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**ABSTRACT**

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**THE PROBLEM OF SYNTACTIC AMBIGUITY**

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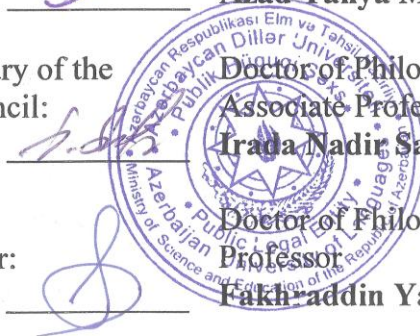
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## GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH

**Urgency of the theme and the degree of research.** It is known that information exchange is a process that takes place during people's coexistence and joint activity. During this process, they interact with each other, that is, they perceive and understand each other. In other words, they communicate. One of the most important elements of communication is mutual understanding. From the psycholinguistic point of view, it is impossible for people to understand each other absolutely. Interpersonal differences, experiences, emotions complicate the process of understanding. Language is the tool that most allows us to communicate our thoughts to each other, but even language is not enough to reflect reality. Language is a source of misunderstandings.<sup>1</sup> The widespread concept of ambiguity is the most obvious example of this lack of understanding and communication. Let's imagine that during communication we hear the expression [ə'tæks ɒn bʌsɪz] and we have difficulty understanding whether it is *attacks on buses* or *a tax on buses*<sup>2</sup>. In another situation, we say to the person next to us: "*Can you put the cat out?*" and while we expect the person to take the cat out in response, we hear "*Why? Is it on fire?*" Or in another situation, while waiting for the person to open the door for us by asking "*Can you open the door*", we simply get the answer "*Yes, I can*". As it can be seen, in the above-mentioned cases, the communication process did not take place in the expected form, and the reason for this is the misunderstanding of what was said. Ambiguity is the reason for this misunderstanding.

Ambiguity is derived from the Latin word *ambiguus* and means *ambiguity, uncertainty*.<sup>3</sup> The word ambiguity, which has a very wide range of usage, is used as a term in a number of scientific fields, such as logic, philosophy, mathematics, psycholinguistics and, of course, linguistics. Ambiguity, which is used as a linguistic phenomenon,

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<sup>1</sup> Exupery, A.S. *The Little Prince* / A.S.Exupery. Omilia Languages, – 2011. – p.47.

<sup>2</sup> Oaks, D. *Structural ambiguity in English* / D.Oaks. – New York: Continuum, – 2010. – p.39.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ambiguity>

means that language units have more than two meanings and interpretations.

It was noted that understanding is a very deep process and depends on various complex psychological and cognitive mechanisms. "How does this process take place?", "what causes misunderstandings?", "what should we do to understand each other properly?", "is there absolute understanding in general?" such questions have constantly made researchers from various scientific fields think. One of the issues at the center of this problem, which is always relevant, is the understanding of the sentence<sup>4</sup>. People's understanding of a sentence is a process consisting of factors such as phonetic-phonological analysis of each word, consideration of lexical and morphological information, syntactic structure and semantic interpretation of the sentence, and is a part of the general understanding process. It is, of course, impossible to thoroughly study this complex process and find answers to all questions, at least because the human brain spends very little time (a few milliseconds) for all of these things to happen<sup>5</sup>. Ambiguity, especially syntactic ambiguity, plays one of the most important roles in the study of such an important issue. The study of syntactically ambiguous sentences is necessary to explore the analytical processes involved in sentence comprehension in general. Syntactic ambiguity is one of the main linguistic phenomena that guides researchers to learn how the human brain processes a sentence and the mechanisms of the comprehension process in general, and this understudied phenomenon needs further investigation. At the same time, finding an answer to the reasons for the deliberate use of ambiguity, intentions to manipulate meaning, and attempts to distort understanding can open new horizons and lay the foundation for new approaches in research on understanding. Therefore, it is possible to evaluate this research work as a small step taken in this field.

Ambiguity has become one of the central issues of multidisciplinary research since the 60s of the last century and has

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<sup>4</sup> Sekerina, I. A. American theories of sentence parsing in the process of understanding // Linguistics Issues. – Moscow: – 1996. – p.1.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, – p.2

been investigated mainly by psycholinguists and computer linguists. The names of such researchers as G. Altmann, T. Bever, C. Donlevy, E. Garcia, J. Kess, R. Hoppe, M. Lefever, L. Ehri, D. McKay, D. Prideaux, W. Baker, J. Trueswell, M. Tanenhouse, M. Dynel, V. Ferreira, A. Franz should be mentioned in this regard. Linguistic analysis and description of ambiguity is mostly related to the names of scientists such as G. Hirst, A. Zwicky, J. Sadock, J. Kooij, D. Oaks, N. Stageberg. Ambiguity in the field of computer linguistics and artificial intelligence is one of the areas that attract the attention of researchers, but the presence of ambiguity in this sphere is considered more negative.

Although not purely related to the problem of syntactic ambiguity, "Algorithmic solution of verb ambiguity in the English-Azerbaijani machine translation system"<sup>6</sup>, "Ambiguity of complex syntactic constructions in English and Azerbaijani languages and their transformation possibilities"<sup>7</sup>, "Homonymy of syntactic units in modern Azerbaijani language"<sup>8</sup>, "Structural-semantic features of syntactic homonymy"<sup>9</sup> and "Psycholinguistic problems of syntactic units"<sup>10</sup> dissertations addressed the issue of ambiguity, and they are valuable studies we have come across in this field. However, there has not been any large-scale research that studies the phenomenon of syntactic ambiguity in modern English from linguistic and psycholinguistic aspects.

**The object and subject of the research.** The object of the research work is the ambiguity that manifests itself at the syntactic

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<sup>6</sup> Əliyev, Ə. İngiliscə-Azərbaycanca məşin tərcüməsi sistemində feilin çoxmənalılığının alqoritmik həlli: /filologiya üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis. / – Bakı, Azərbaycan Dillər Universiteti, 2012. – 139 s..

<sup>7</sup> Əliyeva, X. İngilis və Azərbaycan dillərində mürəkkəb sintaktik konstruksiyaların çoxmənalılığı və onların transformasiya imkanları: /filologiya üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis. / – Bakı, Azərbaycan Dillər Universiteti, 2016. – 134 s.

<sup>8</sup> Əliyeva, G. Müasir Azərbaycan dilində sintaktik vahidlərin omonimliyi: /filologiya üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis./ – Bakı: Bakı Dövlət Universiteti, 2017. – 185 s.

<sup>9</sup> Qocayeva, M.Ə. Sintaktik omonimliyin struktur-semantik xüsusiyyətləri: / filologiya üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis. avtoferatı. / – Bakı, Azərbaycan Dillər Universiteti, 2022. – 35 s.

