

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Language is the most important thing and cannot be separated from human life. Languages are used to communicate and interact with each other and to be able to express the ideas, feelings and emotions. Talking about the function of language that is as an instrument for conveying meaning, (Wierzbicka, 1996) language has meaning whether it is spoken and written. Understanding meaning of the spoken language is easier rather than in written language, because if the listener does not understand what the speaker is saying, they can ask the speaker directly what he means. Meaning describes a notion with a wide range of application and we learn the meaning itself in semantic. Semantics is a technical term used to refer to a field of science that deals with meaning (Palmer, 1976).

Sometimes people do not explain the meaning of what has been said clearly. It causes listeners or readers to interpret different meanings. Sometimes there are also many people who have difficulty understanding the meaning of what has been said specifically in the meaning of written language. This misunderstanding is known as an ambiguity. Ambiguity can occur when a word, phrase or sentence has more than one meaning and this can provide space for alternative reactions to almost the same language (Bach, 2009). Additionally, a word is ambiguous when it has more than one literal meaning. For example, the word “*bank*” has several distinct definitions, one as *financial institution* and

another as *edge of a side*. But if someone says “I deposited \$100 in the bank” most people would understand that bank refers to a financial institution, not a shovel to dig in the mud.

The important domains to decide whether the words ambiguous or not are context and concept. Context helps sentence to distinct the meaning of ambiguous words. In another sense, by looking the context the meaning of the language delivered will be more easily understood. Ambiguity is a statement that has more than one meaning and when understanding the statement without using the context, the meaning that interpreted will not be accurate (Reed, 2005). For example, “she cannot *bear* a baby”. The sentence is lexically ambiguous since the sentence that is containing the word ‘bear’ has no additional context. First interpretation tells us that she cannot tolerate a baby, and the second interpretation means that she cannot pregnant.

In addition, the word *star*, which has two different meanings, the literal *celestial body* and the non-literal meaning *famous actor* whose semantic fields partially overlap for some properties: being bright or unachievable. Moreover, the criteria in analyzing ambiguous words divided into three kinds such as etymological, psychological, and translation criterion (Nerlich, 2003). First, Etymological criterion causing a superposition of terms in historical accident, for instance, word *file* which comes from French roots word *fil* and the Old-English word *féol*. Second, Psychological criterion is up to native speakers’ intuitions. Speakers judge a linguistic form as having related and semantic representations. The psychological criterion also depends on language considered while the word

open is seemed as exhibiting polysemy in *open the door* and *open the curtains* and hence the two senses are taken to be semantically related. Third, the translation criterion relies indeed precisely on the fact that ambiguity is usually not preserved in translation. Yet, some words which have multiple meanings can delay recognition. Understanding words within multiple meanings impeded an understanding of the text.

Words in English have so many similar meanings so this thing becomes the important concern for the users. That statement equals with the research conducted by Britton which explains that the words used in English text are ambiguous (Britton, 1978). Moreover, ambiguity also occurs because a longer linguistic form has its sense and figurative meaning in reading process.

Reading in foreign language would be a rather ambiguous process that involves processing unknown linguistic and cultural inputs, which might eventually cause uncertainty and/or confusion on the part of readers. It made EFL students learned English harder than ESL students. Parallel with the sentence above, Suzawa (2013) argues that what students learned should be clear and not vague and ambiguous. She also argues that there should be no ambiguity in education. Therefore, it is very important to understand what we read because reading is the process of drawing meaning or capturing information from written texts and forming interpretations of that information. In the reading text, there are several reasons that cause ambiguity, such as words without context, ambiguous word order, improper a missing punctuation and faulty pronounce reference.

A textbook has an important role in teaching and learning process especially to study a foreign language. A textbook is used as media in teaching and learning process at the school. This is in line with Celce Murcia's explanation that textbooks or course books are needed as learning media or as an addition to providing content in teaching and learning activities in the classroom (Celce Murcia, 2007). Additionally, the quality of a textbook depends on some factors such as appearance and clearness. Appearance shows how the outlook of the textbook and the ways of the materials are made for example using of picture or diagram to support the materials. However, clearness shows the clear meaning of the materials especially meaning of the text. In consequences, the teachers have to consider and select the textbook since they hold the role for explaining the materials in detail to the students and later on, students can easily learn and master the material especially in reading text.

Moreover, the teacher must have the ability to predict whether the text is difficult, clear or easy for the students (Sutianah, 2014). In fact, there are many textbooks that do not consider this factor. For instance, researcher observed an English textbook for vocational school and found that the reading texts in the textbook have some lexical ambiguities. It made the texts inside the books could not be well-understood. It can also lead to misunderstanding by students in capturing the meaning of the text . Misunderstanding happened when the text was translated into *Bahasa* in wrong interpretation. Clearness of textbook is one important factor in understanding the meaning. The clearness of the textbook depends on the meaning which cannot be ambiguous.

There are so many textbooks provided by publishers for every level of school in Indonesia, based on Indonesian National Curriculum Standards. In fact, every school used the different textbooks published by different publishers. It means that the topics covered in the textbook are the same, but the texts can be different. Parallel with the research of Rahmawati (2012) that there was a different level of text on textbook English today 1 and developed English competencies for grade X. English today 1 was in standard level, but developed English competencies for grade X was in low level.

