 (9.2).

From these observations, it follows that this very common use of potentially ambiguous phrases is almost inconspicuous. It is only apparent if one is deliberately looking for these potentially ambiguous phrases.

## 9.2 Type 2: Unresolved Ambiguity

In this group of examples, the occurring idiom is used ambiguously, without the ambiguity being resolved within the section of the text that is under consideration.<sup>128</sup> The definition for this type of ambiguity use, as given in (71), is repeated here as (111):

- (111) The idiomatic expression occurs once. Both readings, the phrasal and the compositional, are equally plausible, i.e. there is no indication in the immediate linguistic context (either preceding or following the idiomatic expression) that only one of the readings is aimed at.

### 9.2.1 “the last straw” (South by Southeast)

The first example of an unresolved ambiguity is taken from the first chapter of Anthony Horowitz’ *South by Southeast*. The main characters, the brothers Nick (the narrator) and Tim, are broke:

- (112) The day it all started, it was my turn to make lunch – but I’d just discovered there was no lunch left to make. I’d done my best. I’d gotten a tray ready with plates, knives, forks, napkins, and even a flower I’d found growing on the bathroom wall. All that was missing was the food.  
“Is that it?” Tim asked as I carried it in. He was sitting behind his desk,

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**128** More examples of this type may be found in the appendix, p. 244–259.

making paper boats out of pages from the phone book. “A carton of milk?”

“Half a carton,” I replied. “We had the other half for breakfast.” It was true. Half a carton of long-life milk was all that stood between us and starvation. “I’ll get some glasses,” I said.

“Don’t bother.” Tim reached for a cardboard box on the corner of his desk. He turned it upside down. A single straw fell out. **“That’s the last straw”**, he announced.

I’d been living with my big brother [...]

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 1; waw190008)

### *Analysis with TInCAP*

**Tab. 30:** Annotations of (112), “the last straw” (South by Southeast)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190008</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190008</i></b>
Relevant Part	That’s the last straw	That’s the last straw
Paraphrase 1	the final irritation or problem that stretches one’s endurance or patience beyond the limit [phrasal]	the final irritation or problem that stretches one’s endurance or patience beyond the limit [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	the single drinking straw that is left [compositional]	the single drinking straw that is left [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	idiom; figurative language	idiom; figurative language
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par1 R: ?	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2
Context	linguistic context (salience); social context (salience); sociocultural context	linguistic context; social context (salience); sociocultural context (characters); cognitive context (coherence)
Connection	change of communication level	

The phrase “that’s the last straw” (RELEVANT PART) can have two possible PARAPHRASES: the phrasal “that’s the final irritation or problem that stretches one’s

endurance or patience beyond the limit”, which refers to the proverb of “the last straw that broke the camel’s back” (OED: “straw, n.”, 8b and “last straw, n.”), or the compositional “that’s the single drinking straw that is left” with a reinterpretation of the “single stem of a cereal” (OED: “straw, n.”, II) to the “hollow tube (orig. of straw or glass, now usually paper or plastic) through which a drink is sucked” (OED: “straw, n.”, 5g). These paraphrases are UNRELATED: the phrasal reading is not derived from the compositional reading. We deal with an idiom, a specific form of figurative language (PHENOMENON). On both levels of communication, the TRIGGER for the ambiguity is a phrase and thus located on the level of the COMPLEX ELEMENT. The RANGE goes up to the level of the cited section of the text but not beyond (GROUP COMPOUND). Differences between the communication levels can be found with regard to strategy: On the INNERMOST COMMUNICATION LEVEL, the ambiguity is not produced strategically (it would not fit the character, see below), while it is most likely produced strategically on the author’s side (OUTERMOST LEVEL). As the ambiguity is not pursued within the text, it is impossible for both levels to determine whether the ambiguity is perceived at all. Thus the question of strategy of perception remains unsolved.

#### *Ambiguity Production and Perception*

The narration is set up in such a way that both readings, the phrasal and the compositional one, are possible on both levels of communication (P10: multi-level ambiguity). On the outermost level, the ambiguity is perceivable for both speaker and hearer (P4: perceived ambiguity for both S and H). It is produced strategically by the speaker but most likely not perceived strategically by the hearer (P5: strategic ambiguity for S, non-strategic ambiguity for H). On the innermost level, the ambiguity is not produced strategically and thus not perceived by the speaker (P4 and P5: non-perceived and non-strategic ambiguity for S). As the story continues without reference to or resolution of the ambiguity (P6: non-resolved ambiguity), there is no way to indisputably determine whether the ambiguity is perceived by the hearer.

#### *Relevant Context Features*

In a social context where readers are rarely confronted with real straw, the phrasal reading of “that’s the last straw” is in general more salient. The linguistic context in this example is, however, crafted so carefully as to enable a balance which does not allow for a preference to be attested. A situation is described in which Tim and his brother Nick are literally looking at their last straw, which is not a stem of cereal but a drinking straw. Thus, the compositional meaning applies. The description of the straw falling out of the cardboard

box in the sentence directly preceding the idiom highlights the compositional reading and balances it against the otherwise more salient phrasal reading. But that it really is the last straw is also the final event in a string of unbearable occurrences, therefore the phrasal meaning, which is based on the proverb of the final stem of cereal breaking the camel's back, applies as well. Both readings are coherent with the preceding context and can be integrated in the cognitive context which has been constructed.

From the description of the character Tim (sociocultural context), we can deduce that he probably did not produce this ambiguity strategically, i.e. that he is not aware of it. His brother Nick (the narrator) does not answer, and there is no further context referring to the phrase (linguistic context). The following paragraph deals with aspects of the brothers' past and their relationship and does not refer to Tim's statement. Thus, there is no possibility of deciding how Nick interprets his brother's comment, even if we can deduce from previous interactions that he probably notices the ambiguity (sociocultural context). In the end, the ambiguity is not resolved, and both possible readings stay equally salient on both communication levels.

### 9.2.2 “be attached” (Winnie-the-Pooh)

Example (77), here repeated as (113), is taken from chapter 4 of *Winnie-the-Pooh* in which Eeyore is very sad because he has lost his tail. Pooh goes on a quest to find it and locates it next to Owls door where it is used as a bell pull:

(113) “I just came across it in the Forest. It was hanging over a bush, [...] and as nobody seemed to want it, I took it home, and –”

“Owl,” said Pooh solemnly, “you made a mistake. Somebody did want it.”

“Who?”

“Eeyore. My dear friend Eeyore. He was – he was fond of it.”

“Fond of it?”

“**Attached to it**,” said Winnie-the-Pooh sadly.

So with these words he unhooked it, and carried it back to Eeyore; and when Christopher Robin had nailed it on its right place again, Eeyore frisked about the forest, waving his tail so happily that Winnie-the-Pooh came over all funny, and had to hurry home for a little snack of something to sustain him.

(Milne 1926, 59-61; waw190001)

*Analysis with TInCAP*<sup>129</sup>**Tab. 31:** Annotations of (113), “be attached” (Winnie-the-Pooh)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190001</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190001</i></b>
Relevant Part	attached to it	attached to it
Paraphrase 1	fond of it [phrasal]	fond of it [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	connected with it [compositional]	connected with it [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language	figurative language
Type	1: unambiguous use	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1?	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2
Context	linguistic context (salience, meta-language); sociocultural context	linguistic context (salience, meta-language); cognitive context (coherence); non-linguistic co-text (illustration)
Connection	change of communication level	

*Ambiguity Production and Perception*

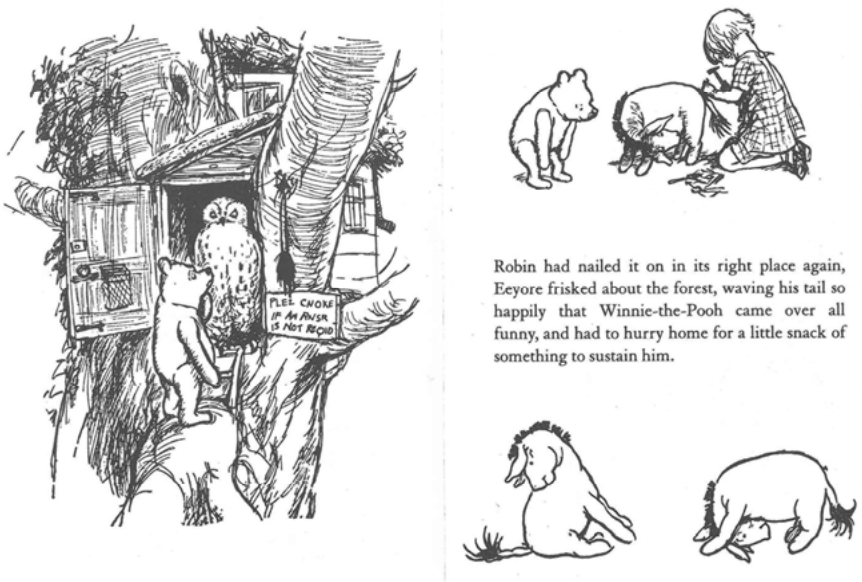
In the context of this example, both readings of “attached to it” are fitting on both levels of communication (P10: multi-level ambiguity). On the innermost level, the ambiguity is not produced strategically and thus not perceived by the speaker (P4 and P5: non-perceived and non-strategic ambiguity for S). As Owl, the hearer on the innermost level, does not react to the ambiguity, it is not possible to determine whether the ambiguity is perceived by him. On the outermost Level, the ambiguity is perceivable for both speaker and hearer (P4: perceived ambiguity for both S and H). It is produced strategically by the speaker but most likely not perceived strategically by the hearer (P5: strategic ambiguity for S, non-strategic ambiguity for H). The story continues without further reference to

<sup>129</sup> For a detailed analysis of this example within TInCAP explaining the annotations, see chapter 5.2 (p. 94–109).

the ambiguity, thus the ambiguity is not resolved (P6) on either of the communication levels.

### *Relevant Context Features*

In this example, different context features come into play on the different communication levels. Neither Pooh nor Owl are known for their play with words or their strategic use of ambiguity (sociocultural context). With the linguistic co-text immediately preceding the target phrase, namely the repetition of “fond of it”, the salience of this phrasal reading of “attached to it” is heightened to such an extent that only the phrasal meaning is present on the level of the characters.



**Fig. 10:** Page layout of (113), “be attached” (Winnie-the-Pooh; Milne 1926, 60f)

On the outermost level, these factors strengthening the salience of the phrasal reading have their effect as well. In addition, there are the narrator’s comments, which are not perceivable for the characters. The sentence immediately following the target phrase describes how Christopher Robin nails the tail back onto Eeyore (see Figure 10), heightening the salience of the compositional reading. This is further enforced by the non-linguistic co-text, showing Christopher Robin nailing the tail back on. Both readings are coherent with the preceding

context. Eeyore’s sadness about losing his tail licenses the phrasal reading; knowing that the tail is attached to Eeyore’s hindquarters by a nail licenses the compositional reading. Thus, both readings can easily be integrated into the cognitive context the readers constructed. The ambiguity cannot be resolved.

### 9.2.3 “feather in your hat” (Matilda)

Roald Dahl’s *Matilda* is a very bright child whose rather unintelligent parents often tell her that she is ignorant and stupid. One day, she decides that every time her parents are beastly to her, she will get back at them in her own way. Her first action is to secretly glue her father’s hat, which has a jay’s feather stuck in the hatband, to his head:

- (114) The father glared at his daughter with deep suspicion, but said nothing. How could he? Mrs Wormwood said to him, “It *must* be Superglue. It couldn’t be anything else. That’ll teach you to go playing round with nasty stuff like that. I expect you were trying to stick **another feather in your hat.**” “I haven’t touched the flaming stuff!” Mr Wormwood shouted. He turned and looked again at Matilda who looked back at him with large innocent brown eyes. Mrs Wormwood said to him, “You should read the label on the tube before you start messing with dangerous products. Always follow the instructions on the label.”

(Dahl 1988, Ch. 3; waw190025)

#### *Analysis with TInCAP*

**Tab. 32:** Annotations of (114), “feather in your hat” (Matilda)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190025</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190025</i>
Relevant Part	another feather in your hat	another feather in your hat
Paraphrase 1	another mark of honour [phrasal]	another mark of honour [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	another appendage of a bird stuck to your hat [compositional]	another appendage of a bird stuck to your hat [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	group compound



	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190025</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190025</i>
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par2 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context; cognitive context	sociocultural context (characters); linguistic context; cognitive context
Connection	change of communication level	

The two possible readings of the phrase “feather in your hat” (RELEVANT PART) are the phrasal “another mark of honour” (PARAPHRASE 1; OED: “feather, n.”, 8b) or the compositional “another appendage of a bird stuck to your hat” (PARAPHRASE 2). These paraphrases are RELATED, as the idiomatic or phrasal reading is a figurative use of the compositional one (PHENOMENON: idiom). On both levels of communication, the TRIGGER for the ambiguity is a phrase (COMPLEX ELEMENT). On the INNERMOST LEVEL, the ambiguity is not perceived by either speaker or hearer (UNAMBIGUOUS USE). Thus, the ambiguity is not produced or perceived strategically (DIMENSION PS<sup>-</sup>/RS<sup>-</sup>) and the RANGE does not go beyond the COMPLEX ELEMENT. On the OUTERMOST LEVEL, however, the ambiguity is produced strategically (PS<sup>+</sup>) and the ‘ideal’ reader will recognize it non-strategically (RS<sup>-</sup>). If it is recognized, it is not resolved within this section of the text (UNRESOLVED AMBIGUITY), but the RANGE of the ambiguity still does not go beyond the cited section of the text (GROUP COMPOUND).

#### *Ambiguity Production and Perception*

In this instance of multi-level ambiguity (P10), the ambiguity is not used strategically or even perceived on the INNERMOST LEVEL (P4 and P5: non-perceived and non-strategic ambiguity for S and H). On the outermost level, the ambiguity is perceivable for both speaker and hearer, but is used strategically only by the speaker (P4 and P5: perceived and strategic ambiguity for S, perceived and non-strategic ambiguity for H). The ambiguity is resolved on neither level (P6: non-resolved ambiguity).

#### *Relevant Context Features*

On the innermost level, only the compositional reading is perceived. Both Mr and Mrs Wormwood, who are communicating in this scene, are not characters who use ambiguity in general, and the phrasal reading seems far removed from their usual way of speaking (sociocultural context). Furthermore, the hat in

question already has a feather stuck to it, further foregrounding the compositional reading (cognitive context).

On the outermost level, these context features also play their part in strengthening this reading, particularly as a description of the hat, with a jay's feather already stuck in its hatband, directly precedes this scene (linguistic context). However, over the last pages, the readers have constantly been told of Mr Wormwood's endeavors to succeed in his business and his self-aggrandisement over small triumphs. Thus, the phrasal meaning fits well with the picture created of this character (cognitive context), allowing both readings to hold in the readers' mind.

#### 9.2.4 Patterns Observable for Type 2

In the examples analyzed in this section, the target phrase is used ambiguously on the OUTERMOST LEVEL and the ambiguity is not resolved. The exemplary analyses for this type of ambiguity use reveal further patterns which are also observable in the other examples of this type that I have collected so far (see appendix, p. 244–259).

As observed with the type one patterns (9.1.4), an unambiguous use on the OUTERMOST LEVEL requires an unambiguous use on the INNERMOST LEVEL. By contrast, employing the ambiguity without resolving it on the OUTERMOST LEVEL often is accompanied by an unambiguous use on the INNERMOST LEVEL. It seems that allowing an ambiguity to arise and not be resolved requires specially crafted contexts. The moment the item with the potential to be read ambiguously (here: phrase/idiom) occurs, both readings have to be equally possible. Typically, a range of context features work together to create this effect. Readers have more context features at their disposal than the characters, thus it seems more likely that this effect is achieved.

Taking into account the challenge of creating such a balanced context, a strategic production of the ambiguity on the OUTERMOST LEVEL of communication can be assumed. This is reflected in the analyses which consistently show PS<sup>+</sup>. Whether the ambiguity is perceived strategically or not cannot be determined. The potential to get both readings is there but as the ambiguity is not resolved it is impossible to determine whether the reader perceives both readings. However, the 'ideal' reader will perceive the ambiguity, but certainly not strategically; thus, we typically assign RS<sup>-</sup>.

In all examples analyzed as this type, the RANGE never goes beyond the GROUP COMPOUND. Beyond the paragraph under consideration, the ambiguity is

not relevant any more. It seems that it is difficult to keep up the precarious balance between the two readings over a larger RANGE. Further research is needed to examine these findings for different kinds of examples, e.g. examples where the TRIGGER is not a phrase (COMPLEX ELEMENT).

The identified patterns show that creating an unresolved ambiguity requires some effort. The generally unbalanced salience of the two readings of a potentially ambiguous phrase (cf. 2.3 and 3.3.2) has to be countered, but not as much as to tip the scale in the other direction (which might lead to a type 3 ambiguity use, see 9.3). Even if this is successful, it depends on the individual readers whether they actually perceive the ambiguity, as there are no clear ambiguity markers.

### 9.3 Type 3: Reanalysis

With this particularly productive type of idiom ambiguity use, an instance of reanalysis occurs where a switch from one reading to the other takes place.<sup>130</sup> The definition for this type of ambiguity use, as given in (73), is repeated here as (115):

- (115) The idiom appears once. The linguistic context preceding the idiom allows for both the phrasal as well as the compositional reading. However, one of the readings is more salient. The linguistic context following the idiomatic expression only fits with the less salient reading and forces the reanalysis of the linguistic expression.

#### 9.3.1 “live under the name” (Winnie-the-Pooh)

The following example of reanalysis has been cited in the introduction as (8) and is here repeated as (116). It is taken from the first chapter of *Winnie-the-Pooh*, when Christopher Robins father begins telling the first story about the little bear:

- (116) 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.)

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<sup>130</sup> More examples of this type may be found in the appendix, p. 260–294.

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

(Milne 1926, 3f; waw190012)

*Analysis with TInCAP*

**Tab. 33:** Annotations of (116), “under the name” (Winnie-the-Pooh)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190012</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190012</i></b>
Relevant Part	lived [...] under the name	lived [...] under the name
Paraphrase 1	was called or known by the name [phrasal]	was called or known by the name [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	his place of living was located under the name [compositional]	his place of living was located under the name [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	idiom; figurative language	idiom; figurative language
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par2 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par2>Par1
Context	linguistic context (meta-language); sociocultural context	cognitive context; linguistic context (meta-language); social context (fre- quency); non-linguistic co-text (illus- tration)
Connection	change of communication level	

The phrase “live under the name” (RELEVANT PART) can in the given context be understood in the following two ways: Either Winnie-the-Pooh was called Sanders (PARAPHRASE 1, phrasal reading, OED: “name, n. and adj.”, P3) or he had the name Sanders written over his door and lived under this sign (PARAPHRASE 2, compositional reading). As the phrasal reading is figuratively derived from the compositional one, the paraphrases are RELATED. The phrase “under the name” is an idiom, as it is a fixed, and not an ad-hoc use of figurative language (PHENOMENON). On both levels of communication, the TRIGGER for the ambiguity is a phrase and thus on the level of the COMPLEX ELEMENT. The RANGE goes up to the

level of the cited section of the text but not beyond (GROUP COMPOUND). Differences between the communication levels can be found regarding strategy: On the INNERMOST COMMUNICATION LEVEL, the ambiguity is most likely not produced strategically and certainly not perceived strategically (the character Christopher Robin does not pursue a goal with the perception of the ambiguity). On the OUTERMOST LEVEL, the ambiguity is produced strategically (the author places it in the text) and perceived non-strategically, i.e. it is perceived but not with a specific goal in mind.

#### *Ambiguity Production and Perception*

This is a case of multi-level ambiguity (P10). On the innermost level, the phrase “live under the name” is used by the father telling a story. The child listening to the story, Christopher Robin, does not know the meaning of the phrase, asks for an explanation, and gets one. The possible ambiguity of the phrase is not expanded upon, both speaker and hearer seem not to be aware of it (P4: non-perceived ambiguity for S and H). On the outermost level, the author strategically places the ambiguity in the text (P4 and P5: perceived and strategic ambiguity for S). Both readings fit within the preceding context, with the phrasal reading being the more likely one (see below). Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the reader is not aware of the phrase’s ambiguity at first. A process of reanalysis is triggered (P7: disambiguation by time) through the explanation of the father (P9: disambiguation by metalinguistic strategies), which produces the ambiguity for the hearer (P4 and P5: perceived and non-strategic ambiguity for H). Furthermore, the illustration supports this disambiguation (P8: disambiguation by context).

