



# Are There Ambiguity in Japanese? Focusing on Japanese Learning Materials

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**Abstract.** This article seeks to identify the form of ambiguity in Japanese language learning materials and the factors that contribute to meaning ambiguity. The data source was taken from compulsory Japanese language books in universities in Indonesia. It took the two volumes of the book *Minna no Nihongo Shokyu Nihongo I and II*. The findings indicate that ambiguity in the Japanese language emerges due to words possessing polemic characteristics, leading to multiple possible interpretations. Ambiguity in the Japanese language can develop from the presence of words with many meanings and variations in the interpretation of grammatical structures. Therefore, it may be inferred that multiple instances of semantic ambiguity are present in Japanese language learning resources, particularly in *Minna no Nihongo Shokyu I and 2*. The study's findings encompass five distinct categories that contribute to ambiguity. These categories are identified as follows: syntactic structure variations leading to ambiguity, polysemy as a source of ambiguity, the utilization of specialized expressions resulting in ambiguity, ambiguity arising from cultural context, and ambiguity stemming from pragmatic expressions.

**Keywords:** Ambiguity, Meaning Relation, Polysemy, *Minna no Nihongo*.

## 1 Introduction

The advancement of study into languages is occurring exceptionally quickly. Numerous completed investigations have yielded highly suitable solutions pertaining to language problems as focal points within the field of language study. However, many aspects of language have not been explained that can explain these language problems well [1]-[5]. In the field of semantics, the relation of meaning or meaning relationships between language units in the form of words, morphemes of one word, or other morphemes are related to form a certain group of vocabulary. There are many types of meaning relations in linguistics, in which meaning relations appear called meaning ambiguity. Ambiguity or taxation of meaning, in Japanese, known as '*aimaisei*' [2], [4], [5] is a linguistic phenomenon concerning the ambiguous meaning of language forms, and this phenomenon is often found in examples of Japanese sentences. The causes of ambiguity in language research include the limitation of language symbols to describe the phenomenon of unlimited meaning so that it is undeniable that the same form appears to

express the meaning of different languages. In addition, the listener's interpretation of the form of language from the form of language conveyed orally or in writing is captured differently because of obscurity. However, the ambiguity of meaning as a linguistic phenomenon has not been thoroughly investigated, especially in Japanese language learning materials. In addition, it is a fact that most of the Japanese materials for foreign learners are well made by native speakers and have not included an explanation of the phenomenon of ambiguity of meaning from Japanese forms in the books made.

On the other hand, other reasons, such as early Japanese language learning, are still focused on learning language forms, including language structure, vocabulary, and written forms. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the Japanese language learning curriculum allocates dedicated time for studying Japanese language education, as outlined in the Japanese Language Education Curriculum. This curriculum emphasizes the aforementioned aspects, while also providing only a limited number of hours for learning. The acquisition of knowledge in the Japanese language has been somewhat delayed, and the comprehension of Japanese remains somewhat lukewarm, perhaps due to insufficient time dedicated to learning. In addition to the limitations associated with the current system, research is needed to address language difficulties, particularly in the context of foreign languages. Such studies can serve as a means for learners to acquire knowledge and comprehension beyond what is often achieved through classroom learning.

Consider the following Japanese sentences that contain the phenomenon of ambiguity.

- (01) *Tarou wa kinou katta kushi*  
*Tarou Top yesterday buy(past) toothpick/comb*  
*o Nakushita.*  
*Acc lost-past.*  
 "Tarou bought a comb/toothpick yesterday"

In (01), the word *kushi* in Japanese can be an example that can explain the phenomenon of ambiguity. The term "kushi" encompasses two distinct connotations. The primary definition refers to an implement employed by individuals to groom their hair. In contrast, the secondary definition pertains to an object typically utilized post-meal to remove residual food particles lodged between teeth. One word contains two very different meanings. This fact, if not realized by Japanese language learners, can cause problems in communicating. The intended message might be interpreted as either the primary or secondary meaning of "kushi." In the context of sentence formation (01), both interpretations conveyed by the term "kushi" are deemed appropriate. The ambiguity in (01) is formed because the language unit contains multiple meanings. The polysemy of the word "kushi" (which can also be mentioned as a cause of ambiguity) can lead to a doubling of meaning. Therefore, (01) conveys the intended meaning is not yet clear. The subsequent instance illustrates a type of ambiguity arising from disparities in the interpretation of sentence context in conjunction with terms in the Japanese language.

