Homonymy Analysis In Taylor Swift's Songs

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Abstract

This research aims to determine the types of ambiguous words and the meanings of ambiguous words in Taylor Swift's songs. The researcher uses Ullmann's theory to determine the type of ambiguous word. The research design is a qualitative research. The research instrument is the researcher himself. The data sources for this study are the audio and lyrics of Taylor Swift's songs The data of this study are ambiguous words contained in Taylor Swift's songs. In collecting the data, the researcher applies the non-participant observation method and the note taking technique as a follow-up technique. Data analysis conducts the referential method with the language references as the determinant. The researcher finds out homonyms in the songs whose meanings were not related and the actual meanings matched the context in the song lyrics. This research also focuses on homograph and homophone.

Keywords: Ambiguities, Homonymy, Song Lyrics

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I INTRODUCTION

Language is an activity to express the meaning symbols of its language to deliver the meaning of its symbols to the hearer in spoken communication and to the reader in written communication. Symbol includes word, phrase, clause, and sentence. Meaning is what the speaker or writer means in an utterance and the relationship between language and society that had been agreed by native language in order to understand each other. Every symbol has its meaning but there are symbols that have more than one meaning. The hearer and reader are able to interpret more than one meaning. A word that has more than one meaning in semantics called ambiguity.

Ambiguity is an expression of a word, a phrase and a sentence that has more than one meaning (Leech, 1981). Ambiguity may happen in spoken or written language because the use of words and structure of the sentence that cannot deliver one meaning. Ambiguity may occur because of the nature of words in particular

language. For example is English language has many words that has more than one meaning. If the words are not delivered one clearly meaning, it will caused ambiguous meaning.

Formulation of the Research

This research is focused to find ambiguity in songs. The researcher uses the songs from Taylor Swift in this research. Taylor Swift is one of singers who very popular in the world. She has released six albums since her debut in 2004. The researcher chooses the 3 songs from Taylor Swift in her sixth album Reputation that has been selected: *I Did Something Bad, Delicate,* and *Getaway Car.*

The researcher has some reasons to conduct this research using Taylor Swift's song. First, Taylor Swift's songs are easy to be heard in all ages because she is young and beautiful singer. Second, Taylor Swift's song is very popular and it is proven by album selling which make a new record as the album with the best selling in 2017 with her new album. The last reason is the researcher has found some lexical ambiguity in Taylor Swift's songs. The researcher interests to conduct the research using Taylor Swift's songs.

Referring to the limitation of the problem above, the researcher formulates this research as follows: "Types and meaning of lexical ambiguity found in Taylor Swift's songs".

Purpose of the Research

Related to the research question above, the purpose of this research are:

1. To describe homonymy words found in Taylor Swift's songs (*I Did Something Bad, Delicate,* and *Getaway Car).*

2. To describe the meaning of lexical ambiguity found in Taylor Swift's songs (*I Did Something Bad, Delicate,* and *Getaway Car).*

II RESEARCH METHODS

In this research, the researcher uses qualitative research. According to Moleong (2010: 4) defined qualitative research method as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in form words, written or spoken, of the person who can be observed. The source of the data that used in this research are taken from the lyrics Taylor Swift's songs. The data of this research are lexical ambiguities, especially relates with homonymy found in Taylor Swift's songs.

In collecting the data, the researcher uses several steps. First, the researcher downloads the lyric and audio of the song by Taylor Swift. Second, the researcher read the lyric and hear the audio of the songs to find out the word that possibly ambiguous. Then, the researcher identifies the data which lexically ambiguous in Taylor Swift's songs. The last step is the researcher analyzes and describes the ambiguity. The researcher observes the songs, then identify the lyrics and songs to find the ambiguity and its meaning. Non-participant observation are conducted when the observer as a detached emissary without any attempt on his part to experience through participation what others feel. The researcher also applies note taking technique by Sudaryanto (1993: 26).

