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OF PROBABILITY AND POSSIBILITY

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Abstract

All possible is probable. But all probable may not be possible. Probability never becomes zero. One says an event as probable just to safeguard oneself to avoid liability. Both are uncertain causing suspense or tension giving birth to sleepless nights.

Keywords: Probability, possibility, uncertainty

Of Probability and Possibility

Probable is that may be expected to happen or prove true. It is supported generally but not conclusively by the evidence. It is affording ground for belief. It is that can reasonably but not certainly be expected e.g. the probable winner. It is reasonably so, as on the basis of evidence, but not proved e.g. the probable cause of a disease. It is likely to occur, exist or be true e.g. the most probable explanation/outcome/cause; it seems probable that the police are right about this; the probable explanation; reckon the probable cost; gives a probable account of the matter; it is probable that they forget; a probable candidate, member of a team, etc.; a probable loser; the probable result; it seems probable that he will win this time; quality of being probable; Probable for something is a person or thing most likely to be chosen, e.g. for a sports team or as the winner; all four players are probables for the national team, to be announced tomorrow; he is one of the probables for the American tour. Probable originally means that can be proved now rare. It is having more evidence for than against. It is giving ground for belief. It implies likely. It is colourable, plausible e.g. probable opinion. It is one that has a good chance or is likely to turn out or become the thing in question. Probable cause, as per law, is reasonable grounds for presuming guilt in someone

charged with a crime. It is a belief, especially, one justifying legal proceeding against a person. Probable error is a quantity assumed as the value of an error, such that the chances of the real error being greater are equal to those of its being less. Probable evidence is the evidence not conclusive but admitting of some degree of force. Probable is supposed to mean plausible. It is apparently a contracted form of probable. Prob means either probable or probably or problem or all together. Probably implies in all likelihood. It means very likely. It is almost certainly. For example: He is probably stuck in a traffic jam. You are probably right. 'Will you be coming?' 'Probably (not)'. Probably he told her everything. Probability is the quality or fact of being probable e.g. a probable event or result; in all probability. It is a probable or most probable event e.g. the probability is that they will come. It is the appearance of truth. It is the chance or likelihood of something happening. In statistics it is the likelihood of an occurrence, expressed by the ratio of the number of actual occurrences to that of possible occurrences. It is the relative frequency with which an event occurs or is likely to occur. Probability is the state or condition of being probable. For example: There is very little probability that anyone will try to escape. What is the probability of its success? A fall in interest rates is a

strong probability in the present economic climate. In planning for the future, we need to consider a whole range of probabilities and possibilities. The magistrate will make a decision on the balance of probabilities. There is little probability that he will reach in time. The probability is that he will die. In mathematics it is a ratio expressing the chances that a certain event will occur. For example: The species has a 50% probability of extinction within 5 years. In all probability means most probably. It is likelihood e.g. there is no probability of his coming. It is most probable event e.g. what are the probabilities? The probability is that he will come. In mathematics, it is extent to which an event is likely to occur, measured by the ratio of the favourable cases to the whole number of cases possible e.g. From a bag containing 3 red balls and 7 white balls, the probability of a red ball's being drawn first is $3/10$. In all probability means it is very likely. For example: In all probability he is already left. Probability curve, in statistics, is a curve that describes the distribution of probability over the values of a variate. Probabiliorism is the doctrine that in case of doubt one is bound to choose the more probable opinion. It is ethical doctrine that the side on which evidence preponderates ought to be followed. Probabilism is the policy of confining efforts to what is immediately possible or practicable. It is the ethical doctrine that of two opinions, both-reasonable, one may follow one's own inclination as a doubtful law cannot impose a certain obligation. As per philosophy, it is the doctrine that certainty is impossible, and that probability suffices to govern faith and practice. As per Roman Catholic Theology it is a theory that in cases of moral doubt, a person may follow a soundly probable opinion concerning the morality of an action. Probabilistic is of or based on probabilism. It is involving chance variation. Possible is capable of existing or happening, though not certain. It is that may be managed, achieved, etc. e.g. came as early as possible; did as much as possible. It is that is likely to happen etc. e.g. few thought their victory possible. It is potential e.g. a possible way of doing it. A possible candidate means member of a team, etc. It is whatever likely, manageable, etc. It is reasonable or acceptable e.g. a possible solution to the dispute. It is that may or can exist, happen, be done or be used, etc. e.g. that is quite possible; it is scarcely possible to say; it is possible he knows or may know; there are three possible excuses; provide against a possible loss of men; get the greatest possible assistance; get all the assistance possible; come if possible; come as early as possible; a possible future leader; the possible side effects of the drug; a possible way out. It is that may be true or may be the