#### *Relevant Context Features*

For this example, the relevant context features differ significantly for the innermost and the outermost level. On the outermost level, the linguistic context preceding the phrase “under the name” gives no indication of preference for one or the other reading, both readings fit. Still, due to the social context, a preference for the phrasal reading is to be expected, as it is more frequent: it is more common to be known under a certain name than to have a name over one’s door which is not one’s own. Therefore, the phrasal meaning is initially perceived. In the linguistic context following the idiomatic expression, the dialogue between Christopher Robin and his father (on the internal communication level) provides hints for the reader (on the external communication level) that promote the compositional reading through the use of a metalinguistic explanation. For readers, this will trigger a process of reanalysis and update the cogni-

tive context which now includes the compositional reading instead of only the phrasal one. The non-linguistic co-text supports the compositional reading as well, showing Winnie-the-Pooh sitting under a sign with “Mr. Sanders” written on it (cf. Figure 1, p. 3).

On the innermost level, while the linguistic context stays exactly the same, the sociocultural context of the hearer is specified: Christopher Robin signals that he does not know what “under the name” means. Either he does not get both the phrasal as well as the compositional reading or he is confused. Before the explanation by his story-telling father, there is no indication that there is any representation of the meaning of this phrase in his cognitive context. Consequently, we have to assume that there is no process of reanalysis happening on the innermost level.

This raises the question whether the analysis of the processes happening on the outermost level are really as straightforward as presented above. A reader who knows the phrasal reading “be called” might be confused by the storyteller’s compositional explanation of the phrase. Through the necessary reanalysis which Milne forces by re-literalizing the figurative meaning, he makes readers aware of the flexibility of language. But what about readers, perhaps children like Christopher Robin, who do not (yet) know the phrasal meaning of “under the name”? These readers would – just as Christopher Robin – only understand the one meaning explained in the text. The double meaning would pass them by. This almost suggests that Milne deliberately misleads young readers – or, at least, makes them wonder. However, readers as young as that will most likely not be readers but listeners. Someone will be reading the story aloud to them and be able to explain the play with words Milne is enjoying here.

### 9.3.2 “throw the book at s.o.” (South by Southeast)

Example (117) renders the first lines of the sixth chapter of Anthony Horowitz’ *South by Southeast*. The main characters, the brothers Nick (the narrator) and Tim, have been locked up by Chief Inspector Snape and his partner Boyle for wasting the police’s time:

(117) This time Snape locked us up for two days. Boyle wanted **to throw the book at us** but fortunately he didn’t have a book. I’m not even sure Boyle knew how to read.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 6; waw190002)

*Analysis with TInCAP***Tab. 34:** Annotations of (117), “throw the book at s.o.” (South by Southeast)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190002</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190002</i></b>
Relevant Part	to throw the book at us	to throw the book at us
Paraphrase 1	to charge us with every possible offence [phrasal]	to charge us with every possible offence [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	to throw a book (as in a physical object) at us [compositional]	to throw a book (as in a physical object) at us [compositional]
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group of elements	group of elements
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	---	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: ---	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par2>Par1
Context	---	cognitive context; linguistic context
Features		
Connection	change of communication level	

The phrase “to throw the book at us” (RELEVANT PART) has two possible readings: the phrasal “to charge us with every possible offence” (PARAPHRASE 1, OED: “book, n.”, 13) or the compositional “to throw a book (as in a physical object) at us” (PARAPHRASE 2). The readings may be historically related. But as the relation between the readings is not transparent for modern language users, the paraphrases are UNRELATED. The phrase is an idiom, a form of figurative language (PHENOMENON). On both levels of communication, the TRIGGER for the ambiguity is a phrase and thus on the level of the COMPLEX ELEMENT. The RANGE does not go beyond the level of the sentence (GROUP OF ELEMENTS) as the ambiguity is resolved within it. The ambiguity is produced strategically on both communication levels. On the MEDIATING LEVEL, there is no hearer represented in the communication situation, which is why no strategy can be assigned (unsolved). On the OUTERMOST LEVEL, the ‘ideal’ reader will experience a process of reanalysis; thus, the ambiguity is perceived non-strategically.

### *Ambiguity Production and Perception*

In this example, the ambiguity involves two communication levels (P10: multi-level ambiguity). On both the MEDIATING and the outermost level, the ambiguity is produced strategically (P4 and P5: perceived and strategic ambiguity for S). On the mediating level, there is no process of perception. On the outermost level, both readings fit within the preceding context, with the phrasal reading being the more likely one (see below). Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the reader is not aware of the phrase's ambiguity at first. A process of reanalysis is triggered through the continuation of the utterance (P7: disambiguation by time), by the use of the noun "book" referring to a real physical object (P8: disambiguation by context). This process of reanalysis produces the ambiguity for the hearer (P4 and P5: perceived and non-strategic ambiguity for H).

### *Relevant Context Features*

There is no process of perception on the mediating level. Thus, no context features influencing the perception can be distinguished and no type assigned. On the outermost level, the readers have constructed, in the course of the previous chapter, a mental representation of what is going on: Snape and Boyle are angry but they do not really have any evidence of wrong-doing on the brothers' part (cognitive context). The linguistic co-text immediately preceding the phrase "throw the book at us" does not conflict with this mental representation and consequently further supports the phrasal reading of Boyle wanting to punish the brothers. However, the linguistic co-text following the phrase introduces a book. The indefinite article indicates that it is not an object that has been referred to before and no book is part of the scene. Yet in co-occurrence with "have" and "read" it can only refer to an actual, concrete book. A book that could be held and read. Thus, a process of reanalysis from the phrasal meaning to the compositional meaning is triggered.

### **9.3.3 "dress the chicken" (Amelia Bedelia)**

Here is another example with the literal minded Amelia Bedelia from Peggy Parish's series:

(118) *The meat market will deliver a steak and a chicken. Please trim the fat before you put the steak in the icebox. And please **dress the chicken**.*

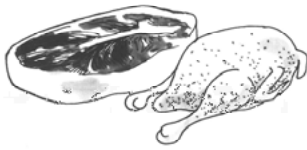
When the meat arrived, Amelia Bedelia opened the bag. She looked at the steak for a long time. "Yes," she said. "That will do nicely."



Amelia Bedelia got some lace and bits of ribbon. And Amelia Bedelia trimmed that fat before she put the steak in the icebox.

“Now I must dress the chicken. I wonder if she wants a he chicken or a she chicken?” said Amelia Bedelia. Amelia Bedelia went right to work. Soon the chicken was finished.

(Parish 1963, 17f; waw190009)



*The meat market will deliver  
a steak and a chicken.*

*Please trim the fat before you  
put the steak in the icebox.*

*And please dress the chicken.*

When the meat arrived,  
Amelia Bedelia opened the bag.  
She looked at the steak for a long time.  
“Yes,” she said. “That will do nicely.”



Amelia Bedelia got some lace and bits of ribbon.  
And Amelia Bedelia trimmed that fat before  
she put the steak in the icebox.



“Now I must dress the chicken.  
I wonder if she wants a he chicken or a she chicken?”  
said Amelia Bedelia.  
Amelia Bedelia went right to work.  
Soon the chicken was finished.

Fig. 11: Page layout of (118), “dress the chicken” (Amelia Bedelia; Parish 1963, 17f)

### Analysis with TInCAP

Tab. 35: Annotations of (118), “dress the chicken” (Amelia Bedelia)

	Annotation 3, <i>i3waw190009</i>	Annotation 4, <i>i4waw190009</i>
Relevant Part	dress the chicken	dress the chicken
Paraphrase 1	prepare the chicken to be cooked	prepare the chicken to be cooked
Paraphrase 2	put clothes on the chicken	put clothes on the chicken
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost

	<b>Annotation 3, <i>i3waw190009</i></b>	<b>Annotation 4, <i>i4waw190009</i></b>
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; formulaic language	collocation; formulaic language
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co- text (illustration); sociocultural con- text (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

The phrase “dress the chicken” (RELEVANT PART) may be read as “prepare the chicken to be cooked” (PARAPHRASE 1; OED: “dress, v.”, 13a) or as “put clothes on the chicken” (PARAPHRASE 2; OED: “dress, v.”, 7a). The readings are RELATED, with the first being a collocation (PHENOMENON) as this reading of “dress” depends on the co-occurrence with food. On both levels of communication, the TRIGGER for the ambiguity is a phrase and thus on the level of the COMPLEX ELEMENT and the RANGE encompasses the cited section of the text (GROUP COMPOUND). Differences between the communication levels can be found regarding strategy: On the INNERMOST COMMUNICATION LEVEL, the ambiguity is produced and perceived non-strategically. It is a case of UNAMBIGUOUS USE. On the OUTERMOST LEVEL, we have a case of REANALYSIS and the ambiguity is produced strategically and perceived non-strategically.

#### *Ambiguity Production and Perception*

In this case of multi-level ambiguity (P10), the ambiguity is not perceived by either speaker or hearer (P4: non-perceived ambiguity for S and H) and not produced or perceived strategically (P5: non-strategic ambiguity for S and H) on the innermost level. On the outermost level, the ambiguity is perceived by both speaker and hearer (P4: perceived ambiguity for S and H), it is produced strategically and perceived non-strategically (P5: strategic ambiguity for S, non-strategic ambiguity for H). On the innermost level, the ambiguity is not perceived and thus a resolution of the ambiguity is not possible by any means. On the outermost level, the ambiguity is resolved through the continuation of the utterance, which triggers a process of reanalysis, as well as through the non-

linguistic context (P6: resolved ambiguity; P7: disambiguation by time; P8: disambiguation by context).

### *Relevant Context Features*

In this example, speaker and hearer process different readings, each according to their personal sociocultural context. None of them perceives the ambiguity at this point of the narrative. Therefore, this is an unambiguous use on the INNER-MOST LEVEL.

On the outermost level, various context features interact during the processing of this section of text. In the beginning of the narrative, Amelia Bedelia got a long list of tasks from her employer. According to readers' knowledge of the social context, they will infer that all tasks on the list are typical household tasks, in accordance with her job as housemaid. Preparing a chicken for cooking is such a typical task one would expect. However, the linguistic context then refers to a "he chicken or she chicken", which only works with the "put on clothes"-reading. This is also supported by the non-linguistic co-text with an illustration showing Amelia Bedelia putting clothes on the chicken (see Figure 11). A process of reanalysis is triggered, which might, at this point in the narrative, not be unexpected for the readers who are already aware of the character's sociocultural context: This is the seventh and final item on the list and Amelia Bedelia has never done the socially expected.

### 9.3.4 "auf den Arm nehmen" (Ritter Tollkühn)

In Bernd Schreiber's *Ritter Tollkühn und der goldene Dings*, the main character Tom has gone on a quest to help the king who is always freezing. When he comes back, the following scene unfolds:

- (119) Tom ging auf den frierenden König zu. „Ich bin gekommen, um mein Versprechen einzulösen“, sagte er und warf die Satteltasche auf den Tisch.  
 König Knöterich schaute ungläubig auf die Tasche. „Hast du mir etwa ein Paar warme Handschuhe mitgebracht?“  
 „Nein, Herr König“, antwortete Tom. „Etwas viel Kostbareres. Ich habe für Euch den goldenen Dings, äh, Kelch erobert.“  
 „Aahhh! Oohhh!“, hallte es durch den Saal.  
 „Ihr wollt wohl den König **auf den Arm nehmen**“, sagte Friedrich von Edelstein.

„Ich fürchte, mit den vielen Umhängen und Mützen ist mir der König zu schwer“, grinste Tom.

„Ha, guter Witz“, kicherte Ritter von Trutz.

(Schreiber 2010, 149–150; waw190029)<sup>131</sup>

### Analysis with TInCAP

**Tab. 36:** Annotations of (119), “auf den Arm nehmen” (Ritter Tollkühn)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190029</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190029</i>
Relevant Part	auf den Arm nehmen	auf den Arm nehmen
Paraphrase 1	to tease [phrasal]	to tease [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	to take onto one’s arms [compositional]	to take onto one’s arms [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1+Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	cognitive context; social context (salience); sociocultural context; linguistic context	cognitive context; social context (salience); sociocultural context (characters); linguistic context
Connection	change of communication level	

### 131 English translation (by me) for example (119):

Tom approached the freezing king. “I came to fulfill a promise”, he said and threw the bag on the table.

King Knöterich ogled the bag. “Did you bring me a pair of warm gloves?”

“No, Your majesty”, Tom answered. “Something way more precious. I got the golden thingy, ehm, cup for you.”

“Aahhh! Oooh!” it echoed through the room.

“Do you mean to pull the king’s leg”, Friedrich von Edelstein said.

“I’m afraid he’s too heavy with his capes and hats”, Tom grinned.

“Good joke”, snickered knight von Trutz.

The German idiom (PHENOMENON) “jemanden auf den Arm nehmen” (RELEVANT PART) is roughly equivalent to the English idiom “to pull s.o.’s leg” and has the phrasal reading “to tease” (PARAPHRASE 1) and the compositional reading “to pick s.o. up; to take s.o. onto one’s arms” (PHARAPHRASE 2). The two readings are UNRELATED as it is not possible to derive the phrasal meaning from the compositional without knowing the idiom before. On both levels of communication, the TRIGGER for the ambiguity is a phrase (COMPLEX ELEMENT) and the RANGE goes up to the level of the cited section of the text but not beyond (GROUP COMPOUND). Differences between the communication levels can be found regarding strategy: On the INNERMOST COMMUNICATION LEVEL, the ambiguity is not produced strategically but perceived strategically, as indicated by Ritter von Trutz’s comment “good joke”. On the OUTERMOST LEVEL, the ambiguity is produced strategically (the author places it in the text) and perceived non-strategically, i.e. it is perceived but not with a specific goal in mind.

#### *Ambiguity Production and Perception*

This is also a case of multi-level ambiguity (P10). The ambiguity is perceived by the hearers on both levels, but only on the outermost level is it perceived by the speaker (P4: non-perceived ambiguity for S on the innermost level; perceived ambiguity for S on the outermost level and for H on both levels). Regarding strategy, the levels differ as well. On the innermost level, the speaker, Friedrich von Edelstein, does not use the ambiguity strategically but the hearer, Tom, perceives it strategically (P5: non-strategic for S, strategic for H). On the outermost level, the ambiguity is placed strategically in the text by the author but it is not perceived strategically by the reader (P5: strategic for S, non-strategic for H). On both levels the ambiguity is resolved through the interaction between the characters (P6: resolved ambiguity; P7: disambiguation by time; P8: disambiguation by (linguistic) context).

#### *Relevant Context Features*

The cognitive context is the same on both levels. Both characters and readers are aware that Friedrich von Edelstein is Tom’s and Ritter von Trutz’ adversary. He has been trying to prevent them from reaching their goal and is trying to wrest power from the king. This mental representation in combination with the knowledge that it is very uncommon to pick up an adult and take him onto one’s arms (social context) leads to a clear preference for the phrasal reading when Friedrich von Edelstein utters the phrase “auf den Arm nehmen” (salience).

The linguistic co-text preceding the phrase (only observable on the outermost level) does not indicate any preference for one reading or the other; thus, the salience of the readings, which is unbalanced in favour of the phrasal one, does not change. Tom's comment following Friedrich von Edelstein's utterance clearly refers to the compositional reading: Being "too heavy" is only relevant in combination with picking the king up, not with teasing him. Ritter von Trutz's comment indicates that Tom was joking, i.e. that he strategically misinterpreted Friedrich von Edelstein's question. Tom does not really mean what he was saying and he is well aware of the strangeness of the action he refers to. This fits well with the character, as he likes to joke and does not take Friedrich von Edelstein quite seriously (sociocultural context).

### 9.3.5 Patterns Observable for Type 3

This is probably the most productive type of ambiguity use involving idiomatic expressions in children's literature. At first glance, it often seems that the author or speaker is disambiguating, while, in fact, ambiguity is created instead. This is revealed in the pattern observable in the category ORDER: after the process of reanalysis, both readings are available to the hearer, even if not equally salient. So this use of ambiguity is a strategy of ambiguity rather than disambiguation. This category further shows that the generally more salient reading (paraphrase 1), which mostly is the phrasal reading for idiomatic expressions, is prevalent before the process of reanalysis is triggered. This concurs with the considerations on the patterns observable for type 1 (9.1.4).

Just as with type 2, in all examples of type 3 analyzed above the RANGE never goes beyond the GROUP COMPOUND. Once the process of reanalysis is completed, the ambiguity loses its relevance. Further studies might explore this phenomenon further and show whether this is due to this specific type of ambiguity or whether it is true for other types of ambiguities as well.

In the examples presented above, the reanalysis always happens on the OUTERMOST LEVEL and rarely on the INNERMOST, where we find a variety of ambiguity uses. This is not surprising if one considers the fact that the linguistic context is the most prominent trigger for reanalysis: an explicit expression of or indication for the generally less expected reading is necessary to instigate the process of reanalysis. This linguistic context is often part of the narrator's comment and consequently not available to the characters. Therefore, the reanalysis is only triggered on the OUTERMOST LEVEL. A further consequence of this pattern is the fact that, in cases of reanalysis on the OUTERMOST LEVEL, the ambiguity is always

produced strategically (PS<sup>+</sup>) by the author creating the linguistic context and perceived non-strategically (RS<sup>-</sup>) by the readers, who are unexpectedly confronted with the alternative reading. By contrast, reanalysis on the INNERMOST LEVEL is more likely to be produced non-strategically (PS<sup>-</sup>) and perceived strategically (RS<sup>+</sup>), as part of a character trait (for examples of reanalysis on the INNERMOST LEVEL, see 9.3.4 and further examples in the appendix, p. 260–294).

These patterns again reveal the prevalence of the general salience and the effort that has to go into promoting the less salient reading. Unlike the previous type, however, the scale is tipped in the other direction for these examples, which triggers the reanalysis. This strategy of using ambiguity is very productive in children’s literature, probably because it is a didactic strategy, explicitly indicating the ambiguity potential of certain phrases. However, grown-ups are amused by this strategy at least as much as children, if not more. This is reflected in the frequent use of similar structures in comedy, comic strips, or jokes.<sup>132</sup>

## 9.4 Type 4: Contrastive Readings

In examples of this type, the phrase in question is used twice in close proximity with different readings.<sup>133</sup> The definition for this type of ambiguity use, as given in (75), is repeated here as (120):

- (120) The idiom occurs (at least) twice in close proximity. Each occurrence is a case of unambiguous use. The two (or more) occurrences do not share the same reading: One of them is the phrasal and one is the compositional reading.

### 9.4.1 “shot in the arm” (South by Southeast)

The following example of contrastive readings has been cited before as (76) and is here repeated as (121), with the targeted idiom marked in bold:

- (121) “If it was Charon,” he muttered, “he’ll think we’re dead now. And if he thinks we’re dead, he won’t try and kill us.”

<sup>132</sup> For examples, please see the following entries in TInCAP: haj040053, waw190066, waw190069, kes060011.

<sup>133</sup> More examples of this type may be found in the appendix, p. 295–305.

“Right,” I agreed.

Tim brightened. “Well, I suppose that’s a **shot in the arm.**” Then he saw the blood.

“Nick!”

“What?”

“You’ve been **shot in the arm.**”

“I know.”

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 10; waw190027)

### Analysis with TInCAP

**Tab. 37:** Annotations of (121), “shot in the arm” (South by Southeast)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190027</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190027</i>
Relevant Part	shot in the arm	shot in the arm
Paraphrase 1	a much needed stimulant or encouragement [phrasal]	a much needed stimulant or encouragement [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	been hit with a bullet in the arm [compositional]	been hit with a bullet in the arm [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom; syntactic ambiguity	figurative language; idiom; syntactic ambiguity
Type	4: contrastive readings	4: contrastive readings
Order	P: Par1/Par2 R: Par1/Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1/Par2
Context	social context (salience); linguistic context	social context (salience); linguistic context; cognitive context
Connection	change of communication level	

There are two possible readings for the phrase “shot in the arm” (RELEVANT PART): either it is “a much needed stimulant or encouragement”, most likely derived from getting an injection (=shot) (PARAPHRASE 1, phrasal reading, OED: “shot, n.1”, 7g(b)), or it means “been hit with a bullet in the am” (PARAPHRASE 2, compositional reading). These readings are UNRELATED, they are based on differ-



ent syntactic structures: In the first reading, *shot* is read as a noun; in the second, it is a verb. So, the PHENOMENON here is not only an idiom but also a syntactic ambiguity. The TRIGGER is a phrase, on the level of the COMPLEX ELEMENT, and the RANGE does not go beyond the level of the GROUP COMPOUND for both levels of communication. Yet again, the differences are most noticeable for the question of strategic use: while the ambiguity is not produced strategically on the INNERMOST LEVEL, it is on the OUTERMOST LEVEL. On both levels, if the ambiguity is perceived at all, it is perceived non-strategically.

#### *Ambiguity Production and Perception*

This is a case of multi-level ambiguity (P10). On the outermost level it is placed strategically in the text (P4 and P5: perceived and strategic ambiguity for S), on the innermost level it is used non-strategically (P4 and P5: non-perceived and non-strategic ambiguity for S). On both levels, it is unclear whether the ambiguity is perceived by H. While the overall ambiguity is not resolved (P6), each of the individual occurrences is immediately disambiguated by context (P8).

