

# DOUBLM: Double Meaning

Page

Discussion

Read

From The Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric

 All rhetorical devices > Figurative Speech (*'ilm al-*

*bayān*)

Alphabetical list



التورية

DOUBLM: Double Meaning

Category

Figurative Speech (*'ilm al-bayān*)

Subcategory

Semantic Ambiguity

Built upon

7 sources

Annotation Unit

ARDT Code

DOUBLM

Level

1 (Rhetorical device)

↳ Has 4 subtypes

Included in Taxonomy

ARDT

v0.1.1

v0.1.0

External Identifiers

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B-6

BalaghaBase

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## Definition

Double Meaning (*al-tawriya*) is an Arabic rhetorical device where the **communicator** uses a single word that carries two meanings: one near (*qarīb*), which is apparent and springs immediately to the mind of the **addressee**, and one distant (*ba'īd*), which is the intended meaning and whose indication by the word is hidden. As a result, the **addressee** supposes the near meaning is intended, while the **communicator** in fact intends the distant one, by means of a contextual clue (*qarīna*) that points to it without making it apparent, concealing it from all but the perceptive.<sup>[1][2][3][4]</sup>

The device is also called delusion (*ihām*),<sup>[5]</sup> suggestion (*takhyīl*), directing (*tawjīh*) and fallacy (*mughālata*).<sup>[3][6][7]</sup>

## Linguistic Operations

From the sources

- The **communicator** selects a single word that is genuinely polysemous (*lafz mushtarak*) - carrying two recognised meanings, such that both its near and distant meanings are legitimate.<sup>[1][2][3][7]</sup>
- The near meaning presents itself first, but is not intended.<sup>[1][3]</sup>
- The distant meaning is the intended one, guided by a contextual clue without explicit declaration.<sup>[1][3][4]</sup>

## Recognition

From the sources

Double Meaning may be present when:

- A single word carries two recognised meanings in Arabic.<sup>[1][2][3]</sup>
- The apparent meaning presents itself first to the **addressee**.<sup>[1][3]</sup>
- A contextual clue points toward the distant meaning without explicitly stating it.<sup>[1][3][4]</sup>

## Diagnostic Communicative Enhancements

From the sources

- Double Meaning stimulates the mind and exercises the intellect in searching for the distant meaning.<sup>[1]</sup>
- It produces intellectual exercise (*riyāḍa*) through interpretive effort.<sup>[1]</sup>
- It allows concealment while maintaining formally truthful wording.<sup>[1][7]</sup>

Applying the Recognition Framework

The information on this page can be used to evaluate whether this device is present in a candidate **lexical item** using the **Specific Device Recognition** part of the **Universal Framework for Identifying Arabic Rhetorical Devices**:

- Use the Definition, Mechanism, and Recognition sections of this page in **Step 1**.
- Apply the identification test in **Step 2**.

- Apply the substitution test in [Step 2](#).
- Consider contextual indicators in [Step 3](#).
- Use the Diagnostic Communicative Enhancements section of this page in [Step 4](#).

## Subtypes of Double Meaning

### From the sources

The sources consistently identify four subtypes of Double Meaning.<sup>[2][8][3]</sup>

### DOUBLM-BP: Bare Double Meaning (*al-tawriya al-mujarrada*)

#### From the sources

A double meaning in which neither the associates of the near meaning nor the distant meaning are mentioned.<sup>[2][3][8]</sup>

#### Annotation Unit

|             |                      |
|-------------|----------------------|
| ARDT        | DOUBLM-BP            |
| Level       | 2 (Subtype)          |
| BalaghaBase | <a href="#">Q405</a> |

#### Source Example

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُم بِاللَّيْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا جَرَحْتُم بِالنَّهَارِ  
Qur'ān 6:60

"And He it is who takes your souls by night, and He knows what you have done by day."

#### Explanation

The word *jaraḥtum* has a near meaning of wounding and a distant intended meaning of committing sins.<sup>[1][2]</sup>

#### Source Example

يا سيدا حاز لطفاً لست أبرح من يزيد

"O master of grace, I do not depart from Yazīd."

