

Lexical Ambiguity in the Podcast Titled "Close the Door" by Deddy Corbuzier on Kompas.com

Oveh Aulia Putri^{1*}, Farah Zulfa Az-Zahro², Tatu Siti Rohbiah³

¹ Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Indonesia;
email: putriovehulia@gmail.com

² Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Indonesia;
email: zulfahro01@gmail.com

³ Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Indonesia;
email: tatu.siti.rohbiah@uinbanten.ac.id

* Corresponding Author: nabilashaini2214@gmail.com

Abstract: This study aims to analyze lexical ambiguity in the Close the Door podcast, hosted by Deddy Corbuzier. The focus of the study includes identifying the types of lexical ambiguity in the form of polysemy and homonymy, analyzing the meaning of ambiguous words or phrases based on the conversational context, and the influence of ambiguity on listeners' comprehension. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with semantic analysis as the theoretical basis. The research data were obtained from conversations in the Close the Door podcast published on Kompas.com. The data collection technique was carried out through listening and note-taking of utterances containing lexical ambiguity. The data were then analyzed by identifying the form of ambiguity, determining its type, and interpreting the meaning based on the context of the utterance. The results show that lexical ambiguity in the podcast appears in the form of polysemy and homonymy, influenced by the use of informal and spontaneous language. This ambiguity can lead to different interpretations for listeners, but the conversational context helps clarify the speaker's intended meaning. This research is expected to contribute to the development of semantic studies, particularly regarding lexical ambiguity in spoken-word digital communication media.

Keywords: Homonymy; Lexical Ambiguity; Podcast; Polysemy; Semantics.

1. Introduction

Language is the primary means of communication used by humans to convey ideas, thoughts, opinions, and feelings in everyday life. Through language, humans can build social interactions and understand the meaning conveyed by their interlocutors. However, in practice, language is not always clear and singular. A word or phrase can have more than one meaning, giving rise to different interpretations. This phenomenon is known as ambiguity. In semantic studies, ambiguity is a condition when a form of language can be interpreted in more than one way (Saeed, 2009). One of the most common forms of ambiguity in communication is lexical ambiguity.

Lexical ambiguity occurs when a word has multiple meanings, either due to related meanings or due to the similarity of word forms with different meanings. Cruse (2004) explains that lexical ambiguity is generally divided into two types: polysemy and homonymy. Polysemy refers to a single word having multiple related meanings, while homonymy refers to words that have the same form but different, unrelated meanings. This phenomenon is often found in spontaneous and informal oral communication because speakers do not always consider the clarity of meaning in depth.

In modern life, the development of digital media has given rise to various new forms of communication, one of which is podcasts. Podcasts have become a popular communication medium because they present relaxed, spontaneous conversations that are close to people's lives. According to Yule (2010), the context of a conversation greatly influences the meaning of an utterance, so spontaneous oral communication has a high potential for ambiguity. One podcast that has had a significant influence in Indonesia is Close

Received: February 20, 2026;
Revised: March 24, 2026;
Accepted: April 28, 2026;
Published: April 30, 2026;
Curr. Ver.: April 30, 2026.



Copyright: © 2025 by the author.
Submitted for possible open access
publication under the terms and
conditions of the Creative
Commons Attribution (CC BY SA)
license (
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)

the Door, hosted by Deddy Corbuzier. This podcast is widely known for presenting various current topics in an open, relaxed, and spontaneous communication style. This informal conversational situation allows for the use of words or phrases with multiple meanings.

The phenomenon of lexical ambiguity in spoken communication media is interesting to study because it can affect listeners' understanding of the message being conveyed. Ambiguity can lead to misunderstandings if listeners interpret the meaning differently from the speaker's intention. Diani et al. (2022) explain that understanding ambiguity theory is important for reducing misinterpretation in communication. Furthermore, Rodd (2020) states that the process of understanding the meaning of ambiguous words is strongly influenced by the semantic context and the listener's language experience. Thus, the study of lexical ambiguity is not only important in the field of linguistics but also relevant in understanding the effectiveness of mass communication and digital media.