#### *Relevant Context Features*

There are two occurrences of the phrase “shot in the arm” within close proximity. Each phrase is not used ambiguously within its sentence, partially due to syntax: The first occurrence can only be read as “much needed stimulant or encouragement”, the second can only refer to “been hit with a bullet”. The uniqueness of this example stems from the fact that the linguistic context for both occurrences includes the same phrase used with a different meaning. As the first use of the phrase, due to the syntactic structure, allows only the reading that is more salient in the social context of most readers (getting encouragement as well as getting an injection), this already more salient reading is foregrounded further. The mention of blood in the next sentence prepares the readers’ cognitive context for the different reading of the second use of the phrase. Processing the same phrase twice in close proximity with different readings highlights the ambiguity of the phrase, even though it is used unambiguously twice.

### **9.4.2 “entered the competition/entered him” (Groosham Grange)**

The following example, cited above as (68) and (103), repeated here as (122), is taken from Anthony Horowitz’s *Return to Groosham Grange*. At the sports day taking place at the school the following scene occurs:

- (122) Gregor, the school porter, had been disqualified from javelin throwing. He had strolled across the field without looking, and although he hadn't actually **entered** the competition, one of the javelins had unfortunately **entered** him.

(Horowitz 1988b, Ch. 1; waw190018)

*Analysis with TInCAP*

**Tab. 38:** Annotation of (122), “entered the competition/entered him” (Groosham Grange)

<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190018</i></b>	
Relevant Part	entered the competition/entered him
Paraphrase 1	he had not put himself up as a contestant
Paraphrase 2	he had been pierced by a javelin
Comm. Level	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	element
Range	group compound
Relation	related
Phenomenon	collocation; polysemy
Type	4: contrastive readings
Order	P: Par1/Par2 R: Par1→Par1/Par2
Context	linguistic context (collocation); social context (salience); cognitive context

There are two occurrences of enter, “entered the competition” and “entered him”, which together are the RELEVANT PART of this example. The two possible readings within the respective contexts are “put himself up as a contestant” (PARAPHRASE 1; OED “enter, v”, 20c) and “been pierced by a javelin” (PARAPHRASE 2; OED “enter, v”, 3). The paraphrases are RELATED, as they are based on the polysemy of the verb “enter” which shows different readings based on the collocations in which it occurs (PHENOMENON). The TRIGGER is a word, on the level of the ELEMENT, and the RANGE does not go beyond the level of the GROUP COMPOUND. On the OUTERMOST LEVEL, the ambiguity is produced strategically by the author and perceived non-strategically by the readers. As there is no communication situation on the INNERMOST LEVEL, there is only one annotation.

*Ambiguity Production and Perception*

In this example for one-level ambiguity (P10), the ambiguity is perceived by both the author and the readers (P4: perceived ambiguity for S and H). The author uses the ambiguity strategically, while the reader is made aware of the ambiguity through the second, different use of the verb “enter” (P5: strategic ambiguity for S, non-strategic ambiguity for H). Each individual use of the verb is disambiguated by the immediate linguistic context (P8) but the overall ambiguity is not resolved (P6).

*Relevant Context Features*

In this example of Type 4, there are two occurrences of enter: *entered the competition* and *entered him*. As discussed in chapter 8.1.4, each of these is unambiguous in its immediate linguistic context. In combination with “competition”, only the figurative reading of Gregor (not) having put himself up as a contestant is possible. For the second occurrence of “enter”, the inanimate subject “javelin” only enables the reading of Gregor having been pierced.

This seems very straightforward. However, as the phrases do not occur individually but within a larger context and within close proximity to each other, further aspects of context have to be taken into consideration. To begin with, entering a competition is – in a typical current day reader’s experience – more common than being pierced by a javelin (social context). Furthermore, the setting created in the mind of the readers with the title of the chapter (“Sports Day”) and the first paragraph is that of a sports event at a school where different kinds of competitions are taking place: the egg-and-spoon race, the three-legged race, the teacher’s race, etc. (cognitive context). Within this context, entering a competition is a likely scenario, further enhancing the salience of this reading. Thus, the first instance of “enter” in collocation with “competition” is unsurprising in its reading and strengthens the salience of this meaning even more. Because the setting is not (yet) one where readers would expect a javelin to be personified (which would allow for the paraphrase-1-reading for the second occurrence), a switch of readings has to take place when encountering the second occurrence of “enter”, triggered by the inanimate subject.

**9.4.3 “brought them up” (Flavia de Luce)**

In this example from the sixth book in the *Flavia de Luce* series, cited above as (66), Flavia, the narrator of the story, is in an argument with her sister:

- (123) “I am not being tetchy!” she shouted.  
 “If you’re not being tetchy,” I said, “then your brain is most likely being devoured by threadworms.”

Threadworms were one of my latest enthusiasms. I had recognized at once their criminal possibilities when Daffy had **brought them up** one morning at the breakfast table. Not **brought them up** in the sense of vomiting, of course, but mentioned that she had been reading about them in some novel or another where they were being bred by a mad scientist with nefarious intentions who reminded her of me.

(Bradley 2014, Ch. 11; waw190053)

### *Analysis with TInCAP*

**Tab. 39:** Annotations of (123), “brought them up” (Flavia de Luce)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190053</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190053</i></b>
Relevant Part	brought them up	brought them up
Paraphrase 1	started a topic of conversation [phrasal]	started a topic of conversation [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	vomited [compositional]	vomited [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom; phrasal verb	figurative language; idiom; phrasal verb
Type	---	4: contrastive readings
Order	P: Par1+Par2→Par1/Par2 R: ---	P: Par1+Par2→Par1/Par2 R: Par1→Par1/Par2
Context	---	social context (salience); linguistic context (collocation, meta-language); cognitive context; sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

The two possible readings of the phrasal verb “brought up” (RELEVANT PART) in this example are “started a topic of conversation” (PARAPHRASE 1; OED: “to bring up”, 8) and “vomited” (PARAPHRASE 2; OED: “to bring up”, 10). These readings are RELATED through figuration. The TRIGGER is the phrasal verb, on the level of the COMPLEX ELEMENT, and the RANGE does not go beyond the level of the GROUP COMPOUND for both levels of communication. In this instance, the ambiguity is produced strategically both by the narrating main character on the INNERMOST and the author on the OUTERMOST LEVEL (PS<sup>+</sup>). On the INNERMOST LEVEL, there is no hearer represented in the communication situation, which is why no strategy can be assigned (RS<sup>0</sup>). On the OUTERMOST LEVEL, the ‘ideal’ reader will perceive the ambiguity non-strategically (RS<sup>-</sup>).

#### *Ambiguity Production and Perception*

In this example of multi-level ambiguity (P10), there is no perception process on the innermost level. Thus, perception and strategy can only be analyzed for the speaker, Flavia de Luce. She perceives the ambiguity, as she creates it strategically (perceived and strategic ambiguity for S). On the outermost level, the ambiguity is perceived by both the author and the reader (P4: perceived ambiguity for both S and H), but while the author places it strategically in the text, it is perceived non-strategically by the reader (P5: strategic ambiguity for S, non-strategic ambiguity for H). The overall ambiguity is resolved (P6). For the first occurrence, the ambiguity is disambiguated by time and the immediate linguistic co-text (P7, P8), after the second occurrence metalinguistic strategies (P9) trigger a process of reanalysis, which leads to the ambiguity perception by the reader.

#### *Relevant Context Features*

In this example, we deal with two readings of a phrase, where one of the readings is highly unlikely for three reasons. Firstly, starting a topic of conversation is very common, while vomiting threadworms is very uncommon (social context). Secondly, using the phrasal verb “bring up” in collocation with “at the breakfast table” further enforces the salience of the reading “start a topic of conversation” (linguistic context). Thirdly, threadworms have not been mentioned before in the course of the narrative. If Flavia’s sister Daffy had one or had vomited one, readers would have been told by Flavia, the narrator, who cannot keep any information to herself which she considers interesting (cognitive context).

In this context, the only possible reading when the phrase “brought them up” first occurs, is “started a conversation”. However, when Flavia uses the

phrase again, she gives the two possible definitions (meta-language). She also tells readers which is the right one, completely disregarding the fact that without her explanation, the “vomiting”-reading would not have suggested itself and readers would not process it. This fits her character, as she has been presented as someone who likes to play with words and who likes to show off her knowledge (sociocultural context).

#### 9.4.4 Patterns Observable for Type 4

The exemplary analyses above reveal that with this type of ambiguity use the salience of the possible readings is very unbalanced. Social context and cognitive context together strengthen one reading so much that the second reading often is – at first glance – very implausible. In order to make this reading perceivable, it has to be enforced by the linguistic context.

Thus, the following two observations are not unexpected. Firstly, the ambiguity is employed strategically by the speaker who creates the linguistic context. It is perceived non-strategically by the hearer, who is forced by the linguistic context to recognize the ambiguity. Secondly, the pattern in the order of perception is consistent. Before the second occurrence of the phrase, only the first paraphrase is perceived, as it is more salient and fits the (linguistic) context. After the second occurrence, the hearer is aware of both possible readings at the same time – even if there is only one possible reading for each individual use.

This kind of ambiguity use, with one word or phrase occurring twice in close proximity with two different readings, is a way to make hearers aware of the ambiguity of a phrase. Often, it also adds a comical touch, because one of the readings is really implausible for one of the occurrences in the given context.

## 9.5 Summary

The exemplary analyses of the four types of ambiguity use presented above, while representative, do not allow for statistical analysis. In the future, a larger corpus of examples analyzed with TInCAP will enable this. Still, TInCAP already delivers results by making similarities visible in a way more traditional literary analysis (i.e. not working with a specialized corpus) cannot. This allows me to draw the following conclusions:

Firstly, the examples analyzed above show that for the ‘ideal’ reader the more salient reading is always perceived. Thus, if there is only one reading (type 1), it is the more salient one, and if there is a switch between readings (types 3 and 4), the more salient reading is the first to be perceived. Furthermore, as assumed by the processing theories in chapter 2.4, the more salient reading of ambiguous idioms is the phrasal one.

Secondly, the interaction of context features is more intricate for the ambiguous use of idioms (types 2, 3 and 4), than for the unambiguous use. The unambiguous use mostly relies on the higher general salience of the phrasal reading in combination with a linguistic context that is coherent with this reading. The effort to create a context that allows for ambiguity is much higher. This suggests, in turn, that if an idiom is used ambiguously, the ambiguity is most likely produced strategically. The analyses confirm this.

Lastly, there is a feature common for all types: ambiguity is more likely to be perceivable and perceived on the outermost level than on the innermost. This suggests that, in literary texts, authors exploit ambiguity to create some sort of bonding with readers.<sup>134</sup>

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**134** Such an effect has, moreover, often been identified for the perception of wordplay (see Zirker & Winter-Froemel (2015)), e.g. Lewis Carroll often uses this strategy (see Zirker (2010)). It is also not limited to children’s literature: we find similar effects, for instance, in Shakespeare’s work (see Bauer (2015b)).

# Conclusion and Outlook

The main goal of my study has been to contribute to ambiguity research from an interdisciplinary perspective. Two aspects of ambiguity have been at the center of attention. On the one hand, ambiguity has been studied as a feature of a specific kind of idiomatic phrase: whenever ambiguity occurs in these phrases, it is to be regarded as a feature of the language system. On the other hand, there is the playful use of this ambiguity in discourse, which leads to the perception of the ambiguity, and makes hearers aware of the inherent property of these idiomatic phrases. The resulting ambiguity awareness may be employed playfully and productively at the same time, as has been illustrated in the analyses of examples from children's literature.

The overarching question of this dissertation has been how the perception of the ambiguity of idioms, which is grounded in the language system, is influenced by specific contexts in discourse. The system-based ambiguity of idioms and the contextual influences in discourse are closely linked: We often do not perceive the potential for ambiguity unless features of the context draw our attention to it. This observation makes the joint study of idioms, ambiguity and context imperative. The conviction that these phenomena need to be studied not in isolation but in relation to each other resulted in the *state of the art* with its three main chapters.

Starting out with a discussion of the main features of idioms, I have shown that a universal definition of idioms is not possible. Idioms form a radial category, with more and less prototypical representatives. The only feature all idioms share is that of conventionality. The results of previous research depend on the definition of idioms and the specific idioms used in this research. Restricting the input to prototypical idioms only, for instance, will merely yield insight into this specific group of idioms and not into idioms in general. Hence, we have to think out of the box, taking results about other multiword expressions (metaphor, clichés, quotations, etc.) into account. We have seen that they all share properties with idioms, and the boundaries between the categories are often blurred. Considering the various kinds of multiword expressions, their ambiguity potential, and how they interact with contextual features in discourse, will also yield insight in those idioms that share some properties with the multiword expression in question.

From there, I went on to investigate the ambiguity of idioms. Not all idioms have the potential to be ambiguous and, with those that do have it, the ambiguity is not necessarily perceived to the same extent. For some, language users will agree that they are ambiguous, for others opinions may differ. The likelihood of

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an idiom to be perceived as ambiguous, independently of context, seems to be a question of degrees, influenced by (at least) two aspects: the semantic distance of the two readings and the decomposability of the idiom. In relation to the observations on the difficulty of delimiting idioms from other multiword expressions, this leads to the question to what extent we can transfer these findings to other ambiguous words or phrases, also taking into account different contexts of their appearance.

One aspect where there certainly are similarities in idiomatic and other ambiguities is in their dependency on context to be perceived and/or resolved. The context features I have identified as influential to the ambiguity and disambiguation of idioms are just as influential to other kinds of ambiguity. Linked to this context-sensitivity of ambiguity, one may agree with Wasow (2015a) that “ambiguity avoidance is overrated”: In discourse, ambiguity is less of a problem than Grice’s maxim “avoid ambiguity” would have us expect. Only in very specific settings does ambiguity make its way from the language system all the way to discourse.

Based on theoretical considerations as well as the examples from literary texts that I studied, I have identified four potential uses of ambiguity in context: as potential ambiguity that does not become functional (type 1), as unresolved ambiguity (type 2), as ambiguity which is perceived retrospectively and leads to reanalysis (type 3), or as the contrasting of two readings (type 4). The specific setting of children’s literature – with young readers (or listeners) who have just started to learn idiomatic readings as well as older readers – made me expect that all four types of use of ambiguous idioms occur there. The exemplary analyses have shown that this is the case. In these texts, contexts are created that playfully exploit the ambiguity of idioms, using it as a productive literary force and, thus, raising awareness for the potential double meanings of specific language structures.

This exploration of the ambiguity of idioms may be characteristic for some texts from children’s literature. However, this kind of ambiguity use is limited neither to idioms nor to children’s literature. Any form of ambiguity which relies on an ambiguity potential based in the language system will show the same types of use in context, and a large variety of context types will employ this potential, e.g. comedy<sup>135</sup>, comics<sup>136</sup> or, as mentioned above, jokes. In general, all contexts where there is more than one level of communication seem to be especially likely to do so, as the doubling of the communicative situation may lead

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135 Cf. e.g. waw190066 and waw190067.

136 Cf. e.g. waw190069.

to a doubling of the ambiguity experience, and differences in the type of ambiguity use between the communication levels will heighten the ambiguity awareness for those on the outer communication level(s).

The detailed analyses of a variety of examples on the basis of TInCAP have shown the advantages of using a specialized corpus. Combining the possibilities of annotation with the search functions allows for the systematic testing of hypotheses, reveals similarities, and visualizes patterns. The phenomena that have thus been revealed and visualized within one project show the potential of TInCAP: By allowing for an easy comparison with and the incorporation of examples from other projects and disciplines, TInCAP furthermore goes beyond the usual disciplinary boundaries and enables generalizations across all disciplines involved in the corpus.

This dissertation is a first step towards a larger investigation. Within this context, the analyses are exemplary by necessity, as the goal was to develop a theoretical foundation. From here on, the study of ambiguous idioms in context may be expanded in three directions: Corpus extension, adaptation of TInCAP, and experimental investigation.

The corpus needs to be extended in three steps. Firstly, the corpus of examples from children's literature should be built up further to allow for a statistically valid evaluation of the results. Secondly, the corpus should be supplemented by other literary texts, as it is to be expected that the same or at least similar structures are found in texts for grown-ups. However, it should then also be investigated whether the effects are the same as well. If, in a further step, the corpus is extended to non-fictional texts, the effect of fictionality on these specific forms of language play can be evaluated. Lastly, the corpus should not only be extended with regard to text types, but also with regard to ambiguity types. As stated above, I expect the same forms of usage for all ambiguities that rely on an ambiguity potential based in the language system. Thus, including other forms of phrasal language as well as homonyms and polysemes into the corpus will significantly broaden the picture of ambiguity use in context.

In order to successfully carry out a larger study like that, a few additions to the TInCAP annotation scheme are necessary. Firstly, a detailed modeling of the perception of ambiguity is required. We need to be able to analyze and depict which reading is perceived (my category ORDER OF PERCEPTION). The various possible ORDERS may be subsumed under the four TYPES I identified. Secondly, a more fine-grained differentiation of the annotation for producer (P) and perceiver (R) goes hand in hand with the first feature: it is necessary to mark the ORDER OF PERCEPTION separately for P and R, as they do not always share the

same readings – and even if they do, they may perceive them at different moments. Thirdly, a possibility of annotating relevant context features should be provided. This enables researchers to gain insight into which aspects of context most likely influence ambiguity perception as well as which aspects of context interact with each other. Lastly, these additions to TInCAP will need to be complemented by the corresponding search functions, so that the annotated information may be retrieved as well. This will then allow for statistical analysis and evaluation.

As a final expansion, psycholinguistic evidence to complement the theoretical considerations is desirable. The insights gained by this study and its extension may help to design experiments with larger, more complex contexts. Furthermore, it will demonstrate how fruitful interdisciplinary research can be, which is an encouragement to further think and work in this direction.

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# Appendix: Corpus

For the following collection of examples each TInCAP annotation is given in table format, including CHANGES OF COMMUNICATION LEVEL. This collection does not give all the information that has been entered in TInCAP, only the information directly relevant for this thesis has been included here. The TInCAP-ID is provided, which allows easy retrieval of the complete annotations via the web interface of TInCAP 1.0 at [tincap.uni-tuebingen.de](https://tincap.uni-tuebingen.de). Furthermore, the data has been exported in XML-format and may be downloaded at <https://hdl.handle.net/11022/0000-0007-E7DF-A>.

The examples are sorted by type of ambiguity use in context. The RELEVANT PART is marked in bold. All examples that show different ambiguity uses on different communication levels (as apparent in the table) appear twice, within each relevant category. If there is more than one ambiguity within one example (ADDITIONAL AMBIGUITY), this is indicated underneath the table with ⇔, referring to the title and ID of the example and to the category the additional example appears in, as well. CONNECTED ENTRIES are indicated in the same way.

Most, but not all, of the following examples include idiomatic or phrasal ambiguities. Those that do not nevertheless show patterns similar to the ones analyzed in this study. They are a first step towards expanding the corpus.



## Type 1: Unambiguous Use

### be attached (waw190001)

“I just came across it in the Forest. It was hanging over a bush, [...] and as nobody seemed to want it, I took it home, and –”

“Owl,” said Pooh solemnly, “you made a mistake. Somebody did want it.”

“Who?”

“Eeyore. My dear friend Eeyore. He was – he was fond of it.”

“Fond of it?”

“**Attached to it**,” said Winnie-the-Pooh sadly.

So with these words he unhooked it, and carried it back to Eeyore; and when Christopher Robin had nailed it on its right place again, Eeyore frisked about the forest, waving his tail so happily that Winnie-the-Pooh came over all funny, and had to hurry home for a little snack of something to sustain him.

(Milne 1926, 59-61)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190001</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190001</i>
Relevant Part	attached to it	attached to it
Paraphrase 1	fond of it [phrasal]	fond of it [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	connected with it [compositional]	connected with it [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language	figurative language
Type	1: unambiguous use	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1?	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2
Context	linguistic context (salience, meta-language); sociocultural context	linguistic context (salience, meta-language); cognitive context (coherence); non-linguistic co-text (illustration)
Connection	change of communication level	

### be it on your own head (waw190004)

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.

Sir Nobonk had been in many wars. Usually [...]

(Milligan 1982, Ch. 1)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190004</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190004</i>
Relevant Part	be it on your own head	be it on your own head
Paraphrase 1	you have to take full responsibility for what you plan to do [phrasal]	you have to take full responsibility for what you plan to do [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	you have to strap the licence to your head [compositional]	you have to strap the licence to your head [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par2? R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; sociocultural context (characters)
Connection	change of communication level	

### blame the times (waw190077)

Captain Angua shook her head. “Sorry Miss, but it’s true. Turned out to be a book of Clatchian poetry, you know. All that wiggly writing! I suppose it looks like a spell book for those inclined to think that way. She died.” “**I blame ‘The Times’**”, said Mrs Proust. “When they put that sort of thing in the paper, it gives people ideas.” Angua shrugged. “From what I hear the people who did it weren’t much for reading.” “You’ve got to stop it!” said Tiffany. “How, Miss? We are the ‘City Watch’. We don’t have any real jurisdiction outside the walls.”

