

Ambiguity in Twilight in Delhi by Ahmad Ali: A Pragmatic Study of Lexical and Semantic Ambiguity in Postcolonial Discourse

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Abstract:

In this research paper, we explored how Ahmad Ali used lexical and semantic ambiguity in *Twilight in Delhi*, focusing closely on how ambiguity functions as an intentional stylistic and communicative strategy within a postcolonial context to show life under British rule. The novel portrays Indo-Muslim society during the decline of Mughal influence and the rise of British colonial rule. We found that, by blending English narration with Urdu vocabulary rooted in local culture, hybrid expressions, and symbolic imagery, the text generates multiple layers of meaning. We adopted a qualitative research design to analyse textual excerpts from selected dialogues and narrative descriptions closely. The theoretical framework is based on H. P. Grice's Cooperative Principle, particularly the Maxim of Manner, which emphasizes clarity and the avoidance of ambiguity. The analysis shows that the novel often flouts this maxim through indirect phrases, culturally rich terms, and figurative narration. Our findings revealed that lexical ambiguity arises mainly from untranslated Urdu terms and localised English expressions, whereas semantic ambiguity arises through metaphorical descriptions and narrative breaks. Our research paper concludes that ambiguity in *Twilight in Delhi* is a purposeful narrative device that reflects cultural hybridity, identity shifts, and resistance to colonial influence, and we request readers to draw on contextual inference and cultural knowledge for a deeper understanding.

Keywords:

Lexical ambiguity; semantic ambiguity; postcolonial literature; linguistic hybridity; pragmatic analysis; *Twilight in Delhi*

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

In literature, words do not always have literal meanings alone; wording or semantics often extends beyond fixed meanings, and the same words and sentences can be interpreted in multiple ways by different readers or readers from different backgrounds. Readers tend to interpret different meanings from the same lexical or narrative structure. This phenomenon, commonly mentioned as semantic ambiguity, plays an important role in shaping readers' understanding of literary texts. In communication, speech, and storytelling contexts, ambiguity occurs when words, phrases, or descriptions carry multiple possible meanings, leading to varied interpretations among readers and listeners. Contemporary linguistic and literary research views semantic ambiguity not as a weakness of language but as a deliberate narrative and stylistic device that enriches textual depth and interpretive complexity.

The study of semantic ambiguity becomes particularly significant in narrative fiction, where silence, pauses, descriptive passages, and contextual implication contribute to layered meanings. In *Twilight in Delhi*, conversational exchanges and culturally embedded expressions often produce interpretive uncertainty, reflecting the sociocultural transitions of colonial Delhi. The ambiguity present in dialogues, character interactions, and narrative silences encourages multiple interpretations, especially when meanings are implied rather than explicitly stated.

Recent scholarly discussions emphasize that meaning in discourse is analyzed through context, the speaker's intention, and the reader's perception. From a semantic and discourse perspective, ambiguity in conversation is closely linked with contextual inference, cultural references, and pragmatic interpretation. Therefore, analyzing semantic ambiguity in literary conversations provides a deeper understanding of how meaning is constructed, mutated, and reinterpreted within narrative frameworks. We can infer from these discussions that Ali's language mixing is a key part of the novel. This is what makes the meanings in conversational structures so rich and layered.

1.2 Scope and Significance of the Study

This research has significant implications for linguistics, literary discourse analysis, and semantic studies, as it connects linguistic theory to literary interpretation. By focusing on conversational ambiguity, the research shows how meaning is not always direct but often shaped by context, culture, and narrative technique. The paper also contributes to a deeper understanding of how ambiguity functions as a narrative strategy rather than merely a source of confusion. It encourages analytical reading by drawing attention to implied meanings, indirect speech, and contextual interpretation in literary conversations. Moreover, it provides useful insights for researchers and scholars of English literature, particularly those interested in semantics, pragmatics, narrative genre, and discourse analysis in postcolonial literature.