To analyze the data, the researcher uses referential identity method by Sudaryanto to analyze the linguistics phenomenon occur in these songs. According to Sudaryanto (1993: 13) referential identity method is a method of analyzing the qualitative data where the deciding factor is outside of language itself. The researcher conducts some steps. First, the researcher identifies the words which are possibly ambiguous. Second, the researcher classifies the ambiguity into polysemy and homonym. Third, the researcher analyzes the ambiguity and describes the meaning of the ambiguity. The last is the researcher concludes the findings of this research.

III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the researcher finds homonymy words and their meaning based on the context of in Taylor Swift's song lyrics. Homonymy occurs when two or more lexemes that have the same pronunciation, spelling and it can be similar forms but the meaning is not related to each other.

Datum 1

'Cause for every lie I tell them, they tell me three
         This is how the __world__ works
                  Now all he thinks about is me

The meaning of the word **"world"** based on dictionary or the denotative meaning are: (1) the earth and all the people and things on it; (2) human society. Based on the lyrics, the first meaning is the earth and all the people and things on it is related to the context because there is the word *works* after the ambiguous word. It means the song writer stated that she or he know how the earth works. In other hand, the second meaning is human society also appropriate with the context because the song writer wants to share how human society life in the world. Both of the meanings are appropriate with the context of the lyrics.

The word **"world"** is noun that lexically ambiguous in the case of homonym. It is caused by the meaning of the word **"world"** has more than one meaning in which the meaning unrelated to each other based on dictionary. The meaning of the word **"world"** in song lyrics use denotative meaning based on Merriam Webster dictionary. The exact meaning of the word **"world"** is human society because how the earth works already known by most of people on it. The song writer wants to share how human society life in the world.

Datum 2

He says, "Don't throw away a good __thing__"
         But if he drops my name, then I owe him nothin'

The underlined word **"thing"** is lexically ambiguous in the case of homophone. Homophone is part of homonym which the characteristic is word that has the same pronunciation and different spelling but the meaning is unrelated. The word **"thing"** has the same pronunciation with the word **"think"** if the reader cannot listen to it carefully. Those two words have unrelated meaning.

The meaning of the word **"thing"** based on dictionary means an object not directly refers to another object. In other side, the meaning of the second word **"think"** is an opinion about someone or something in mind. The context of the lyrics is stated in the lyrics *"Don't throw away a good __thing__"* means that people is better to keep something important and do not throw away something good. The meaning used is denotative meaning based on dictionary. Both of the meanings are possible based on the context of the lyrics. In short, the hearer has to listen carefully to the song to know the exact meaning of the song.

Datum 3

Is it cool that I said all that?
Is it __chill__ that you're in my head?
'Cause I know that it's delicate (delicate)

The underlined word **"chill"** is lexically ambiguous in the case homonym. It is because the meaning of the word **"chill"** based on the dictionary has more than one meaning which those meaning has no relationship to each other. The first meaning is to make someone or something cold or cool. The second meaning is to cause someone to feel afraid. Both of the meanings are unrelated to each other.

The meaning of the word **"chill"** is denotative meaning or the real meaning based on dictionary. The exact meaning of the ambiguous word **"chill"** is to cause someone to feel afraid. It is because the lyrics stated "*Is it chill that you're in my head?*", means that a person makes someone afraid because a person think about someone in her or his mind. A person asks someone about her or his feelings if they are afraid when they are in someone's mind. A person does not make someone or something cold because there is no statement that stated about temperature. So, the first meaning is not appropriate with the context of the lyrics.

Datum 4

Third floor on the west side, me and you
         Handsome, you're a __mansion__ with a view

Do the girls back home touch you like I do?

The underlined word *"mansion"* is lexically ambiguous in the case of homophone. Homophone is part of homonym which the characteristic is word that has the same pronunciation and different spelling but the meaning is unrelated. The word *"mansion"* has the same pronunciation with the word *"mention"* but each of the meaning is different. The spelling of the word is different too. The word *"mansion"* pronounced as *man(t)-shən* and the word *"mention"* pronounced as *men(t)-shən*. Based on the Merriam Webster dictionary, the word *"mansion"* means a large and impressive house of wealthy person. In other side, the word *"mention"* means a short statement about something or someone. To know the exact meaning, the reader and hearer have to know the word which used in the song lyrics.