(Pratchett 2010, 138)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190077</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190077</i>
Relevant Part	blame the times	blame the times
Paraphrase 1	it's the fault of the current state of affairs	it's the fault of the current state of affairs
Paraphrase 2	it's the fault of a newspaper called "The Times"	it's the fault of a newspaper called "The Times"
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; formulaic language; polysemy	figurative language; formulaic language; polysemy
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par2 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par2
Context	sociocultural context; cognitive context	cognitive context; linguistic context (metalinguistic strategies)
Connection	change of communication level	

### bury the hatchet (waw190055)

"Did you even come to the match?" he [Harry] asked her. "Of course I did", said Hermione in a strangely high-pitched voice, not looking up. "And I'm very glad we won! And I think you did really well, but I need to read this by Monday."

"Come on Hermione, come and have some food", Harry said, looking over at Ron and wondering whether he was in a good enough mood to **bury the hatchet**. "I can't Harry, I've still got 422 pages to read", said Hermione, now sounding slightly hysterical. "Anyway", she glanced over at Ron, too. "He doesn't want me to join in."

(Rowling 1999, Ch. 13)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190055</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190055</i>
Relevant Part	bury the hatchet	bury the hatchet
Paraphrase 1	stop fighting [phrasal]	stop fighting [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	put the hatchet into the ground [compositional]	put the hatchet into the ground [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190055</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190055</i></b>
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	social context (salience); linguistic context (language knowledge)	social context (salience); linguistic context (language knowledge)
Connection	change of communication level	

### **change the towels (waw190045)**

Amelia Bedelia read, *Change the towels in the green bathroom.*

Amelia Bedelia found the green bathroom. “These towels are very nice. Why change them?” she thought. Then Amelia Bedelia remembered what Mrs. Rogers had said. She must do just what the list told her. “Well, all right,” said Amelia Bedelia.

Amelia Bedelia got some scissors. She snipped a little here and a little there. And she changed those towels.

(Parish 1963, 7f)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190045</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190045</i></b>
Relevant Part	change the towels	change the towels
Paraphrase 1	substitute the towels for fresh ones	substitute the towels for fresh ones
Paraphrase 2	alter the towels	alter the towels
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; formulaic language; polysemy	collocation; formulaic language; polysemy
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190045</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190045</i>
Context	sociocultural context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “change the towels (waw190078)”, Type 1 and 3

### change the towels (waw190078)

Mr. Rogers went to wash his hands.

“I say,” he called. “These are very unusual towels.”

Mrs. Rogers dashed into the bathroom.

“Oh, my best **towels**,” she said.

“Didn’t I **change** them enough?” asked Amelia Bedelia

(Parish 1963, 22)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190078</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190078</i>
Relevant Part	change the towels	change the towels
Paraphrase 1	substitute the towels for fresh ones	substitute the towels for fresh ones
Paraphrase 2	alter the towels	alter the towels
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex	complex
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; formulaic language; polysemy	collocation; formulaic language; polysemy
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par2 R: Par1	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par2→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context; non-linguistic context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “change the towels (waw190045)”, Type 1 and 3

**chewing the fat (waw190057)**

London! Damn and blast! I'd completely forgotten. Today was the day I was supposed to have gone up to the City with Father to be fitted for braces. No wonder he was peeved. While I was relishing death in the churchyard and **chewing the fat** with Nialla and the vicar, Father had almost certainly been steaming and fuming round the house like an over-stoked destroyer. I had the feeling I hadn't heard the last of it.

(Bradley 2010, Ch. 5)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190057</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190057</i></b>
Relevant Part	chewing the fat	chewing the fat
Paraphrase 1	chatting [phrasal]	chatting [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	grinding the fat with one's teeth [compositional]	grinding the fat with one's teeth [compositional]
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: ---	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge)	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge)
Connection	change of communication level	

**our geeses will be cooked (waw190089)**

"Yes, his name is Dieter," I told him. "He meant Thomas Hardy."

Gil scratched his head.

"Hardy? Don't know him. From around here, is he?"

"He's an author."

Like any bookworm's sister, I knew the titles of a million books I hadn't read.

"Ah!" he said, as if that settled it. "You'd better scramble down now. If the chief sees you up here, both **our geeses will be cooked.**"

"Geese," I said. "Latshaw, you mean?"

“Yes, that’s right,” he said quietly. “Geese,” and turned his attention to a box of colored filters.

I had nearly reached the bottom of the ladder when I became aware of a face too close for comfort. I jumped to the floor and twisted round to find myself standing almost on Latshaw’s toes.

(Bradley 2011b, Ch. 9)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190089</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190089</i>
Relevant Part	our geese will be cooked	our geese will be cooked
Paraphrase 1	we will be ruined [phrasal]	we will be ruined [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	our geese will be prepared to be heated [compositional]	our geese will be prepared to be heated [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge)	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge)
Connection	change of communication level	

### cool one’s heels (waw190056)

*She must have been desperate*, I decided. Yes, that was it. There wasn’t a woman on earth who would choose such an unwelcoming spot (‘wretchedly insalubrious’ Daffy would have called it) unless she had no other choice. The reasons were numerous, but the one that leapt immediately to mind was one I had recently come across in the pages of the *Australian Women’s Weekly* while **cooling my heels** in the outer chamber of a dentist’s surgery in Farington Street. ‘Ten early signs of a blessed event’, the article had been called, and the need for frequent urination had been near the top of the list.

(Bradley 2010, Ch. 5)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190056</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190056</i></b>
Relevant Part	cooling my heels	cooling my heels
Paraphrase 1	waiting [phrasal]	waiting [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	lowering the temperature of my heels [compositional]	lowering the temperature of my heels [compositional]
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: ---	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	social context (salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (salience)	social context (salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (salience)
Connection	change of communication level	

### **crack a smile (waw190090)**

There were only three of them in potions that afternoon, Harry, Ernie and Draco Malfoy. “All too young to apparate just yet?” said Slughorn genially. “Not turned 17?” They shook their heads. “Ooh, well” said Slughorn cheerily. “As we are so few we’ll do something fun. I want you all to brew me up something amusing.” “That sounds good, Sir” said Ernie sycophantically, rubbing his hands together. Malfoy on the other hand did not **crack a smile**. “What do you mean, something amusing?” he said irritably. “Ooooh, surprise me” said Slughorn eerily. Malfoy opened his copy of Advanced Potion-Making with a sulky expression.

(Rowling 2005, Ch. 22)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190090</i></b>
Relevant Part	not crack a smile
Paraphrase 1	refrain from smiling [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	not break a smile [compositional]
Comm. Level	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element
Range	complex element



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**Annotation 1, *i1waw190090***


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Relation	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge)

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**dead on one's feet (waw190006)**

We stalked out of the windmill, Tim leaving white footprints behind him. The sails were still turning slowly behind us.

In the last twelve hours we'd been machine-gunned through a cornfield and stitched up by a vet. We'd found Charon's headquarters and we'd come infuriatingly close to seeing Charon. We'd stolen Mr Waverly's cheque and we'd almost been shot getting away with it.

And now we were **dead on our feet**. We needed a bath and a long, long sleep. Because you had to admit – both of us had been through the mill.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 11)

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**Annotation 2, *i2 waw190006***


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Relevant Part	dead on our feet
Paraphrase 1	We were really, really tired and exhausted [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	We were dead and still standing [compositional]
Comm. Level	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element
Range	complex element
Relation	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	social context (salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (salience)

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⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “get away with s.th. (waw190006)”, Type 2

⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “through the mill (waw190006)”, Type 2

**draw the drapes (waw190065)**

*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.

(Parish 1963, 11f)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190065</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190065</i>
Relevant Part	draw the drapes	draw the drapes
Paraphrase 1	pull the drapes over the window	pull the drapes over the window
Paraphrase 2	make a picture of the drapes	make a picture of the drapes
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; figurative language; formulaic language	collocation; figurative language; formulaic language
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context	cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “draw the drapes (waw190013)”, Type 1 and 3

**draw the drapes (waw190013)**

“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.

(Parish 1963, 20)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190013</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190013</i></b>
Relevant Part	draw the drapes	draw the drapes
Paraphrase 1	pull the drapes over the window	pull the drapes over the window
Paraphrase 2	make a picture of the drapes	make a picture of the drapes
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex	complex
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; figurative language; formulaic language	collocation; figurative language; formulaic language
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1→Par1+Par2 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context; non-linguistic context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “draw the drapes (waw190065)”, Type 1 and 3

### **draw the drapes (waw190028)**

Feely sprang to her feet, and came floating across the drawing room to greet Dieter, hands outstretched, palms down, as if she were walking in her sleep. She was radiant, the vixen!

I was praying she'd trip on the rug.

“**Draw the drapes**, please, Dogger,” Father said, and as Dogger complied, the light vanished from the room and left all of us sitting together in the gloom.

(Bradley 2010, Ch. 29)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190028</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190028</i></b>
Relevant Part	draw the drapes	draw the drapes
Paraphrase 1	pull the drapes over the window	pull the drapes over the window
Paraphrase 2	make a picture of the drapes	make a picture of the drapes
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190028</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190028</i>
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; figurative language; formulaic language	collocation; figurative language; formulaic language
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	linguistic context (collocation); social context; sociocultural context	linguistic context (collocation); social context; sociocultural context
Connection	change of communication level	

### draw the drapes (waw190071)

I could easily slip back for another look before the police turned up. And if they *did* arrive while I was at the scene, I'd tell them that I'd been waiting for them; keeping an eye on Brookie, making sure that nothing was touched. And so forth. "You look exhausted," I said, turning to Porcelain.

Her eyelids were already flickering as I **drew the drapes**.

"Sleep tight," I said, but I don't think she heard me.

The doorbell rang as I came down the stairs. Rats! Just when I thought I was alone. I counted to ten and opened the door – just as the bell rang again.

(Bradley 2011a, Ch. 9)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190071</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190071</i>
Relevant Part	drew the drapes	drew the drapes
Paraphrase 1	pulled the drapes over the window	pulled the drapes over the window
Paraphrase 2	made a picture of the drapes	made a picture of the drapes
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; figurative language; formulaic language	collocation; figurative language; formulaic language
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1	P: Par1 R: Par1

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190071</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190071</i>
Context	linguistic context (collocation); social context; sociocultural context	linguistic context (collocation); social context; sociocultural context
Connection	change of communication level	

### dress the chicken (waw190009)

*The meat market will deliver a steak and a chicken. Please trim the fat before you put the steak in the icebox. And please **dress the chicken**.*

When the meat arrived, Amelia Bedelia opened the bag. She looked at the steak for a long time. “Yes,” she said. “That will do nicely.”

Amelia Bedelia got some lace and bits of ribbon. And Amelia Bedelia trimmed that fat before she put the steak in the icebox.

“Now I must dress the chicken. I wonder if she wants a he chicken or a she chicken?” said Amelia Bedelia. Amelia Bedelia went right to work. Soon the chicken was finished.

(Parish 1963, 17f)

	Annotation 3, <i>i3waw190009</i>	Annotation 4, <i>i4waw190009</i>
Relevant Part	dress the chicken	dress the chicken
Paraphrase 1	prepare the chicken to be cooked	prepare the chicken to be cooked
Paraphrase 2	put clothes on the chicken	put clothes on the chicken
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; formulaic language	collocation; formulaic language
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “trim the fat (waw190009)”, Type 1 and 3

⇒ Connected Entry: “dressed the chicken (waw190079)”, Type 3

**dust the furniture (waw190046)**

She looked at her list again. *Dust the furniture.*

“Did you ever hear of such a silly thing. At my house we undust the furniture. But to each his own way.”

Amelia Bedelia took one last look at the bathroom. She saw a big box with the words Dusting Powder on it. “Well, look at that. A special powder to dust with!” exclaimed Amelia Bedelia.

So Amelia Bedelia dusted the furniture. “That should be dusty enough. My, how nice it smells.”

(Parish 1963, 9f)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190046</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190046</i>
Relevant Part	dust the furniture	dust the furniture
Paraphrase 1	remove the dust from the furniture	remove the dust from the furniture
Paraphrase 2	put dust on the furniture	put dust on the furniture
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; formulaic language; underspecification	collocation; formulaic language; underspecification
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “dust the furniture (waw190080)”, Type 3

**feather in your hat (waw190025)**

*[Matilda has glued her father’s hat on with superglue.]*

The father glared at his daughter with deep suspicion, but said nothing. How could he? Mrs Wormwood said to him, “It must be Superglue. It couldn’t be anything else. That’ll teach you to go playing round with nasty stuff like that. I expect you were trying to stick another **feather in your hat.**” “I haven’t touched the

flaming stuff!” Mr Wormwood shouted. He turned and looked again at Matilda who looked back at him with large innocent brown eyes. Mrs Wormwood said to him, “You should read the label on the tube before you start messing with dangerous products. Always follow the instructions on the label.”

(Dahl 1988, Ch. 3)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190025</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190025</i>
Relevant Part	another feather in your hat	another feather in your hat
Paraphrase 1	another mark of honour [phrasal]	another mark of honour [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	another appendage of a bird stuck to your hat [compositional]	another appendage of a bird stuck to your hat [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par2 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context; cognitive context	sociocultural context (characters); linguistic context; cognitive context
Connection	change of communication level	

### **gild the lily (waw190091)**

“One last point,” the inspector said, rubbing his nose. “Perhaps you’d be good enough to clear up one small question that has rather eluded me.”

“I’ll do my best, inspector,” I said.

“Why on earth did Colin hang Brookie from the fountain? Why not leave him where he was?”

“They had struggled for the lobster pick inside the base of the fountain when Colin let go of the thing suddenly, Brookie’s own force caused him to stab himself in the nostril. It was an accident, of course.”

Although this was the way Colin had told it to me, I must confess to **gilding the lily** more than a little for the Inspector’s benefit. I no more believed Colin’s version of the story than I believed that dray horses can fly. Brookie’s death, in my

estimation, was Colin’s revenge for years of abuse. It was murder, pure and simple.

(Bradley 2011a, Ch. 30)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190091</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190091</i></b>
Relevant Part	gilding the lily	gilding the lily
Paraphrase 1	embellishing unnecessarily [phrasal]	embellishing unnecessarily [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	covering the lily with gold [compositional]	covering the lily with gold [compositional]
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: ---	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge)	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge)
Connection	change of communication level	

### **keep an eye on (waw190092)**

Down the hall I crept on tiptoe, taking great care to avoid the squeaky floorboard in front of the nook. I put my hand on the knob of Angels – and threw open the door.

Undine was standing on the laboratory stool, the oilcloth wallet in her hand. She had fished it out of its hiding place behind the baggy wallpaper.

“You lied to me,” she said, wide-eyed with indignation. “You told me you were watering plants.”

I have to give the girl credit. Not only had she found the hidden wallet, but she had manufactured a remarkably good response when I caught her red-handed. It was exactly the kind of thing I might have thought of myself. Someday I might even tell her that – but not now.

I marched smartly across the room and snatched the packet from her hands. “You little beast!” I said. “Is this how you repay kindness?”

“You crept up on me,” Undine pouted. “Ibu said you were devious.”



“Ibu did, did she? Did she say anything else?”

“Yes. She told me to **keep an eye on you.**”

Keep an eye on me! That was the last straw.

“Tell me something, Undine,” I said. “Do you know how to say ‘buzz off’ in Malay?”

“Berambus.”

“Excellent! Berambus!”

“Are you dismissing me?” she asked.

“You’re a very perceptive child,” I said, shoving her out the door. “Now tallyho, and don’t come back.”

(Bradley 2014, Ch. 22)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190092</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190092</i>
Relevant Part	keep an eye on you	keep an eye on you
Paraphrase 1	carefully observe you [phrasal]	carefully observe you [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	put an eye on you and keep it there [compositional]	put an eye on you and keep it there [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge)	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “last straw (waw190092)”, Type 1

### kick the bucket (waw190093)

“You don’t know what you’re talking about!” said Ron, starting to get angry. “Grim scare the living daylights out of most wizards.”

“There you are then” said Hermione in a superior tone. “They see the grim and die of fright. The grim’s not an omen, it’s the cause of death, and Harry’s still with

us because he’s not stupid enough to see one and think ‘right, well, I better **kick the bucket** then.’”

Ron mouthed wordlessly at Hermione who opened her bag, took out her new arithmancy book and propped it open against the juice jug.

(Rowling 1999, Ch. 6)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190093</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190093</i></b>
Relevant Part	kick the bucket	kick the bucket
Paraphrase 1	die [phrasal]	die [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	strike the bucket with the foot [compositional]	strike the bucket with the foot [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge)	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge)
Connection	change of communication level	

### **last straw (waw190092)**

Down the hall I crept on tiptoe, taking great care to avoid the squeaky floorboard in front of the nook. I put my hand on the knob of Angels – and threw open the door.

Undine was standing on the laboratory stool, the oilcloth wallet in her hand. She had fished it out of its hiding place behind the baggy wallpaper.

“You lied to me,” she said, wide-eyed with indignation. “You told me you were watering plants.”

I have to give the girl credit. Not only had she found the hidden wallet, but she had manufactured a remarkably good response when I caught her red-handed. It was exactly the kind of thing I might have thought of myself. Someday I might even tell her that – but not now.

I marched smartly across the room and snatched the packet from her hands. “You little beast!” I said. “Is this how you repay kindness?”

“You crept up on me,” Undine pouted. “Ibu said you were devious.”

“Ibu did, did she? Did she say anything else?”

“Yes. She told me to keep an eye on you.”

Keep an eye on me! **That was the last straw.**

“Tell me something, Undine,” I said. “Do you know how to say ‘buzz off’ in Malay?”

“Berambus.”

“Excellent! Berambus!”

“Are you dismissing me?” she asked.

“You’re a very perceptive child,” I said, shoving her out the door. “Now tallyho, and don’t come back.”

(Bradley 2014, Ch. 22)

	<b>Annotation 3, <i>i3waw190092</i></b>	<b>Annotation 4, <i>i4waw190092</i></b>
Relevant Part	the last straw	the last straw
Paraphrase 1	the final irritation or problem that stretches one’s endurance or patience beyond the limit [phrasal]	the final irritation or problem that stretches one’s endurance or patience beyond the limit [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	the single straw that is left [compositional]	the single straw that is left [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	linguistic context (saliency); social context (saliency); sociocultural context	linguistic context (saliency); social context (saliency); sociocultural context
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “keep an eye on s.o. (waw190092)”, Type 1

**last straw (waw190062)**

The wind ripped at my hair and tore at my thin autumn coat. I inhaled the salt air as deeply as I dared, the sea spray running in torrents down my face.

A hand seized my arm roughly.

“What the devil do you think you’re doing?”

I spun round, startled, trying to wriggle free.

It was, of course, Ryerson Rainsmith.

“What the devil do you think you’re doing?” he repeated. He was one of those people who thought that the secret of gaining the upper hand was to ask every question twice.

The best way of dealing with them is not to answer.

“I’ve been looking everywhere for you. Dorsey is beside herself with worry.”

“Does that mean there are now two of her to put up with?” I wanted to ask, but I didn’t.

With a name like Dorsey it was no wonder he called her “Dodo” – or at least he did whenever he thought they were alone.

“We were afraid you’d fallen overboard. Now come below at once. Go to your cabin and put on some dry clothing. You look like a drowned rat.”

That did it. It was **the last straw**.

Ryerson Rainsmith, I thought, your days – your very hours – are numbered.

(Bradley 2015, Ch. 1)

	<b>Annotation 3, <i>i3waw190062</i></b>	<b>Annotation 4, <i>i4waw190062</i></b>
Relevant Part	the last straw	the last straw
Paraphrase 1	the final irritation or problem that stretches one’s endurance or patience beyond the limit [phrasal]	the final irritation or problem that stretches one’s endurance or patience beyond the limit [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	the single straw that is left [compositional]	the single straw that is left [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: ?	P: Par1 R: Par1

	Annotation 3, <i>i3waw190062</i>	Annotation 4, <i>i4waw190062</i>
Context	linguistic context (saliency); social context (saliency); sociocultural context	linguistic context (saliency); social context (saliency); sociocultural context
Connection	change of communication level	
⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “beside herself (waw190062)”, Type 3		

### let the cat out of the bag (waw190094)

The vicar was silent for a long moment – and then he chuckled. “You’re having a game with me,” he said. “I remember distinctly officiating at your baptism. Flavia Sabina de Luce was the name we bestowed upon you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, amen, and Flavia Sabina de Luce you shall remain – until such time, of course, as you choose to change it by entering into a state of Holy Matrimony, like your sister Ophelia.”

My jaw fell open like a bread box.

“Feely?”

“Oh, dear,” the vicar said. “I’m afraid I’ve **let the cat out of the bag.**”

Feely? My sister, Feely? Entering into a state of Holy Matrimony?

I could scarcely believe it!