Several previous studies have examined lexical ambiguity in various language media. Chin and Gunawan (2024) examined lexical ambiguity in the lyrics of the song Cigarettes After Sex and found the dominant use of polysemy in the formation of emotional meaning. Diana and Simatupang (2024) examined ambiguity in CNN World news headlines and showed that ambiguity can influence readers' interpretation of news information. Meanwhile, Rahmawati et al. (2024) examined lexical ambiguity in the series Bocah Ngapa (K) Ya and found that conversational context was the main factor in determining the meaning of ambiguous utterances. Based on these studies, it can be understood that lexical ambiguity is often found in various forms of communication, both written and spoken.

However, research on lexical ambiguity in podcasts, particularly the Close the Door podcast, is still relatively limited. To date, studies of this podcast have focused more on pragmatics, communication style, and interview strategies. However, the spontaneous and informal nature of language used in podcasts has the potential to generate ambiguous words or phrases that are interesting to analyze from a semantic perspective. Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing the types of lexical ambiguity that appear in the Close the Door podcast, particularly those published on Kompas.com, and the meanings they convey based on the context of the conversation.

This research is expected to contribute to the development of semantic studies, particularly regarding lexical ambiguity in spoken-language digital communication media. Furthermore, the results are also expected to help listeners, language researchers, and communication practitioners understand the multiple meanings that emerge in conversations, thereby minimizing misunderstandings in everyday communication.

2. Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because it is in accordance with the interpretive research objectives and aims to describe the meaning of lexical ambiguity in the Close The Door podcast in depth. The descriptive qualitative approach also allows researchers to understand the meaning of language not only lexically, but also based on the context of its use in conversation. The research is in the form of speech or conversations containing lexical ambiguity in the Close The Door podcast hosted by Deddy Corbuzier and published through Kompas.com. The data collected includes words, phrases, or expressions that have more than one meaning (polysemy and homonymy) in the context of oral communication. The research instrument consists of the researcher as the main instrument (human instrument) and a data classification table as an analysis aid. The classification table is designed to group data based on the type of lexical ambiguity, semantic meaning, and pragmatic meaning in the context of conversation.

3. Theoretical Review

Semantics

Semantics is a branch of linguistics that studies the meaning of language, including words, phrases, and sentences. According to Cruse (2004), semantics focuses on the lexical meaning of a language form without regard to the context in which it is used. Therefore, semantics plays a crucial role in understanding the basic meaning of a word before it undergoes changes or adjustments in communication. In this study, semantics is used to identify the lexical meaning of ambiguous words or phrases in the Close The Door podcast. Semantic analysis is the initial step before further interpreting the meaning through context (Bahasa & Volume, 2024).

Lexical Ambiguity

Lexical ambiguity is a situation where a word or phrase has more than one meaning. This phenomenon often occurs in everyday communication, especially in spontaneous spoken conversations. According to Ullmann, lexical ambiguity is divided into two main types: polysemy and homonymy. Lexical ambiguity can lead to differences in interpretation of meaning between speakers and listeners. Therefore, understanding ambiguity is crucial for the message being conveyed to be understood correctly.(Nomor et al., 2020)

Polysemy and Homonymy

Polysemy

Polysemy is when a word has multiple, related meanings. For example, the word "head" can refer to a part of the human body or the leader of an organization. Although their meanings are different, they are still conceptually related.

Homonymy

Homonymy is a condition where a word has more than one unrelated meaning, even though they have the same form. For example, the word "bisa" can mean either poison or ability. In this case, the two meanings are unrelated. These two types of ambiguity form the basis for classifying the data in this study.(Madarina, n.d.)

Context in the Meaning of Language

Context plays a crucial role in determining the meaning of an utterance. Context can include the situation, the background of the conversation, the relationship between speakers, and the purpose of the communication. According to Cruse, the meaning of a word cannot be accurately understood without considering the context in which it is used. In the podcast "Close The Door," the relaxed and spontaneous context of the conversation often leads to ambiguous meanings. Therefore, context analysis is essential to determine the speaker's intended meaning.