- (02) *Heya o sagasu*  
*room Acc mencari*  
 (Looking for room)

The example of (02) can be understood by interpretation. First, the speaker will go to a certain place (property company, home marketing) to buy or rent a house as a residence. Meanwhile, another acceptable understanding from example (02) shows the activity of searching for something missing, tucked away in some other room. Thus, the meaning of the word "heya" indicates the place where the activity indicated by the verb. Japanese learners only understand the meaning of "heya o sagasu" at the first level of meaning mentioned in the example. However, other interpretations can be raised from instance (02).

- (03) *Kare wa kanojo ga suki da*  
 (He loves her)  
 (Morimoto, 2013)

In (03), the indicated sentence structure causes multiple meanings in which part is the perpetrator of the feeling of liking "ga suki" and which part is the object of the favor. The interpretation of meaning in example (03) forms two meanings, first he (male) as a subject who has feelings for her (female), "kanojo" as the object of "kare wa kanojo o suki da", second he (male) "kanojo" as a subject who has feelings for him (male) as an object of "kare o kanojo wa suki da". This difference in understanding the word is a result of the ambiguous form of "ga suki" sentence structure. It results in two fundamentally different understandings. The vagueness of the same object of liking is equally filled by the structure.

The termination of the *Minna no Nihongo Volume I and Volume II* books as data sources intended to describe the forms of ambiguity in Japanese based on the background of the book (both existing volumes) is a learner's handbook. It can also be called a compulsory book that is used as a learning resource by the learners and Japanese language teachers at the Higher Education level in Indonesia. Based on the position of the book which is very important in the process of learning Japanese, research on the book from various aspects is needed as an urgent need, including the research that will be carried out to obtain information on the ambiguity of meaning in language units in the two books. This study aims to enhance awareness among educators as facilitators for Japanese language learners and to explore the potential of utilizing two books as supplementary teaching resources. Additionally, it seeks to assist learners in comprehending the intricacies of Japanese language, particularly the various forms of sentence ambiguity presented in the books mentioned above. The research problem regarding the description of ambiguous forms of meaning in Japanese sentences focused only on data from *Minna no Nihongo Volume I and II*. A description of the causes of ambiguity of meaning will further strengthen the purposes of this study to determine whether other sentences that are similar (of the same construction) will cause ambiguity of meaning.

The ambiguity of meaning in Japanese may be due to prosodic factors such as pressure, joints or pauses. The factors that cause this ambiguity in the meaning of Japanese

sentences are not addressed in this analysis. The focus of this study only looks at the factors causing ambiguity of meaning in the written data of the existing sentence structure form, and ignores oral data from ambiguous sentences. It aims that this research does not widen beyond the field of language semantics, because if the problem of oral data is included in this study, it is also necessary to study phonology, especially about stress and pause. Based on the background analysis, this study aims to investigate the forms of ambiguity in the book *Minna No Nihongo Volume I and Volume II*, to construe the meaning that can arise from these forms of ambiguity, and to classify the forms of ambiguity based on causal factors.

## 1.1 Meaning Relation

The introductory explanation briefly addressed the concept of meaning relations within the context of discussion. According to Chaer [3], the concept of meaning relation pertains to a semantic association between two distinct units within a language. The semantic relationship is the relationship of meaning between language units with one another. There are two types of semantic relationships: paradigmatic and syntagmatic. Masayoshi [6] explained that paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships in Japanese. It defines paradigmatic semantic relationships as relationships between words that have the same meaning (synonyms) or collections of words that are related because they have opposite meanings (antonyms).

