Ambiguity in the Movie "Titanic" by James Cameron: Semantics Analysis

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze and examine the types of ambiguity in the branch of linguistics, and semantics in the movie "Titanic" by James Cameron and also examine the meaning of that word or sentence that makes it ambigous. The method is used in this analysis is the quantitative analysis method. The data was used taken from some journals, books, and from the movie "Titanic" which was released in 1997. Ambiguity and vagueness could be viewed as opposite ends of a continuum, with polysemy in the middle, according to the Cognitive Grammar framework (Langacker 1987). The results demonstrated that there are two types of meaning found, namely Lexical Ambiguity (65%) and Syntactic Ambiguity (35%). The data was obtained from the results of processing data and reading several sources of existing journals.

I. Introduction

The expression of thoughts through speech sounds joined into words is referred to as language. Words are joined into phrases, similar to how concepts are integrated into thoughts. "A language is a set of arbitrary vocal symbols by which a social group cooperates," declared Bernard Bloch and George L. The study of meaning can be done in several ways. Linguistic semantics is an attempt to explain a speaker's knowledge in such a way that he or she can convey facts, sentiments, intentions, and imaginative products to other speakers while also understanding what they transmit to him or her. The systematic study of meaning is semantics, and linguistic semantics is the study of how languages organize and express meaning is linguistic semantics. Language is one of the most important things in the life of every human being. Each of them is of course inseparable from language, the first time a child gets a language that is heard directly from the father or mother when the child is born into this world. Then as time goes by and as the child grows, they will acquire a language other than the language taught by the mother and father, either in the form of a second, third, foreign language or so on which is called language acquisition where it depends on the social environment and cognitive level possessed by these children through the learning process in their environment. (Purba, N. et al. (2020).

Language understanding happens quickly and, to a large extent, progressively. Readers must make at least partial syntactic commitments as a sentence evolves, especially when faced with local syntactic indeterminacies, because the interpretation of a sentence is significantly bound by its syntactic structure.

We must learn language because language is one of the communication tools that makes it easier for us to talk to other people. English is an international language that is

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used as a common language when we speak to foreigners. language is not just a collection of words or sentences, more than that there is a learning method regarding the rules in language so that these words can be sorted into certain sentences according to the applicable rules.

Semantics is the study of meaning. Semantics is a very broad field of study because it also alludes to aspects of the structure and function of language so that it can be linked to psychology, philosophy, and anthrophology. (Lehrer: 1974).

Semantics is a branch of linguistics. There are several branches from linguistics including; phonetics, phonology, morphology, semantics, pragmatics, and syntax. Semantics is concerned with the study of meaning in all formal aspects where words have several types of meaning. Therefore, this study examines the types of ambiguity and words or sentences that are considered to have ambiguity in the film "Titanic" by James Cameron.

Ambiguity refers to a remark or sentence that has more than one plausible meaning; the listener or reader must decide which interpretation is correct. Some statements may be unclear when said alone, but the ambiguity can be removed with extra information. The line 'You read the book' is an example of this. When uttered alone, the sentence could allude to an event that occurred in the past or is currently occurring; however, when changed to 'You read the book when you were younger,' the ambiguity is removed.

A term, sentence, or phrase is ambiguous if it has multiple meanings. The amount of senses or dictionary definitions a word has is usually added together to calculate semantic ambiguity. Such assessments are rather subjective and may not fully reflect the entire level of change in word meaning, especially for polysemous terms that can be used in a variety of ways and have subtle meaning shifts.

Ambiguity is utilized in literature to give the work a deeper meaning. Writers utilize ambiguity to allow readers to use their imagination to figure out what's going on between the lines of a screenplay. This level of reader connection allows them to feel as though they are a part of the prose or poetry they are reading.

Linguistics has many branches. This branch of research in this Analysis, namely "Semantics" with the Ambiguity theme. The reason why the writer chooses this branch of linguistics is that she wants to study and dissect words that are considered to have many meanings and are confusing in one study. And the result of the study that the writer chose was from one of the famous films about disaster and romance, namely "Titanic". And this film is one of the historical films at that time.

Following this analysis, the research question in this analysis are :
A. What type of ambiguity is used in the movie "Titanic"?
B. What is the meaning of ambiguity in the movie "Titanic"?

II. Review of Literature

Semantics is the study of meaning in language, including the logical aspects of meaning (formal semantics), word meanings and their relations (lexical semantics), and the cognitive structure of meaning (conceptual semantics). Semantics deals with the literal meaning of words and the meaning of the way they are combined, which taken together form the core of meaning, or the starting point from which the whole meaning of a particular utterance is constructed. Simply, "semantics is the study of meaning.