#### Explanation

The word *yazīd* may first be taken as the proper name Yazīd (near), while the intended meaning is "increase" (distant), with no associated clue for either meaning.<sup>[4]</sup>

#### Constructed Example

يا مَنْ يَعِيشُ بَيْنَنَا وَقَلْبُهُ بَعِيدٌ — هَلْ تَعْلَمُ كَمْ نَحْنُ فِي شَوْقٍ إِلَيْكَ؟

"O you who lives among us yet whose heart is distant — do you know how much we long for you?"

#### Explanation

The word *ba'īd* has a near meaning of physical distance (far away), and a distant intended meaning of emotional or spiritual remoteness. No associate of either meaning appears alongside it — nothing in the surrounding words primes the [addressee](#) toward one reading or the other — making this a bare Double Meaning.

### DOUBLM-RP: Reinforced Double Meaning (*al-tawriya al-murashsha*)

#### Annotation Unit

|                  |             |                        |
|------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| From the sources | ARDT        | DOUBLM-RP              |
|                  | Level       | 2 (Subtype)            |
|                  | BalaghaBase | Q406 <a href="#">↗</a> |

A Double Meaning in which an associate of the near meaning is mentioned alongside it.<sup>[2][3][8]</sup>

#### Source Example [↗](#)

وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ  
Qur'ān 51:47

"And the heaven, We built it with power."

#### Explanation

The word *aydin* carries a near meaning of hands, reinforced by the act of building, while the intended meaning is power.<sup>[2][3]</sup>

#### Constructed Example [↗](#)

بَنَيْتُ مَجْدِي بِيَدِي

"I built my glory with my hand."

#### Explanation

The word *yad* first suggests the physical hand (near), reinforced by the act of building, while the intended meaning is power or capability (distant).

### DOUBLM-EP: Elucidated Double Meaning (*al-tawriya al-mubayyana*)

| From the sources | Annotation Unit |                        |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
|                  | ARDT            | DOUBLM-EP              |
|                  | Level           | 2 (Subtype)            |
|                  | BalaghaBase     | Q407 <a href="#">↗</a> |

A Double Meaning in which an associate of the distant meaning is mentioned alongside it.<sup>[2][3][8]</sup>

#### Source Example [↗](#)

فَأَظْهَرْتَ ذَلِكَ الْفَرْضَ مِنَ ذَلِكَ النَّدْبِ

"And you revealed that obligation from that recommendation."

#### Explanation

The words *fard* and *nadb* each carry a near meaning on the surface — the two legal categories of obligatory and recommended acts — but their intended distant meanings are "gift" (*fard*) and "a man swift in fulfilling needs" (*nadb*). These distant meanings are elucidated by the prior mention of *sunna*, which belongs to the domain of those distant meanings. Without *sunna* preceding them, the double meaning would not take shape.<sup>[8][2]</sup>

#### Constructed Example [↗](#)

لَمَّا سَمِعْتُ صَوْتَهُ الشَّجِيَّ تَذَكَّرْتُ الْحَمَامَ

"When I heard his mournful voice, I remembered the *hamām*."

### Explanation

The word *ḥamām* has a near meaning of "bathhouse" and a distant intended meaning of "dove." The prior mention of a mournful voice (*ṣawt al-shajī*) is an associate of the dove — doves are conventionally associated with mournful cooing — and thus belongs to the domain of the distant meaning, elucidating it. No associate of the near meaning (bathhouse) appears.

## DOUBLM-PP: Prepared Double Meaning (*al-tawriya al-muhayya`a*)

### From the sources

A double meaning in which a neighbouring word prepares the ambiguity and makes the double meaning possible.<sup>[2][3][8]</sup>

### Annotation Unit

|             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| ARDT        | DOUBLM-PP   |
| Level       | 2 (Subtype) |
| BalaghaBase | Q408 ↗      |

### Source Example ↗

إِنَّهُ كَانَ يُحَرِّكُ الشَّمَالَ بِالْيَمِينِ

"He used to stir the left with the right."