<sup>10</sup> Xanbutayeva, L. Sintaktik vahidlərin psixolinqvistik problemləri: /filologiya elmləri doktoru dis. avtoferatı / – Bakı, Azərbaycan Dillər Universiteti, 2022. – 64 s.

level of the modern English language. The subject of the research work is the summarization and systematization of the results and knowledge obtained from the analysis of the forms and characteristics of ambiguity at the syntactic level.

**The research goals and objectives.** The main goal of our research is to correctly define the essence of the phenomenon of syntactic ambiguity in modern English and to reveal its true status and functions in natural languages, to comprehensively study the mechanisms of formation of this linguistic phenomenon and to investigate the effects of syntactically ambiguous language units in the comprehension process. For the implementation of these listed, the following tasks need to be fulfilled:

- To analyze the existing theoretical ideas and approaches related to the phenomenon of syntactic ambiguity in linguistics literature and to put forward a definition that can be considered generally acceptable;

- Clarifying whether ambiguity is a desirable or undesirable aspect of language;

- To compare ambiguity with other linguistic concepts (vagueness, "garden path" phenomenon, syntactic homonymy) and to explain the specificity of this phenomenon;

- To analyze the issue of understanding and solving ambiguous syntactic units;

- Propose a classification for syntactic ambiguity, examine its types and points of development;

- To identify cases of intentional use of syntactic ambiguity and to describe its manipulative nature.

**The research methods.** Linguistic description, syntagmatic analysis, comparative, transformational, contextual analysis were used during the research. As for the reasons for choosing these methods for research, it is intended to describe ambiguous linguistic elements by dividing them into constituent parts using the linguistic description method. Regarding the method of syntagmatic analysis, it should be noted that in order to solve syntactically ambiguous sentence structures, they should be divided into correct syntagms, so the reason for choosing this research method becomes clear.

The need to use the comparative method comes from comparing and confronting the examples shown in English into Azerbaijani, studying the degree of ambiguity in these two languages, and looking at the reasons why non-ambiguous linguistic units in Azerbaijani are ambiguous in English. During the research, the transformative possibilities of the language were also used to a great extent, because the meaning of ambiguous syntactic structures can be resolved in the correct and intended form through the transformation method. It is for this reason that the selection of the transformation method is important in this study.

The main reason for using the contextual analysis method comes from the role of the linguistic context in solving ambiguity, because it is exactly because of the context that ambiguity does not cause serious problems for language users in most cases, therefore the use of the contextual analysis method is necessary.

It should also be mentioned that the works and articles of Azerbaijani, English and Russian-speaking experts were used as sources in the preparation of the research.

**The main thesis statements to be defended:**

1. Ambiguity is considered as an aspect that weakens the pace of development of computer linguistics, but it does not cause serious comprehension problems for natural language users;

2. The functions performed by ambiguity in language are related to the functions performed by language in society;

3. The term "syntactic ambiguity" is the most successful and most suitable for naming the phenomenon of ambiguity manifested at the syntactic level of the language;

4. Ambiguous language units that exist at the syntactic level are quite numerous, but most of them are imperceptibly interpreted correctly by language users;

5. Ambiguity is the most effective manipulative tool available in language, and instances of intentional ambiguity serve wordplay in various types of discourse;

6. Ambiguity is the most important tool underlying verbal humor.

**The scientific novelty of the research.** Although there is a long history of reasoning and views on the phenomenon of ambiguity, the

history of the involvement of syntactic ambiguity in contemporary research is still young. For the first time, in this dissertation, the phenomenon of syntactic ambiguity is widely involved in the research and is investigated from both linguistic and psycholinguistic perspectives. Another scientific innovation of the dissertation is the analysis of the relationship between the phenomenon of ambiguity and the topic of humor in this research work.

**The theoretical and practical significance of research.** The theoretical importance of the research is that the generalizations, conclusions and propositions made here can be used as a theoretical source in the works to be written about the syntax of the English language, as well as general linguistics and psycholinguistics. On the other hand, in the dissertation, the relationship between ambiguity and humor is analyzed in the background of the general functions of language, so this relationship can be a means to lay the foundation for a new approach to the issue of the functions of language and ambiguity. It is possible to consider this work practically useful too. The results obtained from the work can be used in order to present methodical ideas regarding the reading of lectures on the grammar (syntax) of the English language in higher schools, in the compilation of textbooks and teaching aids, the conducting of new research in this direction in the future, and the analysis of ambiguous language units in the English language classes. In the dissertation, the syntactic interpretation of the vast majority of the materials presented in English is continuously focused on, and when appropriate, some of them are translated into Azerbaijani and compared, which greatly increases its practical importance.

**Approbation and application.** Regarding the topic of the dissertation, reports were made at various scientific conferences and department meetings, articles were published in local and foreign publications, abstracts presented at international and republican conferences were published. The materials of the research can be used in the writing of graduate work and master's theses. At the same time, research materials can be useful in writing textbooks and teaching aids.

**The name of the institution where the dissertation work was conducted.** The dissertation work was performed at the



Department of English Grammar of the Azerbaijan University of Languages.

**The total volume of the dissertation with characters indicating the volume of each structural section of the dissertation separately.** The dissertation work consists of the introduction, three chapters, the conclusion, the list of used literature. The introduction part of the dissertation is 8 pages (14 134 characters), Chapter I 50 pages (95 003 characters), Chapter II 48 pages (85 088 characters), Chapter III 27 pages (48 277 characters), the conclusion 2 pages (3 508 characters) with the total volume being 246 010 characters.

## **THE MAIN CONTENT OF THE RESEARCH**

In the “**Introduction**”, the relevance of the topic is justified, the object and subject of the research, goals and tasks, research methods, thesis statements presented for defense, scientific novelty of the work, its theoretical and practical importance are determined, and information is given about the structure of the dissertation.

**Chapter I** of the dissertation which is called “**The essence of the phenomenon of ambiguity**” consists of 4 paragraphs.

The first paragraph is “*General notes*”. It discusses the nature of this phenomenon, its status and function in the language, aspects that distinguish ambiguity from other neighbouring concepts, such as syntactic homonymy, vagueness of meaning, "garden path" phenomenon. This part mentions a number of definitions given to linguistic ambiguity, and summarizes these ideas and presents such a general definition: Ambiguity is the misunderstanding of the intended meaning (idea) as a result of the linguistic units belonging to different levels of the language having more than one meaning.

In order to shed more light on the essence of the phenomenon of ambiguity, this phenomenon has been widely compared with other neighboring concepts, such as the "garden path" phenomenon, vagueness, and syntactic homonymy.

