



# SCHÜLERCAMPUS 2014

## Anglistik/Amerikanistik: "Safety helmets must be worn" – Mehrdeutigkeit als sprachwissenschaftlicher Untersuchungsgegenstand

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### Spielt sprachliche Mehrdeutigkeit eine Rolle in *Deinem* Leben?

Ja? Dann lies auf der anderen Seite weiter!

Nein, wieso auch?



Dann zeig mir doch mal die nächste Bank!



Okay, zweideutige Wörter benutze ich schon ab und zu. Aber mehr auch nicht!

Alles klar, wer trägt dann die Waffe?  
"The police stopped the man with a gun."

Die Polizei?

?

Der Mann?



Das kann beantwortet werden



mithilfe

des Kontexts

und/oder

der eigenen Erfahrung mit Sprache und Konversation.

### Ambiguity

→ Words and sentences are ambiguous if they have several meanings (!this is not equal to fuzziness in languages).

→ Ambiguity exists because language is a creative system that develops over time.

1. Lexical ambiguity: a word is ambiguous

e.g. *bright*: → *clever* or *shiny*

2. Structural ambiguity: syntax of a sentence is ambiguous

e.g.

→ *The chicken wants to eat and is ready or the process of cooking the chicken is finished.*



3. Referential ambiguity: if an expression can refer to different entities

e.g. *Her mother wanted her to tidy up her room because she didn't find anything anymore.*

→ *Her mother doesn't find anything anymore or she (the daughter) doesn't find anything anymore.*

4. Ambiguity of numbers: when numbers aren't clearly defined

e.g. a) *Three animals were mentioned.*

→ *exactly three*

b) *Families with three children get one ticket for free.*

→ *three or more*

5. Ambiguity with negation

e.g. *The child may not eat the chocolate.*

→ *The child is not allowed to eat the chocolate.*

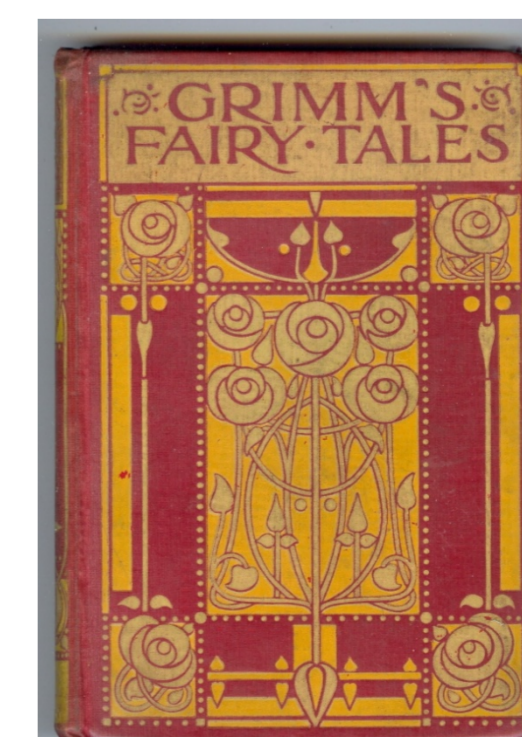
→ *Possibly, the child will not eat the chocolate.*

Ambiguity is often used (consciously or unconsciously) in

Publicity



Texts



Conversations

-How did you find my book?  
-That was easy. They had it in the library.