Meanwhile, syntagmatic is the relationships formed by a word that allows it to be used with other words in one sentence construction. The concept of meaning relation serves as a mechanism for categorizing words into specific terms (vocabulary) with a distinct group structure. The interrelation between the semantic significance of linguistic units, precisely words, and their associations with other words [7].

「何らかの意味特徴を共有する複数の語は一つの意味分野を成していると言います。例えば「言葉を発する」という共通の意味特徴を持つ日本語の語彙は「話す / 言う / しゃべる / 述べる / 語る / ささやく / つぶやく / どなる / わめく」など数多くありますが、これらの語彙は一つの意味分野を成していることとなります」

(For example, there are many Japanese vocabulary words that share the common semantic characteristic of "uttering words" such as "speak, say, speak, whisper, murmur, roar, rant," but these vocabulary words form a semantic field.)

This explanation provides a clear description of the set of words that have the same meaning characteristics that will form a group of meanings. For example, in Japanese, vocabulary is known to mean "issuing language or words" in *hanasu/ iu/ shaberu/ noberu/ kataru/ sasayaku/ tsubuyaku/ donaru/ wameku/* and many other vocabulary groups. All of these word groups form a specific word group. Numerous categories of word groupings can be classified depending on the semantic ties they form. Within this context, the association between words encompasses various relationships, including synonyms, antonyms, polysemy, and homonyms. The categorization of words based on

semantic relationships can facilitate comprehension for Japanese learners, particularly those studying Japanese as a foreign language.

## 1.2 Ambiguity

There exist other synonymous words for ambiguity, including uncertainty, taxation of meaning, plurality of meaning, among others [8]. In regard to the many names for uncertainty, this study will not question the various terms but will instead assume that all of the various terms used by linguists point to the same thing. Chaer [3] defined ambiguity or taxation is a symptom of multiple meanings due to different grammatical interpretations. This different grammatical interpretation generally occurs in written language since in written language suprasegmental elements cannot be described accurately. In the next explanation, Chaer [3] gave the following examples and explanations.

- (05) *Buku sejarah baru*  
(New history book)

The phrase "new history book" can be interpreted to mean the new meaning in the example explains the phrase history book, so that the new meaning describes the publication, the latest volume of the book. However, the other meaning of the word new describes its history, not the book, which also means that it contains the new age's history.

Based on this example of ambiguity, the cause of different interpretations of meaning in a particular speech is due to the vagueness of a word explaining or perhaps explained by another word in the construction of the sentence. Consequently, the example of a new history book can be explained through the following chart.

- (5a) [(History book) new]  
(5b) [Book (new history)]

In Japanese, the concept of ambiguity is seen in the following understanding and examples. Ambiguity, referred to as "aimaisei", is a linguistic phenomenon characterized by the presence of multiple distinct meanings for a given word or phrase [7]. An example of ambiguity in Japanese is found in the following sentence.

- (06) *Watashi wa tarou to hanako o matte iru.*  
*Saya TOP Tarou with/and Hanako Acc waiting*  
(I'm waiting for Tarou and Hanako)

In the preceding example, there are two equally acceptable interpretations of the difference in understanding as a sort of ambiguity of meaning in Japanese. The first is an understanding of the waiting activities that the speaker did with "Tarou" to wait for Hanako's arrival. In the second meaning, the speaker waits alone for the arrival of the two people, Tarou and Hanako. This discrepancy in comprehension is related to

grammatical interpretations that differ. This is driven by grammatical rules in the language in issue, which allows for multiple types of understanding.

The phenomenon of ambiguity of meaning is distinguished from vagueness [11]. To clarify the difference between the two phenomena, below is another example in the linguistic phenomenon called vagueness.