The second paragraph of the first chapter is called “*Perception of Ambiguous Language Units and Resolution of Ambiguity*”. It is

mentioned here that in order to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of ambiguity, the issue of how it is perceived and resolved by the human brain is also highlighted in the dissertation. Both the linguistic and the physical context normally reduce the ambiguity of the utterance either to zero or to a pragmatically acceptable level for effective communication.<sup>11</sup> This phenomenon is called the resolution of ambiguity. Although the ambiguity is easily resolved in most cases, the mechanisms of this process have attracted considerable interest. It is not by chance that the study of ambiguity is one of the focus issues in linguistics, as well as one of the fields of research in psycholinguistics in recent decades. Psycholinguistic research shows that at different levels of language there are differences between the processing strategies of ambiguous sentences and non-ambiguous sentences,<sup>12</sup> but the main issue at the center of these studies is whether people process one or both/multiple meanings of an ambiguous sentence at the same time when they are unaware of the presence of ambiguity in the sentence. Depending on this, two main hypotheses have been proposed regarding the processing of ambiguous units: the single-meaning approach and the double/multiple meaning approach<sup>13</sup>.

Ambiguous sentences differ from ordinary sentences in a number of ways, for example, one of them is that the time required to process ambiguous sentences (perception time) is longer<sup>14</sup>. Another issue is that they are more difficult to process, and this is due to the fact that they are more cognitively complex. A psycholinguistic study of ambiguous sentences may lead to more precise conclusions about sentence processing in general.

In the research work, a number of experiments conducted so far were addressed to show the mechanisms of resolving the

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<sup>11</sup> Salvatore, A. Linguistic theories of humor/ A.Salvatore. – Berlin-New York: Mouton de Gruyter, – 1994. – p.94.

<sup>12</sup> Kess, J.F. Ambiguity in psycholinguistics / J.F.Kess, R.A.Hoppe. – Amsterdam: John Benjamins B.V., – 1981. – p.1.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, – p.1.

<sup>14</sup> Николаевич, А.В. Движения глаз при чтении предложений с синтаксической неоднозначностью в русском языке: / Автореф. дис. ... канд. биол. наук. / – Москва, 2013. – 27 с.

phenomenon of ambiguity, and it was established that linguistic competence, context, correct linguistic analysis, acoustic signals, etc., are involved in this process. Besides, it can affect the individual characteristics, mental skills, and creativity of language users.

In order to correctly define the nature of the phenomenon of ambiguity, its status in language should be clarified. For this reason, ambiguity has been investigated in the background of the "blessing or curse" debate for language. The third paragraph is thus called "***Ambiguity: a curse or a blessing for language***".

In fact, the ambiguous nature of the language has puzzled many. Perhaps, it could be argued that it doesn't matter that language is ambiguous because the cognitive mechanisms we have enable us to resolve ambiguity, and most of the time we don't notice the ambiguity, but this argument doesn't explain why ambiguity is so prevalent in language, because those mechanisms exist due to the fact that languages are ambiguous; If there was no ambiguity, there would be no means to resolve it. Despite our ambiguity resolution mechanisms, misunderstandings sometimes occur, and their outcome can be humorous as well as disastrous. N. Chomsky notes in "Interview on Minimalism": "*...if you want to make sure that we always understand the other side correctly, then language does not fully serve this purpose, because language has a characteristic of ambiguity. If we always want to express the idea we want to convey in a simple and short form, no, the language does not have this feature either.*"<sup>15</sup>

A theoretical explanation of the question of the origin of ambiguity was actually given centuries ago by the eminent Greek philosopher and scientist Aristotle. According to his theory, the number of elements that make up human language is much less than the realities that these elements express, that is, reality is more complex than language<sup>16</sup>.

Researchers' views on the role of ambiguity in language are ambiguous. While some consider it a positive thing for the language,

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/on-nature-and-language/an-interview-on-minimalism>

<sup>16</sup> Pehar, D. Diplomatic ambiguity: Language, power, law / D.Pehar. LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, – 2011. – p.16.

other groups of scholars have noted the importance of avoiding it as much as possible. Researchers from the University of Rochester and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, S. Piantadosi, H. Tilly, E. Gibson, state that ambiguity is an advantage for language because it makes communication short and easy. It is argued that if context conveys sufficient information about meaning, non-ambiguous language will be redundant and unnecessary, and consequently ineffective. The approach of the mentioned researchers is based on the theory established by G.K. Zipf in 1949, as G.K. Zipf notes in his work "Human behavior and the principle of the least effort" that language is very close to being the most optimal means for human communication.<sup>17</sup>

A second advantage of ambiguity is that it allows for the reuse of language units, especially words that are easier to say and understand.

Trying to give a cognitive explanation of ambiguity, T. Wasow et al. point out the possibility of its saving the human brain from overload and helping to manipulate meaning. The authors point out that ambiguity is rarely harmful to the communication process, but on the contrary, it arises from the requirements of effective communication and emphasizes that it serves effective communication. A person can overcome and solve any ambiguity with a sufficiently informative context, because the human brain has special mechanisms for sentence processing (Human Sentence Processing Mechanisms).<sup>18</sup>

Some researchers generally believe that misunderstandings caused by ambiguities are non-existent. G.Simpson writes that when taken alone, classic examples of ambiguity such as "*The men decided to wait by the bank*", "*Visiting relatives can be a nuisance*", "*The shooting of the hunters was terrible*" are not like the types of sentences we hear and encounter every day. They are simply "pedagogical" examples that can be used to illustrate ambiguity.<sup>19</sup> In sentences that we encounter every day in daily conversation, for

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<sup>17</sup> <http://colala.berkeley.edu/papers/piantadosi2012communicative.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> <https://web.stanford.edu/~wasow/Lapointe.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Gorfein, S.D. Resolving semantic ambiguity / S.D.Gorfein. – New York: Springer-Verlag, – 1989. – p.13-14.

example, "What would you say to an omelet?"<sup>20</sup> the meaning is clear even if there is ambiguity in a sentence and it is true for almost all ambiguous sentences we come across in everyday situations.

A similar opinion is voiced by P. Culicover and R. Jackendoff: "...speakers may be tolerant of "imperfections" such as ambiguity, because they have pragmatics to help guide interpretation. A tolerance for ambiguity in turn may make it possible to communicate in less time and with less effort to achieve precision". Apparently, these linguists state that language users are tolerant of ambiguity, which is regarded as a "defect" in language, and correctly interpret what is intended through pragmatic factors. Tolerating ambiguity, in turn, allows one to achieve precision in the communication process with less time and less effort<sup>21</sup>.

G. Prideaux and W. Baker note that the cases where ambiguity remains a "problem" are cases where comedians in search of cheap laughter manipulate the meaning and linguists take ambiguous language units out of context and record them as examples in an isolated form.<sup>22</sup>

As mentioned, although one group of researchers advocates ambiguity, another group calls it a "curse" for language. Many people are surprised that natural languages are so ambiguous, and it is stated that the presence of ambiguity in language must be explained. A computer system sometimes provides hundreds of interpretations of syntactically ambiguous language units, which are more problematic for computational linguists.