Podcasts as a Medium of Oral Communication

Podcast is an audio-based digital communication tool that allows interaction in a way that more relaxed and spontaneous. In contrast to the text that In written form, communication in podcasts is typically unstructured and often uses informal language. The Close The Door podcast, hosted by Deddy Corbuzier, is known for its free-flowing and candid communication style . (Sukardi, 2018)This results in various forms of lexical ambiguity in conversations. Therefore, podcasts are a relevant subject for linguistic research, particularly in the fields of semantics and pragmatics.

Framework of Thought

Based on the theoretical study above, this study focuses on analyzing lexical ambiguity in the Close The Door podcast. The analysis was conducted by identifying words or phrases with multiple meanings and then grouping them into polysemy or homonymy types. Next, lexical meaning was analyzed using a semantic approach, and meaning in context was analyzed using a pragmatic approach. The results of this analysis are used to understand how lexical ambiguity affects listener comprehension in spoken communication (Fadilah et al., 2017).

4. Results and Discussion

Data Tabulation

“STEVEN WONGSO!! □LISTEN UP!! ARE YOU MAKING A TROUBLE AGAIN!? I'LL CHASE YOU!!! (April 14, 2026)

Table 1. Lexical Ambiguity Findings Data 1.

No	Words/Terms	Speech Quotes	First Meaning	Second Meaning	Types of Ambiguity
1	Dog	“Lu is not a dog.”	Mammals	Symbol of uncontrolled eating behavior	Polysemy
2	Like a dog	“Fat people are like dogs.”	Eating behavior metaphor	Insults against fat people	Polysemy

3	Dog	"What's the difference between a mother and a dog?"	Animal	How to educate with harsh words	Polysemy
4	Like a dog	"If you're fat, don't be like a dog."	Impulsive eating behavior	Satire on lifestyle	Metaphor
5	Different	"Those are two different things."	Not the same	Differences in meaning based on context	Contextual ambiguity

"LOE'S PRESCON, I'M NOT SATISFIED!! □ IN CORRUPTION THERE ARE NO FRIENDS!! □" (June 11, 2025)

Table 2. Findings of Lexical Ambiguity in Data 2.

No	Words / Terms	Speech Quotes	First Meaning	Second Meaning	Types of Ambiguity
1	Insistent	"Why do you insist on using a Chromebook?"	Insist	Stubborn	Polysemy
2	Noisy	"Even though we often make noise."	Has a different opinion	Personal conflict	Polysemy
3	Problem	"We already know the problem with Chromebooks."	Topics of conversation	Alleged violations	Contextual ambiguity
4	Startled	"I was a bit surprised too."	Surprised	The allusion that it could have been prevented	Polysemy
5	Naughty questions	"If it's a naughty question, yes."	Just a random question	Cornering questions	Metaphor
6	Beyond that	"Besides that, are you corrupt or not?"	In addition to the previous topic	Private assessment outside the law	Referential ambiguity
7	Actually	"What really happened?"	Asking for an explanation	Allegedly there are facts that have not been conveyed	Pragmatic ambiguity
8	Truth	"The truth is no longer a fact."	Real facts	Public opinion or perception	Polysemy

Discussion

a. Data 1

In the first data, the word that appears most frequently is "dog." In general, the word means a mammal with four legs. feet. However, in this podcast, Deddy Corbuzier explains that the word is used as a metaphor for uncontrolled eating behavior, similar to the concept of Pavlov's Dog. The idea is that a person shouldn't eat simply because of a certain urge or habit. Despite this, many viewers understand the word "dog" as an insult. This is because the word is often used in everyday conversation to belittle others. As a result, the meaning received by the public differs from the intended message.(Rahmawati et al., 2024)

The phrase "fat people like dogs" also has many interpretations. Steven Wongso considered the phrase an encouragement for someone to regulate their lifestyle. However, most viewers interpreted it as a form of mockery of overweight people. Furthermore, Deddy Corbuzier also explained that the situation greatly influences the meaning of a word. In family relationships or close friendships, harsh words are sometimes considered normal and interpreted as encouragement. However, when expressed on social media or in public, the meaning can change because it is heard by many people with varying understandings. From this data, it is clear that lexical confusion arises from a difference between the speaker's intent and the listener's understanding. A word that is actually used as a comparison can turn into a quip when the situation is not fully understood.