1.3 Statement of Problem

Although ambiguity has been widely discussed in linguistics and literary studies, research on semantic ambiguity in conversational discourse in South Asian novels is limited. Most of the existing literature describes ambiguity as a general linguistic phenomenon or focuses on thematic interpretations rather than exploring how conversational ambiguity leads to misunderstanding and layered meaning in literary genres.

The novel *Twilight in Delhi* offers a fine line between the meanings and interpretations of its dialogues and conversations and the underlying cultural meanings. Indirect phrases and expressions, however, mostly create interpretive gaps. These gaps can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations, especially when readers rely solely on dictionary meanings rather than contextual pragmatic meanings and cultural implicatures. The lack of focused semantic analysis of such conversational ambiguity highlights a research problem that needs systematic investigation through a discourse-oriented approach.

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The research paper primarily aims to analyze semantic ambiguity in conversational dialogues in *Twilight in Delhi* and to explore how the discourse

leads readers to misinterpret the message due to the polysemy of lexical and semantic items. The aims of this research are:

- To identify examples of semantic ambiguity in communicational exchange in the novel.
- To explore the linguistic and contextual causes of misinterpretation.
- To explore how narrative silence, descriptive pauses, and cultural terms can create ambiguity.
- To analyze ambiguous implications using relevant theories of semantics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions guide our research:

- What are the prominent examples of lexical and semantic ambiguity in the conversational communication of *Twilight in Delhi*?
- How do linguistic and contextual factors contribute to misinterpretation in the novel?
- How do narrative silence, descriptive pauses, and cultural terms create ambiguity?
- How can we apply Grice's Maxim of Manner to explain the role of ambiguity as a purposive narrative strategy in the text?

1.6 Limitations and Delimitation of the Study

This research is confined to the analysis of semantic ambiguity in conversational discourse within *Twilight in Delhi*. It basically focuses on discourse, dialogues, conversational interactions, and narrative descriptions that create multiple meanings or lead to interpretive misunderstandings.

The study is limited to semantic and discourse-based analysis and cannot cover an in-depth investigation of phonological or purely syntactic and pragmatic ambiguity. It also does not cover a comparative analysis of her literary works. This research sustains a focused approach by analyzing how conversational ambiguity operates within the specific novel through semantic, narrative-based, and discourse-oriented perspectives.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Background

Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* (1940) is widely regarded as an important postcolonial novel that depicts the cultural, social, and linguistic life of Indo-Muslim society during the colonial period. Earlier critics mainly interpreted the novel as a nostalgic depiction of a declining culture and the loss of traditional values in Delhi under British rule. Padamsee (2013) explains that the novel emerged within a historical discourse that assumed the decline and eventual disappearance of Indo-Muslim cultural identity in modern South Asia. Within this context, language becomes a central element of representation, as Ahmed Ali uses a mixture of English narration and culturally embedded Urdu expressions to portray the lived reality of colonial Delhi. This blending of languages naturally creates layers of meaning, where words and expressions carry cultural, historical, and emotional significance beyond their literal meanings. As a result, lexical and semantic ambiguity in the novel can be seen as closely linked to its cultural authenticity, symbolic narration, and historical setting rather than as a weakness in language use.

Khan and Meraj (2022) also noted that the new generation in the novel (Asghar) embraces British norms and styles more than their elders do, creating a generational gap reflected in their dialogues and conversations.