Computational linguists K. Church and R. Patil write: "Ambiguity is a practical problem."<sup>23</sup> Apparently, ambiguity is

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<sup>20</sup> Ellis, L. *Medicine for a Merry Heart* / L.Ellis. – US: Book Venture Publishing, – 2017. – p.3.

<sup>21</sup> Culicover W. *Simpler Syntax* / W.Culicover, P.R.Jackendoff. – New York: OUP, – 2005. – p.542.

<sup>22</sup> Prideaux, D.G., Baker, W.J. *The recognition of ambiguity // Experimental Linguistics: Integration of theories and applications, Studies in the Sciences of Language Series 3*, – 1980. – p.203.

<sup>23</sup> Church, K., Patil R. *Coping with syntactic ambiguity or how to put the block in the box on the table // American Journal of Computational Linguistics – 1982. Vol.8, №3-4, – p.139.*

considered to be an issue that complicates natural language processing in computational linguistics.

One of the issues reflected in Chapter I is the question of classification of linguistic ambiguity, so the fourth paragraph which is called "*The types of linguistic ambiguity*" has been entirely devoted to this issue. Taking into account the lack of standard approach to this issue, some existing divisions were shown in the research work and finally, 4 types were distinguished in the classification of the phenomenon of linguistic ambiguity based on the levels of the language: phonological, lexical, semantic and syntactic.

It is clear that phonological ambiguity occurs only in spoken speech and does not cause any problems in written speech. For example:

*Teacher: Use the word "fascinate" in a sentence.*

*Student: There are ten buttons on my coat, but I can only fasten eight.*<sup>24</sup> As can be seen, there is a phonological ambiguity due to the words "fascinate vs fasten eight".

Lexical ambiguity is the phenomenon of ambiguity observed at the lexical, that is, word level of the language. M.C. McDonald and others write: "*Almost all words in the English lexicon exhibit a nonzero degree of ambiguity, some acutely so.*"<sup>25</sup> Based on this information, it is considered that almost all words of the English vocabulary are ambiguous. Nevertheless, this type of ambiguity is easy to resolve, and this is due to the fact that when we encounter such a word in a sentence, impossible meanings are automatically excluded with the help of syntactic and semantic factors, for example, "*Fred could not bear the thought of another piece of pie*".<sup>26</sup> When hearing the sentence "bear", other meanings of the word

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<sup>24</sup> O'Shaughnessy, D. Speech processing: A dynamic and optimization-oriented approach / D.O'Shaughnessy, L.Deng. – New York: Marcel Dekker Inc., – 2003. – 308 p.

<sup>25</sup> MacDonald, C.M., Pearlmutter, J.N., Seidenberg, S.M. Lexical Nature of Syntactic Ambiguity Resolution // Psychological Review, – 1994. Vol.101, №4, – p.677.

<sup>26</sup> Prideaux, D.G., Baker, W.J. The recognition of ambiguity // Experimental Linguistics: Integration of theories and applications, Studies in the Sciences of Language Series 3, – 1980. – p.203.

"bear" and the possibility of being a noun are removed from the parsing process, and therefore, normally, lexical ambiguity does not pose a great threat to understanding.

As for semantic ambiguity, although there are many disputes about this type of ambiguity, the most complete approach was presented by M. Awwad. The author himself, referring to D. Cruse, writes that semantic ambiguity is the uncertainty of the general logical meaning of the sentence when there is no syntactic or lexical ambiguity within the sentence.<sup>27</sup> The given definition can be considered reasonable, and it is clear from the definition that semantic ambiguity is more applicable to sentences. For example, *Mary and Jack are married*. The reason this sentence can be an example of semantic ambiguity is that, although there is no lexical or syntactic ambiguity in the sentence, it is difficult to understand the general meaning of the sentence implies whether Mary and Jack are husband and wife, or simply that they are both married (in terms of marital status).

Syntactic ambiguity is the arrangement of word combinations and components within a sentence in such a way that it gives rise to two or more different meanings and can lead to different syntactic relations between them, for example, when we say "an English teacher", it can be interpreted as "the teacher is of English nationality" or "that teacher teaches English language". Syntactic ambiguity is not limited to this type of phrases only, so if the main component has more than one determiner, the syntactic relations between them can also be ambiguous, for example, when we say "an old book seller"<sup>28</sup> do we mean "a person who sells old books" or "a book trader who is elderly/ old?"

Ambiguity observed within the sentence has a similar nature; more than one syntactic analysis of ambiguous sentences is possible, for example, should the sentence "*I found her an experienced secretary*" be interpreted as "*I consider her an experienced*

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<sup>27</sup> Awwad, M. The Ambiguous Nature of Language // International J.Soc.Sci. & Education, – 2017. Vol.7, Issue 4, – p.203.

<sup>28</sup> Oaks, D. Structural ambiguity in English / D.Oaks. – New York: Continuum, – 2010. – p.16.

*secretary*" or "*I found an experienced secretary for her*"? Depending on the intended meanings, even though "I" appears in the function of subject and "found" predicate in both sentences, in the first interpretation, "her an experienced secretary" should be analyzed as a complex object, and in the second case, as two separate objects.

In conclusion, it is stated that since the number of language units and realities is disproportionate, the presence of ambiguity in the language should be accepted as a natural state. Ambiguous language units are not even considered by the human brain unless they are taken out of context. For this reason, it can be argued that there are very few pure ambiguities in the language. Any linguistic unit realized in communication is able to correctly express the intended meaning with the help of the context, even if it is ambiguous. On the other hand, ambiguity also helps to make speech an effective communication tool. We believe that ambiguity should not be viewed as a disadvantage for language users, and that a language completely free of ambiguity would cause more problems than its current state.

Chapter II, called "**The Essence of Syntactic Ambiguity**" delves into the phenomenon of syntactic ambiguity and consists of 2 paragraphs. The first paragraph is called "***The types of syntactic ambiguity***". Once the essence of this phenomenon is clear, the second important factor is to determine its classification and the principles. Since there are certain gaps in the existing divisions in the linguistic literature, 3 main criteria are put forward to propose a justified classification of syntactic ambiguity: 1) Ease of resolution; 2) Occurrence in the deep and surface structure; 3) Nature.

According to the first principle, syntactic ambiguity is divided into two types: local and global.<sup>29</sup> Local ambiguity is temporary and disappears at the end of the sentence. To exemplify, garden path sentences are an example of a case of local ambiguity, because with a deeper analysis, the ambiguity is removed and the intended meaning of the sentence is understood. In case of global ambiguity, a deeper and longer analysis is needed. Most ambiguous syntactic units

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<sup>29</sup> Секерина, И.А. Американские теории синтаксического анализа предложения в процессе понимания // – Москва: Вопросы Языкознания. – 1996. – с.101



belong to global ambiguity. There are two or more different syntactic analyzes of sentences in which this type of ambiguity is observed.