### Explanation

The word *shamāl* is prepared by *yamīn*, making the near meaning available while concealing the distant one.<sup>[2]</sup>

### Constructed Example ↗

بلدي شامٌ وقلبي يَمَانِي

"My homeland is Syria, and my heart is yamānī."

### Explanation

The word *yamānī* has a near meaning of "from Yemen" (prepared by the preceding word *shām*, Syria, which primes the [addressee](#) to read it as a geographical contrast), while the distant intended meaning is "of the sword," since *yamānī* is one of the names of the sword in Arabic. Without *shām* preceding it, the [addressee](#) would not be led to the near geographical meaning, and the tawriya would not take shape.

## Different From

### From the sources

-  **PARONOM**: [Complete Paronomasia](#) - two words, identical in form, each used with a different meaning. Whereas Double Meaning is one word with different possible meanings.<sup>[1]</sup>
- **DELIBAM**: [Deliberate Ambiguity](#) - operates at the sentence level, with different meanings, which remain unresolved by design. Whereas Double Meaning is a single word where one meaning is intended and the other is a decoy.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Notes

- The Arabic root of *tawriya* means concealment, which motivates the technical sense.<sup>[1][3]</sup>
- The alternative name *ihām* reflects the misleading effect on the [addressee](#).<sup>[1][3][6]</sup>
- Later rhetoricians expanded its use extensively in poetry and prose.<sup>[8][3]</sup>

## See Also

- [Disambiguation page for Figurative Speech](#) ('ilm al-bayān)
- [Disambiguation page for Repetition Devices](#)
- [Disambiguation page for Ambiguity and Lexical Wordplay Devices](#)

References

1. ↑ <sup>a b c d e f g h i j k l m n</sup> Ayman Amin Abd Al-Ghani, *Al-Kāfi fi al-Balāgha: Al-Bayān, wa al-Badī' wa al-Ma'ānī* (Cairo: Dār al-Tawfiqiyya lil-Turāth, 2011), 275–290.

2. ↑ <sup>a b c d e f g h i j k l</sup> Aḥmad al-Ḥashimī, *Jawāhir al-Balāgha fi al-Ma'ānī wa-al-Bayān wa-al-Badī'* <sup>↗</sup> (Windsor: Hindāwī Foundation, 2019), 363–364, ISBN 9781527316386.

3. ↑ <sup>a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q</sup> 'Abd al-'Azīz Atīq, *'Ilm al-Badī'* (Beirut: Dār al-Nahḍa al-'Arabiyya lil-Ṭibā'a wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 2002), 122–134.

4. ↑ <sup>a b c d</sup> Ḥafnī Nāsif, Muḥammad Diyāb, Sultan Muḥammad and Muṣṭafā Ṭammām, [ *Durūs al-Balāgha*] (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2012), 105, ISBN 9786144162798.

5. ↑ In'ām Fawwāl 'Akkāwī, *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufaṣṣal fi 'Ulūm al-Balāgha: Al-Badī' wa-al-Bayān wa-al-Ma'ānī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1996), 251-254.

6. ↑ <sup>a b</sup> W. P. Heinrichs, 'Rhetorical Figures', in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature* <sup>↗</sup>, ed. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey (London: Routledge, 1998), 660, ISBN 0415068088. DOI: 10.4324/9780203020425 <sup>↗</sup>

7. ↑ <sup>a b c</sup> Fadl Hasan 'Abbās, *Al-Balāgha: Funūnuḥā wa-Afnānuḥā - 'Ilm al-Bayān wa-al-Badī'* (Amman: Dār al-Furqān lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 2007), 284–286.

8. ↑ <sup>a b c d e f g h</sup> In'ām Fawwāl 'Akkāwī, *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufaṣṣal fi 'Ulūm al-Balāgha: Al-Badī' wa-al-Bayān wa-al-Ma'ānī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1996), 444–450.

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