2.2 Recent Studies

Today's researchers have increasingly worked on the linguistic and stylistic features of *Twilight in Delhi*, especially its use of indigenized and Urduized English, bilingual elements, and sociolinguistic coding. Sarfraz (2021) highlighted lexical variations in the novel and argued that Ahmed Ali's language reflects a localized variety of English shaped by South Asian cultural and linguistic influences. This variation leads to multiple layers of interpretation because meanings are not always direct or fixed. Similarly, Marryum, Ahmad, and Xuanyu (2022) identified bilingualism and code-switching in the novel and noted that the frequent use of Urdu words, religious terms, and cultural expressions creates interpretive ambiguity for readers unfamiliar with the sociocultural context. Sarfaraz (2021) analyzed word choice in the novel and found that Ahmed Ali's language reflects a local variety of English shaped by Indo-Islamic cultural and linguistic influences. He found that Urdu words for Islamic terminology, Islamic historical references, and Asian edible items are more often used untranslated in the novel because there are no adequate English substitutes. Moreover, Shahid, Kousar, and Haider (2024) identified sociolinguistic codes in *Twilight in Delhi* and noted that the intentional retention of untranslated cultural terms maintains authenticity while also leading to lexical ambiguity. Their study shows that the novelist purposefully uses local vocabulary rather than simplified English substitutes to convey cultural identity and a realistic approach. Furthermore, Akram and Ayub (2018) examined the appropriateness of the novel's language. They proposed that the mixed use of English and Urdu serves as a postcolonial approach that challenges colonial language control. All these studies highlight that Ali's mixing of languages, code-switching, and Urduization of English lexical items are central features of the novel and play a crucial role in creating semantic depth and ambiguity. On the other hand, most of these studies focused on language variation and cultural representation rather than on a direct semantic and pragmatic analysis of ambiguity.

2.3 Research Gaps

Despite recent research papers offering considerable insights into bilingualism, lexical variation, and cultural hybridity in *Twilight in Delhi*, there remains a clear gap in the focused study of lexical and semantic ambiguity. Most scholars mentioned ambiguity only indirectly in their discussions of cultural identity and linguistic hybridity, and did not systematically analyze how it functions in meaning construction and interpretation. The existing literature mainly adopts descriptive, stylistic, or sociolinguistic approaches, which merely describe language patterns rather than explaining the novel's important communicative role of ambiguity. Therefore, a thorough pragmatic analysis of semantic ambiguity in the novel remains overlooked.

- **Methodological Gaps:** A significant methodological gap in the existing literature is the limited use of pragmatic frameworks in investigating the novel's language. Most recent papers depend on qualitative stylistic analysis, corpus-based research, or sociolinguistic observation of code-switching and lexical choices (Sarfraz, 2021; Marryum et al., 2022).

Whereas these methods effectively highlight linguistic features, they do not fully describe how ambiguity operates in conversation, communication, and interpretation within the text. The existing literature is deficient in research that applies discourse-pragmatic theories, especially Grice's Cooperative Principle, to investigate how unclear, indirect, or culturally based expressions contribute to semantic ambiguity in literary discourse.

- **Conceptual Gaps:** The existing literature also shows a conceptual gap, as it fails to define and explain ambiguity clearly. We found that the research papers analyzed hybridity, indigenization, and cultural coding, but none clearly conceptualized how these linguistic elements tend to convey different meanings or foster interpretive uncertainty. Ambiguity is treated mostly as an outcome of bilingualism rather than as an intentional stylistic and communicative strategy. Therefore, the connection between word selection, contextual meaning, and semantic ambiguity has not been adequately developed as a theory in previous research on *Twilight in Delhi*.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Our present research is based on Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle, mainly the Maxim of Manner. As suggested by Grice, efficient communication needs precision, brevity, conciseness, and the avoidance of ambiguity and vagueness. The Maxim of Manner specifically advocates that speakers should be clear and coherent in their expressions. On the other hand, in literature-based texts, writers may intentionally flout this maxim to create deeper meanings, symbolic interpretations, and emotional impact. In the novel, *Twilight in Delhi*, Ahmed Ali recurrently uses indirect narration, symbolic expressions, and culturally rich lexical terms that do not provide instant understanding. From a pragmatic perspective, this intentional ambiguity can be interpreted as a violation of the Maxim of Manner, leading to semantic ambiguity. As a result, Grice's theory offers a well-suited framework for exploring how ambiguity is created and interpreted within the novel's linguistic structure.