Depending on the occurrence in the deep and surface structure, syntactic ambiguity is distinguished as deep structure ambiguity and surface structure ambiguity.<sup>30</sup> It is known that according to the rules of generative transformation, two structural representations of the sentence are used and two layers are distinguished in each sentence: the deep structure and the surface structure. The former corresponds to the order of the words in the sentence, but the latter contains the relationships between the constituents for meaning,<sup>31</sup> for example, although the surface structure of the sentences "*He stole the car*" and "*The car was stolen by him*" are different, they are the same at the deep structure. Also, since the sentence "*John bought the flower for Susan*"<sup>32</sup> is syntactically ambiguous, its meanings are different. When analyzing this sentence, in the deep structure, it can be interpreted as both "*John bought flowers for Susan as a present*" and "*John bought flowers for Susan because she asked him to, but maybe he will give the flowers to someone else.*" In each case, these differences become apparent only when examining the deep and surface structure.

In the case of deep structure ambiguity, the syntactic unit can be parsed into syntagms in a different way, and the resulting tree diagrams are also different. For example, the sentence "*The stout doctor's wife stayed at home*" can be shown.<sup>33</sup> In this sentence, the word "stout" can be related to both the word "doctor" and the word "wife". Deep structure ambiguity has a deeper meaning and manifests itself in the syntactic roles and functions between individual words in the sentence, for example, let's analyze the

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<sup>30</sup> Kess, J.F. Ambiguity in psycholinguistics / J.F.Kess, R.A.Hoppe. – Amsterdam: John Benjamins B.V., – 1981. – p.13.

<sup>31</sup> Veysəlli, F. Struktur dilçiliyin əsasları / F.Veysəlli. Studia philologica II, – Bakı: Mütərcim, – 2008. – s.182.

<sup>32</sup> Carroll, D.W. Psychology of Language / D.W.Carroll. – US: Thomson, – 2008. – p.133.

<sup>33</sup> Prideaux, D.G., Baker, W.J. The recognition of ambiguity // Experimental Linguistics: Integration of theories and applications, Studies in the Sciences of Language Series 3, – 1980. – p.203.

sentence "*The mayor ordered the police to stop drinking*".<sup>34</sup> Despite expressing two different meanings, this sentence, which is syntactically ambiguous, can be divided into syntagms in only one form. Then it can be asked, what is the factor that creates ambiguity in the sentence? The point is that according to the first meaning, it is the policeman himself who is drinking, and the mayor orders the policeman to stop drinking. According to the second meaning, the person or persons drinking are others, and the mayor orders the police to stop it. As it can be seen, in the case of deep structure ambiguity, the relationships between words in the sentence, their roles in the sentence constitute ambiguity.

Based on the principle of the nature of ambiguities, 5 types were distinguished: analytical, attachment, coordination, elliptical, and part-of-speech ambiguities, and extensive information was given about each of them in the research work. They are as follows:

1) **Analytical** – Analytical ambiguity arises when the nature and status of one of the elements in the sentence is doubtful, for example, in the sentence "*I want the books on the table*" "on the table" can be considered both as a prepositional phrase and as an attribute phrase.<sup>35</sup> Accordingly, the sentence can be interpreted in two different forms: a) I want the books which are on the table at the moment; b) I want the books to be put on the table.

2) **Attachment** – In this type of ambiguity, it is difficult to determine which member the constituent belongs to in the sentence, which member it modifies. G. Hirst writes that the most widespread form of attachment ambiguity is related to prepositional phrases, as it is impossible to determine whether this phrase belongs to the preceding noun/noun phrase or to the verb of the sentence.<sup>36</sup> Although attempts have been made to automatically process attachment ambiguity, the accuracy of these results is still questionable,<sup>37</sup> for example, in the

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<sup>34</sup> McKay, D.G., Bever, T.G. In search of ambiguity // Perception and Psychophysics, – 1967. Vol.2, Issue 5,– p.193.

<sup>35</sup> Hirst, G. Semantic interpretation and the resolution of ambiguity / G.Hirst. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, – 1987. – p.137.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, – s.131.

<sup>37</sup> Hindle, D., Rooth, M. Structural ambiguity and lexical relations // Computational Linguistics, – Vol.19. – 1993. №1, – p.103.

sentence "*The police shot the rioters with guns*", "with guns" can refer to both the word "shot" and the word "the rioters".<sup>38</sup> That is to say, the sentence can be understood in two different ways: a) *The police shot the armed rioters*; b) *The police shot the rioters with a gun*.

3) **Coordination** – Coordination ambiguity is observed when more than one conjunction is used in the sentence, for example, the sentence *I hugged Mary and John and Paul saw me* can be divided into syntagms in two different forms: a) I hugged Mary and (John and Paul) saw me; b) I hugged (Mary and John) and Paul saw me.<sup>39</sup>

4) **Elliptical** – As it is known, ellipsis is the omission of any part of the sentence for the sake of brevity and the omitted part can be understood and restored. This linguistic tool not only serves to make the speech more dynamic, but also causes ambiguity, so that the elliptical type of ambiguity raises doubts about the presence of ellipsis in the sentence, for example, the sentence "*John knows a more clever man than Kim*" is a case of elliptical ambiguity. Whether the original version of the sentence was "*John knows a more clever man than Kim does*", that is, whether it was subject to ellipsis, creates ambiguity. If there is an ellipsis in the sentence, this sentence should be considered as a complex sentence with a subordinate clause: "Who" acts as the subject of the subordinate clause, and the predicate of the sentence is omitted. Assuming no ellipsis, the sentence presented is a simple sentence and "Who" is the object of the sentence.

5) **Part of Speech Ambiguity** – As the name suggests, in this type of ambiguity, it is doubtful which part of speech a certain word in a sentence belongs to, for example, consider the conversation between a father and his little son in the following dialogue:

*Jimmy. Dad, did you ever hear a rabbit bark?*

*Taste: Of course not. Rabbits don't bark!*

*Jimmy: But my teacher told us that rabbits eat cabbage and bark.*<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> <https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/thematic/ambiguity/v-1>

<sup>39</sup> Awwad, M. The Ambiguous Nature of Language // International J.Soc.Sci. & Education, – 2017. Vol.7, Issue 4, – p.203.

<sup>40</sup> Ahmed, M.F. Taxonomy of Structural Ambiguity in Humour With Reference To Translation // Journal of Al-Frahedis Arts, 2012, Issue 13, – p.21.

Ambiguity in the presented passage consists of the little boy's inability to choose the meaning of the word "bark", which acts as both a noun (bark) and a verb (bark) in the sentence.