(07) *Ki no eda ni tori ga tomatte iru*  
*Pohon Gen cabang datif burung agentif stopping*  
 (There are birds perching on tree branches)

(08) She is a good student  
 (She's a good student)

The examples shown in (07) (08), the words underlined *tori* and *good student* are considered a phenomenon called vagueness. The term *tori* is not thought to have a particular meaning, the type of *tori* "bird" is not clear which is on the branch of the tree. It appears a question, are sparrows, pigeons, or sparrows that are usually in the trees? Likewise, in (08), the meaning of "good student" is not specific. Such linguistic phenomena are called vagueness of meaning and unclearness of meaning. This notion's distinguishing characteristic is its emphasis on the ambiguity of meaning, whereby a single form of expression can be interpreted in multiple ways.

## 2 Methods

This research is a qualitative study since the results are in the form of qualitative analysis descriptions and do not propose results in the form of quantitative calculations [9], [10]. In Japanese, the forms of ambiguity are discussed in detail, including the forms of ambiguity, the causes of the development of ambiguity of meaning, and the descriptions that can result from the causes of ambiguity of meaning.

Data were obtained from the Japanese learning material book, *Minna No Nihongo volume I and Volume II*. The book *Minna no Nihongo* was published by Surienetto-wakku in 2002. After the data was confirmed to be a form of ambiguity by analyzing at the sentence level, the data was written in the form of data cards along with example sentences in Japanese. The classification of these sorts of ambiguity was determined by analyzing the causes that contribute to the multiple interpretations of meaning found in the books *Minna no Nihongo Volume I and Volume II*.

## 3 Results and Discussion

The study's findings on the utilization of expressions in the educational resources of *Minna no Nihongo Shokyu I and Shokyu II* textbooks are categorized into five distinct groups. These categories include ambiguity resulting from variances in syntactic structure, ambiguity arising from polysemy, ambiguity stemming from specialized expressions, ambiguity influenced by cultural context, and ambiguity arising from pragmatic

interpretation. Each of these classifications can be delineated in the subsequent sections.

### 3.1 Ambiguity Occurs due to Differences in Syntactic Structure

The data analysis inside the Japanese learning materials revealed a notable presence of ambiguity arising from disparities in syntactic structure, resulting in ambiguity of meaning. There exist other variations of this type, which will be expounded upon in the subsequent analysis.

MI: 2: 16 *Kore wa nihongo no hon desu* (This is a Japanese book)  
*ini Top bhs Jepang Gen buku to be*

The analysis of Japanese utterances within the dataset will result in two distinct interpretations, thereby indicating the presence of ambiguity in Japanese language. The underlined sentences within this dataset give rise to distinct interpretations. The term "nihongo no hon" can be understood as denoting a literary work that pertains to or encompasses the subject matter of the Japanese language. The aforementioned construction of the phrase suggests a possible interpretation, wherein the term "nihongo" (Japanese) functions as a modifier for another term, specifically "hon" (book), facilitated by the auxiliary word "no." Furthermore, an alternative interpretation of the phrase "nihongo no hon" suggests that the book in issue is a literary work composed in Japanese, specifically with *kana* and *kanji* characters. The significance of this interpretation is inconsequential, as it pertains to the initial determination of whether the book is written in Japanese or another language. The phenomenon of double comprehension, which pertains to the simultaneous understanding of two languages or linguistic systems, remains inadequately comprehended and may even be unfamiliar to individuals learning the Japanese language.

The divergence in interpretation is inherently linked to the multifaceted nature of the auxiliary word "no" in the Japanese language, which exhibits various meanings and functions as a polysemous linguistic element. In addition to its purpose of indicating possession, the auxiliary word "no" in Japanese also combines two or more nouns. The examination of the function of the auxiliary word "no" is crucial for evaluating its meaning within a given context. Furthermore, the use of the auxiliary word "no" as a connector of many nouns can lead to diverse readings and understandings, as illustrated in the following example.