b. Data 2

In a podcast with Nadiem Makarim, Deddy Corbuzier used many terms with ambiguous meanings. These terms made the questions sound more pointed, even though they were phrased casually. For example, the word "ngotot" doesn't just mean sticking to a point of view, but also suggests someone is overly assertive about their decision. When Deddy used this term, his question seemed to be mocking the decision to use Chromebooks.

The word "bust" has two distinct meanings. On the one hand, it can be interpreted as a lighthearted argument, but on the other, it can be interpreted as a deeper disagreement. Deddy uses the term to indicate that he once disagreed with Nadiem, although their relationship remains harmonious. Furthermore, the term "masalah" lends a deeper nuance to the discussion. Generally, the term simply refers to something being debated. However, in the context of this podcast, the term "masalah" implies that the Chromebook procurement poses complex legal or ethical issues. Deddy uses the phrase "tanya nakal" (naughty question) before asking a sensitive question. The word "nakal" is typically associated with naughty children, but in this conversation, it refers to a question that is critical and quite pressuring to the interviewee.

The word "actually" also provides a different focus in the interview session. The use of this term creates a sense that there is still information that has not been fully disclosed. Thus, the term is not only intended to request clarification but also suggests that other information is being withheld. The second data shows that Deddy Corbuzier often chooses words with more than one meaning. This style of speaking makes the interview atmosphere more dynamic and engaging, but it can also lead to various interpretations from the audience.

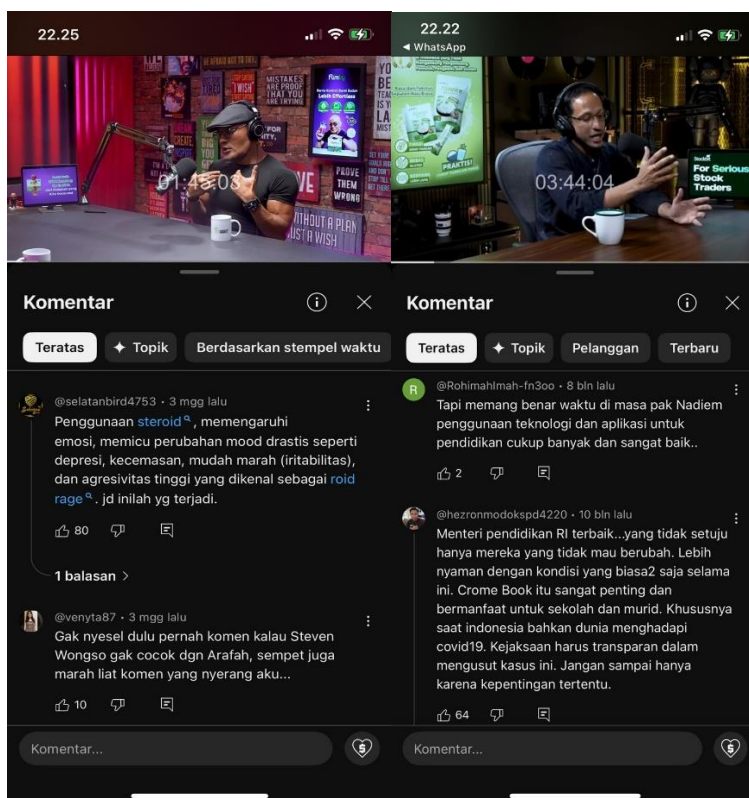


Figure 1. References to Comments from Netizens.