We noted that syntactic ambiguity is the arrangement of words in a sentence in such a way that the sentence can have more than one different meaning. Almost all parts of speech are involved in this process to some extent. One of the issues investigated in Chapter II is the cases where individual parts of speech enable ambiguous sentence structures. This issue is explored in the second paragraph which is called "*The features of syntactic ambiguity usage*". For this purpose, it is studied how verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns (main parts of speech), and prepositions and conjunctions (auxiliary parts of speech) contribute to ambiguity based on examples selected from humorous texts. It became clear that both main and auxiliary parts of speech participate in creating ambiguity to some extent. Based on the examples presented in the dissertation, we can say that the ambiguity of both the main and auxiliary parts of speech stems from the lack of clear morphological properties, having more than one lexical meaning, homonymy with other parts of speech, etc.

To sum up what has been stated so far, although most linguistic units are ambiguous, we do not think it is necessary to struggle with this, because in addition to linguistic and extralinguistic factors, there is also an innate competence of language users to understand what is being said. For this reason, despite being ambiguous, natural languages have proven themselves to be a means of communication between people and serve this purpose well. On the other hand, creating intentional ambiguity is evidence that language is not only a means of communication.<sup>41</sup> This can be explained by the fact that deliberately resorting to ambiguity is contrary to the desire of language users to convey some information; here we are talking about the manipulation of the laws of language and logic.

**In chapter III**, which is called "**The manipulative nature of ambiguity**", we are looking at this issue, that is, the manipulative characteristics of the phenomenon of ambiguity. It consists of two paragraphs. The first one is "*The usage of ambiguity in humorous*

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<sup>41</sup> Crystal, D. Language Play / D.Crystal. – UK: Penguin, – 1998. – p.1-2.

*texts*". Deliberately creating ambiguity may arise from the desire to "play" with language to confuse the other party, to divert the necessary meaning to the first impression, or to cause humor. We can see that more often in advertising slogans, diplomatic and humorous texts, as well as in newspaper headlines. Addressing ambiguity in advertising slogans can be related to both the purpose of creating memorable and effective slogans, and the need to avoid the problem in cases of consumer dissatisfaction.<sup>42</sup> According to statistics, 44% of advertisements can give way to more than one meaning by presenting incomplete or ambiguous information.<sup>43</sup> The two meanings created through ambiguity in advertising slogans always seem to be a solution to those working in this sector, as well as in politics, advertising, etc., according to various theories of word processing. Deliberate ambiguity is favored over other rhetorical devices.<sup>44</sup>

As for diplomatic texts, the reason for resorting to ambiguities in this case is clear; if politicians answer the questions addressed to them in a way that can be interpreted in two ways, they can insure themselves against various unpleasant situations and solve any conflict in a more peaceful way.<sup>45</sup>

In order to explore the manipulative nature of ambiguity, two spheres were chosen in the research: humor and newspaper headlines. The reason for this is that linguistic ambiguity manifests itself in a clearer form in these two types of discourse. Ambiguity is always regarded as a negative influence on comprehension in legal documents, academic writing samples, and other serious texts, but it is important to address it in humorous texts. Ambiguity is one of the most important elements in any written or spoken speech in the comedy genre, and this linguistic phenomenon is one of the techniques comedians use over and over again in their writing or

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<sup>42</sup> Romanenko, E. Linguistic Analysis of On-line Advertising in English / E.Romanenko. Bachelor thesis, Charles University, – 2014. – p.15.

<sup>43</sup> Han, K.W., Choi, H. Use of ambiguity in advertising creativity: a cross-cultural perspective // Indian Journal of Science and Technology, – 2015. Vol.8. №26, – p.1.

<sup>44</sup> Lagerwerf, L. Deliberate ambiguity in slogans // John Benjamins Publishing, Document Design, – 2002. Vol.3. №3, – p.245.

<sup>45</sup> Pehar, D. Diplomatic ambiguity: Language, power, law / D.Pehar. LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, – 2011. – p.27-28.

performances. The research work explained the essence, importance, functions, the role in society, main features and types of humor and addressed the issue of its relationship with ambiguity.

Although many types of humor are distinguished, the type in the focus of research is verbal humor. Verbal humor means that humor is expressed only through linguistic means. To illustrate, caricatures, funny facial expressions and walking, someone's feet getting caught in a banana peel, or the actions of Rowan Atkinson who became popular as Mr. Bean are not verbal humor cases. Verbal humor is interesting for linguists because language tools and possibilities play a role in achieving a humorous effect. S. Attardo states that "during the modern linguistic study of humor, there are two concepts that are constantly in focus: polysemy and ambiguity".<sup>46</sup> However, not all instances of linguistic ambiguity lead to humor, so ambiguity alone is not sufficient for a humorous effect.

Ambiguity can be used both planned and unplanned. The interlocutor's deliberate use of ambiguity can be caused by various reasons, and it is usually considered contrary to P. Grice's "principle of cooperation" in communication.<sup>47</sup> If ambiguity does not arise in a purposeful form, it may go unnoticed in the communication process and further it becomes clarified and resolved. The extent to which verbal humor based on ambiguity makes us laugh depends on the resolution of the ambiguity.

G. Ritchie writes that various types of ambiguity are the main means of verbally expressed humor.<sup>48</sup> A similar idea was put forward by V. Raskin: "*Deliberate ambiguity will be shown to underlie much, if not all, of verbal humor.*"<sup>49</sup> Apparently, V. Raskin states that intentional ambiguity is the basis of many, if not all, types of verbal humor.

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<sup>46</sup> Salvatore, A. Linguistic theories of humor/ A.Salvatore. – Berlin-New York: Mouton de Gruyter, – 1994. – p.32.

<sup>47</sup> Salvatore, A. The Routledge handbook of language and humor / A.Salvatore. – New York-London: Routledge, – 2017. – p.81.

<sup>48</sup> Ritchie, G. The linguistic analysis of jokes / G.Ritchie. – London: Routledge, – 2004. – p.39].

<sup>49</sup> Raskin, V. Semantic mechanisms of humor / V.Raskin. Dordrecht-Boston-Lancaster: D.Reidel Publishing Company, – 1985. – p.XIII.

V. Raskin has a very interesting approach to the issue of deliberately using ambiguity in humorous texts. According to this approach, the deliberate use of ambiguity during communication to play word games is the reason why communication does not go as expected. This also contradicts the idea that "*language is the most basic means of communication*", but V. Raskin noted that using language not only in "serious" but also in "comic" mode is based on the mutual consent of the parties, and the resulting communication process is "*unrealistic communication*" called (non-bona fide communication). Ambiguity in serious informative texts is considered as an unpleasant obstacle to communication, but it is an important element of non-bona fide communication presented by V. Raskin. The author states that when using humor during communication, despite the violation of P. Grice's "*principles of cooperation*", rules specific to communication, which are called purely unrealistic, are followed, and the speaker, for example, using signals, such as "*Have you heard the one about?*", "*Let me tell you a joke*", "*Wanna hear a joke*", "*Listen, this is funny*" intends to announce in advance that he will "play with the language".<sup>50</sup>

In order to clarify the nature of verbal humor, the dissertation refers to various verbal jokes and shows that depending on the level of the language, verbal jokes are divided into phonological, lexical and syntactic types such as ambiguity. Based on this classification, examples are presented for each verbal joke throughout the dissertation.