Fun fact: the word 'ambiguous', at least according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is ambiguous: it can mean uncertainty or dubiousness on the one hand and a sign bearing

multiple meanings on the other. I mention this merely to disambiguate what this entry is about, which concerns a word or phrase enjoying multiple meanings. In this sense, ambiguity has been the source of much frustration, bemusement, and amusement for philosophers, lexicographers, linguists, cognitive scientists, literary theorists and critics, authors, poets, orators, and pretty much every other being who uses language regularly to communicate.

An ambiguous word/sentence is a sentence that has many possible meanings, and a word, sentence, or phrase will be ambiguous if it has more than one meaning. Semantic ambiguity is typically measured by summing the number of senses or dictionary definitions that a word has. Such measures are somewhat subjective and may not adequately capture the full extent of variation in word meaning, particularly for polysemous words that can be used in many different ways, with subtle shifts in meaning.

The Meaning of Ambiguity is In both spoken and written language, learners' capacity to grasp an ambiguous sentence or speech is severely limited. This brief study tries to illustrate some of the most typical ambiguities in the English language that we may encounter in everyday communication, including both deliberate and inadvertent ambiguity.

2.1 Types of Ambiguity

In speech and writing, there are two basic types of ambiguity:

1. Lexical Ambiguity

Lexical ambiguity is the presence of two or more possible meanings in one word. It can also be referred to as semantic ambiguity or homonymy.

Lexical ambiguity is sometimes used deliberately to create other types of wordplay.

According to the editors of the MIT Encyclopedia of the Cognitive Sciences, "True lexical ambiguity is typically distinguished from polysemy (e.g., 'the N.Y Times as in this morning's edition of the newspaper versus the company that published the newspaper) or from vagueness (e.g., 'cut as in 'cut the lawn' or 'cut the cloth'), though the boundaries can be fuzzy."

Other Example :

a.) **Metal** (a 'substance' or a 'music')

b.) **Jam** (a 'part of bread seasoning' or 'traffic')

c.) "John loves his mother and so does Bill ?"

This sentence can be two meanings :

-   John loves John's mother; and
-   Bill loves Bill's mother or that john loves John's Mother and Bill loves John's mother.

But is it ambiguous ?

One might argue that the clause '*so does Bill*' is unambiguous and may be read unequivocally as saying in the context *that Bill does the same thing that John does*, although there are two different possibilities for what is doing the same thing. These alternatives are not fixed semantically. Hence the ambiguity is merely apparent and better described as semantics underdetermination.

2. Syntactic Ambiguity

Syntactic ambiguity (also called structural ambiguity or grammatical ambiguity) is the presence of two or more possible meanings within a single sentence or sequence of words.

Syntactic ambiguity, also called structural ambiguity is a situation where a sentence may be interpreted in more than one way due to ambiguous sentence structure.

Example :
a.) 'Visiting relatives can cause problems.'
→ This sentence is ambiguous because it can be interpreted as :
- Relatives who visit us can cause problems.
                    Or
- When we visit relatives, there can be problems.
b.)   'The chicken is ready to eat.'
→ This sentence is ambiguous because it can be interpreted as :
- The chicken is ready to be fed
                    Or
- Chicken is ready to be fed to someone depending on dish.

III. Research Method

Quantitative research is the process of collecting and analyzing numerical data. It can be used to find patterns and averages, make predictions, test causal relationships, and generalize results to wider populations. (Ron Scollon (Citing Goodwin, 1994).

Quantitative research is the polar opposite of qualitative research, in which non-numerical data is collected and analyzed (e.g. text, video, or audio).

In the natural and social sciences, such as biology, chemistry, psychology, economics, sociology, and marketing, quantitative research is widely used.

IV. Result and Discussion

4.1 Lexical Ambiguity
Data 1
 "*Just put her down on the roof of the officers' quarters like yesterday.*" (Minute 04:28)

In this data 1, is Included in direct speech because this sentence is said directly by the person and not a quote or rephrase from another person. This analysis, it is describing two men who are researching and looking for treasure from the sinking and destroyed Titanic.
"Just put her down on the roof of the yesterday officers' quarters like yesterday." ("*daratkan saja dia diatas atap ruangan petugas seperti kemarin*"). This sentence may be understood to mean either "keep him on the roof of the room like yesterday" or "put him back on the roof of the officer's room like yesterday". The word "put" and description "like yesterday" can mean the object has been there before or is this the first time it has been stored there.

