

## An Analysis of Ambiguity used in Maleficent: Mistress of Evil Movie: Semantic

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### Abstract

*This research aims to determine what type of ambiguity and meaning are found in Maleficent: Mistress of Evil. The study's data was gathered from a 2019 American fantasy film titled Maleficent: Mistress of Evil that was made by Walt Disney Pictures. Film is a form of visual art that uses moving images to simulate experiences or otherwise convey ideas, narratives, perceptions, feelings, beauty, or atmosphere. The study's theoretical framework is based on Stephen Ullmann's (1977) theory. The researcher used a qualitative approach because the data in this study is delivered in the form of words or sentences. The researcher discovered data on homonymy, homograph, homophones, polysemy, and structural ambiguity. Due to a lack of data, the results of this study revealed six data points. The lexical data (66.7%) dominates this analysis out of the six. Following the phonological data (16.7%) and structural data (16.6%).*

### Keywords

ambiguity; lexical; maleficent; structural



## I. Introduction

Language is one of the most important things in the life of every human being (Purba, N. et al. (2020). Language has the ability to both create and break down barriers. Humans and a large portion of the animal kingdom have some form of communication in the form of a language. Many of us speak multiple languages, and we switch between dialects daily. At work, at home, and in school with our friends, we speak a specific language. The film is a language in and of itself, primarily visual but also including sound and spoken word. The vast number of languages available means that a film's language (or languages) can be much more than a simple default to the origin country's language. The language of a film is a creative, deliberate, and business decision.

Linguists study how language affects how we and others perceive the world, and they try to figure out what words and phrases unintentionally influence us. Language is the primary tool for expression and communication, so speaking, writing, and reading are essential in everyday life. Understanding how people use language—what words and phrases they choose and combine unconsciously can help us better understand ourselves and why we act the way we do.

Linguistics researchers try to figure out what makes our language unique and universal, as well as how it is acquired and changes over time. Language is viewed as a cultural, social, and psychological phenomenon by them. Semantics is the appropriate theory for this study because it focuses on the actual objects or ideas to which a word refers. "Semantics is the technical language," writes Palmer (1976). The term "meaning study" is used to refer to the study of meaning. In a small unit like a word, meaning can be conveyed. A single word can have multiple meanings, which can be confusing. A word can be interpreted in a variety of ways, and it can be difficult to predict what will happen next. The meaning that someone is attempting to convey in a given situation. It

causes people to become irritable about several related meanings or a variety of meanings. When it happens, it's known as "ambiguity." Ambiguity occurs when a passage contains two or more possible meanings. The adjective form of the word is ambiguous, and it comes from a Latin term that means "wandering about." Amphibologia, amphibolia, and semantic ambiguity are other terms for ambiguity. Furthermore, ambiguity is sometimes considered a fallacy (also known as equivocation) in which the same term is used in multiple ways.

Based on that, the researcher chooses to watch the movie *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil*, produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios, as the object of research. *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil* is a 2019 American fantasy film directed by Joachim Ronning and written by Linda Woolverton, Micah Fitzerman-Blue, and Noah Harpster for Walt Disney Pictures. Angelina Jolie reprises her role as Maleficent in this sequel to the 2014 film *Maleficent*.

Set five years after *Maleficent*, the film follows the titular character as she battles the neighboring kingdom's distorted perception of her as a villain, as well as a subplot about the rise of the Dark Fey, an endangered and powerful fairy race. This film tells us about Maleficent visiting a magnificent old castle to celebrate Aurora's upcoming wedding to Prince Phillip. While there, she meets Aurora's future mother-in-law, a cunning queen who plots to exterminate the land's fairies. Maleficent joins forces with a seasoned warrior and a group of outcasts to take on the queen and her powerful army in the hopes of stopping her. In addition, to add to the body of knowledge on ambiguity, this study looks at the ambiguity in the film *Maleficent*. This becomes one of the more specific topics as the movie progresses and examines various types of ambiguity.

### Research Question

In light of the above discussion, this research is being carried out to find solutions to the issues. Which formulated in the following questions:

This research is being carried out to address the issues raised in the following questions:

1. What are the ambiguity found in the *Maleficent* movie?
2. What are the meaning of ambiguity found in the *Maleficent* movie?

## II. Review of Literature

The researcher applies Stephen Ullmann's theory to the analysis of lexical and structural ambiguity in the film *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil*. The Yule theory is used to analyze the types of phrases that are analyzed in structural ambiguity. Furthermore, the two types of lexical ambiguity homonymy and polysemy are used in the *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil* film. This occurs when the characters use words that have multiple meanings, each of which is different or unrelated. A homograph occurs when a character in a script uses two words that have the same written form. It refers to ambiguity in the realm of sound, which can lead to multiple interpretations by the listener. The researcher discusses the discovery of the ambiguity in the film *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil* in this chapter. In addition, based on the theory, the writer examines the frequency of ambiguity in the film.