One of the issues touched upon when talking about verbal humor is its use in foreign language teaching. It should be noted that verbal jokes based on phonological, lexical, or syntactic ambiguity and humorous texts in general provide rich material for the teaching process.<sup>51</sup> Acquaintance of students with such texts not only increases their linguistic competence, but also helps them to familiarise themselves with the culture of that nation. It is true that

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<sup>50</sup> Salvatore, A. The Routledge handbook of language and humor / A.Salvatore. – New York-London: Routledge, – 2017. – p.81.

<sup>51</sup> Semiz, O. EFL learners' understanding of linguistic ambiguity in language-based jokes // Narrative and language studies, – 2014. Vol.2, Issue 2, – p.2

for the successful use of the mentioned texts in the educational process, it is necessary to apply them in classes for students with high language competence, because the perception of humor in the presented text and causing laughter depends on the resolution of ambiguities, which, of course, requires language competence.

Another area of discourse – newspaper headlines – was also studied to investigate ambiguity as a means of manipulation. It was discussed in the second paragraph which is called “*The characteristics of ambiguity usage in newspaper headlines*”.

A newspaper headline is a part of a newspaper article that summarizes its content and is also written in a larger font. Usually, it is stated that it has 1) nominative, 2) informative, 3) expressive-appellative, 4) advertising and 5) dividing functions.<sup>52</sup>

Newspaper headlines are the first thing that catches the reader's attention and are usually the only readable part of a newspaper. Each newspaper headline expresses the general content of the news in a very short form and guides the reader whether to read the rest of the article or not. Due to the principle of saving space, there are many omissions in newspaper titles. Since the main purpose of the newspaper headline is to express the general content of the news, words with semantic load are kept and structural words are discarded. The resulting sentence looks grammatically different as a result of these changes. Due to the omissions, sometimes there are enough cases of inconsistency between the headline and the actual content of the news. This fact may disappoint and confuse the reader after reading the full story. So, newspaper headlines do not always provide a summary of the article and news: sometimes the sole purpose of the newspaper's editorial staff is to arouse the reader's interest.<sup>53</sup>

The best newspaper headlines aim to both inform the reader and convey the rest of the story, which is why newspaper headlines are so strategically important. “*The best headlines both "tell and*

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<sup>52</sup> Иноземцева, Н.В. Функциональные особенности заголовков англоязычных газетных статей // Вестник Оренбургского государственного университета, – 2015. №11(186), – с.145.

<sup>53</sup> Abdulla, Q. Linguistic features of newspaper headlines // Al-Anbar University of Language and Literature, – 2012. Issue 7. – p.194.



*sell", that is, they tell the reader quickly what the news is and persuade the reader that the story is worth reading."*<sup>54</sup>

In addition to the strategic importance of the newspaper headline, it is also necessary to talk about its impact on potential and real readers. In general, newspapers, which affect both the mood and worldview of a person, direct the attention of the society to the issues that society considers important by means of their headlines. In order to be memorable and effective, alongside with ambiguity, puns, alliteration, emotive words, as well as other rhetorical devices are used. It should be noted that puns used in newspaper headlines are based on "common and cultural knowledge", so those who live in the same society and share the same culture find puns easier to understand.

Even if not all newspaper headlines are linguistically ambiguous, in most cases they are difficult to comprehend and correctly interpret from the first reading. For this reason, the headline should be treated with skepticism until the entire article (news) is read. In the first chapter of the research work, we stated that any communicative system operates with the principles of clarity and conciseness. We noted that the desire to convey more ideas with fewer words can result in ambiguity, which distorts the process of understanding. The main reason why newspaper headlines are ambiguous is related to this compactness. In newspaper titles, structural words such as articles, determiners, and auxiliary verbs are omitted. As a result of these omissions, it becomes difficult to determine the syntactic function of some words. The fact that English belongs to the group of inflected languages, the prevalence of conversion phenomenon, the abundance of homonyms, and the fact that the relations between words in a sentence are determined not by means of suffixes, but by fixed word order, create a broad basis for ambiguity in newspaper headlines where structural words are discarded. For example, the newspaper headline "*Killer sentenced to die for second time in 10 years*"<sup>55</sup> is ambiguous as well as laughable, because the prepositional phrase "for second time" comes directly after the word "to

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<sup>54</sup> Ludwig, M.D. Modern News Editing / M.D.Ludwig, G.Gilmore. – US: Blackwell Publishing, – 2005. – p.107.

<sup>55</sup> <https://studylib.net/doc/7265872/ambiguous-newspaper-headlines-headlines-frequently-try-to-be>

die" in the sentence, so there is a funny implication that he is already dead and is again sentenced to death for the second time. However, if we apply the combination "for second time" to the word "sentenced" in the newspaper title, we will understand that the news is about a murderer who was sentenced to death twice in ten years. Upon reading the article, it is understood that the murderer, who committed a crime and later was pardoned after the first death sentence, was sentenced to this punishment for the second time in ten years.

Although ambiguity can be observed in every aspect of language, newspaper headlines stand out as one of the most important sources of ambiguity. It is difficult for readers who are not aware of the phenomenon of ambiguity and its processing characteristics to correctly understand newspaper headlines. Studies show that newspaper headlines written by native-speaking journalists are more ambiguous than those written by non-native-speaking journalists.<sup>56</sup> Although the reason for this is not stated in the study, we assume that native speakers have more opportunities to manipulate the language because of their higher competence in their language.

One of the biggest problems in understanding newspaper headlines is the temporal ambiguity that most of them have. In the so-called "garden-path" sentences, where temporal ambiguity is common, there is a difference between the original interpretation of the sentence and its true interpretation. In these sentences, the syntactic decisions we make about the sentence change when we reach the end of the sentence, the sentence undergoes reprocessing, and correct understanding occurs. Newspaper headlines are a clear example of what we are saying.

All example sentences analyzed in Chapter III of the dissertation are newspaper headlines taken from various online newspaper websites and social media platforms.

Based on the presented examples, we conclude that ambiguity is one of the characteristics of newspaper headlines, and it makes newspaper headlines more attention-grabbing by sometimes

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<sup>56</sup> Khamahani, G., Tahirov, M. Focus on structural and lexical ambiguity in English newspaper headlines written by native and non-native journalists: a contrastive study // *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, – 2013. Vol.4, №6, – p.1.

humorous, sometimes unexpected, and sometimes absurd alternative meanings. Although the intention to deliberately create a double/multiple meaning and cause confusion among the readership does not coincide with the principles of correct and impartial reporting of information in journalism, in most cases, ambiguous newspaper headlines also result from the ambiguous nature of the language and the rules of the special style of newspaper headlines. In addition to its manipulative nature, ambiguity undoubtedly helps create more effective newspaper headlines.