case. It is that can be in the future. It is that may or may not happen. It is that can be done, known, chosen, acquired, selected, used, etc., depending on circumstances e.g. a possible candidate. It is not contrary to the nature of things. It is contingent. It is potential. It is practicable. It is such as one may tolerate, accept, or get on with. It is one's best. It is necessities. It is permissible. It is that may be a fact or the truth. It, colloquially, is that can be put up with. It is tolerance. It is a candidate, etc. who has a good chance of winning, succeeding, being chosen, etc., e.g. Smith was a possible for the job. It is that is likely to happen etc. e.g. few thought his election possible. It is that is acceptable for want of better e.g. here is a possible way of doing it. It is a highest possible score especially in shooting e.g. scored a possible at 800 yards. Life is infested with various possibilities. For examples: It should be possible to develop a form of tape that cannot be copied. Try to give as much detail as possible i.e. as much as you can in your answer. We will get your order to you as soon as possible. Shelter the plants from sun and wind, if at all possible, i.e. if you can. Avoid caffeine and other stimulants whenever/wherever possible i.e. when you can. It is quite/perfectly possible for someone to know a huge amount of history without being able to draw any lessons from it. The doctor will come at the earliest possible opportunity. We did all that was humanly possible i.e. that humans could do to save his life. It is possible that he went. There are several possible explanations. Frost is possible, although unlikely, at this time of year. It seems possible that the rule will now be relaxed. It is just possible that we may be late. It is not possible. He ran as fast as possible. Do you consider the undertaking as possible? The final eleven will be selected from the sixteen possible. The best of both worlds/all possible worlds are two idioms. Possible is a person who is suitable for selection, e.g. for a job or sports team. For example: They interviewed 50 people of whom five were possibles. Possibly is used to emphasize that one feels strongly that something is difficult, strange, unreasonable, etc. It means perhaps e.g. a serious, possibly fatal, disease. It means may be, for all one knows to the contrary. It is by any possibility. It is conceivably. It is in any case e.g. it can't possibly work. It is by some possibility. It is maybe e.g. it may possibly so. It is in accordance with possibility e.g. cannot possibly refuse; how can I possibly? It is by any possible means e.g. it can't possibly work. It is with a reasonable amount of effort, goodwill, etc. Further examples: You can't possibly think that I had anything to do with it! Could you possibly go? 'Will you be leaving next week?' 'Possibly'. This conference is possibly the most

important event of his presidency. Could you possibly i.e. please will you open that window for me? I will come as soon as I possibly can. I can't possibly lend you so much money. You can't possibly carry the entire luggage. Possibly he will come in a week's time. Could you possibly lend me one hundred rupees? Are you getting the job? – Possibly.