Data 2
 "*I felt like I was standing over the great abyss.*" (Minute 36:37)

In this data 1, is Included in direct speech because this sentence is said directly by the person and not a quote or rephrase from another person. This analysis, it is describing there is a woman who comes from a conglomerate who feels that her life is not free and is always constrained by the rules of her family and she wants to be free from this situation.
"I felt like I was standing over the great abyss." (*Aku merasa seperti berdiri diatas jurang yang dalam*.) this sentence may be understood because she feels like she's standing in a deep abyss or she feels scared like she's in a deep abyss. This is maybe like a figurative word but, for me, it can be many meanings.

Data 3

"*Taking our shift light pretty good tonight*" (minute 1:36:20)

In this data 3, is included in direct speech because this sentence is said directly by the person and not a quote or rephrase from another person. In this analysis, it is two men who were on shift guarding security and managing the condition of the ship so that the situation remained stable because the ship was in a bad condition aka the ship had a collision and would soon sink.

Taking our shift light pretty good tonight." *(Mengambil shift ringan kami malam ini, sangat bagus.)* this sentence may be understood because they take the easy work shift tonight or their shift is very "easy" tonight. aka hard work. It can be many meanings because this sentence has a figurative word.

4.2 Syntactic Ambiguity

Data 4

"*If they go, it's sayonara in two microseconds*" (minute 04:08)

Because this sentence is uttered directly by the speaker and not a paraphrase or recitation from another person, data 4 includes direct speech. This line describes a man who is a conducting study and looking for treasure from the Titanic ship. The man was in a submarine seeking the former Titanic ship's location. and the story's mood is quite stressful.

"If they go, it's sayonara in two microseconds." (*dan jika berhasil, maka ucapkan selamat tinggal pada 0,00002 detik.*) This sentence can make confused because "Sayonara" can mean to say goodbye to something or another thing other. And the sentence "If they go" it can mean if something or some people go or it can mean success.

Data 5

"Wasn't I a dish?" (Minute 16:02)

In this data 5, included direct speech because this sentence is said directly by the person and not a quote or rephrase from another person. In this sentence, it is describing a grandmother who claimed to be herself when a group of researchers managed to find a painting of a woman with a diamond heart necklace that had been buried for nearly 83 years on the Titanic.

"Wasn't I a dish?" (*apakah saya tidak menarik* ?) this sentence can make confusion because the word "*dish*" can make some meaning. If you see in the dictionary, the dish is "food" or serving or anything about food &beverage" but in this sentence it means adjective. In this sentence, a dish is meaning attractive. So, in this sentence, it's meaning "Am I unattractive?".

Data 6

"We're a couple of regular swells." (minute 25:42)

Because this line is uttered directly by the speaker and not a quote or recitation from another person, data 6 includes direct speech. This statement describes two men who gamble and risk all of their money to do so. Two more strangers bought Titanic tickets. They were triumphant in the end. Fabrizzio and Jack were the names of the two companions. They are overjoyed as a result of this and bring a lot of money.

"We're a couple of regular swells" (*Kita seperti bandit gemuk*). This sentence can make me confused because it can mean that they are two people fat or they are two fat bastards sneaking up. But, this sentence is meaning that like "we are like fat bandits". and this sentence is used figurative word for makes this dialogue interested.

Data 7

"You can't count on him like that" (minute 1:40:10)

In this data 7, included direct speech because this sentence is said directly by the person and not a quote or rephrase from another person. This sentence, it is describing the conditions on the ship were in a precarious state because the ship had begun to sink and all the passengers and crew were panicking. there was a crew on the ship guarding the condition.

"You can't <u>count</u> on him like that" (kamu tidak bisa mengandalkan dia seperti itu) this sentence can make confused because it can mean anything. "count" in the dictionary is meaning like sum/ calculus. But in this sentence is like depending on.

V. Conclusion

We have outlined a framework for ambiguity types in Semantics Analysis. We argued against the view that word meanings are fixed and inflexible, where lexical ambiguity and syntactic ambiguity must be treated by multiple word entries in the lexicon. This analysis takes seven data which is divided into 2 types. namely lexical ambiguity and syntactic ambiguity. It was found that 65% of the data belonged to lexical ambiguity while 35% belonged to syntactic ambiguity. From the results of this analysis, it can be concluded that the type of analysis in the film "Titanic" by James Cameron is found to contain quite a lot of ambiguous words. Ambiguous words or sentences in dialogue are usually used to make the dialogue better and use figurative words to make the film more beautiful. Moreover, this ambiguous word is very interesting because it can make the audience feel and get more experience by imagining the film. She conveyed her message quite obvious by providing data by attaching the dialogue script in the titanic film. Elaborating the meaning in the analysis also helps the listener or the target audience of her speech can easily understand what she wanted to convey.

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