### 2.1 Semantic

The term semantic is derived from the French term *semantique*, which was coined by M. Breal and absorbed from Greek. Semantics is a linguistic subfield concerned with the study of language meaning. We use language to communicate with one another in everyday life, and we try to convey meaning through words. Semantics, according to Katz

(1972), is the study of linguistic meaning. It is concerned with what sentences and other linguistic objects express, not with how their syntactic parts are arranged or how they are pronounced. Hurford and Heasley (1983), semantics is also defined as the study of meaning in language. We have to explain and clarify the nature of meaning in semantics, although there is no universal agreement on either the nature of meaning or how it should be described.

## 2.2 Meaning

Meaning is the message conveyed by words, sentences, and symbols in a context, according to semantics and pragmatics. Also known as lexical or semantic meaning. W. Tecumseh Fitch points out in his book *The Evolution of Language* (2010) that semantics is important "The branch of linguistics that frequently collides with philosophy. This is because the study of meaning raises a slew of deep issues that philosophers are traditionally drawn to". Meaning appears to be both the most obvious and the most difficult aspect of language to study. It's self-evident because that's what language is for: communicating with one another and effectively conveying 'what we mean.' However, the steps involved in comprehending something said to us in a language in which we are fluent are so quick and seamless that we have little conscious awareness of the principles and knowledge that underpin this communicative ability.

## 2.3 Ambiguity

Ambiguity is a term that refers to an idea or situation that can be interpreted in multiple ways. This includes everything from ambiguous sentences (which could mean anything) to ambiguous storylines and ambiguous arguments. It's often viewed negatively because we value clarity in writing, and ambiguity is the polar opposite of clarity. However, ambiguity can be beneficial in certain situations, particularly in poetry and storytelling.

Ambiguity is similar to vagueness, except that ambiguity refers to something having multiple possible meanings, whereas vagueness refers to a general lack of clarity; something vague may have no clear meanings, whereas something ambiguous may have several clear meanings.

According to Ullmann (2009), "Ambiguity is a linguistic condition that can arise in a variety of ways." Ambiguity devices can be divided into three types: phonetic, grammatical, and lexical," he adds. "A word or a sentence is ambiguous when it can be interpreted in more than one way," says Fauziati (2011). People take longer to comprehend ambiguous sentences than unambiguous ones.

Ambiguity occurs when a linguistic form has two or more possible interpretations (Kreidler, 1998). Other lexical relations, according to Fromkin, Rodman, and Hymes (2011), include homonyms, polysemy, and hyponyms.

### a. Lexical Ambiguity

Lexical ambiguity occurs when a word has two or more different meanings depending on the context, but the form remains the same, and two or more different words may sound identical (Ullmann, 1977) And the definitions of the words are based on multiple dictionaries, which can lead to ambiguity (Ramadani, 2015).

Homonymy and polysemy are two different types of lexical ambiguity. According to Murphy (2010), homonymy refers to unrelated words that have the same spoken or written form, but it is also possible for unrelated words to have the same spoken and written forms.

On the other hand, a word with two or more meanings that are still related to one another is called polysemy.

#### 1. Homonymy

According to Murphy (2010), homonymy occurs when two different lexemes have the same spoken and written forms, or they can be the same in either spoken or written form.

#### 2. Homophones

Words that have different meanings and spellings but are pronounced the same are known as homophones.

#### 3. Homographs

Homographs are words that are spelled the same but have different meanings and pronunciation

#### 4. Polysemy

Polysemy is the phenomenon of a single word form associated with two or more related senses. It differs from monosemy, in which a single word form is linked to a single meaning, and homonymy, in which a single word form is linked to two or more unrelated meanings.

### **b. Phonological Ambiguity**

According to Ullman (1972), phonological ambiguity arises from the sound of language spoken rather than written. It occurs, according to Hamidy (2009), when a set of sounds can be interpreted in multiple ways. People sometimes speak too quickly, causing others to doubt the meaning or message of their words, allowing them to be interpreted in a variety of ways."

### **c. Structural Ambiguity**

Structural ambiguity is a type of ambiguity that occurs when the arrangement of words in a phrase. A clause or sentence allows for two or more different interpretations. Even if there are no ambiguous words in the structure, structural ambiguity can arise.

## **III. Research Method**

The descriptive qualitative method is used in this thesis to examine the lexical and structural ambiguities in the "Maleficent: Mistress of Evil" film script. The writer's first step in this study was to collect data, compile it, and then explain it before moving on to the data analysis stage. Because the data in this study is delivered in the form of words or sentences, the writer used a qualitative approach. This method is used by providing descriptions of meanings and the different types of meanings that can be found in data. "Qualitative data are attractive," as Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) put it. They provide well-founded, detailed descriptions and explanations of processes that occur in local settings. To complete this journal, titled "An Analysis of Ambiguity used in Maleficent: Mistress of Evil Movie." the author gathers relevant references such as textbooks, theories, and theses, as well as conducts internet research. All of the references are related to language books and semantics.