青いシャツの襟  
*Aoi Shatsu no Eri*  
*biru baju Gen kerah*  
*Kerah baju biru*  
 (Blue shirt collar)

The use of the auxiliary word "no" in this statement also introduces ambiguity in terms of its meaning. The term "aoi," which means "blue," lacks clarity when used to

describe the words "shatsu" or "eri." The origin of semantic ambiguity might be attributed to the presence of the auxiliary word "no" in Japanese grammatical structures, which can lead to several interpretations. The user's text does not provide enough information to be rewritten in an academic manner. The presence of the auxiliary word "no" in the phrase "nihongo no hon" elicits multiple interpretations in the aforementioned description. The inclusion of the phrase "nihongo no hon" in the classification of ambiguous meanings is attributed to the existence of polysemous terms. The author employs the term "kouzouteki aimaisei" to refer to the phenomenon of ambiguity in form.

M2:49:200 *Atarashii seihin no namae o kimeta*  
*new Product Gen name Acc decided (past)*  
*no wa dare desu ka.*  
*Gen Top siapa to be question*  
 (We have decided on a name for our new product)

The analysis of M2:49:200 data can be understood as a manifestation of semantic ambiguity in the Japanese language, resulting from variations in interpretation arising from variances in grammatical structure. In this research, the word "kouzouteki aimaisei" was employed. The discrepancy in the interpretation of meaning pertains to the adjective "atarashii" (new), which serves to elucidate the two subsequent nouns. In this case, the term "atarashii" meaning "new" functions as a modifier for the noun "seihin" meaning "product", or alternatively, as a modifier for the phrase "seihin no name" meaning "product name". There are other meanings of this sort, such as the example "Kore, kyouto no omiyage desu, moerugomi wa getsuyoubi to mokuyoubi no asa, chiisai tori ya sakana wa kaemasuga., nihongo no shiken, eki no tatemono, furui hon ya zasshi wo ireru hako, toshokan no hon."

### 3.2 Ambiguity Arises due to Polysemy

MI: 7: 58 *nihonjin wa hashi de gohan o tabemasu.*  
*Orang Jepang Top jembatan/sumpit di nasi Acc makan*  
*Orang Jepang makan nasi dengan sumpit/di jembatan*  
 (Japanese people eat rice at Wahashi)

The interpretation of the word "hashi" in the statement mentioned above may vary due to the presence of data form ambiguity in Japanese. The term "hashi" can be understood in two distinct contexts: either as "hashi" referring to chopsticks or as "hashi" referring to a bridge. The interpretation of "hashi" as a bridge is considered less logical. However, it should be noted that the interpretation in question is not incorrect and is widely accepted within the Japanese context. Hence, the presence of ambiguity in this sentence is attributable to the utilization of the term "hashi".

The interpretation of the aforementioned line is contingent upon the cultural practice of Japanese individuals utilizing chopsticks to consume rice. The term



"chopsticks," known as "hashi" in Japanese, functions as a utensil due to its association with the auxiliary word "de," which serves as a marker for tools or instruments. The aforementioned line mostly pertains to the various interpretations of the term "hashi" as a bridge, thus implying that an individual of Japanese origin is consuming rice in the bridge. This interpretation is likewise acknowledged within the Japanese context. In contrast to its usage as a tool or instrument in the first sense, the term "de" in the second sense refers to the location or site where the subject engages in an action or undertaking.

The polysemous word "hashi" generates several meanings of sentences, resulting in ambiguous data. This sort of ambiguity falls under the category of "tagigoteki aimaisei". The phenomenon of ambiguity emerges when linguistic units are used to allow for several interpretations.

Another instance of ambiguity arises due to the polysemy of a term, as seen in the phrase "ima no shigoto ga owattara, yasumi o torou to omotteiru, kono hon o agemasu, kondo no shuumatsu, ryuugakuseipaathi."