(Bradley 2013, Ch. 3)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190094</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190094</i>
Relevant Part	let the cat out of the bag	let the cat out of the bag
Paraphrase 1	disclose a guarded secret [phrasal]	disclose a guarded secret [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	release the cat [compositional]	release the cat [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	linguistic context (co-text, language knowledge); cognitive context	linguistic context (co-text, language knowledge); cognitive context
Connection	change of communication level	

**measure two cups of rice (waw190047)*****Measure two cups of rice.***

“That’s next,” said Amelia Bedelia. Amelia Bedelia found two cups. She filled them with rice. And Amelia Bedelia measured that rice. Amelia Bedelia laughed. “These folks do want me to do funny things.”

Then she poured the rice back into the container.

(Parish 1963, 15f)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190047</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190047</i></b>
Relevant Part	measure two cups of rice	measure two cups of rice
Paraphrase 1	apportion two cups of rice	apportion two cups of rice
Paraphrase 2	measure the height of two cups of rice	measure the height of two cups of rice
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; polysemy	collocation; polysemy
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “measure rice (waw190083)”, Type 1 and 3

**measure rice (waw190083)**

Mrs. Rogers went to the kitchen.

“I’ll cook the dinner.

Where is the **rice** I asked you to **measure**?”

“I put it back in the container.

But I remember – it measured four and a half inches,”  
said Amelia Bedelia.

(Parish 1963, 23)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190083</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190083</i></b>
Relevant Part	measure (two cups of) rice	measure (two cups of) rice
Paraphrase 1	apportion (two cups of) rice	apportion (two cups of) rice
Paraphrase 2	measure the height of (two cups of) rice	measure the height of (two cups of) rice
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex	complex
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; polysemy	collocation; polysemy
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context; cognitive context; non-linguistic context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “measure two cups of rice (waw190047)”, Type 1 and 3

### **on your own head be it (waw190019)**

“Leave your trunk and your owl, Alastor’s going to deal with the luggage ... oh, for heaven’s sake, Sirius, Dumbledore said no!”

A bear-like black dog had appeared at Harry’s side as he was clambering over the various chunks cluttering the hall to get to Mrs Weasley.

“Oh honestly ...” said Mrs Weasley despairingly. “Well, **on your own head be it!**”

She wrenched open the front door and stepped out into the weak September sunlight. Harry and the dog followed her. The door slammed behind them and Mrs Black’s screeches were cut off instantly.

(Rowling 2003, Ch. 10)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190019</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190019</i></b>
Relevant Part	on your own head be it	on your own head be it
Paraphrase 1	you have to take full responsibility for what you plan to do [phrasal]	you have to take full responsibility for what you plan to do [phrasal]

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190019</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190019</i>
Paraphrase 2	it has to be on your own head [compositional]	it has to be on your own head [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	social context (salience); cognitive context (priming); linguistic context (language knowledge)	social context (salience); cognitive context (priming); linguistic context (language knowledge)
Connection	change of communication level	

### **pull s.o.'s leg (waw190003)**

My grandmother was tremendously old and wrinkled, with a massive wide body which was smothered in grey lace. She sat there majestic in her armchair, filling every inch of it. Not even a mouse could have squeezed in to sit beside her. I myself, just seven years old, was crouched on the floor at her feet, wearing pyjamas, dressing-gown and slippers.

“You swear you aren’t **pulling my leg**?” I kept saying to her. “You swear you aren’t just pretending?”

(Dahl 1983, Ch. 2)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190003</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190003</i>
Relevant Part	pulling my leg	pulling my leg
Paraphrase 1	deceiving me humorously or playfully, teasing me [phrasal]	deceiving me humorously or playfully, teasing me [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	tugging on my leg [compositional]	tugging on my leg [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	unrelated	unrelated



	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190003</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190003</i>
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	social context (salience, frequency); sociocultural context; cognitive con- text (coherence)	social context (salience, frequency); cognitive context (coherence); soci- ocultural context (characters); linguis- tic context (meta-language)
Connection	change of communication level	

### **pull s.o.'s leg (waw190070)**

Collingwood looked over both shoulders before replying. “People disappear,” she whispered, pinching her fingertips together and then, like a magician, with a quick gesture, causing them to fly open to reveal an empty hand. “Poof! Just like that. Without a trace.”

“You’re **pulling my leg**,” I said.

“Am I?” she asked, her eyes huge and damp. “Then what about Le Marchand? What about Wentworth? What about Brazenose?”

“Surely they can’t all have vanished without a trace,” I said. “Someone would have noticed.”

(Bradley 2015, Ch. 2)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190070</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190070</i>
Relevant Part	pulling my leg	pulling my leg
Paraphrase 1	deceiving me humorously or play- fully, teasing me [phrasal]	deceiving me humorously or play- fully, teasing me [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	tugging on my leg [compositional]	tugging on my leg [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1	P: Par1 R: Par1

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190070</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190070</i>
Context	social context (salience, frequency); sociocultural context; cognitive context (coherence)	social context (salience, frequency); cognitive context (coherence); sociocultural context (characters); linguistic context
Connection	change of communication level	

### put the lights out (waw190007)

**Put the lights out** when you finish in the living room. Amelia Bedelia thought about this a minute. She switched off the lights. Then she carefully unscrewed each bulb.

And Amelia Bedelia put the lights out. “So those things need to be aired out, too. Just like pillows and babies. Oh, I do have a lot to learn.”

(Parish 1963, 13f)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190007</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190007</i>
Relevant Part	put the lights out	put the lights out
Paraphrase 1	extinguish the lights [phrasal]	extinguish the lights [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	bring the lightbulbs outside [compositional]	bring the lightbulbs outside [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; metonymy; phrasal verb	collocation; metonymy; phrasal verb
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “put the lights out (waw190081)”, Type 3

**safe as houses (waw190096)**

In the foyer, Dogger was atop a tall orchard ladder, hanging a branch of holly from one of the archways.

“Mind the ilicin,” I called up to him. “Don’t lick your fingers.”

It was a joke, of course. There was once thought to be enough of the glycoside in a couple of handfuls of the red berries to be fatal, but handling the leaves was actually as **safe as houses**.

Dogger raised an elbow and looked down at me through the crook of his arm.

“Thank you, Miss Flavia,” he said. “I shall be most careful.”

(Bradley 2011b, Ch. 8)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190096</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190096</i></b>
Relevant Part	safe as houses	safe as houses
Paraphrase 1	completely safe and secure [phrasal]	completely safe and secure [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	as safe as houses are [compositional]	as safe as houses are [compositional]
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: ---	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge)	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge)
Connection	change of communication level	

**simmer down (waw190020)**

Then suddenly he struck again. Perhaps he had had a bad day at the garage and had not sold enough crummy second-hand cars. There are many things that make a man irritable when he arrives home from work in the evening and a sensible wife will usually notice the storm-signals and will leave him alone until he **simmers down**.

When Mr Wormwood arrived back from the garage that evening his face was as dark as a thundercloud and somebody was clearly for the high-jump pretty soon. His wife recognised the signs immediately and made herself scarce.

(Dahl 1988, Ch. 4)

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**Annotation 1, *i1waw190020***

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Relevant Part	simmer down
Paraphrase 1	calm down from an angry or excited state
Paraphrase 2	stop cooking, decreasing temperature
Comm. Level	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element
Range	complex element
Relation	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	cognitive context (coherence); social context (cultural knowledge); sociocultural context (character)

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**spill the beans (waw190097)**

As a well-known puppeteer, Rupert couldn't afford to have his name linked in any way with the death of a child. He needed to erase himself from the scene of Robin's death. No one but Grace knew he had been at the farm that day.

That's why he threatened her. He told her that if she didn't do as he wanted, he would **spill the beans** to Gordon – sorry, I mean that he would inform Gordon that he'd been carrying on an affair with his wife.

(Bradley 2010, Ch. 28)

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**Annotation 1, *i1waw190097***

**Annotation 2, *i2waw190097***

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190097</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190097</i></b>
Relevant Part	spill the beans	spill the beans
Paraphrase 1	reveal the secret [phrasal]	reveal the secret [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	cause the beans to pour out and be wasted [compositional]	cause the beans to pour out and be wasted [compositional]
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>

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	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190097</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190097</i>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: ---	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge, meta-language)	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge, meta-language)
Connection	change of communication level	

### spill the beans (*waw190098*)

Would I ever be able to solve this complex tangle of puzzles?

One thing was immediately clear: I needed to know more – much, much more – about the Hobbler, and it was clear that no Hobbler of my immediate acquaintance was going to make my life easier by **spilling the beans**.

*[chapter ends here]*

(Bradley 2011a, Ch. 20)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190098</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190098</i>
Relevant Part	spilling the beans	spilling the beans
Paraphrase 1	revealing the secret [phrasal]	revealing the secret [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	causing the beans to pour out and be wasted [compositional]	causing the beans to pour out and be wasted [compositional]
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: ---	P: Par1 R: Par1

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190098</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190098</i>
Context	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge)	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge)
Connection	change of communication level	

### spill the beans (waw190099)

“I can think of only one person,” I said.

“And who might that be?”

“I’m afraid I can’t tell you.”

“So much for trust,” she said in a flat voice.

“So much for trust.”

It hurt me to cut her off in that way, but I had my reasons, one of which was that she might be forced to **spill the beans** to Inspector Hewitt. I couldn’t have anyone interfering when I was so close to a solution.

(Bradley 2011a, Ch. 27)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190099</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190099</i>
Relevant Part	spill the beans	spill the beans
Paraphrase 1	reveal the secret [phrasal]	reveal the secret [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	cause the beans to pour out and be wasted [compositional]	cause the beans to pour out and be wasted [compositional]
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: ---	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge)	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge)
Connection	change of communication level	

**straw that broke the camel's back (waw190100)**

I shot a quick glance behind me as I switched on the electric light, and the room was bathed in a harsh glare.

“No lights!” Miss Fawlthorne said, reaching past my face and switching them off again instantly. “‘Lights-out’ means lights out, you stupid girl.”

That did it. As with Ryerson Rainsmith’s calling me a drowned rat, it was the **straw that broke the camel's back**. A week away from home and my list of people to poison was already up to two – three if you counted the insipid Dodo.

(Bradley 2015, Ch. 2)

waw190100	Annotation 1	Annotation 2
Relevant Part	straw that broke the camel's back	straw that broke the camel's back
Paraphrase 1	the final irritation or problem that stretched my endurance or patience beyond the limit [phrasal]	the final irritation or problem that stretched my endurance or patience beyond the limit [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	the single straw that caused the camel's back to break [compositional]	the single straw that caused the camel's back to break [compositional]
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	complex element
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	1: unambiguous use
Order	P: Par1 R: ---	P: Par1 R: Par1
Context	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge)	social context (cultural knowledge, salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge)
Connection	change of communication level	

**take s.o. to (waw190034)**

“So tell me, Timothy,” she said. “**What takes you to Dover?**”

“Well ... the train does,” Tim replied. As brilliant as ever.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 8)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190034</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190034</i></b>
Relevant Part	what takes you to	what takes you to
Paraphrase 1	why are you going to	why are you going to
Paraphrase 2	what kind of transport takes you to	what kind of transport takes you to
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; formulaic language	figurative language; formulaic language
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context; cognitive context; non-linguistic context	linguistic context; cognitive context; sociocultural context (characters)
Connection	change of communication level	

### **trim the fat (waw190009)**

*The meat market will deliver a steak and a chicken. Please **trim the fat** before you put the steak in the icebox. And please dress the chicken.*

When the meat arrived, Amelia Bedelia opened the bag. She looked at the steak for a long time. “Yes,” she said. “That will do nicely.”

Amelia Bedelia got some lace and bits of ribbon. And Amelia Bedelia trimmed that fat before she put the steak in the icebox.

“Now I must dress the chicken. I wonder if she wants a he chicken or a she chicken?” said Amelia Bedelia. Amelia Bedelia went right to work. Soon the chicken was finished.

(Parish 1963, 17f)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190009</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190009</i></b>
Relevant Part	trim the fat	trim the fat
Paraphrase 1	cut away the fat	cut away the fat
Paraphrase 2	decorate the fat	decorate the fat
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element



	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw19009</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw19009</i>
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; formulaic language	collocation; formulaic language
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “dress the chicken (waw19009)”, Type 1 and 3

⇒ Connected Entry: “trimmed the fat (waw190082)”, Type 3

### under the name (waw190012)

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.” [...])

(Milne 1926, 3f)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190012</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190012</i>
Relevant Part	lived [...] under the name	lived [...] under the name
Paraphrase 1	was called or known by the name [phrasal]	was called or known by the name [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	his place of living was located under the name [compositional]	his place of living was located under the name [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	idiom; figurative language	idiom; figurative language
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par2 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par2>Par1

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190012</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190012</i></b>
Context	linguistic context (meta-language); sociocultural context	cognitive context; linguistic context (meta-language); social context (fre- quency); non-linguistic co-text (illus- tration)
Connection	change of communication level	

## Type 2: Unresolved Ambiguity

### add up to very little (waw190042)

That afternoon, the last day of the Christmas term, David had brought home his report card. It had not made pleasant reading.

“Eliot has not made progress,” the math teacher had written. “He can’t divide or multiply and will, I fear, **add up to very little.**”

“Woodwork?” the carpentry teacher had written. “I wish he would work!”

“If he stayed awake in class, it would be a miracle,” the religion teacher had complained.

“Very poor form,” the form master had concluded.

“He’ll never get ahead,” the headmaster had agreed.

Mr. Eliot had read all these comments with growing anger.

(Horowitz 1988a, Ch. 1)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190042</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190042</i>
Relevant Part	add up to very little	add up to very little
Paraphrase 1	do sums with small numbers only	do sums with small numbers only
Paraphrase 2	not reach a goal, not have success	not reach a goal, not have success
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex	complex
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language	figurative language
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	linguistic context (co-text); sociocultural context	linguistic context (co-text); cognitive context (coherence); sociocultural context
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “woodwork/would work (waw190042)”, Type 4

⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “form (waw190042)”, Type 4

**all Greek (waw190050)**

“To think we are looking at a plan that was first drawn ages ago by a Greek admiral in charge of a fleet of treasure ships! And on this very map is shown where that treasure is still hidden – and we’re the only people in the world that know the secret!”

It certainly was rather a tremendous thought. Silence fell on the four children. They looked at one another. Lucy-Ann spoke again, timidly.

“Jack! Philip! This won’t be another adventure, will it?!”

Nobody answered her. They were all thinking about the strange map. Jack voiced their thoughts.

“The thing is, as Lucy-Ann says – we may be the only ones in the *world* that know this secret – but **it’s all Greek to us!** We can’t read a word on the map; we don’t even know the name of the island that’s marked here. It’s maddening.”

“We shall have to find out,” said Dinah.

“Oh yes – run around to various Greek people – Mr Eppy, for instance – and say, ‘Please will you decipher this strange document for us?’ [...]”

(Blyton 1950, Ch. 8)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190050</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190050</i></b>
Relevant Part	it’s all Greek to us	it’s all Greek to us
Paraphrase 1	it is all unintelligible gibberish [phrasal]	it is all unintelligible gibberish [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	it is all written in Greek [compositional]	it is all written in Greek [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2?	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2
Context	linguistic context (salience); cognitive context (coherence); social context (salience)	linguistic context; cognitive context (coherence); social context (salience); sociocultural context (characters)
Connection	change of communication level	

**be attached (waw190001)**

“I just came across it in the Forest. It was hanging over a bush, [...] and as nobody seemed to want it, I took it home, and –”

“Owl,” said Pooh solemnly, “you made a mistake. Somebody did want it.”

“Who?”

“Eeyore. My dear friend Eeyore. He was – he was fond of it.”

“Fond of it?”

“**Attached to it,**” said Winnie-the-Pooh sadly.

So with these words he unhooked it, and carried it back to Eeyore; and when Christopher Robin had nailed it on its right place again, Eeyore frisked about the forest, waving his tail so happily that Winnie-the-Pooh came over all funny, and had to hurry home for a little snack of something to sustain him.

(Milne 1926, 59-61)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190001</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190001</i></b>
Relevant Part	attached to it	attached to it
Paraphrase 1	fond of it [phrasal]	fond of it [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	connected with it [compositional]	connected with it [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language	figurative language
Type	1: unambiguous use	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1?	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2
Context	linguistic context (salience, meta-language); sociocultural context	linguistic context (salience, meta-language); cognitive context (coherence); non-linguistic co-text (illustration)
Connection	change of communication level	

**be attached (waw190011)**

*[The narrator Nick and his brother Tim are chained together with handcuffs.]*

We held hands until we were round the corner. But then, of course, we were still **very much attached.**

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 7)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190011</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190011</i>
Relevant Part	very much attached	very much attached
Paraphrase 1	fond of each other [phrasal]	fond of each other [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	connected with each other (by handcuffs) [compositional]	connected with each other (by handcuffs) [compositional]
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language	figurative language
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: ?	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2
Context	cognitive context; sociocultural context	cognitive context; linguistic context (salience); sociocultural context
Connection	change of communication level	

### be in s.o.'s shoes (waw190075)

That was the thing about thoughts. They thought themselves, and then dropped into your head in the hope that you would think so too. You had to slap them down, thoughts like that; they would take a witch over if she let them. And then it would all break down, and nothing would be left but the cackling.

She had heard it said that, before you could understand anybody, you needed to **walk a mile in their shoes**, which did not make a whole lot of sense because, probably after you had walked a mile in their shoes you would understand that they were chasing you and accusing you of the theft of a pair of shoes – although, of course, you could probably outrun them owing to their lack of footwear.

(Pratchett 2010, 58f)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190075</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i1waw190075</i>
Relevant Part	walk a mile in their shoes	walk a mile in their shoes
Paraphrase 1	try to understand someone else, show empathy [phrasal]	try to understand someone else, show empathy [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	put on someone else's shoes to walk a mile [compositional]	put on someone else's shoes to walk a mile [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190075</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i1waw190075</i></b>
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: ---	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par2→Par1+Par2
Context	cognitive context; linguistic context; social context	cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge, metalinguistic strategies); social context
Connection	change of communication level	

### brush with (*waw190024*)

Snape had seen enough. “So they took you into a broom cupboard, did they?” he snarled. He caught one of the brooms. “I suppose this was your **brush with MI6?**” “Chief Inspector! Listen...” It was too late for that. Snape dropped the broom and [...]

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 5)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190024</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190024</i></b>
Relevant Part	brush with	brush with
Paraphrase 1	hostile encounter [phrasal]	hostile encounter [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	sweeping utensil [compositional]	sweeping utensil [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group of elements	group of elements
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: ?	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190024</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190024</i>
Context	cognitive context; sociocultural context; linguistic context (language knowledge)	cognitive context; sociocultural context; linguistic context (language knowledge)
Connection	change of communication level	

### end of the line (waw190017)

Twenty-four hours later we found ourselves on the platform of Central Station in Amsterdam. We'd paid our bill at the Van Bates Motel and bought two tickets to England. That was the end of our money. And here we were at **the end of the line**.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 12)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190017</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190017</i>
Relevant Part	the end of the line	the end of the line
Paraphrase 1	the point where it is no longer possible to continue with a process or activity [phrasal]	the point where it is no longer possible to continue with a process or activity [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	the last stop of the train line [compositional]	the last stop of the train line [compositional]
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: ?	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2
Context	cognitive context; linguistic context (salience); sociocultural context	cognitive context; linguistic context (salience); sociocultural context (characters)
Connection	change of communication level	

### feather in your hat (waw190025)

*[Matilda has glued her father's hat on with superglue.]*

The father glared at his daughter with deep suspicion, but said nothing. How could he? Mrs Wormwood said to him, "It must be Superglue. It couldn't be



anything else. That'll teach you to go playing round with nasty stuff like that. I expect you were trying to stick another **feather in your hat.**" "I haven't touched the flaming stuff!" Mr Wormwood shouted. He turned and looked again at Matilda who looked back at him with large innocent brown eyes. Mrs Wormwood said to him, "You should read the label on the tube before you start messing with dangerous products. Always follow the instructions on the label."

(Dahl 1988, Ch. 3)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190025</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190025</i>
Relevant Part	another feather in your hat	another feather in your hat
Paraphrase 1	another mark of honour [phrasal]	another mark of honour [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	another appendage of a bird stuck to your hat [compositional]	another appendage of a bird stuck to your hat [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex element	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par2 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context; cognitive context	sociocultural context (characters); linguistic context; cognitive context
Connection	change of communication level	

### feel like (waw190022)

The paper boats went into the bin. Tim opened another drawer and threw the knives, forks and napkins inside. At the same time, I grabbed the milk carton and slipped it into a vase on a shelf. That just left the tray. Tim handed it to me. I looked for somewhere to put it. I couldn't see anywhere so I put it on a chair and sat on it. [...]

