

## Read

From The Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric

The communicator intentionally uses a word which can change its meaning through a small change in the word itself. This causes ambiguity in the communicator's intended meaning, so that the communicator may avoid being committed to one of the two meanings.<sup>[1][2]</sup>

- Abū Nuwās

And when Caliph al-Rashīd objected to the line, Abū Nuwās claimed he said **لقد ضاء شعري على بابكم - كما ضاء**

عَقْدٌ عَلَى خَالِصَةٍ where the original phrase "ضَاع شعري" (my poetry was lost) could be changed to "ضَاء شعري" (my poetry shone), and "ضَاع عَقْدٌ" (a necklace was lost) could be read as "ضَاء عَقْدٌ" (a necklace shone). These minor changes result in completely different interpretations of the line of poetry.

- CA-1: Incomplete Paronomasia
- Related to [Equivocation](#) ↗

1. ↑ Ḥafnī Nāṣif, Muḥammad Diyāb, Sultān Muḥammad and Muṣṭafā Ṭammām, *Durūs al-Balāgha* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2012), 121, ISBN 9786144162798.
2. ↑ Basil Hatim, *Arabic Rhetoric: The Pragmatics of Deviation from Linguistic Norms*, LINCOM Studies in Communication 04 (Munich: Lincom Europa, 2010), 183, ISBN 9780415386098.

Categories: Arabic Rhetorical Devices | Linguistic Embellishments ('ilm al-badī') | Indirectness &amp; Ambiguity

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### CD-3: Evasive Letterplay

**Category** Linguistic Embellishments  
(‘ilm al-badī‘)

**Subcategory** Indirectness & Ambiguity

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