

AMBIGUITY IN SONG LYRICS OF THE BEST DAY BY TAYLOR SWIFT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify ambiguity in the lyrics of the song entitled "The Best Day" created and sung by Taylor Swift. This research uses descriptive methods to analyze the data. The research data was collected from the lyrics of the song "The Best Day". The result of this research shows that: There are eight ambiguities, four structural ambiguities and four lexical ambiguities in the lyrics of the song "The Best Day". Taylor Swift uses more than a few ambiguities to tell her real life as a child through her song lyrics, such as: homonymy, homophones, homographs, full homonymy, partial homonymy, polysemy, morphology, and syntax. She shares that when she was five years old, she could already feel everything that happened in her life, and she believed that her mother was not afraid of anything that harmed her, her mother would always take care of her. She also felt that her father was the greatest father in the world, always taught her how to be a strong child. Swift was also always proud of her little brother; she taught that he was better than her. This study is important to know the message or meaning that the singer or song writer wants to convey in his/her work.

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INTRODUCTION

Communication is a process of interaction between fellow living beings (humans) in everyday life. Humans usually communicate in many ways, one of which is by using symbols, sounds and with structured alphabetical letters. This system is then called language.

Linguistics is the study of language. Linguistics has two branches: macro-linguistics and micro-linguistics. Macro-linguistics is a

branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and factors outside of language. Such as its relationship with psychological, social, teaching, medical, and philosophical aspects. Micro-linguistics studies the elements in language directly, namely regarding their properties, structure, how they work, and so on. Micro linguistics generally consists of phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax.

In communicating, we must have experienced misunderstandings or did not understand what was explained or stated by our interlocutors, or vice versa. For example, the voice we hear is not clear in our ears, or maybe vice versa. Our voice or the way we speak is not clear so that others do not understand what we say. This happens very often and is very natural. The term is called "Ambiguous".

There are so many problems that arise due to ambiguity. Starting from small problems to big problems, considering the importance of communication in our daily lives. Small problems that occur are for example when we mishear what others hear, for example when our mothers ask us to fill half a bucket of water, but we fill the bucket full of water. This subject of ambiguity is certainly very interesting to discuss.

There are explanations from experts (Richard and Schmidt, 2002 n.d.) defined linguistics as "the study of language as a system of human communication". It is explained that linguistic carries different approaches to the study of language and aspects of investigation, such as: sound systems, sentence structure, relationships between language and cognition, meaning systems, language, and social factors. Sound system is an aspect of study of language that includes sound speech as part of its investigation such as phonetics which is the study of speech sounds and their physiological production and acoustic qualities and phonology as the study of the sound system of a language that is made up of a set of phonemes which are used according to phonological rules such as assimilation, dissimilation, insertion, and deletion. Sentence structure is part of linguistic that investigates details structure of how it is connected into making structurally appropriate words or sentence.

Ambiguity is the lack of understanding the meaning of an utterance or sentence. It can

be caused by double meaning or more in a word that creates confusion between the speaker or the sender and the receiver. (Nordquist, 2023 n.d.) stated that ambiguity is sometimes regarded as a fallacy or commonly known as equivocation in which the same term is used in more than one way. Ambiguity is divided into two types, lexical and syntactic. Lexical ambiguity is the condition where two or more possible meanings within a single word, while syntactic ambiguity is the condition where two or more possible meanings within a single sentence or sequence of words. Ambiguity not only important to be analyzed in conversation or social interaction, but as well as in some poems, advertisements, song lyrics, and other texts. In this research, the author particularly discuss ambiguities in song lyrics.

Songs are one of the most popular works of art in society, even beating the interest in reading textbooks, magazines, novels, or poetries. Not only for entertainment, but many use songs to convey messages to each other. Song lyrics are one of the works of songwriters that have a deep meaning that they want to convey to their listeners. Sometimes song lyrics have meanings that are difficult to understand, because they contain ambiguities meanings in the arrangement of words or sentences. In song lyrics, there can be several ambiguities meanings that want to be conveyed to the listener. Ambiguity in song lyrics can be influenced by the social background of the songwriter, such as race, culture, knowledge, and style in music. Therefore, to clarify the meaning of song lyrics, the author are interested in analysis the ambiguities of song lyrics.

