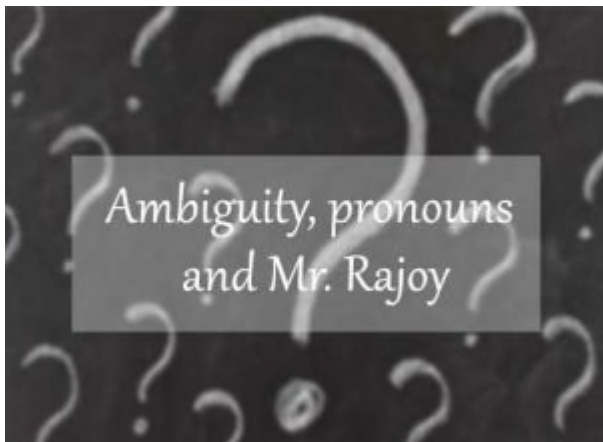


# Ambiguous pronouns

5 de mayo de 2015



Can you make sense of this sentence ( *¿Podría sacar algo de esta oracion?* ) ?

**“Mr. Rajoy went to the bar with Mr. Sanchez and he bought him a beer”.**

Who bought whom a beer? Did Mr. Rajoy buy the beer, or did Mr. Sanchez? Not sure? Yes, you should be confused. The pronoun “he” could refer to either Mr. Rajoy or Mr. Sanchez. So to avoid such ambiguity or to put it bluntly (hablando francamente), to avoid an accusation of “lack of thought”, the sentence would be better written in this way:

“Mr. Rajoy went to the bar with Mr. Sanchez and Mr. Rajoy bought him a beer”.

Such confusion does not occur in the following:

**“Mrs. Merkel went to the bar with Mr. Cameron and she bought him a beer”.**

Here the pronoun, in this case “she” can only refer to Mrs. Merkel. No confusion.

So, is this confusing or not?

**“If the politicians in Tenerife do not pay their taxes, eliminate them”.**

What or who is to be eliminated? The politicians? The taxes? Here “them” could refer to the taxes and the politicians or both. So do we eliminate the politicians, the taxes or both? Good question. The answers might be tempting (tentadas)!

So, speaking seriously (*hablando seriamente*), to avoid ambiguity, think carefully when using pronouns.