Summary Table of Findings

Data	Ambiguous Lexeme	Type	Meaning 1	Meaning 2
A-1	<i>steroid</i>	Polysemy	Medical drugs (corticosteroids for disease)	Anabolic steroids (fitness doping)
A-1	<i>steroid</i>	Polysemy	Mood (general psychology)	Clinical affective condition (psychiatric term)
A-1	<i>roid rage</i>	Ambiguous Jargon	Angry reactions due to steroids (medical)	A satire of someone's angry behavior (social)

A-2	<i>suitable</i>	Polysemy	Compatible / personality compatible	Appropriate / commensurate socially / status
A-2	<i>attack</i>	Contextual Homonymy	Verbal attacks/hate comments online	Attack \sik (literal meaning)
B-1	<i>time</i>	Homonymy	Time period (term of office)	Mass / group of people (if written 'masa')
B-2	<i>changed</i>	Polysemy	Change positively / reform	Changing without direction (negative connotation)
B-2	<i>interest</i>	Polysemy	Public interest / positive urgency	Hidden interests / political agenda
B-2	<i>transparent</i>	Frozen Metaphor	Not hiding information (\guaranteed)	Clear/translucent (literal, reduced)

Discussion

a. "Steroids" (Data A-1) — Medical and Popular Polysemy

Medically, the term "steroid" encompasses a wide range of chemical compounds, including corticosteroids and synthetic androgens. However, in everyday language, this meaning has become more focused and often refers only to anabolic steroids used for muscle building. Therefore, readers unfamiliar with medical terminology might misunderstand the comment as a general accusation, even though the context is more relevant to anabolic steroid use.

b. "Roid Rage" (Data A-1) — Medical Jargon in Social Discourse

The term "roid rage" originates from the medical and sports world, referring to aggressive behavior resulting from anabolic steroid use. In this context, the term serves not only as a medical explanation but also as a disparagement of the individual being discussed. The ambiguity arises because not everyone shares the same understanding of the term.

c. "Match" (Data A-2) — Relational Polysemy

The term "match" in the phrase "Steven Wongso doesn't match Arafah" carries several possible meanings, such as incompatibility in personality, social status, or career goals. The lack of a clear explanation makes the comment more ambiguous and open to various interpretations.

d. "Interests" (Data B-2) — Connotative Ambiguity

The phrase "particular interests" creates an ambiguity often seen in political discussions. While interests generally refer to goals or needs, in social criticism, it can also have negative connotations, such as hidden agendas or conflicts of interest. This use of the term makes accusations sound more implicit and less direct.

e. "Masa" (Data B-1) — Homonymy in Informal Writing

The word "masa" in the phrase "waktu di masa Pak Nadiem" refers to a period of time. However, when written, the word appears similar to "massa," which refers to a group of people. While the context helps clarify its meaning, the informal form of writing still poses a risk of being misinterpreted by some readers.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

Based on an analysis of the Close The Door podcast hosted by Deddy Corbuzier and published on Kompas.com, it can be stated that lexical ambiguity is a phenomenon that often occurs in spontaneous and informal oral communication. This study successfully identified various variations of lexical ambiguity that emerged in podcast discussions, including polysemy, homonymy, metaphor, contextual ambiguity, referential ambiguity, and pragmatic ambiguity. The diversity of these types of ambiguity reflects how many variations of meaning can arise in a single oral communication channel. (Sukardi, 2018)

In the episode featuring Steven Wongso, the most obvious ambiguity is polysemy, particularly in the word "dog," which lexically refers to a mammal, but in conversation is used as a metaphor for uncontrolled eating behavior inspired by the concept of Pavlov's Dog. Differences in background knowledge and social context between the speaker and listener result in the word being interpreted differently by the public, often even being considered an insult. On the other hand, in the episode with Nadiem Makarim, Deddy Corbuzier consistently utilizes words with multiple meanings such as "ngotot," "busit," "masalah," "pertanyaan nakal," and "sebenarnya" as a communication strategy to ask critical questions without appearing pressurizing, thus creating an interactive interview atmosphere while providing opportunities for the audience to interpret a lot.

Overall, this study confirms that conversational context plays a crucial role in capturing the meaning of a statement. Without a good understanding of context, listeners and readers of comments are highly susceptible to misunderstanding the original intent of the statement. This also demonstrates that podcasts, as a form of informal and spontaneous oral communication, are a rich area for research on lexical ambiguity, particularly in the realms of semantics and pragmatics.