Possibility is the state or fact of being possible, or an occurrence of this e.g. outside the range of possibility; saw no possibility of going away; the possibility of miracles; cannot by any possibility be in time; there is no possibility of his coming; it is within the range of possibility. It is something that is possible. It is the quality or condition of being possible. It is a contingency. It is potential, promise for the future. It is the thing that may exist or happen e.g. what are the possibilities? It is the capability of being used, improved, etc. It is the potential of an object or situations e.g. especially have possibilities. Further examples: What is the possibility of India's winning the World Cup. A wise man never ignores the possibility of failure. Have you considered the possibility of the new project? The boy has great possibilities. There are three possibilities. Possible, feasible and practicable are synonymous. Possible, feasible, practicable refer to that which may come about or take place without prevention by serious obstacles. Possible is used of anything that may exist, occur, be done, etc., depending on circumstances e.g. a possible solution to a problem. That which is possible is naturally able or even likely to happen, other circumstances being equal. For example: Discovery of a new source of plutonium is possible. Feasible refers to the ease with which something can be done and implies a high degree of desirability. For example: This plan is the most feasible. It is used of that which is likely to be carried through to a successful conclusion and, hence, connotes the desirability of doing so e.g. a feasible enterprise. Practicable applies to that which can be done with the means at hand and with conditions as they are. For example: We ascended the slope as far as was practicable. It applies to that which can readily be affected under the prevailing conditions or by the means available e.g. a practicable plan. Possibles and Probables are teams for football etc. trial match. Both probability and possibility have different forms and features having various degrees and dimensions along with different faces and facets as well. Man faces both. He has to face. He is bound to face. Thus, man faces both willy-nilly infinite times from cradle to grave. In this regard he is quite undone, since life itself is immersed in this solution of uncertainty rather than certainty.

For example, let us take two statements:

- (1). He may come.
- (2). He may not come.

In fact there is no basic difference between these two sentences. Because, 'he may come' means 'he may not come' also. Similarly, 'he may not come' means 'he may come' as well simultaneously. The former sentence signifies affirmation and the later one is liable for negation. Thus both the sentences express the tendency of a concerned individual. In both the cases there is no must, no guarantee, no certainty but two occurrences with full uncertainty. Here the tendency or statistical interpretation of the concerned person has simply been mentioned without any ambiguity though both the statements suffer from full of ambiguity. Thus, uncertainty in disguise of ambiguity causes anxiety. Both probability and possibility are may be, not certain due to third unknown factor. Here lies the ignorance or limitation of human knowledge. Here the concept of luck or god has come into existence. The theist contends that god is almighty who knows everything and controls luck. Someone runs after both considering certain. Impossible is absent in his dictionary. He is an optimist. Someone runs not, considering both uncertain. He is a pessimist. In this creation of uncertainty, only death is sure and certain. But the paradox is that the occurrence of certain death is quite uncertain. Thus, certainty is controlled by uncertainty. None knows when the confirmed death will occur. Conversely, uncertainty is controlled by certainty. All possible is probable. But all probable may not be possible. Probability never becomes zero. One says an event as probable just to safeguard oneself to avoid liability. Both are uncertain causing suspense or tension giving birth to sleepless nights. Probability and possibility are two brothers. Probability is junior and possibility is senior. Where probability ends, possibility begins. As such, more probable may be called possible and less possible may be called probable respectively. Both probable and possible represent hope which is the driving force since time immemorial. Fulfilment of one hope provokes an ambitious person to get more. The more the merrier. A wise knows where to stop. A fool knows not where to stop but knows well to be greedy more. As such it faces downfall utterly. It seems the difference between probability and possibility is thin. In fact, there is no basic difference between these two concepts. Only two different words are used from two different perspectives or subjects. Probability has been used by the statistician and possibility by the historian, just like God and

Almighty as are believed thereby preached by a pious soul.

Let us consider two sentences:

(1). A cloudburst is possible but not probable before afternoon.

(2). A cloudburst is probable but not possible before afternoon.

Here, the two terminologies probability and possibility have been used interchangeably.

Conclusion

Both are uncertain. Both are mirage. The chance is fifty-fifty or less than that. The paradox is that man knows it, yet man runs after it. Here lies the uniqueness of allurements of hope beckoned by probability and possibility.

References

No reference, since the present article is an outcome of Creative Writing



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