His eyes travelled down. "Why are you sitting on a tray?" he demanded. "Because **I feel like a cup of tea.**" It was the first thing to come into my head but the answer must have satisfied him because a moment later, walking over to the window, he'd forgotten me.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 1)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190022</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190022</i>
Relevant Part	feel like	feel like
Paraphrase 1	to have an inclination for	to have an inclination for
Paraphrase 2	to have the impression or conviction of being	to have the impression or conviction of being
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; figurative language	collocation; figurative language
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: ?	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2
Context	cognitive context; linguistic context (salience); sociocultural context	cognitive context; linguistic context (salience); sociocultural context (characters)
Connection	change of communication level	

### **get away with s.th. (waw190006)**

We stalked out of the windmill, Tim leaving white footprints behind him. The sails were still turning slowly behind us.

In the last twelve hours we'd been machine-gunned through a cornfield and stitched up by a vet. We'd found Charon's headquarters and we'd come infuriatingly close to seeing Charon. We'd stolen Mr Waverly's cheque and we'd almost been shot **getting away with it**.

And now we were dead on our feet. We needed a bath and a long, long sleep. Because you had to admit – both of us had been through the mill.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 11)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190006</i>
Relevant Part	getting away with it
Paraphrase 1	We stole Mr Waverly's cheque and were not punished for it [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	We stole Mr. Waverly's cheque and escaped, taking it with us [compositional]
Comm. Level	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>

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**Annotation 1, *i1waw190006***


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Trigger	complex element
Range	group compound
Relation	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2
Context	social context (salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (salience)

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⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “through the mill (waw190006)”, Type 2

⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “dead on one’s feet (waw190006)”, Type 1

**get s.o.’s number (waw190049)**

“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.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 12)

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**Annotation 1, *i1waw190049***
**Annotation 2, *i2waw190049***


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Relevant Part	got his number	got his number
Paraphrase 1	understood his character, capabilities, or situation	understood his character, capabilities, or situation
Paraphrase 2	judged him ready to die	judged him ready to die
Paraphrase 3	knew his tricot number	knew his tricot number
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group of elements	group of elements
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom; polysemy	figurative language; idiom; polysemy
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par1+Par2+Par3 R: ?	P: Par1+Par2+Par3 R: Par1+Par2+Par3

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	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190049</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190049</i></b>
Context	cognitive context; linguistic context (salience, language knowledge); sociocultural context	cognitive context; linguistic context (salience, language knowledge); sociocultural context
Connection	change of communication level	

### has beans (waw190068)

They passed a yellow door on which it said: STOREROOM NUMBER 77 — ALL THE BEANS, CACAO BEANS, COFFEE BEANS, JELLY BEANS, AND **HAS BEANS**. “**Has beans?**” cried Violet Beauregarde. “You’re one yourself!” said Mr Wonka. “There’s no time for arguing! Press on, press on!”

(Dahl 1964, Ch. 18)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190068</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190068</i></b>
Relevant Part	has beans	has beans
Paraphrase 1	a type of beans	a type of beans
Paraphrase 2	a once famous person who is so no longer	a once famous person who is so no longer
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	collocation; homophony	collocation; homophony
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1? R: Par1+Par2?	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context; cognitive context; linguistic context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context (priming, meta-language); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

**larger slice of the pie (waw190051)**

No, really. A recent Bloomberg report noted that major pizza companies have become intensely, aggressively partisan. Pizza Hut gives a remarkable 99 percent of its money to Republicans. Other industry players serve Democrats a somewhat **larger slice of the pie** (sorry, couldn't help myself), but, overall, the politics of pizza these days resemble those of, say, coal or tobacco. And pizza partisanship tells you a lot about what is happening to U.S. politics as a whole.

(Krugman 2015)<sup>137</sup>

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**Annotation 1, *i1waw190051***


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Relevant Part	larger slice of the pie
Paraphrase 1	the bigger part of s.th. [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	the bigger piece of the pie [compositional]
Comm. Level	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>
Trigger	complex element
Range	group compound
Relation	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2
Context	social context (salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (salience)

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**last straw (waw190008)**

The day it all started, it was my turn to make lunch – but I'd just discovered there was no lunch left to make. I'd done my best. I'd gotten a tray ready with plates, knives, forks, napkins, and even a flower I'd found growing on the bathroom wall. All that was missing was the food.

“Is that it?” Tim asked as I carried it in. He was sitting behind his desk, making paper boats out of pages from the phone book. “A carton of milk?”

“Half a carton,” I replied. “We had the other half for breakfast.” It was true. Half a carton of long-life milk was all that stood between us and starvation. “I'll get some glasses,” I said.

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<sup>137</sup> Thanks to Tom Wasow for this example.

“Don’t bother.” Tim reached for a cardboard box on the corner of his desk. He turned it upside down. A single straw fell out. “That’s **the last straw**”, he announced.

I’d been living with my big brother [...]

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 1)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw19008</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw19008</i>
Relevant Part	That’s the last straw	That’s the last straw
Paraphrase 1	the final irritation or problem that stretches one’s endurance or patience beyond the limit [phrasal]	the final irritation or problem that stretches one’s endurance or patience beyond the limit [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	the single drinking straw that is left [compositional]	the single drinking straw that is left [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	idiom; figurative language	idiom; figurative language
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par1 R: ?	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2
Context	linguistic context (salience); social context (salience); sociocultural context	linguistic context; social context (salience); sociocultural context (characters); cognitive context (coherence)
Connection	change of communication level	

### present (waw190088)

*The pressure of this reality keeps it compressed. There may come a time when the universe ends and reality dies, and then this one will explode and ... who knows? Keep it safe. It’s a future as well as a **present**.*

Death put his skull on one side. *It’s a small thing*, he added. *You could have had eternity.*

“I know,” said Mort. “I’ve been very lucky.”

(Pratchett 1987, 316)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190088</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190088</i>
Relevant Part	present	present
Paraphrase 1	a gift	a gift
Paraphrase 2	the period of time now occurring	the period of time now occurring
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	element	element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	homonymy	homonymy
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	linguistic context; cognitive context	cognitive context; linguistic context
Connection	change of communication level	

### spend the night behind bars (waw190023)

All around me, the birds were screeching and whistling and fluttering. It was as if they were laughing at us. But then maybe they knew. They weren't the only ones who were going to be **spending the night behind bars**.

*[chapter ends here]*

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 5)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190023</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190023</i>
Relevant Part	spending the night behind bars	spending the night behind bars
Paraphrase 1	spending the night in prison [phrasal]	spending the night in prison [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	spending the night in a cage [compositional]	spending the night in a cage [compositional]
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity	2: unresolved ambiguity

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190023</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190023</i>
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: ---	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2
Context	linguistic context; cognitive context	linguistic context; cognitive context
Connection	change of communication level	

### steal (waw190073)

When Gritoller Mimpsey, vice-president of the Thieves' Guild, was jostled in the marketplace and then found on returning home that a freshly-stolen handful of diamonds had vanished from their place of concealment, he knew who to blame. This was the type of thief that could **steal** the initiative, the moment and the words right out of your mouth.

However, it was the first time it had stolen something that not only asked it to, in a low but authoritative voice, but gave precise and somehow unarguable instructions about how it was to be disposed of.

(Pratchett 1988a, 56)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190073</i>
Relevant Part	steal
Paraphrase 1	to cause the loss of [fig.]
Paraphrase 2	to take away dishonestly
Comm. Level	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	element
Range	group compound
Relation	related
Phenomenon	collocation; figurative language
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context (character); linguistic context; cognitive context

### stick around (waw190074)

“What did you call me?” Mort hissed.

The doorknocker thought quickly. “Fir?” it said.

“What did you ask me to do?”

“Unftick me.”



“I don’t intend to.”

“Fine,” said the doorknocker, “fine. That’f okay by me. I’ll juft **ftick around**, then.”

It watched Mort canter off along the street and shuddered with relief, knocking itself gently in its nervousness.

(Pratchett 1987, 170)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190074</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190074</i>
Relevant Part	stick around	stick around
Paraphrase 1	remain where I am	remain where I am
Paraphrase 2	stay stuck to s.th.	stay stuck to s.th.
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language	figurative language
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: ?	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2
Context	cognitive context; non-linguistic context; linguistic context	cognitive context; linguistic context
Connection	change of communication level	

### through the mill (*waw190006*)

We stalked out of the windmill, Tim leaving white footprints behind him. The sails were still turning slowly behind us.

In the last twelve hours we’d been machine-gunned through a cornfield and stitched up by a vet. We’d found Charon’s headquarters and we’d come infuriatingly close to seeing Charon. We’d stolen Mr Waverly’s cheque and we’d almost been shot getting away with it.

And now we were dead on our feet. We needed a bath and a long, long sleep. Because you had to admit – both of us **had been through the mill**.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 11)

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**Annotation 3, i3waw190006**


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Relevant Part	had been through the mill
Paraphrase 1	We had been badly treated and were abused and exhausted [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	We had moved through the mill, from one end to the other/from top to bottom [compositional]
Comm. Level	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>
Trigger	complex element
Range	group compound
Relation	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1+Par2
Context	social context (salience); cognitive context; linguistic context (salience)

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⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “get away with s.th. (waw190006)”, Type 2

⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “dead on one’s feet (waw190006)”, Type 1

## Type 3: Reanalysis

### auf den Arm nehmen (waw190029)

Tom ging auf den frierenden König zu. „Ich bin gekommen, um mein Versprechen einzulösen“, sagte er und warf die Satteltasche auf den Tisch.

König Knöterich schaute ungläubig auf die Tasche. „Hast du mir etwa ein Paar warme Handschuhe mitgebracht?“

„Nein, Herr König“, antwortete Tom. „Etwas viel Kostbareres. Ich habe für Euch den goldenen Dings, äh, Kelch erobert.“

„Aahhh! Oohhh!“, hallte es durch den Saal.

„Ihr wollt wohl den König **auf den Arm nehmen**“, sagte Friedrich von Edelstein.

„Ich fürchte, mit den vielen Umhängen und Mützen ist mir der König zu schwer“, grinste Tom.

„Ha, guter Witz“, kicherte Ritter von Trutz.

(Schreiber 2010, 149–150)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190029</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190029</i>
Relevant Part	auf den Arm nehmen	auf den Arm nehmen
Paraphrase 1	to tease [phrasal]	to tease [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	to take onto one's arms [compositional]	to take onto one's arms [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1+Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	cognitive context; social context (salience); sociocultural context; linguistic context	cognitive context; social context (salience); sociocultural context (characters); linguistic context
Connection	change of communication level	

### be at loggerheads (waw190076)

“Oh, rat spit!” I said. I was furious with myself. Why hadn't I taken Gladys and walked her across the little bridge?

“Double rat spit!”

I scrambled to my feet and looked down at myself. My dress was completely soaked.

Father would be furious.

“Damn it all – dash it all, Flavia,” he would say, as he always did, and then would begin one of those silences between us that would last for several days until one of us forgot about my offense. “**Being at loggerheads**,” Daffy called it, and now, as I stood knee-deep in the water, I tried to imagine that I had been suddenly transported to a cold, rushing river somewhere in the Canadian north woods, with the severed heads of the loggers bobbing past me in the current like bloated, grizzled apples.

(Bradley 2011a, Ch. 22)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190076</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i1waw190076</i>
Relevant Part	being at loggerheads	being at loggerheads
Paraphrase 1	to be contending about differences of opinion [phrasal]	to be contending about differences of opinion [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	being surrounded by the severed heads of loggers [compositional]	being surrounded by the severed heads of loggers [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1+Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	cognitive context; social context (salience); sociocultural context	cognitive context; social context (salience); sociocultural context (characters); linguistic context (metalinguistic strategies)
Connection	change of communication level	

### be in s.o.'s shoes (waw190075)

That was the thing about thoughts. They thought themselves, and then dropped into your head in the hope that you would think so too. You had to slap them down, thoughts like that; they would take a witch over if she let them. And then it would all break down, and nothing would be left but the cackling.

She had heard it said that, before you could understand anybody, you needed to **walk a mile in their shoes**, which did not make a whole lot of sense because, probably after you had walked a mile in their shoes you would understand that they were chasing you and accusing you of the theft of a pair of shoes – although, of course, you could probably outrun them owing to their lack of footwear.

(Pratchett 2010, 58f)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190075</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i1waw190075</i></b>
Relevant Part	walk a mile in their shoes	walk a mile in their shoes
Paraphrase 1	try to understand someone else, show empathy [phrasal]	try to understand someone else, show empathy [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	put on someone else's shoes to walk a mile [compositional]	put on someone else's shoes to walk a mile [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: ---	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par2→Par1+Par2
Context	cognitive context; linguistic context; social context	cognitive context; linguistic context (language knowledge, metalinguistic strategies); social context
Connection	change of communication level	

### **be in the dark (waw190038)**

“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 [...]

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 7)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190038</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190038</i></b>
Relevant Part	completely in the dark	completely in the dark
Paraphrase 1	without knowledge in regard to this question [phrasal]	without knowledge in regard to this question [phrasal]

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190038</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190038</i>
Paraphrase 2	in a place without light [compositional]	in a place without light [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1→Par1+Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	non-linguistic context; cognitive context	cognitive context; linguistic context (metalinguistic strategies)
Connection	change of communication level	

### be it on your own head (*waw190004*)

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.

Sir Nobonk had been in many wars. Usually [...]

(Milligan 1982, Ch. 1)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190004</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190004</i>
Relevant Part	be it on your own head	be it on your own head
Paraphrase 1	you have to take full responsibility for what you plan to do [phrasal]	you have to take full responsibility for what you plan to do [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	you have to strap the licence to your head [compositional]	you have to strap the licence to your head [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190004</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190004</i>
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par2? R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; sociocultural context (characters)
Connection	change of communication level	

### **beside herself (waw190062)**

The wind ripped at my hair and tore at my thin autumn coat. I inhaled the salt air as deeply as I dared, the sea spray running in torrents down my face.

A hand seized my arm roughly.

“What the devil do you think you’re doing?”

I spun round, startled, trying to wriggle free.

It was, of course, Ryerson Rainsmith.

“What the devil do you think you’re doing?” he repeated. He was one of those people who thought that the secret of gaining the upper hand was to ask every question twice.

The best way of dealing with them is not to answer.

“I’ve been looking everywhere for you. Dorsey is **beside herself** with worry.”

“Does that mean there are now two of her to put up with?” I wanted to ask, but I didn’t.

With a name like Dorsey it was no wonder he called her “Dodo” – or at least he did whenever he thought they were alone.

“We were afraid you’d fallen overboard. Now come below at once. Go to your cabin and put on some dry clothing. You look like a drowned rat.”

That did it. It was the last straw.

Ryerson Rainsmith, I thought, your days – your very hours – are numbered.

(Bradley 2015, Ch. 1)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190062</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i1waw190062</i>
Relevant Part	beside herself	beside herself
Paraphrase 1	out of her wits	out of her wits
Paraphrase 2	close/near/next to herself	close/near/next to herself
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190062</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i1waw190062</i>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1+Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	social context (salience); sociocultural context (character)	social context (salience); linguistic context (metalinguistic strategies); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “last straw (waw190062)”, Type 1

### blame the times (waw190077)

Captain Angua shook her head. “Sorry Miss, but it’s true. Turned out to be a book of Clatchian poetry, you know. All that wiggly writing! I suppose it looks like a spell book for those inclined to think that way. She died.” “**I blame “The Times”**”, said Mrs Proust. “When they put that sort of thing in the paper, it gives people ideas.” Angua shrugged. “From what I hear the people who did it weren’t much for reading.” “You’ve got to stop it!” said Tiffany. “How, Miss? We are the ‘City Watch’. We don’t have any real jurisdiction outside the walls.”

(Pratchett 2010, 138)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190077</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190077</i>
Relevant Part	blame the times	blame the times
Paraphrase 1	it’s the fault of the current state of affairs	it’s the fault of the current state of affairs
Paraphrase 2	it’s the fault of a newspaper called “The Times”	it’s the fault of a newspaper called “The Times”
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; formulaic language; polysemy	figurative language; formulaic language; polysemy



	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190077</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190077</i>
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par2 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par2
Context	sociocultural context; cognitive context	cognitive context; linguistic context (metalinguistic strategies)
Connection	change of communication level	

### Brüche (waw190005)

PRIMZAHL: Eine Primzahl ist eine Zahl, die man nur durch 1 und durch sich selber teilen kann, wenn man keine **Brüche** erhalten will. Zum Beispiel an den Armen.

(Steinhöfel 2008, Ch. 2)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1 waw190005</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2 waw190005</i>
Relevant Part	Brüche	Brüche
Paraphrase 1	fractions [math.]	fractions [math.]
Paraphrase 2	fractures, broken bones	fractures, broken bones
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	element	element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	polysemy	polysemy
Type	---	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: ---	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1>Par2
Context	sociocultural context (character)	cognitive context; linguistic context; sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

### change the towels (waw190045)

Amelia Bedelia read, *Change the towels in the green bathroom.*

Amelia Bedelia found the green bathroom. “These towels are very nice. Why change them?” she thought. Then Amelia Bedelia remembered what Mrs. Rogers had said. She must do just what the list told her. “Well, all right,” said Amelia Bedelia.

Amelia Bedelia got some scissors. She snipped a little here and a little there. And she changed those towels.

(Parish 1963, 7f)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190045</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190045</i></b>
Relevant Part	change the towels	change the towels
Paraphrase 1	substitute the towels for fresh ones	substitute the towels for fresh ones
Paraphrase 2	alter the towels	alter the towels
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; formulaic language; polysemy	collocation; formulaic language; polysemy
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “change the towels (waw190078)”, Type 1 and 3

### **change the towels (waw190078)**

Mr. Rogers went to wash his hands.

“I say,” he called. “These are very unusual towels.”

Mrs. Rogers dashed into the bathroom.

“Oh, my best **towels**,” she said.

“Didn’t I **change** them enough?” asked Amelia Bedelia

(Parish 1963, 22)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190078</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190078</i></b>
Relevant Part	change the towels	change the towels
Paraphrase 1	substitute the towels for fresh ones	substitute the towels for fresh ones
Paraphrase 2	alter the towels	alter the towels

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190078</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190078</i>
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex	complex
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; formulaic language; polysemy	collocation; formulaic language; polysemy
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par2 R: Par1	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par2→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context; non-linguistic context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “change the towels (waw190045)”, Type 1 and 3

### draw the drapes (waw190065)

*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.

(Parish 1963, 11f)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190065</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190065</i>
Relevant Part	draw the drapes	draw the drapes
Paraphrase 1	pull the drapes over the window	pull the drapes over the window
Paraphrase 2	make a picture of the drapes	make a picture of the drapes
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; figurative language; formulaic language	collocation; figurative language; formulaic language

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190065</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190065</i>
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context	cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “draw the drapes (waw190013)”, Type 1 and 3

### draw the drapes (waw190013)

“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.

(Parish 1963, 20)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190013</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190013</i>
Relevant Part	draw the drapes	draw the drapes
Paraphrase 1	pull the drapes over the window	pull the drapes over the window
Paraphrase 2	make a picture of the drapes	make a picture of the drapes
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex	complex
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; figurative language; formulaic language	collocation; figurative language; formulaic language
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1→Par1+Par2 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context; non-linguistic context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “draw the drapes (waw190065)”, Type 1 and 3

**dress the chicken (waw190009)**

*The meat market will deliver a steak and a chicken. Please trim the fat before you put the steak in the icebox. And please **dress the chicken**.*

When the meat arrived, Amelia Bedelia opened the bag. She looked at the steak for a long time. “Yes,” she said. “That will do nicely.”

Amelia Bedelia got some lace and bits of ribbon. And Amelia Bedelia trimmed that fat before she put the steak in the icebox.

“Now I must dress the chicken. I wonder if she wants a he chicken or a she chicken?” said Amelia Bedelia. Amelia Bedelia went right to work. Soon the chicken was finished.

(Parish 1963, 17f)

	<b>Annotation 3, i3waw190009</b>	<b>Annotation 4, i4waw190009</b>
Relevant Part	dress the chicken	dress the chicken
Paraphrase 1	prepare the chicken to be cooked	prepare the chicken to be cooked
Paraphrase 2	put clothes on the chicken	put clothes on the chicken
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; formulaic language	collocation; formulaic language
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “trim the fat” (waw190009), Type 1 and 3

⇒ Connected Entry: “dressed the chicken (waw190079)”, Type 3

**dressed the chicken (waw190079)**

“The chicken – you **dressed the chicken?**” asked Mrs. Rogers.

“Yes, and I found the nicest box to put him in,” said Amelia Bedelia.

“Box!” exclaimed Mrs. Rogers.

Mrs. Rogers hurried over to the box.

She lifted the lid.  
There lay the chicken.  
And he was just as dressed as he could be.

(Parish 1963, 25)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190079</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190079</i>
Relevant Part	dressed the chicken	dressed the chicken
Paraphrase 1	prepared the chicken to be cooked	prepared the chicken to be cooked
Paraphrase 2	put clothes on the chicken	put clothes on the chicken
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex	complex
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; formulaic language; figurative language	collocation; formulaic language; figurative language
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1→Par1+Par2 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context; non-linguistic context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “dress the chicken (waw190009)”, Type 1 and 3

### **dust the furniture (waw190046)**

She looked at her list again. *Dust the furniture.*

“Did you ever hear of such a silly thing. At my house we undust the furniture. But to each his own way.”