Wasow (n.d.) challenged Grice's Maxim of Manner (to avoid ambiguity), arguing that ambiguity is natural and deeply embedded in language. He noted that if ambiguity were that bad or prohibited, languages would have had to adapt to remove it altogether – but they have not. This supports the idea that Ahmad Ali deliberately used ambiguity, not by accident.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Our research's conceptual framework explores how the relationship among lexical variation, cultural context, and semantic ambiguity operates. Existing papers show that the use of indigenized vocabulary, untranslated Urdu terms, and hybrid linguistic expressions in *Twilight in Delhi* produces lexical ambiguity because such words carry multiple cultural meanings (Shahid et al., 2024). Simultaneously, semantic ambiguity arises from metaphorical imagery, symbolic settings, and emotionally charged language associated with nostalgia, cultural decline, and identity clashes. So, ambiguity in the novel is conceptualized as a purposeful, intentional, and deliberate linguistic strategy shaped by postcolonial context, bilingual narrative style, and sociocultural representation rather than mere uncertainty, vagueness, or language complexity.

2.6 Analytical Framework

This research paper employs a qualitative textual analysis to examine lexical and semantic ambiguity in selected passages and dialogues from the novel *Twilight in Delhi*. We will analyze dialogues, narrative descriptions, and culturally rich and significant wording and vocabulary that show ambiguity in meaning. First, examples of lexical and semantic ambiguity will be identified through close reading of the text.

Second, these examples will be analyzed using Grice's Maxim of Manner to show how ambiguity arises from obscurity, indirectness, and culturally grounded expressions. Third, the findings will be interpreted in relation to themes of cultural hybridity, identity shift, and postcolonial linguistic representation. By combining recent linguistic studies with a pragmatic framework, this analytical approach aims to provide a more focused and systematic understanding of how semantic ambiguity functions deliberately as a narrative and stylistic tool in Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi*.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

For this research paper, we chose a qualitative research design because it aims to interpret meanings, language use, and contextual instances rather than to measure numerical data. Qualitative research is best suited to literary and discourse analysis, as it allows an in-depth examination of textual discourse, dialogue patterns, and interpretive frameworks. The research especially uses textual and discourse analysis to identify semantic ambiguity in conversational dialogues. The design is both descriptive and analytical. It highlights instances of semantic ambiguity in the selected text and then examines how they lead to misinterpretation or multiple meanings. The study also draws on semantic theory and discourse-based approaches to explore and perceive how ambiguity functions within narrative conversations.

By applying theoretical concepts to selected textual extracts, the research aims to provide a systematic and structured analysis of conversational ambiguity.

3.2 Research Instruments (Tools and Items)

As this research is a qualitative textual study, the main research instrument is the text of *Twilight in Delhi* itself. The novel's text is the primary source for identifying conversational exchanges and confusing phrases. We have used close reading, textual coding, and theme-based analysis as tools. Close reading helped in identifying words, phrases, and dialogues that carry layered meanings. Textual coding is used to organize different types of semantic ambiguity, such as lexical, contextual, and culturally based ambiguity. We have also used theoretical frameworks from semantics and discourse analysis as analytical tools to analyze the selected data. These frameworks help identify changes in meaning, varied or layered meanings, and interpretive gaps in the novel's conversational structure.