Suggestion

Based on the results and conclusions discussed, future researchers are advised to expand the data coverage by analyzing more podcast episodes and adopting more diverse methods to achieve more comprehensive research results. Furthermore, content creators are encouraged to be more careful in choosing words that may have multiple meanings to avoid misunderstandings among audiences. Listeners and viewers are also expected to improve their language skills, enabling them to more intelligently understand the context of conversations. This research is expected to stimulate the development of semantic and pragmatic studies related to digital communication media in Indonesia.

References

- Chaer, A. (2009). *Introduction to Indonesian Semantics*. Rineka Cipta. Jakarta.
- Chin, FV, & Gunawan, H. (2024). Lexical Ambiguity in the Lyrics of the Cigarettes After Sex Album: A Semantic Study. *JL3T (Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Language Teaching)*, 10(2), 174–184. <https://doi.org/10.32505/jl3t.v10i2.9361>
- Cruse, D. A. (2004). *Meaning in Language: An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Diana, E., & Simatupang, EC (2024). Lexical Ambiguity in News Headlines of CNN World; Semantics Study. *JOURNALISTRENDI: JOURNAL OF LINGUISTICS, LITERATURE, AND EDUCATION*, 9(1), 260-267. <https://doi.org/10.51673/jurnalistrendi.v9i1.1938>
- Diani, I., Afrodita, M., & Lazfihma, L. (2022). The Role of Understanding Ambiguity Theory in Resolving Misunderstandings in Communication. *Silampari Bisa: Journal of Research in Indonesian, Regional, and Foreign Language Education*, 5(2), 368-378. <https://doi.org/10.31540/silamparibisa.v5i2.1863>
- Fairuz & Nur, I. (2021). The Meaning of Lexical Ambiguity in the Lyrics of the Album The Book Of Us “Gluon Karya Even Of Day”: A Semantic Study. *Aksarabaca Journal of Language, Literature, and Culture*, 2(2), 271–277. <https://doi.org/10.47313/aksarabaca.v2i2.3162>
- Gul, S., Zainab, M., & Gul, S. (2025). Lexical Ambiguity and Meaning Negotiation in Academic Discourse. *Panacea Journal of Linguistics & Literature*, 4(2), 01-16.
- Jupriono, D., & Sukatman, S. (2021). *PARONOMASIA IN HUMOR DISCOURSE ON SOCIAL MEDIA*. *TANDA: Journal of Cultural, Language and Literature Studies* (e-ISSN: 2797-0477), 1(03), 17-26.
- Nurhamidah, JM, Pamungkas, BP, & Hakim, F. (2024). Exploration of Ambiguity of Meaning in the Lyrics of the Song Membasuh: A Semantic Approach with Contextual Meaning. *Morphology: Journal of Education, Language, Literature and Culture*, 2(6), 311–318. <https://doi.org/10.61132/morfologi.v2i6.1195>
- Purba, EN, & Damanik, BAR (2025). Polysemy and Homonymy in Semantic Interpretation. *Young Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 1(3), 101-109.
- Rahmawati, LE, Haryanti, P., & Ariyanto, ZR (2024). Lexical Ambiguity in the Series Bocah Ngapa (K) Ya. *Proceedings Series on Social Sciences & Humanities*, 20, 12-21. <https://doi.org/10.30595/pssh.v20i.1298>

-
- Rodd, J. M. (2020). Settling into semantic space: An ambiguity-focused account of word-meaning access. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 15(2), 411-427. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691619885860>
- Saeed, J. I. (2009). *Semantics* (3rd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Sukardi, MI, Sumarlam, S., & Marmanto, S. (2018). Deviation of Meaning with Homonymy in Meme Discourse (Semantic Study). *LiNGUA: Journal of Language and Literature*, 13(1), 23-34. <https://doi.org/10.18860/ling.v13i1.4513>
- Yule, G. (2010). *The Study of Language* (4th ed.). Cambridge University Press.