RESEARCH METHODE

The method used in this research is a qualitative method that focuses on textual analysis. Qualitative method is analyzing a

research by not involving calculations based on statistical numbers, but rather emphasizing the substance of the meaning of a phenomenon. Qualitative research uses a range of methods to focus on the meaning and interpretation of social phenomenon and social process in the particular contexts in which they occur (Jupp, 2006: 249 2017) . In using qualitative methods, using content analysis techniques to categories and interpret data ((Heasley dan Smith, 2007) n.d.) . The data source in the form of text (song lyrics) is interpreted and deconstructed on the ideology and values contained in it. Text is any written expression that has meaning, such as letters, short messages, poems, song lyrics, novels, visual texts in films, pictures, or advertisements. In this research, the text analyzed is the song "The Best Day" by Taylor Swift using a qualitative descriptive method which is a method to examine a concept or phenomenon that can be traced and described in depth. The data sources in this study were obtained using data collection methods. In this research, the author uses studies and theories related to semantics and ambiguity of meaning in the lyrics of the song "The Best Day" by Taylor Swift.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

We are all familiar with the word ambiguity, which is a phenomenon that depends on everyone. Almost every day we experience it and not a few people are confused in understanding the true meaning, starting from hearing news on the radio, hearing television broadcasts, watching movies when hearing dialogue, and when hearing song lyrics. According to (Leech, 1981:30) "an expression becomes ambiguous when more than one interpretation can be assigned".

Quoted from the journal (Andini, 2021:2 n.d.) that ambiguity is a phenomenon that depends on individual interpretation. Ambiguity is often found in everyday life

where many people are often confused when understanding the real meaning. Ambiguity is often defined as a word that has a double meaning or has two meanings.

The meaning in the ambiguity can be double due to grammatical, phonetic, or lexical units. The mingling of language sounds or language similarities due to speech that is spoken too quickly, or the intonation is not correct, causing doubt in the meaning. Ambiguity is of three types, including:

A. Phonetic-level ambiguities

Phonetic ambiguity occurs because of the mingling or unification of sounds due to speech that is pronounced too quickly so that it has a different sounding meaning.

B. Lexical-level ambiguities

Lexical ambiguity is caused by a word sometimes having more than one meaning, for different things according to its usage. Lexical level ambiguity consists of:

a) Homonymy

Homonymy is an utterance that is the same but for different things, resulting in unclear or biased meaning. Homonymy is divided into several types, namely:

b) Homophones

Homophones occur when the lexemes sound the same but are written differently.

c) Homographs

Homographs occur when the writing is the same but the pronunciation is different.

d) Full homonymy

Full homonymy occurs when it can be a homophone and homograph simultaneously.

e) Partial homonymy

Partial homonymy occurs when only some of the word forms are the same, either only homophones or only homographs occur.

f) Polysemy

Polysemy is the same word that can have more than one meaning, or a form of language (word, phrase, etc.) that has more than one meaning. More than one meaning occurs because there are several concepts in the meaning of a word. Grammatical ambiguity occurs at the level of words or sentences because of the similarity of phrases, contexts, and word formation events.

C. Grammatical-level ambiguities
(Structural ambiguities)

Ambiguity at the grammatical level occurs during the formation process at the linguistic level, namely:

- Morphology: morphemes and words.

At the morphological level, ambiguity results in a change in meaning.

- Syntax : phrases, clauses, and sentences.

At the syntactic level, ambiguity appears in phrases, clauses, and sentences. Each word that makes up the phrase is clear. But combining them can have more than one interpretation.

Based on the theories and explanations in the previous paragraphs, this research focuses on lexical or word ambiguity, which is a condition where a word has multiple meanings.