3.3 Population and Sampling

The text of the novel *Twilight in Delhi* is selected as the population for this research paper, specifically, all conversational instances in the novel. Still, analyzing each dialogue in detail would be far beyond the practical scope of our research. Hence, purposive sampling is used to select relevant conversational extracts that clearly show semantic ambiguity or potential misinterpretation. So,

in our sample dialogues and communication instances, meanings appear layered, implied, culturally based, or prone to more than one interpretation. Particular focus is placed on conversations featuring key characters and on scenes that show social, cultural, or emotional tension. The selected samples are clear examples of the novel's broader conversational structures and provide sufficient data for in-depth semantic analysis.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process began with a close, repeated reading of the novel to identify conversations and dialogues that include ambiguous words and phrases. During the reading process, completely ambiguous words, phrases, and dialogues are highlighted and noted. The examples are then collected and listed for further analysis. Having identified the required extracts, each selected dialogue is examined in relation to its local and immediate context, the story's background, and cultural influences. We analyzed how meaning is formed through communication and discourse, and also how it can be interpreted in various ways. The recorded data are then arranged into categories of semantic ambiguity and examined using the chosen theoretical and analytical frameworks. This methodological procedure confirms that the analysis maintains focus and remains consistent, supported by textual examples from the novel.

4. Data Analysis

Our research paper investigates lexical and semantic ambiguity as shown in dialogues, narrative descriptions, and symbolism in *Twilight in Delhi*. The selected dialogues, descriptive instances, and the characters' language clearly indicate that the novel's ambiguity is intentional. It is not by chance or accident. Instead, it is manipulated cautiously to convey layered cultural meaning simultaneously.

An obvious level of ambiguity is generated by the use of Urdu and culturally specific diction alongside English. Many words, such as *salaamed*, *Nawab*, *kahar*, and *mohallah*, are left untranslated. These words not only name people or objects but also carry social, cultural, and historical meanings. For example, the word *salaamed* does not imply a greeting- it implies a respectable status also. *Nawab* is the title of a ruler or an important or powerful person in the upper class and therefore conveys authority, status, and tradition. An attendant or a household help could be called a *kahar*, reflecting social status and hierarchy in Delhi during the early twentieth century. Owing to this, the meaning is based on the cultural context and the reader's understanding and knowledge of history. Ambiguity in this case is an essential tool for highlighting the local flavor of Postcolonial Muslim culture, rather than minimizing cultural knowledge for non-natives or outsiders.

Many single words, sentences, dialogues, and narrations contain ambiguity. Most of the time, people communicate in a scholarly, indirect, and implied manner and sometimes use metaphorical language. Whatever people say does not always convey their exact meaning. For example, Mir Nihal's discussion with his relatives appears simple and straightforward at first, but it also conveys an emotional dilemma, cultural norms, and social criticism. Marriage, marital issues, etiquette, manners, and household problems are full of implied meanings concerning discontent and social transformation.

In the same way, Asghar's dreams and spiritual emotions are a mixture of the physical and spiritual worlds, so often it becomes hard to differentiate between his religious piety and physical or worldly lust. These examples show that meaning is implied both explicitly and implicitly. Semantic ambiguity is also proposed in narrative description.

The old Mughal buildings, evening gardens, and ruined houses convey meanings that are both physical and symbolic, far more important and self-evident. Mir Nihal's haveli symbolizes the decay of the elite class of Indo-Muslim society. The images of dust, shadows, and ruin all hint at the historical decay and deteriorating culture.

Frequent references to twilight and gloom convey a sense of confusion and transformation. These descriptions are hence symbolic of not only the physical environment and surroundings but also of social and cultural transition. To analyze the discourse, we applied H. P. Grice's Cooperative Principle, particularly the Maxim of Manner. This maxim advocates precision and clarity in discourse. However, the novel mostly lacks straightforward, direct expression. In the use of indirect language, meaning is unclear and ambiguous, with symbolic words and words that imply cultural connotations. All that has been done deliberately and on purpose.

Thus, the author makes the text emotionally strong and richer in cultural terms. Mir Nihal's thoughts show a fine blend of personal and religious, class and patriotic feelings. These layers of meaning require readers to engage with the context and cultivate cultural awareness to achieve a clear understanding and perception. The phenomenon of "Urduization," i.e., the formation of Urdu words based on English grammar, also leads to lexical ambiguity.