Amelia Bedelia took one last look at the bathroom. She saw a big box with the words Dusting Powder on it. “Well, look at that. A special powder to dust with!” exclaimed Amelia Bedelia.

So Amelia Bedelia dusted the furniture. “That should be dusty enough. My, how nice it smells.”

(Parish 1963, 9f)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190046</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190046</i></b>
Relevant Part	dust the furniture	dust the furniture
Paraphrase 1	remove the dust from the furniture	remove the dust from the furniture
Paraphrase 2	put dust on the furniture	put dust on the furniture
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; formulaic language	collocation; formulaic language
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context (meta-language; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “dust the furniture (waw190080)”, Type 3

### **dust the furniture (waw190080)**

Then Mrs. Rogers saw the furniture.

“The **furniture!**” she cried.

“Did I **dust** it well enough?” asked Amelia Bedelia.

“That’s such nice dusting powder.”

(Parish 1963, 21)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190080</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i1waw190080</i></b>
Relevant Part	dust the furniture	dust the furniture
Paraphrase 1	remove the dust from the furniture	remove the dust from the furniture
Paraphrase 2	put dust on the furniture	put dust on the furniture
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex	complex
Relation	related	related

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190080</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i1waw190080</i>
Phenomenon	collocation; formulaic language; underspecification	collocation; formulaic language; underspecification
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1→Par1+Par2 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context; non-linguistic context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “dust the furniture (waw190046)”, Type 1 and 3

### follow one’s nose (waw190026)

There was a gap in the hedge and a lane on the other side. We turned left, **following our noses**. Actually, Tim’s nose had been stung so badly, it now pointed both ways.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch.8)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190026</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190026</i>
Relevant Part	following our noses	following our noses
Paraphrase 1	being guided by our instincts [phrasal]	being guided by our instincts [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	going where our noses pointed [compositional]	going where our noses pointed [compositional]
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	---	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1→Par1+Par2 R: ---	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	cognitive context; linguistic context; sociocultural context	cognitive context; sociocultural context (characters); linguistic context (meta-language)
Connection	change of communication level	



**get to one's feet (waw190040)**

Somehow I managed to **get back to my feet**. I was glad they were still at the end of my legs.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 6)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190040</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190040</i></b>
Relevant Part	get back to my feet	get back to my feet
Paraphrase 1	stand up	stand up
Paraphrase 2	find my feet and return to them	find my feet and return to them
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; figurative language	collocation; figurative language
Type	---	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: ---	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	cognitive context; linguistic context; sociocultural context	cognitive context; sociocultural context (characters); linguistic context (meta-language)
Connection	change of communication level	

**has beans/beens (waw190068)**

They passed a yellow door on which it said: STOREROOM NUMBER 77 — ALL THE BEANS, CACAO BEANS, COFFEE BEANS, JELLY BEANS, AND **HAS BEANS**. “**Has beans?**” cried Violet Beauregarde. “You’re one yourself!” said Mr Wonka. “There’s no time for arguing! Press on, press on!”

(Dahl 1964, Ch. 18)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190068</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190068</i></b>
Relevant Part	has beans	has beans
Paraphrase 1	a type of beans	a type of beans
Paraphrase 2	a once famous person who is so no longer	a once famous person who is so no longer
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190068</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190068</i></b>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	collocation; homophony	collocation; homophony
Type	2: unresolved ambiguity	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1? R: Par1+Par2?	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context; cognitive context; linguistic context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context (priming, meta-language); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

### heads off (*waw190031*)

“I see!” said the Queen, who had meanwhile been examining the roses. “Off with their heads!” and the procession moved on, three of the soldiers remaining behind to execute the three unfortunate gardeners, who ran to Alice for protection. “You shan’t be beheaded!” said Alice, and she put them into a large flowerpot that stood near. The three soldiers wandered about for a minute or two, looking for them, and then quietly marched off after the others.

“Are their **heads off**?” shouted the Queen.

“Their heads are gone, if it please your Majesty!” the soldiers shouted in reply.

(Carroll 1865, Ch. 8)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190031</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190031</i></b>
Relevant Part	Are their heads off?	Are their heads off?
Paraphrase 1	Have they been beheaded?	Have they been beheaded?
Paraphrase 2	Have their heads gone away?	Have their heads gone away?
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; polysemy	figurative language; polysemy
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190031</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190031</i>
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1→Par2→Par2>Par1	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	linguistic context (priming); cognitive context; sociocultural context	linguistic context (priming); cognitive context; sociocultural context (characters)
Connection	change of communication level	

### intelligence (waw190041)

Waverly lowered his voice. “I take it you’ve heard of MI6.”

“I’ve driven up it,” Tim said.

“No,” Waverly corrected him. “You’re thinking of the M6 motorway to Birmingham. I’m talking about **intelligence**.”

Tim’s face brightened. “Then you’re talking to the right person!” he announced.

“Military intelligence!” Waverly explained.

“Spies,” I added.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 4)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190041</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190041</i>
Relevant Part	intelligence	intelligence
Paraphrase 1	intellect	intellect
Paraphrase 2	agency for obtaining secret information	agency for obtaining secret information
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	element	element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	polysemy	polysemy
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par2→Par2>Par1 R: Par1	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par2→Par2+Par1→ Par2>Par1
Context	cognitive context; sociocultural context; linguistic context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

**into a hornets' nest (waw190066)**

“Mr. Travers is in trouble. He’s practically put his foot right **into a hornets’ nest.**”

“But, hornets’ nests grow on trees, sir.”

“Never mind that.”

(Sandrich 1935, 00:36:08–00:36:19)<sup>138</sup>

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190066</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190066</i></b>
Relevant Part	into a hornets’ nest	into a hornets’ nest
Paraphrase 1	he stirred up opposition [phrasal]	he stirred up opposition [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	into the nest built by hornets [compositional]	into the nest built by hornets [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1→Par1+Par2 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	cognitive context; linguistic context; sociocultural context	linguistic context (priming); cognitive context; sociocultural context (characters)
Connection	change of communication level	

**lay on (waw190085)**

This was not entirely true. Gry could have survived for weeks by nibbling the grass in the glade, but noble motives can never be questioned. “Very commendable,” Inspector Hewitt said. “I had asked Constable Linnet to **lay on some hay.**” I had a quick vision of PC Linnet producing an egg in the straw, but I banished it from my mind to keep from grinning.

(Bradley 2011a, Ch. 15)

<sup>138</sup> Thanks to Chris Culy for this example.

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190085</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190085</i></b>
Relevant Part	lay on some hay	lay on some hay
Paraphrase 1	provide/supply some hay	provide/supply some hay
Paraphrase 2	produce and deposit an egg on hay	produce and deposit an egg on hay
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; phrasal verb	figurative language; phrasal verb
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1→Par1+Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	cognitive context; non-linguistic context; sociocultural context	cognitive context; sociocultural context (characters); linguistic context (meta-language)
Connection	change of communication level	

### **make the bed (waw190036)**

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.)

(Stanton 2006, Ch. 1)

	<b>Annotation1, <i>i1waw190036</i></b>
Relevant Part	the bed was never made
Paraphrase 1	the duvet was never put back on the bed
Paraphrase 2	the bed had never been assembled
Comm. Level	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element
Range	group compound
Relation	related
Phenomenon	collocation; formulaic language

<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190036</i></b>	
Type	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par2>Par1 R: Par1→Par2>Par1
Context	social context (salience); linguistic context (metalinguistic strategies); sociocultural context (character)

### measure rice (waw190047)

#### *Measure two cups of rice.*

“That’s next,” said Amelia Bedelia. Amelia Bedelia found two cups. She filled them with rice. And Amelia Bedelia measured that rice. Amelia Bedelia laughed. “These folks do *want* me to do funny things.”

Then she poured the rice back into the container.

(Parish 1963, 15f)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190047</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190047</i></b>
Relevant Part	measure two cups of rice	measure two cups of rice
Paraphrase 1	apportion two cups of rice	apportion two cups of rice
Paraphrase 2	measure the height of two cups of rice	measure the height of two cups of rice
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; polysemy	collocation; polysemy
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “measure rice (waw190083)”, Type 1 and 3

**measure rice (waw190083)**

Mrs. Rogers went to the kitchen.

“I’ll cook the dinner.

Where is the **rice** I asked you to **measure**?”

“I put it back in the container.

But I remember – it measured four and a half inches,”

said Amelia Bedelia.

(Parish 1963, 23)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190083</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190083</i></b>
Relevant Part	measure (two cups of) rice	measure (two cups of) rice
Paraphrase 1	apportion (two cups of) rice	apportion (two cups of) rice
Paraphrase 2	measure the height of (two cups of) rice	measure the height of (two cups of) rice
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex	complex
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; polysemy	collocation; polysemy
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context; cognitive context; non-linguistic context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “measure two cups of rice (waw190047)”, Type 1 and 3

**miss you (waw190014)**

And I don’t blame you, thought Tiffany, but now I can pass for being a grown-up and I have to say some stupid grown-up things. “But you do have a mother and father, Amber. I’m sure they **miss you**.” She winced at the look of scorn the girl gave her. “Oh aye, and if the old scunner misses me, he’ll aim another blow!” “Maybe we can go together, and help him change his ways?” Tiffany volunteered,

despising herself, but the image of those thick fingers heavy with nettle stings from that awful bouquet wouldn't go away.  
This time Amber actually laughed.

(Pratchett 2010, 184)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190014</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190014</i>
Relevant Part	miss	miss
Paraphrase 1	notice with regret your absence	notice with regret your absence
Paraphrase 2	chance not to hit you	chance not to hit you
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	element	element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	polysemy	polysemy
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2>Par1	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par2>Par1
Context	social context (salience); sociocultural context (characters)	social context (salience); cognitive context (coherence); linguistic context (metalinguistic strategies); sociocultural context (characters)
Connection	change of communication level	

### murdering s.th. (*waw190064*)

We broke cover and sprinted across the lawn to the side of the house. Our shadows reached it first. There was nobody in sight, but now I could hear the sound of a piano drifting out of one of the windows. I recognized the music — but only just. It was Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata", but played very badly. It occurred to me that the pianist might be missing a finger.

"Listen!" I nudged Tim.

"Is it a record?" Tim asked.

"Yes. Nobody's ever played it that badly."

Tim's mouth dropped open. "Charon!"

"It figures. He killed McGuffin. And now he's **murdering Beethoven.**"

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 11)



	Annotation 3, <i>i3waw190064</i>	Annotation 4, <i>i4waw190064</i>
Relevant Part	murdering Beethoven	murdering Beethoven
Paraphrase 1	And now he is spoiling the music written by Beethoven. [phrasal]	And now he is spoiling the music written by Beethoven. [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	And now he is killing the person called Beethoven. [compositional]	And now he is killing the person called Beethoven. [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom; metonymy	figurative language; idiom; metonymy
Type	---	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: ?	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par2→Par1>Par2
Context	sociocultural context; cognitive context; linguistic context	cognitive context; sociocultural context (characters); linguistic context
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “record (waw190064)”, Type 3

### on British soil (waw190035)

“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.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 4)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190035</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190035</i>
Relevant Part	on British soil	on British soil
Paraphrase 1	on British territory	on British territory
Paraphrase 2	on the soil/ground/dirt one finds in Britain	on the soil/ground/dirt one finds in Britain
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190035</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190035</i>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1→Par1+Par2 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	cognitive context; linguistic context (meta-language); sociocultural context	linguistic context (language knowledge, meta-language); cognitive context; sociocultural context (characters)
Connection	change of communication level	

### on your head be it (waw190072)

“You show spirit, and bravery, and you come of noble stock. You will make a very valuable Death Eater. We need your kind, Neville Longbottom.”

“I’ll join you when hell freezes over,” said Neville. “Dumbledore’s Army!” he shouted, and there was an answering cheer from the crowd, whom Voldemort’s silencing charms seemed unable to hold.

“Very well,” said Voldemort, and Harry heard more danger in the silkiness of his voice than in the most powerful curse. “If that is your choice, Longbottom, we revert to the original plan. **On your head,**” he said quietly, “**be it.**”

Still watching through his lashes, Harry saw Voldemort wave his wand. Seconds later, out of one of the castle’s shattered windows, something that looked like a misshapen bird flew through the half-light and landed in Voldemort’s hand. He shook the mildewed object by its pointed end and it dangled, empty and ragged: the Sorting Hat.

“There will be no more Sorting at Hogwarts School,” said Voldemort. “There will be no more houses. The emblem, shield and colours of my noble ancestor, Salazar Slytherin, will suffice for everyone, won’t they, Neville Longbottom?”

He pointed his wand at Neville, who grew rigid and still, then forced the Hat on to Neville’s head, so that it slipped down below his eyes. There were movements from the watching crowd in front of the castle, and as one, the Death Eaters raised their wands, holding the fighters of Hogwarts at bay.

(Rowling 2007, Ch. 36)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190072</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190072</i>
Relevant Part	on your head be it	on your head be it
Paraphrase 1	it will be your responsibility [phrasal]	it will be your responsibility [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	it will be on your head [compositional]	it will be on your head [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	cognitive context; non-linguistic context; linguistic context	cognitive context; linguistic context
Connection	change of communication level	

### operation (waw190039)

Waverly sighed. I think he was actually relieved to get the confession off his chest. “It was an **operation** that went horribly wrong,” he began. “I’m sorry,” Tim chimed in. “I didn’t know you’d been ill.”

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 13)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190039</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190039</i>
Relevant Part	operation	operation
Paraphrase 1	a planned and coordinated activity	a planned and coordinated activity
Paraphrase 2	a surgical procedure	a surgical procedure
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	element	element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	polysemy	polysemy
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190039</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190039</i></b>
Order	P: Par1→Par1>Par2 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1>Par2
Context	cognitive context; sociocultural context; linguistic context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

### **over my dead body (waw190037)**

“You mean – he’s using me?”

“Yes.”

“**Over my dead body!**”

“Exactly...”

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 5)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190037</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190037</i></b>
Relevant Part	over my dead body	over my dead body
Paraphrase 1	under no circumstance [phrasal]	under no circumstance [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	killing me while doing so [compositional]	killing me while doing so [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1→Par2>Par1	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par2>Par1
Context	cognitive context; sociocultural context	cognitive context; sociocultural context (characters)
Connection	change of communication level	

### **platzte ihm der Kragen (waw190063)**

Auch das machte er. Manchmal braucht man viele gute Taten, um sich einen guten Tag zu verdienen.

Dann sollte er das Unkraut aus den Blumentöpfen jäten.

Dann sollte er die Holzwürmer aus den Möbeln verjagen – und da **platzte ihm der Kragen**. Innerlich ist gemeint, denn äußerlich hatte er keinen Kragen. Er warf alles hin und ging weg.

(Janosch 1983)

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**Annotation 1, *i1waw190063***

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Relevant Part	platzte ihm der Kragen
Paraphrase 1	he couldn't bear it any longer [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	his collar burst [compositional]
Comm. Level	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element
Range	group compound
Relation	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom
Type	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1>Par2
Context	social context (salience); linguistic context (metalinguistic strategies); non-linguistic co-text (illustration)

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**poached (waw190054)**

“Whips!” cried Veruca Salt. “What on earth do you use whips for?” “For whipping cream, of course,” said Mr Wonka. “How can you whip cream without whips? Whipped cream isn't whipped cream at all unless it's been whipped with whips. Just as a **poached** egg isn't a **poached** egg unless it's been stolen from the woods in the dead of night! Row on, please!”

(Dahl 1964, Ch. 18)

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**Annotation 1, *i1waw190054***

**Annotation 2, *i2waw190054***

Relevant Part	poached	poached
Paraphrase 1	cooked in simmering or gently boiling water, without the shell	cooked in simmering or gently boiling water, without the shell
Paraphrase 2	illegally or unfairly acquired; stolen	illegally or unfairly acquired; stolen
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	element	element

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	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190054</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190054</i>
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	collocation; homonymy	collocation; homonymy
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1→Par2 R: ---	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context; cognitive context; linguistic context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context (collocation); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

### put the lights out (waw190007)

**Put the lights out** when you finish in the living room. Amelia Bedelia thought about this a minute. She switched off the lights. Then she carefully unscrewed each bulb.

And Amelia Bedelia put the lights out. “So those things need to be aired out, too. Just like pillows and babies. Oh, I do have a lot to learn.”

(Parish 1963, 13f)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190007</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190007</i>
Relevant Part	put the lights out	put the lights out
Paraphrase 1	extinguish the lights [phrasal]	extinguish the lights [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	bring the lightbulbs outside [compositional]	bring the lightbulbs outside [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; metonymy; phrasal verb	collocation; metonymy; phrasal verb
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw19007</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw19007</i>
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “put the lights out (waw190081)”, Type 3

### put the lights out (waw190081)

“Amelia Bedelia, why are all the light bulbs outside?”

asked Mr. Rogers.

“The list just said to **put the lights out,**”

said Amelia Bedelia.

“It didn’t say to bring them back in.

Oh, I do hope they didn’t get aired too long.”

(Parish 1963, 19)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190081</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190081</i>
Relevant Part	put the lights out	put the lights out
Paraphrase 1	extinguish the lights [phrasal]	extinguish the lights [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	bring the lightbulbs outside [compositional]	bring the lightbulbs outside [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex	complex
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; metonymy; phrasal verb	collocation; metonymy; phrasal verb
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1→Par1+Par2 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context; non-linguistic context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “put the lights out (waw190007)”, Type 1 and 3

### record (waw190064)

We broke cover and sprinted across the lawn to the side of the house. Our shadows reached it first. There was nobody in sight, but now I could hear the sound

of a piano drifting out of one of the windows. I recognized the music — but only just. It was Beethoven’s “Moonlight Sonata”, but played very badly. It occurred to me that the pianist might be missing a finger.

“Listen!” I nudged Tim.

“Is it a **record**?” Tim asked.

“Yes. Nobody’s ever played it that badly.”

Tim’s mouth dropped open. “Charon!”

“It figures. He killed McGuffin. And now he’s murdering Beethoven.”

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 11)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190064</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190064</i>
Relevant Part	record	record
Paraphrase 1	Is it a recording?	Is it a recording?
Paraphrase 2	Is it the best/worst/most remarkable performance?	Is it the best/worst/most remarkable performance?
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>
Trigger	element	element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	polysemy	polysemy
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1+Par2→Par2>Par1	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par2>Par1
Context	sociocultural context; cognitive context	cognitive context; sociocultural context (characters); linguistic context
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “murdering s.th. (waw190064)”, Type 3

### take s.o. to (waw190034)

“So tell me, Timothy,” she said. “**What takes you to Dover?**”

“Well ... the train does,” Tim replied. As brilliant as ever.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 8)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190034</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190034</i>
Relevant Part	what takes you to	what takes you to
Paraphrase 1	why are you going to	why are you going to



	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190034</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190034</i>
Paraphrase 2	what kind of transport takes you to	what kind of transport takes you to
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; formulaic language	figurative language; formulaic language
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context; cognitive context; non-linguistic context	linguistic context; cognitive context; sociocultural context (characters)
Connection	change of communication level	

### throw the book at s.o. (*waw190002*)

This time Snape locked us up for two days. Boyle wanted to **throw the book at us** but fortunately he didn't have a book. I'm not even sure Boyle knew how to read.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 6)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190002</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190002</i>
Relevant Part	to throw the book at us	to throw the book at us
Paraphrase 1	to charge us with every possible offence [phrasal]	to charge us with every possible offence [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	to throw a book (as in a physical object) at us [compositional]	to throw a book (as in a physical object) at us [compositional]
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group of elements	group of elements
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom	figurative language; idiom
Type	---	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: ---	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par2>Par1

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190002</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190002</i>
Context	---	cognitive context; linguistic context
Connection	change of communication level	

### trim the fat (waw190009)

*The meat market will deliver a steak and a chicken. Please **trim the fat** before you put the steak in the icebox. And please dress the chicken.*

When the meat arrived, Amelia Bedelia opened the bag. She looked at the steak for a long time. “Yes,” she said. “That will do nicely.”

Amelia Bedelia got some lace and bits of ribbon. And Amelia Bedelia trimmed that fat before she put the steak in the icebox.

“Now I must dress the chicken. I wonder if she wants a he chicken or a she chicken?” said Amelia Bedelia. Amelia Bedelia went right to work. Soon the chicken was finished.

(Parish 1963, 17f)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190009</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190009</i>
Relevant Part	trim the fat	trim the fat
Paraphrase 1	cut away the fat	cut away the fat
Paraphrase 2	decorate the fat	decorate the fat
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; formulaic language	collocation; formulaic language
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “dress the chicken (waw190009)”, Type 1 and 3

⇒ Connected Entry: “trimmed the fat (waw190082)”, Type 3

**trimmed the fat (waw190082)**

“Was the meat delivered?” asked Mrs. Rogers.