Album: Fearless (Taylor's Version)

Released: April 09, 2021

Sung by: Taylor Swift
Composed by: Taylor Swift
Written by: Taylor Swift
Produced by: Taylor Swift and Christopher Rowe

[Verse 1]

I'm five years old, it's getting cold, I've got my big coat on

I hear your laugh and look up smiling at you, I run and run

Past the pumpkin patch and the tractor rides

Look now, the sky is gold

I hug your legs and fall asleep on the way home

[Chorus]

I don't know why all the trees change in the fall

But I know you're not scared of anything at all

Don't know if Snow White's house is near or far away

But I know I had the best day with you today

[Verse 2]

I'm thirteen now

And don't know how my friends could be so mean

I come home crying and you hold me tight and grab the keys

And we drive and drive until we found a town far enough away

And we talk and window shop 'til I've forgotten all their names

[Chorus]

I don't know who I'm going to talk to now at school

But I know I'm laughing on the car ride home with you

Don't know how long it's going to take to

feel okay

But I know I had the best day with you today

[Bridge]

I have an excellent father, his strength is making me stronger

God smiles on my little brother, inside and out

He's better than I am

I grew up in a pretty house and I had space to run

And I had the best days with you

[Verse 3]

There is a video I found from back when I was three

You set up a paint set in the kitchen and you're talking to me

It's the age of princesses and pirate ships and the seven dwarfs

And Daddy's smart

And you're the prettiest lady in the whole wide world

[Chorus]

And now I know why all the trees change in the fall

I know you were on my side even when I was wrong

And I love you for giving me your eyes

For staying back and watching me shine

And I didn't know if you knew, so I'm taking this chance to say

That I had the best day with you today

In this section, the author will analyze lyrics of the song: "The Best Day" by Taylor Swift in several parts, such as how many types of ambiguity are found in the lyrics of the song "The Best Day" by Taylor Swift, what are the types of ambiguity found in the lyrics of the song, and what are the examples of ambiguous

words or sentences from the lyrics of the song. The following are the findings of ambiguities taken from lyrics of the song: "The Best Day" sung by Taylor Swift:

NO.	Types of Ambiguity	Example Words or Sentences	Possible Meanings
1	Lexical ambiguity	change	a change in color, shape, size, or condition; a change in situation or feeling
2	Lexical ambiguity	house	home, building, family, or group; location, dream, or happiness

3	Lexical ambiguity	strength	physical, mental, emotional, or moral strength; a source of inspiration or motivation
4	Lexical ambiguity	pretty	beautiful, attractive, passable, or adequate; an expression of praise, compliment, or love

1	Structural ambiguity	I don't know why all the trees change in the fall	(I don't know) (why all the trees change) (in the fall); (I don't know why) (all the trees change in the fall)
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Table 1. Table of Lexical ambiguity and possible meaning.

NO.	Types of Ambiguity	Example Words or Sentences	Possible Meanings
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2	Structural ambiguity	Don't know if Snow White's house is near or far away	(Don't know) (if Snow White's house is near) (or far away); (Don't know if) (Snow White's house is near or far away)
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3	Structural ambiguity	I have an excellent father, his strength is making me stronger	(I have an excellent father), (his strength is making me stronger); (I have) (an excellent father, his strength) (is making me stronger)
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4	Structural ambiguity	And you're the prettiest lady in the whole wide world	(And you're) (the prettiest lady) (in the whole wide world); (And) (you're the prettiest lady in the whole wide world)
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Table II. Table of Structural ambiguity and possible meaning.

CONCLUSSION

Based on the research that has been conducted on ambiguity in the lyrics of the song entitled "The Best Day" created and sung by Taylor Swift, the conclusions obtained from this research are it can be concluded that The Best Day song lyrics (Sung and composed by Taylor Swift) contain various types of ambiguities, such as lexical ambiguity and structural ambiguity. There are eight

ambiguities words or sentences in the lyrics of the song "The Best Day" by Taylor Swift. Four are lexically ambiguous and the other four are structurally ambiguity. These ambiguities occur because of words or phrases that have more than one possible meaning, or because of sentence structures that can have more than one way to be analyzed syntactically or grammatically.

Taylor Swift uses ambiguities to express feelings and experiences that are complex and not easily described with definite words. Ambiguities can also provide space for listeners to interpret the meaning of song lyrics according to their own experience and imagination. Taylor Swift use ambiguities to create aesthetic and artistic effects in song lyrics.

Ambiguities can add beauty and richness to language by using words that have multiple or different meanings. Ambiguities can also create curiosity and interest for listeners to find out the true meaning of the song lyrics. Taylor Swift also uses ambiguities to create humor or irony in song lyrics. Ambiguities can create a contrast or opposition between the intended meaning and the meaning that the listener might understand. Ambiguities can also create a sense of wonder or amazement for listeners who realize the ambiguities in the song lyrics.

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