## IV. Results and Discussion

These are some data that supported this research; they were the types of ambiguity and meaning that can be found in Maleficent: Mistress of Evil.

### 4.1 Homonymy

#### Data 1

Maleficent: "Mmm... It's more than I can *bear*."

Diaval: "Have you ever considered turning me into a *bear*?"

[00:23:04 --> 00:24:42]

The word "bear," which is highlighted in the dialogue above, is a homonymy because it has the same spelling but a different pronunciation and meaning. There are two possible interpretations of this word. To begin with, the word "bear," pronounced "/be(r)/," means "can't bear doing something." Second, the word "bear", pronounced as "be(r)/", means animal or a large wild animal with thick fur. In the first dialogue, Maleficent can't bear the excitement of meeting Philip's family. In the second dialogue, Diaval asks Maleficent if she's thinking about turning him into a bear. Diaval is Maleficent's loyal servant, friend, and pet raven. He consented to serve Maleficent and served as her "wings" after being rescued by her in the form of a raven.

### 4.2 Homophone

#### Data 2

[01:19:22,337-01:27:09,905]

"They're coming from the *sea*."

"*See* him to his chambers."

The first word, "see," has the meaning of noticing someone or something using your eyes. The data below is a homophone. It has the same spelling as the second word, which is "sea". Both words have different meanings, and the word "sea" has the meaning of "the large area of salt water that covers most of the surface of the Earth." The listeners should pay attention to the full context to know the real meaning of those sentences. In the first dialogue, while they're starting a war, the Queen's servant tells her that the Dark Fey are coming from the sea. In the second dialogue, the Queen tells the servants to send Philip to his chamber.

### 4.3 Homograph

#### Data 3

[00:43:13 --> 00:43:15]

"...will only *lead* to more conflict, Borra."

The word "lead" can have two meanings. The first is "to show someone the way to a place by going there with them"; the second is "to lead," which means to cause someone to do something. In the dialogue above, the word "lead" has an ambiguous meaning, and it's called a homograph. "Killing peasants on the Moors will only *lead* to more conflict, Borra." means that they, who are the Dark Fey, will cost nothing but a war if they kill people on the Moors.

This is another example of homograph:

1. Josh has his *mouth* full of food
2. Ken kissed her on the *mouth*

3. Watch your *mouth*
4. I have three *mouths* to feed

#### 4.4 Polysemy

##### Data 4

[00:06:33,735 --> 00:06:36,936]

Fairy: Do you think Queen Aurora's awake yet?

Other fairies: "Well, she's not "Sleeping Beauty" anymore."The context of this dialogue is that Aurora, who is called by the nickname "Sleeping Beauty," has been cursed by Maleficent, who is her Godmother. The fairies asked her friends if Aurora had wakened up from her sleep yet. Because her name is "Sleeping Beauty," the fairies answer her fairy friend with an ambiguous answer. "Well, she's not "Sleeping Beauty" anymore."

#### 4.5 Phonological ambiguity

##### Data 5

[00:53:19,508 --> 00:58:11,900]

"Did you *hear* that? We're invited to the castle!"

"I'm going to live *here*, in the Moors, with you."

The word "here" is a word that refers to the location where you are. It's an adverb, which is a word that adds to the meaning of a verb or adjective. It can be used to describe something you're giving to someone, such as 'Here's your coffee.' Now, the word "hear" has a completely different connotation. Hear is a verb that refers to the act of listening to a sound. It can also refer to receiving a message or piece of information. Heard is the past tense of the verb hear. The context in the first dialogue is that people in the Moors hear they'll be invited to the castle to attend Aurora and Philip's wedding.

#### 4.6 Structural ambiguity

##### Data 6

[00:59:01,883 --> 00:59:05,518]

Philip: "I fell in love with a girl in the forest and only her."

This sentence either means "Philip falling in love with a girl, in the forest." or "Philip falling in love with a girl in the forest".

From each data written below, the researcher has found:

No	Types of Ambiguity		Percent
1	Lexical Ambiguity	4	66.7%
2	Phonological Ambiguity	1	16.7%
3	Structural Ambiguity	1	16.6%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100%</b>

## V. Conclusion

The conclusion gave the final answer to the research questions that were stated at the start of the paper. In the first research question, the researcher found data on homonymy, homograph, homophones, polysemy, phonological, and structural ambiguity. The researcher only writes six pieces of data due to a lack of data. Of the seven data points, the lexical one dominates this analysis (66.7%). Following the phonological data (16.7%) and structural data (16.6%),

Moreover, the researcher found alternative meanings while searching for the ambiguity in Maleficent's film, e.g., "bear" that has two meanings. This analysis shows us that a single word can have a different meaning depending on the next word. According to the findings above, the presence of ambiguity in language is perceived not only by academic researchers but also by ordinary people who encounter it in everyday life. When a single word has multiple meanings, lexical ambiguity occurs, and structural ambiguity occurs when the structure of a phrase, clause, or sentence can be interpreted in multiple ways, resulting in ambiguity.

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