Ambiguity is a unique aspect of language and does not cause serious comprehension problems either in everyday communication or in newspaper headlines. Even when the reader comes across ambiguous newspaper headlines, he intuitively interprets them in the correct form in most cases, but the presence of an alternative meaning manipulates the rules of language and logic, causing more interest in the reader and making a greater impact, thus newspaper headlines perform the "tell and sell" function in a more effective way.

In the **Conclusion** part of the dissertation, the main thesis statements of the research are presented in a concise manner:

1. Although language is a means of communication, it is also a source of misunderstandings, and one of the clearest examples of this is the phenomenon of ambiguity. Ambiguity, as a linguistic phenomenon, comes up when linguistic units have two or more different meanings. As a result of the research, it became clear that ambiguity is not only linguistic, but also in a number of scientific fields, for example, philosophy, mathematics, psycholinguistics, politics, business, marketing, etc. it is one of the issues investigated by researchers.

2. Since ambiguous language units express more than one meaning, from the psycholinguistic point of view, they are considered as an unpleasant phenomenon that hinders the normal flow of the sentence processing process and prolongs the comprehension time. In fact, in spite of natural languages being ambiguous, people are mostly unaware of the ambiguity; linguistic and extralinguistic factors reduce ambiguity to zero within a given context and the intended meaning is correctly understood. The reason for this is that although languages acquire an ambiguous nature in the process of natural development,

people have innate language competence and strong language processing mechanisms to solve it correctly.

3. The study of ambiguity is at the center of research on the process of sentence processing, because the results of these studies reveal interesting facts about how the human brain analyzes a sentence.

4. Ambiguous nature of language has made many think and the biggest polemic about this issue is whether it is a "blessing" or a "curse". Our research concluded that ambiguity does not cause serious problems for language users; on the contrary, as communicative theories explain, ambiguity has developed in connection with the requirements of language to be a more effective means of communication. An area where the phenomenon of ambiguity appears to be a real obstacle is computational linguistics; because computer systems lack the competence that humans have to properly process language.

5. There are phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic types of linguistic ambiguity.

6. The main principles for classifying syntactic ambiguity are 1) its ease of resolution, 2) its occurrence at the deep and surface structure, and 3) its nature. According to the first principle, its local and global types are distinguished, according to the second principle, deep structure and surface structure ambiguities, and according to the third principle, analytical, attachment, coordination, elliptical and part of speech ambiguities are distinguished.

7. Verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns in the main parts of speech category, whereas prepositions and conjunctions in the auxiliary parts of speech system stand out in enabling ambiguity.

8. In addition to the communicative function of ambiguity, its manipulative nature also plays an important role. Ambiguity is one of the most effective tools language offers us to play word games and manipulate the rules of language and logic. This function of ambiguity is more beneficial in a number of fields interested in playing with language, such as journalism, politics, advertising, business sector, comedy genre, etc. Although not every ambiguous linguistic unit is funny, linguistic ambiguity is one of the main sources of verbal humor.

9. Syntactic ambiguity does not play as big a role as lexical ambiguity in achieving a comic effect in humorous texts, because

processing syntactic ambiguity is more difficult and time-consuming than lexical ambiguity. Solving ambiguity is the first step to creating laughter.

10. The use of ambiguity in newspaper headlines is related to its manipulative role as well as to the special stylistic rules of newspaper headlines. There are many cases of creating ambiguity unintentionally and causing funny, surprising and inappropriate alternative meanings in newspaper headlines written concisely due to the principle of saving space. Deliberately using the technique of ambiguity comes from the intention to create sparks of interest in the reader and to turn to alternative meanings in conflict situations. In both cases, ambiguous newspaper headlines are an effective tool to fulfill their "tell and sell" function.

***The content, thesis statements and results of the research are reflected in the following published articles:***

1. Malikzadeh A.T. The translation problems connected with grammatical ambiguity // Qafqaz University, II International Scientific Conference of Young Researchers. – Baku: 18-19 April, – 2014. – p.499.
2. Malikzadeh, A.T. Humorous effects caused by ambiguity // Azerbaijan University of Languages, Actual problems of Teaching Foreign Languages, Proceedings of the Republican Scientific and Practical Conference. – Baku: 5-6 May, – 2016. – p.10-12.
3. Malikzadeh, A.T. The characteristic features of ambiguity usage in modern English language // Azerbaijan University of Languages, Abstracts of the International Scientific Conference “Current problems of cognitive and applied linguistics”. – Baku: – 20-21 October, – 2016. – p.92-94.
4. Malikzadeh, A.T. The features of usage of ambiguous idiomatic expressions in English // – Baku:Azerbaijan University of Languages, Language and Literature, – 2019. Vol. IX, №2, – p.73-79.
5. Malikzadeh, A.T. The role of pronouns in the emergence of referential ambiguity // – Baku:Azerbaijan University of Languages, Scientific news, – 2019. №4, – p.11-16.

6. Malikzadeh, A.T. Ambiguity as one of the main problems of sentence processing studies // – Baku: Journal of Foreign Languages in Azerbaijan, – 2021. №1(48), – p.59-63.
7. Malikzadeh, A.T. On the factors influencing the decision of a Human Sentence Processing Machine facing syntactic ambiguity // – Baku: "Science and Education", ANAS Institute of Manuscripts named after Mehemed Fuzuli, Philological issues.– 2022. №6, – p.183-192.
8. Malikzadeh, A.T. Ambiguity as a natural outcome of language evolution serving the communicative function // – United Kingdom. Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal (ASSRJ). Services for Science and Education, – 2022. Vol. 9, Issue 4, – p.297-302.
9. Malikzadeh, A.T. The usage of ambiguity-based humour in EFL classrooms // – Украины: Педагогіка формування творчої особистості у вищій і загальноосвітній школах, – 2022. №82, – p.57-62.
10. Linguistic and psycholinguistic features of "garden path" sentences in modern English // – Baku: Baku Girls' University, Scientific works of Baku Girls' University, – 2022. Vol. 13, №3(51), – p.50-55
11. Malikzadeh, A.T. Main sources of ambiguity in the English language // Актуальные вопросы современной науки и образования. XXI Международная научно-практическая конференция. – Пенза, МЦНС: “Наука и просвещение”, – 2022, – p.166-168.

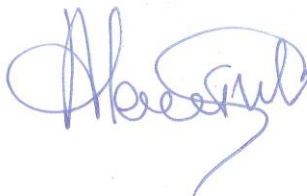
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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Abbasov', is written below the text.

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