Based on the context of the lyrics, the correct word used in the song lyrics is *"mansion"*. It is because the lyrics stated "*Handsome, you're a mansion with a view"*, it means that when someone has a large house with beautiful view, she or he will enjoy the view and very comfortable in the house. It is also happen in human life, she really comfortable beside him. The next lyrics said that *mansion with a view*, so, she describe the man not only like a mansion but has beautiful view too. It means that how comfortable beside the man. So, the meaning of the ambiguous word in lyrics is denotative meaning. In other side, the word *"mention"* is not appropriate with the context because there is no word that said about a short statement about something or someone in the lyrics.

Datum 5
The ties were black, the lies were white
*   In shades of __gray__ and candlelight*
I wanted to leave him

Based on Merriam Webster dictionary, the word *"sirens"* means (1) a piece of equipment that produces a loud, high pitched warning sound; (2) a woman who is very attractive but also dangerous. Both of the meaning is really different. The lyrics said that *there were sirens in the beat of your heart*, it means that there is a loud sound of the beat of

someone's heart. It described that someone's heart make a loud sound of pounding.

The same as previous datum, the word *"sirens"* is lexically ambiguous because it has more than one meaning. Those meaning are not related to each other, so the word *"sirens"* refers to homonym. So, the exact meaning of the ambiguous word *"sirens"* based on the context is a loud sound of heart pounding. The meaning used in the ambiguous word *"sirens"* is denotative meaning. There is no word or statement tells about a woman. The second meaning is not appropriate with the context of the lyrics.

Datum 6
My reputation's never been worse, so
You must __like__ me for me...
We can't make

Based on Merriam Webster dictionary, the word *"like"* means: (1) to feel affection for someone or to enjoy being with someone; and (2) to have the similarity to someone or something. Both of the meanings have unrelated meaning but those meanings are fit to the context. The first meaning is appropriate with the context because the meaning "to feel affection for someone or to enjoy being with someone" is related to the previous word. The previous word in the lyrics stated *you must like me*, it means that a person must feel enjoy or affection with someone. However, the second meaning "to have the similarity to someone or something" also fit to the context because a person wants to have the similarity with someone. Both of the meanings have unrelated meaning.

The underlined word are verb that lexically ambiguous in the case of homonym. It is caused by the meaning of the word *"like"* has more than one meaning in which the meaning unrelated to each other based on dictionary. So, the exact meaning based on dictionary is the denotative meaning which means a person ask someone to feel enjoy or affection with someone else. It is because impossible to ask a person to have the similarity with someone else.

Homonymy is one of types of lexical ambiguities that found out in these lyrics that occur in phonologically and orthographically identical lexemes because the hearer may not able to get what the speaker says when word sound alike but has different meaning. Homophone can be said as sound ambiguity

which two words pronounce alike but different in meaning while homograph is two or more words spelled alike but different in meaning. In addition, from analysis above, the researcher also mostly explores the meaning based on dictionary that known as denotative meaning.

IV CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

From the finding, there are two types of homonymy; homograph and homophone. The lexical ambiguity in Taylor Swift's songs can be as guidance for people or another song writer to use the context in order to understand what the speaker and the writer means to avoid misunderstanding in communication. The researcher hopes that this research can be used as reference for the next researcher who interest to conduct the related research. The researcher realizes that this research still has many weaknesses. So, the researcher hopes for the next researcher to explore more about another type of lexical ambiguity in complete analysis related with polysemy. The further research can be also explored about other types of ambiguity. The ambiguity found not only in the song, but also found in movie, advertisement, announcement, literature and other sources. Through this research, it can be as guidance to conduct the similar research with the different theory and object.

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