MI: 15: 122 *Santosu san wa pasokon o motte imasu*  
*Mr.Santosu Top PC Acc membawa, mempunyai*  
*"Mr. Santosu mempunyai, membawa PC"*  
 (Mr. Santos, I have a computer)

The Japanese verb "motsu" (also known as "motte iru") is a multifaceted form that encompasses multiple meanings. The verb "motsu" (*motte iru*) possesses a semantic meaning that denotes the act of carrying or possessing. The distinction between the two semantic interpretations of the identical verb becomes evident via the utilization of the subsequent illustration.

- (01) *Gakusei wa kaban o motte, gakkou e ikimasu.*  
 (Student: I'm going to take my bag and go to school)
- (02) *Sensei wa atarashii kuruma o motte imasu.*  
 (Teacher: I have a new car)

Clearly, despite the utilization of the word "motsu" in both example sentences, the semantic interpretation of this verb differs between the two instances. The verb "motsu," which means "carry," is exemplified in example 1, where students transport their belongings to school using bags. The second example sentence illustrates the concept of ownership as conveyed by the verb "motsu." In other words, the teacher possesses a new car.

Upon revisiting the data analysis, it becomes evident that the polysemy exhibited by "motsu" verbs contributes to creating a sense of meaninglessness within the aforementioned data. In the context of words in this dataset, both the semantic notions of carrying and possessing associated with the verb "motsu" are acknowledged. The aforementioned painting activity alludes to the action of Mr. Santosu holding a laptop. Furthermore, the intended message given by the aforementioned term just depicts the scenario when Mr. Santosu possesses a laptop.

The classification of the phrase "pasokon o motte imasu" within the realm of ambiguous meaning is attributed to the presence of polysemous words. Consequently, the form of ambiguity described falls under the "tagigoteki aimaisei" category.

The conjugation of verbs in the "te-imasu" form gives rise to significant uncertainty in meaning, particularly in relation to the multifaceted interpretations of "te-imasu/te-iru" in terms of aspect.

### 3.3 Ambiguity Arises due to the Use of Special Expressions

The taxonomy of ambiguities in the Japanese language is comprehended through the utilization of specialized terms in conversational dialogues, whose significance no longer possesses lexical denotation. The comprehension of this specific term is contingent upon the contextual framework within the ongoing discourse.

M1:4:31 Dialogue

*Operator telpon* : *hai, 104 no Ishida desu.*  
 (Phone Operator) : (Yes, this is ishida in 104)  
*Karina* : *Yamato Bijutsukan no denwa*  
*bangou o onegaishimasu.*  
*Museum Yamato gen telephone*  
 (Number acc please)  
*"tolong ingin mendapatkan nomer*  
*telpon Museum Yamato"*  
 (Please call Yamato Bijutsukan's phone number)  
*Operator Telpon* : *Yamato Bijutsukan desu ne.*  
 (It's the Yamato Art Museum)  
 (Phone Operator)  
*Kashikomarimashita.* (I got it)

The aforementioned conversation includes the utilization of the phrase "kashikomarimashita". The comprehension of this term is exclusively confined to the framework of Japanese language customs pertaining to the cultivation of amicable rapport among interlocutors throughout the process of communication. The term "kashiko-marimashita" utilized in the above dialogue can be replaced with the phrase "wa-karimashita," which signifies comprehension as a response to Ms. Karina's request. The semantic significance of the term "kashikomarimashita," which conveys the notions of silence and polite bowing, appears to have diminished in the aforementioned discourse.

This kind of communication is frequently observed inside conversational models in research databases. The presence of several interpretations stems from linguistic statements that serve a particular purpose in conversational discourse. Please analyze the structure of the expression based on the provided further examples.