Farangis and salaamed are examples of words that depict the mixture of two languages. These words retain a local meaning and are not completely dominated by colonial English. This is a fact: keeping such words untranslated makes readers rely on cultural context rather than the English translation. In this way, language becomes resistant and preserves its own identity intact. Narrative silence and indirect narration also lead to semantic ambiguity. Most of the time, people do not speak directly or straightforwardly.

Emotions, feelings, judgment, and social tension are concealed by their speech. Everyday life discussions often carry concealed meanings concerning morality, power, and colonial coercion. Noise and silence in the novel demand that the reader read between the lines. This blend of verbal and non-verbal discourse generates a language with multiple layers and interpretations. Ambiguity is also conveyed through the novel's physical spaces. Gardens, houses, and city streets are presented as the places of tension and conflict between tradition and colonial influence. The decaying haveli, the black streets, and the empty public spaces are both actual places and metaphorical instances. These locations symbolize a society sandwiched between the glorious past and the chaotic present.

In this way, space and place themselves become a source of ambiguity. The characters' conversation also creates ambiguity. Mir Nihal's speech is full of dilemmas and confusion about traditional and modern lives. Asghar's experiences, too, are a combination of religious emotions and worldly desires. In their language, their personal conflicts and their confusion about social change are depicted side by side.

Culture-based words contribute to lexical ambiguity, whereas figurative language, indirect dialogue, symbolic imagery, and silence contribute to the semantic ambiguity. This effect is highlighted through the mixing of Urdu and English and through the description of hybrid cultures. This kind of ambiguity is deliberate, as explained by the Maxim of Manner. It allows the novel to convey various meanings simultaneously and to portray a society on the verge of change.

To conclude, lexical and semantic ambiguity in Ahmad Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* is intentional and directly related to its cultural and historical context. It is present in symbolic description, indirect speech, diction rooted in culture, and mixed-language expressions or bilingualism. These kinds of instances invoke the appreciation and depict the conflict between conventions and modernism. The lack of clarity in the novel's discourse is not evidence of weakness, but a creative literary device. It shows how language in postcolonial culture can simultaneously portray history, culture, and emotion, and encourages readers to engage in an active, thoughtful interpretation of its meaning.

5. Discussion and Findings

Through a critical analysis of lexical and semantic ambiguity in *Twilight in Delhi*, we found that language is a cultural symbol and a means of storytelling. The findings of our research are clear evidence that the ambiguity is not accidental. The use of ambiguity is not a weakness of language, but a literary device that adds richness to the text. Lexical ambiguity is highlighted primarily through Urdu words and culture-based expressions that the author has not translated into English. Social traditions, history, and context give these words meaning. Frequently used words like *salaam*, *Nawab*, and *kahar* have more than one meaning: literal and pragmatic. As a result, readers can interpret the text differently depending on their cultural backgrounds and prior knowledge.

Semantic ambiguity in the novel is also obvious in the characters' dialogues. Many of the dialogues, particularly those between Mir Nihal and his family, are examples of indirect speech and are full of poetic language. What people most of the time say, they do not actually mean it. Readers have to rely on context, family relations, and historical context to interpret such implied meanings. It is way more than just physical decay that is hinted at in the descriptions of old buildings, evening gardens, and burnt houses. They are symbolic imagery of the fall of Mughal culture and of social transition in colonial Delhi.

Interpreting the novel and applying H. P. Grice's Cooperative Principle, specifically the Maxim of Manner, we observed that the writer tends to be indirect and indirect. Although Grice's maxim advises the speaker to speak clearly, the novel often uses deliberately vague and ambiguous language. Code-mixing of Urdu and English, along with symbolic description, forms a multi-layered communication. So ambiguity links the literal meaning to cultural and symbolic meaning.