“Yes,” said Amelia Bedelia.

“I **trimmed the fat** just like you said.

It does look nice.”

Mrs. Rogers rushed to the icebox.

She opened it.

“Lace! Ribbons!

Oh, dear!” said Mrs. Rogers.

(Parish 1963, 24)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190082</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190082</i></b>
Relevant Part	trim the fat	trim the fat
Paraphrase 1	cut away the fat	cut away the fat
Paraphrase 2	decorate the fat	decorate the fat
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex	complex
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; formulaic language	collocation; formulaic language
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	sociocultural context; non-linguistic context	social context; cognitive context; linguistic context; non-linguistic co-text (illustration); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Connected Entry: “trim the fat (waw190009)”, Type 1 and 3

**überdacht werden (waw190067)**

Menschen und ihre Konzepte: einige muss man lieben, andere verdienen einen Tritt vors Schienbein. Manche glauben ja immer noch, dass der Aufzug schneller kommt, wenn man mehrmals auf den Knopf drückt und dabei flucht. Andere denken, dass Autos mit Fischaufklebern am Heck von Leuten gefahren werden, die bei der Fastfoodkette Nordsee arbeiten. Wieder andere glauben, das Antiquariat

wäre das Gegenteil vom Proquariat. Das alles sind vorurteilsbeladene Konstrukte, die dringend **überdacht werden** müssen. Damit es nicht hineinregnet.

(Birr 2015)

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**Annotation 1, i1waw190067**

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Relevant Part	überdacht werden
Paraphrase 1	to think about s.th.
Paraphrase 2	to build a roof above s.th.
Comm. Level	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	element
Range	group compound
Relation	unrelated
Phenomenon	homonymy
Type	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	cognitive context; linguistic context

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**under the name (waw190012)**

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.” [...]*)

(Milne 1926, 3f)

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**Annotation 1, i1waw190012**

**Annotation 2, i2waw190012**

Relevant Part	lived [...] under the name	lived [...] under the name
Paraphrase 1	was called or known by the name [phrasal]	was called or known by the name [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	his place of living was located under the name [compositional]	his place of living was located under the name [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related

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	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190012</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190012</i></b>
Phenomenon	idiom; figurative language	idiom; figurative language
Type	1: unambiguous use	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par2 R: Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par2>Par1
Context	linguistic context (meta-language); sociocultural context	cognitive context; linguistic context (meta-language); social context (fre- quency); non-linguistic co-text (illus- tration)
Connection	change of communication level	

### what is the time (waw190086)

“Then all I will say”, said Tiffany, “is thank you very much. I am sorry to have taken up your time, but I need to be getting on. I have so many things to do. Do you know **what the time is?**” “Yes”, said Eskarina. “It is a way of describing one of the notional dimensions of four-dimensional space. But for your purposes, it’s about ten forty-five.”

(Pratchett 2010, 170)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190086</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190086</i></b>
Relevant Part	what the time is	what the time is
Paraphrase 1	how late it is	how late it is
Paraphrase 2	what time is	what time is
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	group of elements	group of elements
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; formulaic lan- guage	figurative language; formulaic lan- guage
Type	3: reanalysis	3: reanalysis
Order	P: Par1 R: Par1→Par1+Par2	P: Par1+Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	cognitive context; linguistic context (meta-language); sociocultural con- text	linguistic context (meta-language); cognitive context; sociocultural con- text (characters)
Connection	change of communication level	

## Type 4: Contrastive Readings

### be named after s.o. (waw190021)

Next to his house was a piece of broken board which had: “TRESPASSERS W“ on it. When Christopher Robin asked the Piglet what it meant, he said it was his grandfather’s name, and had been in the family for a long time. Christopher Robin said you couldn’t be called Trespassers W, and Piglet said yes, you could, because his grandfather was, and it was short for Trespassers Will, which was short for Trespassers William. And his grandfather had had two names in case he lost one – Trespassers **after an uncle**, and William **after Trespassers.**”

(Milne 1926, 37)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190021</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190021</i>
Relevant Part	after an uncle/after Trespassers	after an uncle/after Trespassers
Paraphrase 1	"after an uncle" = "in imitation/memory of an uncle"	"after an uncle" = "in imitation/memory of an uncle"
Paraphrase 2	"after Trespassers" = "behind/following Trespassers"	"after Trespassers" = "behind/following Trespassers"
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	element	element
Range	group of elements	group of elements
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; polysemy	collocation; polysemy
Type	4: contrastive readings	4: contrastive readings
Order	P: Par1/Par2 R: Par1→Par1/Par2	P: Par1+Par2→Par1/Par2 R: Par1→Par1/Par2
Context	linguistic context (collocation); cognitive context	linguistic context (collocation); cognitive context
Connection	change of communication level	

### bring s.th. up (waw190053)

“I am *not* being tetchy!” she shouted.

“If you’re not being tetchy,” I said, “then your brain is most likely being devoured by threadworms.”

Threadworms were one of my latest enthusiasms. I had recognized at once their criminal possibilities when Daffy had **brought them up** one morning at the breakfast table. Not **brought them up** in the sense of vomiting, of course, but

mentioned that she had been reading about them in some novel or another where they were being bred by a mad scientist with nefarious intentions who reminded her of me.

(Bradley 2014, Ch. 11)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190053</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190053</i></b>
Relevant Part	brought them up	brought them up
Paraphrase 1	started a topic of conversation [phrasal]	started a topic of conversation [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	vomited [compositional]	vomited [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom; phrasal verb	figurative language; idiom; phrasal verb
Type	---	4: contrastive readings
Order	P: Par1+Par2→Par1/Par2 R: ---	P: Par1+Par2→Par1/Par2 R: Par1→Par1/Par2
Context	---	social context (salience); linguistic context (collocation, meta-language); cognitive context; sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

### **be in shock (waw190044)**

*[Charon/Charlotte has been electrocuted.]*

The police had been called and we were sipping cups of hot, sweet tea while we answered their inevitable questions. I suppose they thought we were **in shock**. But Charon was the one who'd got **the biggest shock** of all.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 14)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190044</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190044</i></b>
Relevant Part	in shock/got shock	in shock/got shock
Paraphrase 1	debilitated due to bad events	debilitated due to bad events
Paraphrase 2	exposed to a sudden large application of energy	exposed to a sudden large application of energy

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190044</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190044</i></b>
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; figurative language	collocation; figurative language
Type	---	4: contrastive readings
Order	P: Par1+Par2→Par1/Par2 R: ---	P: Par1+Par2→Par1/Par2 R: Par1→Par1/Par2
Context	cognitive context	linguistic context (collocation); cognitive context (salience); sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

### **be low (waw190048)**

We spent the night at a cheap motel on the edge of Amsterdam. Our money **was low** and **so were** we.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 10)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190048</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190048</i></b>
Relevant Part	was low	was low
Paraphrase 1	we had little money	we had little money
Paraphrase 2	our spirits were low	our spirits were low
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; ellipsis; figurative language	collocation; ellipsis; figurative language
Type	---	4: contrastive readings
Order	P: Par1/Par2 R: ---	P: Par1+Par2→Par1/Par2 R: Par1→Par1/Par2



	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190048</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190048</i>
Context	cognitive context	linguistic context (collocation); cognitive context; sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

**be off (waw190032)**

“Now, I give you fair warning,” shouted the Queen, stamping on the ground as she spoke; “either **you** or **your head must be off**, and that in about half no time! Take your choice!”

The Duchess took her choice, and was gone in a moment.

(Carroll 1865, Ch. 9)

	Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190032</i>	Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190032</i>
Relevant Part	you/your head must be off	you/your head must be off
Paraphrase 1	you have to go	you have to go
Paraphrase 2	you must be beheaded	you must be beheaded
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>+</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; phrasal verb	figurative language; phrasal verb
Type	4: contrastive readings	4: contrastive readings
Order	P: Par1/Par2 R: Par1/Par2→Par1	P: Par1/Par2 R: Par1→Par1/Par2
Context	cognitive context; sociocultural context (character)	social context (salience); linguistic context (collocation); cognitive context; sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

**enter the competition (waw190018)**

Gregor, the school porter, had been disqualified from javelin throwing. He had strolled across the field without looking, and although he hadn't actually **entered the competition**, one of the javelins had unfortunately **entered him**.

(Horowitz 1988b, Ch. 1)

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**Annotation 1, *i1waw190018***


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Relevant Part	entered the competition/entered him
Paraphrase 1	he had not put himself up as a contestant
Paraphrase 2	he had been pierced by a javelin
Comm. Level	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	element
Range	group compound
Relation	related
Phenomenon	collocation; polysemy
Type	4: contrastive readings
Order	P: Par1/Par2 R: Par1→Par1/Par2
Context	linguistic context (collocation); social context (salience); cognitive context

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**overtake s.o. (waw190030)**

I've been in a police car quite a few times and normally it's fun. But Snape was a slow driver. He didn't put on the siren and the only flashing light was his petrol gauge. By the time we got back to Skin Lane, **events had overtaken us**. So had half the traffic in London.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 2)

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**Annotation 1, *i1waw190030***


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**Annotation 2, *i2waw190030***


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Relevant Part	overtaken	overtaken
Paraphrase 1	caught us unprepared	caught us unprepared
Paraphrase 2	passed us by	passed us by
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; ellipsis	figurative language; ellipsis
Type	---	4: contrastive readings
Order	P: Par1/Par2 R: ---	P: Par1+Par2→Par1/Par2 R: Par1→Par1/Par2

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	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190030</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190030</i></b>
Context	---	linguistic context (collocation); cognitive context
Connection	change of communication level	

### form (**waw190042**)

That afternoon, the last day of the Christmas term, David had brought home his report card. It had not made pleasant reading.

“Eliot has not made progress,” the math teacher had written. “He can’t divide or multiply and will, I fear, add up to very little.”

“Woodwork?” the carpentry teacher had written. “I wish he would work!”

“If he stayed awake in class, it would be a miracle,” the religion teacher had complained.

“Very poor **form**,” the **form** master had concluded.

“He’ll never get ahead,” the headmaster had agreed.

Mr. Eliot had read all these comments with growing anger.

(Horowitz 1988a, Ch. 1)

	<b>Annotation 5, <i>i5waw190042</i></b>	<b>Annotation 6, <i>i6waw190042</i></b>
Relevant Part	form	form
Paraphrase 1	poor conduct	poor conduct
Paraphrase 2	year group	year group
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	element	element
Range	complex	complex
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	homonymy	homonymy
Type	4: contrastive readings	4: contrastive readings
Order	P: Par1/Par2 R: Par1	P: Par1+Par2→Par1/Par2 R: Par1/Par2
Context	linguistic context (co-text); sociocultural context	linguistic context (co-text); cognitive context (coherence); sociocultural context
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “add up to very little (*waw190042*)”, Type 2

⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “woodwork/would work (*waw190042*)”, Type 4

**full of holes (waw190033)**

This was tricky. We hadn't had time to make up a sensible explanation and our story – like my arm – was **full of holes**.

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 11)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190033</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190033</i></b>
Relevant Part	was full of holes	was full of holes
Paraphrase 1	our story had gaps	our story had gaps
Paraphrase 2	there where holes made by bullets in my arm	there where holes made by bullets in my arm
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; metaphor	figurative language; metaphor
Type	4: contrastive readings	4: contrastive readings
Order	P: Par1/Par2 R: ---	P: Par1+Par2→Par1/Par2 R: Par1/Par2
Context	cognitive context	linguistic context (collocation); cognitive context; sociocultural context (character)
Connection	change of communication level	

**hold one's breath (waw190015)**

Rincewind glanced at his sock. It was a stub of burnt wool, its brief career as a weapon of war having sent it beyond the help of any darning needle.

*Now kill him.*

Rincewind **held his breath**. The watching wizards **held their breath**. Even Death, who had nothing to hold but his scythe, **held it** tensely.

“No,” said Coin.

*You know what happens to boys who are bad.*

Rincewind saw the sourcerer's face go pale.

(Pratchett 1988a, Ch. 12)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190015</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190015</i></b>
Relevant Part	held his/their breath / held it (scythe)	held his/their breath / held it (scythe)
Paraphrase 1	suspending the act of respiration	suspending the act of respiration
Paraphrase 2	keeping from falling or supporting with the hand	keeping from falling or supporting with the hand
Comm. Level	mediating	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	element	element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	related	related
Phenomenon	collocation; polysemy	collocation; polysemy
Type	4: contrastive readings	4: contrastive readings
Order	P: Par1/Par1/Par2 R: ---	P: Par1+Par2→Par1/Par1/Par2 R: Par1→Par1/Par2
Context	linguistic context; sociocultural context (characters); cognitive context	linguistic context; sociocultural context (characters); cognitive context
Connection	change of communication level	

### land in (waw190084)

In this particular case, though, Rincewind couldn't go home because it actually wasn't there any more. There was a city straddling the river Ankh, but it wasn't one he'd ever seen before; it was white and clean and didn't smell like a privy full of dead herrings.

He **landed in** what had once been the Plaza of Broken Moons, and **also in** a state of some shock. There were fountains. There had been fountains before, of course, but they had oozed rather than played and they had looked like thin soup. There were milky flagstones underfoot, with little glittery bits in. And, although the sun was sitting on the horizon like half a breakfast grapefruit, there was hardly anyone around. Normally Ankh was permanently crowded, the actual shade of the sky being a mere background detail.

(Pratchett 1988a, Ch. 11)

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190084</i></b>
Relevant Part	landed in
Paraphrase 1	come to ground, land (lit.)
Paraphrase 2	end up in, land (fig.)

---

**Annotation 1, *i1waw190084***


---

Comm. Level	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element
Range	group compound
Relation	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; collocation
Type	4: contrastive readings
Order	P: Par1/Par2 R: Par1→Par1+Par2
Context	linguistic context (collocation); cognitive context

---

**let him down or out (waw190087)**

He sat up, and was surprised to find that while someone he was certainly inclined to think of as himself was sitting up, something very much like his body remained lying on the floor.

It was a pretty good body, incidentally, now he came to see it from outside for the first time. He had always been quite attached to it although, he had to admit, this did not now seem to be the case.

It was big and well-muscled. He'd looked after it. He'd allowed it a moustache and long-flowing locks. He'd seen it got plenty of healthy outdoor exercise and lots of red meat. Now, just when a body would have been useful, it had **let him down. Or out.**

On top of that, he had to come to terms with the tall, thin figure standing beside him. Most of it was hidden in a hooded black robe, but the one arm which extended from the folds to grip a large scythe was made of bone.

When one is dead, there are things one instinctively recognises.

(Pratchett 1988b, 14f)

---

**Annotation 1, *i1waw190087***


---

Relevant Part	let down/let out
Paraphrase 1	failed him
Paraphrase 2	released him
Comm. Level	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element
Range	group compound

---

---

**Annotation 1, *i1waw190087***


---

Relation	related
Phenomenon	figurative language; phrasal verb
Type	4: contrastive readings
Order	P: Par1/Par2 R: Par1→Par1/Par2
Context	linguistic context (collocation); cognitive context

---

**shot in the arm (waw190027)**

“If it was Charon,” he muttered, “he’ll think we’re dead now. And if he thinks we’re dead, he won’t try and kill us.”

“Right,” I agreed.

Tim brightened. “Well, I suppose that’s a **shot in the arm**.” Then he saw the blood.

“Nick!”

“What?”

“You’ve been **shot in the arm**.”

“I know.”

(Horowitz 1991, Ch. 10)

---

**Annotation 1, *i1waw190027***


---

**Annotation 2, *i2waw190027***


---

Relevant Part	shot in the arm	shot in the arm
Paraphrase 1	a much needed stimulant or encouragement [phrasal]	a much needed stimulant or encouragement [phrasal]
Paraphrase 2	been hit with a bullet in the arm [compositional]	been hit with a bullet in the arm [compositional]
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>-</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>0</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	group compound	group compound
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	figurative language; idiom; syntactic ambiguity	figurative language; idiom; syntactic ambiguity
Type	4: contrastive readings	4: contrastive readings
Order	P: Par1/Par2 R: Par1/Par2	P: Par1+Par2→Par1/Par2 R: Par1→Par1/Par2

---

	<b>Annotation 1, <i>i1waw190027</i></b>	<b>Annotation 2, <i>i2waw190027</i></b>
Context	social context (salience); linguistic context	social context (salience); linguistic context; cognitive context
Connection	change of communication level	

### **woodwork/would work (waw190042)**

That afternoon, the last day of the Christmas term, David had brought home his report card. It had not made pleasant reading.

“Eliot has not made progress,” the math teacher had written. “He can’t divide or multiply and will, I fear, add up to very little.”

“**Woodwork?**” the carpentry teacher had written. “I wish he **would work!**”

“If he stayed awake in class, it would be a miracle,” the religion teacher had complained.

“Very poor form,” the form master had concluded.

“He’ll never get ahead,” the headmaster had agreed.

Mr. Eliot had read all these comments with growing anger.

(Horowitz 1988a, Ch. 1)

	<b>Annotation 3, <i>i3waw190042</i></b>	<b>Annotation 4, <i>i4waw190042</i></b>
Relevant Part	woodwork/would work	woodwork/would work
Paraphrase 1	carpentry	carpentry
Paraphrase 2	would do s.th.	would do s.th.
Comm. Level	innermost	outermost
Dimension	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>	PS <sup>+</sup> / RS <sup>-</sup>
Trigger	complex element	complex element
Range	complex	complex
Relation	unrelated	unrelated
Phenomenon	homophony	homophony
Type	4: contrastive readings	4: contrastive readings
Order	P: Par1/Par2 R: Par1/Par1+Par2	P: Par1+Par2→Par1/Par2 R: Par1→Par1/Par2
Context	linguistic context (co-text); sociocultural context	linguistic context (co-text); cognitive context (coherence); sociocultural context
Connection	change of communication level	

⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “add up to very little (waw190042)”, Type 2

⇒ Additional Ambiguity: “form (waw190042)”, Type 4





# Abstract

Idioms have long been of interest to research in linguistics as well as literary studies. In this existing research, however, the productive potential of the ambiguity of idioms for aesthetic language use has never been a focus. This study on *Idioms and Ambiguity in Context* combines the interests of both fields, using a corpus taken from the field of children's literature, where we find a high measure of deliberate production of wordplay and ambiguity. It looks at the connection between *context* and our understanding of idiomatic expressions in either their phrasal or their compositional reading, asks when and how we notice the *ambiguity* of idiomatic expressions, and how this ambiguity is used in literary texts when playing with language. The specific ambiguity and the relevant properties of the immediate context are explored. The focal point is a close analysis of examples of idiomatic expressions used in literary texts.

This analysis explores how ambiguity is activated, if, how, and when it is perceived on the different levels of communication, and how the individual context features interact to achieve the observed effects. It emphasizes that ambiguous language needs context in order to be resolvable and that the playful way(s) in which authors use language leads to linguistic reflection and makes their readers aware of the flexibility of language as well as of the potential ambiguity of the idiomatic expression in certain contexts. Furthermore, the analysis reveals how fruitful the interdisciplinary work at the interface of linguistics and literary studies may be.



# Résumé

Depuis longtemps, les expressions idiomatiques ont présenté de l'intérêt pour la recherche en linguistique ainsi que dans les études littéraires. Cependant, dans la recherche existante, l'accent n'a jamais été mis sur le potentiel productif de l'ambiguïté des expressions idiomatiques pour un usage esthétique de la langue. Cette étude sur *idiomatismes et ambiguïté en contexte* combine les intérêts des deux domaines, en se basant sur un corpus tiré du domaine de la littérature pour enfants, où nous trouvons un taux élevé de production délibérée de jeux de mots et d'ambiguïté. Elle examine le lien entre le *contexte* et notre compréhension des expressions idiomatiques, aussi bien dans leur interprétation phraséologique que compositionnelle, et elle pose la question de savoir quand et comment nous remarquons *l'ambiguïté* des expressions idiomatiques, et comment cette ambiguïté est utilisée dans des textes littéraires lorsqu'on joue avec le langage. Elle explore l'ambiguïté spécifique et les propriétés pertinentes du contexte immédiat. Le point central est une analyse approfondie des exemples d'expressions idiomatiques utilisées dans des textes littéraires.

Cette analyse explore comment l'ambiguïté est activée, si, comment et quand elle est perçue aux différents niveaux de communication, et comment les facteurs contextuels spécifiques interagissent pour obtenir les effets observés. Elle souligne que le langage ambigu a besoin d'un contexte pour pouvoir être déchiffré et que la manière ludique dont les auteurs utilisent la langue conduit à une réflexion linguistique auprès de leurs lecteurs et les sensibilise à la flexibilité du langage ainsi qu'à l'ambiguïté potentielle de l'expression idiomatique dans certains contextes. Finalement, l'analyse montre à quel point la collaboration interdisciplinaire entre linguistique et études littéraires peut être fructueuse.



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