M1:7:57 Yamada: *Kouhii wa ikaga desuka*  
*Coffee top how is-Q*  
 (Would you like to get coffee)

Maria : Arigatou gozaimasu.  
(Thank you)

During the course of the conversation, Ms. Yamada extended an offer to Ms. Maria for a cup of coffee. The response provided by Ms. Maria, which includes the phrase "arigatou gozaimasu," exhibits a sense of ambiguity due to the multiple interpretations that can be derived from this expression. Specifically, the first interpretation conveys gratitude for the offer of coffee, while the second interpretation suggests acceptance of the offer to partake in coffee and expresses gratitude accordingly. Furthermore, the phrase "kouhi wa ikaga desuka" exhibits ambiguity as it can be taken in other ways beyond than making an offer. This line can also be understood as seeking opinions regarding the flavor of coffee or inquiring about the desired level of sweetness, among other possibilities.

### 3.4 Ambiguity Occurs Due to Cultural Context

The motivation behind this classification of ambiguity stems from the many interpretations of linguistic forms, which rely on the contextual usage of terms, particularly in relation to the knowledge of Japanese culture. In the realm of communication, individuals of Japanese descent frequently employ a variant of ellipsis, particularly when declining invitations extended by others. The subsequent illustration serves as an exemplification of ambiguity arising from cultural influences. In conclusion, the example provided demonstrates the significance of possessing a lexical comprehension of the structure of the expression "kyou wa chotto..." In the absence of cultural awareness, the sentence's interpretation is briefly explained up to the present day.

MII: 28: 23 A : *Korekara isshoni nomi ni ikimasenka*  
(Would you like to go out with me from now on?)  
B : *Sumimasen, kyou wa chotto...*  
*(Sorry, it's just a little bit today)*  
*Kinou mo nondashi, soreni ashita oosaka ni shucchou*  
*Desukara*  
(I'm working on a function, and I'm going on a business trip to Osaka tomorrow)  
A : *Sou desuka. Zannen desune.*  
(Total? That's a shame)

This dialogue takes place in the context of an invitation extended by individual A to individual B for the purpose of partaking in a traditional Japanese alcoholic beverage known as sake, or *nihonshu*, as it is commonly referred to in Japanese culture. A party B tactfully declines A's offer by employing a communication strategy that avoids explicit and comprehensive rejection. B politely expresses their apologies by saying "Sumimasen, kyou wa chotto..." which translates to "Apologies, today is a bit..." In this discourse, the act of rejection is conveyed through the utilization of the ellipsis form of Chotto. This term possesses the lexical sense of "just, a little bit".

### 3.5 Ambiguity Occurs due to Pragmatic Expressions

This particular classification scheme is not extensively represented in the data analysis. One of the pragmatic models observed in the Japanese language involves the utilization of a conversation format to express the act of declining an invitation offer due to specific reasons. Below is the example of the dialogue.

- M2:34:68 A : *Shigoto no atode, nomi ni ikimasen ka*  
*Work gen after, drink dat go-negative- Q*  
 (Would you like to go for a drink after working?)  
 B : *Sumimasen, kyou wa supo-tsu kurabu e iku hi nandesu*  
*Excuse me, today top sportclub to go day is*  
 (I'm sorry, today is the day to go to a sports club)

The discourse expressed by Mr. B did not explicitly decline the offer extended by Mr. A. The occurrence of ambiguity in Mr. B's response is evident at this point. Apologies, under the framework of meaningful pragmatics, serve as subtle indicators of rejection by providing logical justifications and forming the foundation for declining invitations. The aforementioned logical rationales are put forward in order to circumvent the use of indirect rejection and foster a sense of linguistic civility.

## 4 Conclusion

This article aims to identify the form of ambiguity in Japanese learning materials and continues by identifying the factors that cause ambiguity of meaning. The classification of forms of ambiguity in Japanese materials yields five distinct types. The first type arises from disparities in syntactic structure, while the second type stems from polysemy. The third type emerges from the utilization of specialized expressions, while the fourth type is rooted in cultural context. Lastly, the fifth type of ambiguity arises from pragmatic understanding. One of the contributing aspects to the phenomenon of semantic ambiguity is a deficiency or absence.

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