The results reveal multiple important trends. Lexical ambiguity helps maintain the cultural individuality of Indo-Muslim society and reflects relationships within the family, the system of classes, and the values. Narrative silence, pauses, and poetic language create semantic ambiguity by leaving space

for interpretation. The other element is a mixture of cultures, as the blending of languages is evidence of a society no longer confined to tradition but one heading towards modernity. These findings are proof that the use of ambiguity in *Twilight in Delhi* is well-knit and closely related to its historical and cultural background.

This research paper also explores how ambiguous discourse is significant in portraying feelings and social tension. Characters use nicer, indirect language to hide their true selves. They do not often express their feelings, judgments, or personal struggles directly. For instance, Mir Nihal's thoughts and conversations show that he is in conflict with the tradition and the reality of modernism. Emotional meaning, social criticism, and historical awareness are presented side by side through his speech. This is the indirect communication of an incitable situation in Delhi at a time when the culture was transforming.

Overall, the results show that the lexical and semantic ambiguity in *Twilight in Delhi* has multiple purposes. It sustains cultural identity, enriches meaning, implies social change, and challenges the reader to go beyond literal interpretation. The novel shows how postcolonial literature can employ language to reveal mixed identities and evolving societies. The combination of lexical and semantic analysis and the application of the Maxim of Manner allows this research to explore ways of meaning construction and formation, as elaborated through the text. Hence, ambiguity is not a weakness but an important literary device through which the complexity of Indo-Muslim life and postcolonial experiences are presented.

6. Implications and Conclusion

The semantic and lexical ambiguity as studied in this work on *Twilight in Delhi* can be instrumental in both literature and linguistics. It demonstrates that the novel's lack of clarity is not a coincidence but a deliberate writing tool. Rather than making it difficult to understand, ambiguity helps the author introduce the multifaceted life of colonial Delhi, the shifting state of the Indo-Muslim culture, and the amalgamation of languages in a postcolonial society. The novel demonstrates that a single word or phrase can have more than one meaning at once. Readers need to consider the text's cultural, social, and historical context to understand its meanings.

In terms of language, this study substantiates the relevance of meaning and language use in literary works, studied in synergy. Using the Cooperative Principle of H. P. Grice, and in particular the Maxim of Manner, the analysis of how ambiguity may be achieved by means of deliberate indirectness is explicable. The language in literature is not the same as that in everyday conversation. Writers often employ direct speech, figurative language, and culturally charged language to enrich and deepen their writing. These observations indicate that pragmatic theory and the analysis of literature can be highly beneficial, particularly in the study of postcolonial literature, where language is a source of social transformation and cultural bi-identification.

It is also indicated in the study that culture and history have a strong influence on meaning. The Urdu words, symbolic imagery, and indirect dialogue are characteristic of the social life of early-twentieth-century Delhi. A new reader will interpret the text differently or fail to derive meaning due to a lack of familiarity with this background. This demonstrates that ambiguity may

serve as both a challenge and a direction for interpretation. It helps readers contemplate the text more deeply. Thus, postcolonial literature should be read for its cultural information, historical context, and the reader's subjective perspective.

Moreover, this study demonstrates the scholarly importance of research on ambiguity in literature. When students and researchers investigate how words and meanings can be open to other interpretations, they will better understand narrative techniques, cultural identity, and the use of language in practice. This method promotes critical reading, critical thinking, and deeper engagement with texts. These are skills necessary in higher education, both in linguistics and in literary studies.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that lexical and semantic ambiguity in *Twilight in Delhi* is a deliberate use of narrative tricks. It manifests itself through culturally grounded vocabulary, figurative language, and indirect speech. Such aspects make the novel more realistic, deeper, and postcolonial. This study combines a semantic study with pragmatic theory, namely the Maxim of Manner, thereby enabling an understanding of how ambiguity functions as a literary and cultural instrument. The results emphasize the role of context, culture, and the reader's involvement in the interpretation of literature, leading to further investigation of language, meaning, and ambiguity in postcolonial writing.

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