Beside textbook factors, student is also an important part in understanding the text. In order to understand text, a reader should be able to identify words rapidly and know the meaning of almost all the words (Westwood, 2008). Students who do not understand much of what they read are likely to turn away from books. To make senior high school student become interested in reading the text they have to master the English vocabulary at least 2500 words. In fact, many of them only could master 1000 words after they graduated (Munjin, 2008). Limited vocabulary mastery causes poor comprehension and makes students lose the lexical word meaning. Moreover, student's experience in context allows them to recognize the vocabulary item. Students' own knowledge as student's experience is used to master vocabulary. If students do not master the vocabulary word by word, this condition will lead them to the problem of lexical ambiguity which is the most common ambiguity in reading text.

The researcher has found and seen some of studies that related to this research. Kaplan at all (2014) conducted a study to find out the lexical ambiguity

in understanding some words in English which was used in statistics students and found some words such as random, association, average, confidence, and spread as ambiguous words. They used a method of analogy that was called zebra-versus-hat mnemonic image to solve problem of lexical ambiguity in statistics.

Additionally, a study about ambiguity in exercise book of vocational school in Semarang and found that the lexical ambiguity and structural ambiguity mostly occurred in the reading texts. Lexical ambiguity divided into some parts of speech; verbs, noun, and adjectives. She used paraphrasing, adding preposition *of*, moving sentence construction, adding additional context, using hyphen (-) and using picture as the effective ways to disambiguate ambiguity (Pramitasih, 2012).

Furthermore, in the other research by Riscahyanti (2014) showed that there were 3 types of ambiguity; lexical ambiguity, referential ambiguity and surface structure ambiguity found in Backpack 4 English Textbook. In this study, the dominant type of ambiguity was referential ambiguity. She also found the ways to disambiguate were by using paraphrasing, truth conditional sentences, adding preposition, moving sentence construction, adding additional context, adding correct punctuation and using picture. She found only 3 types of ambiguity.

Those studies indicate that not all reading texts can be clearly understood by the readers. Therefore, it is necessary to demote lexical ambiguity such as paraphrasing the texts, adding preposition *of* to the words in sentence, using hyphen (-) to separate the words and using picture to give description of words.

Another recommended way is to use one or more people perform a check for

ambiguities and for clarities. And then use self-paced reading time studies as a final check for lexical ambiguity (Matzen, 2009)

There are some kinds of reading texts arranged in syllabus for eleventh grade senior high school based on *Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia*. The texts are explanation text, narrative text and analytical exposition text.

Based on one of the texts, taken from *Bahasa Inggris* textbook used in the second grade of senior high school, "Banning of Motorbikes is Necessary in Housing Areas", there was found types of lexical ambiguity which consisted of 7 Synonymy, 2 Antonymy, 4 Homonymy, and 4 Polysemy. Beside that, the structural ambiguity also found 7 cases which consisted of surface structural ambiguity within A Coordinate Head with one Modifier 5 sentences and Certain Function Words, Including Not, Have Possible Differences in Scope 1 sentence. And the Deep-structural Ambiguity found 1 sentence with consisted of Ellipsis in Comperative Constructions.

Banning of Motorbikes is Necessary in Housing Areas

Motorbikes are nuisance and cause for great distress (Surface structure).

Even though motorbikes are considered as the most convenient *form (homonymy)* of transportation, I think they are a *hazard (synonymy)* to humans, animals as well as the environment. I think motorbikes should be banned in housing *areas (synonymy)* due to the following reasons: *cause (synonymy) of unreasonable (polysemy) amount of noise, air pollution, diseases and accidents (Surface Structure).*

First of all, I would like to point out that are major contributor to the pollution in the world. Research has shown that motorbikes emit (synonymy) a deadly (synonymy) gas that is dangerous (synonymy) for the environment (synonymy). Consequently, long-term emission(synonymy) of gas from motorbikes is a major contributor of global warming.

Secondly, according to a report from BBC News Channel, motorbikes are also responsible (polysemy) for causing diseases such as bronchitis, cancer and a major (homonymy) trigger of asthma and high blood pressure (surface structure). Some of the diseases are so ghastly (synonymy) that they can kill people.

Furthermore, motorbikes create (synonymy) so much noise. There is “vroom vroom” noise everywhere. It is extremely difficult (synonymy) to sleep (synonymy). Parents with infants (antonymy) find it extremely challenging (polysemy). The moment (synonymy) their babies (antonymy) fall asleep (antonymy), one or another motorbikes passes by and the baby wakes up (antonymy) (Deep Structure) .It is also arduous (synonymy) for children to concentrate on their homework. Experts are of the opinion (synonymy) that if there is extreme noise, it can lead (homonymy) to deafness and lack of concentration in children (antonymy) and adults (antonymy) (Surface structure).

Finally, motorbikes are responsible for horrible (synonymy) accident. In some cases (homonymy) there are deaths. Motorbike riders go so fast that they are unable to stop on time (synonymy) thus they end up hitting other people or animals (surface structure). Many times a lot of animals are trampled and found

dead on the road (surface structure). Motorbikes are known to be the biggest killer (polesemy) on the road.

In conclusion for the arguments (synonymy) above, I strongly believe that motorbikes should be banned from housing areas.

(Source: Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas XI)

The similarity of meaning that existed in English reading texts made the reader interpret different meanings. Therefore this study aimed to analyze the lexical and structural ambiguity in each text contained in *Bahasa Inggris* textbook to help improve the understanding of the meaning and the information conveyed by the reading texts.

B. Problems of the Study

The problems of the study were stated as follows:

1. What are the types of lexical and structural ambiguity found in *Bahasa Inggris* textbook used in the second grade of senior high school?
2. What is the most dominant type of lexical and structural ambiguity in *Bahasa Inggris* textbook used in the second grade of senior high school?

C. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were:

1. To find out the types of lexical and structural ambiguity found in *Bahasa Inggris* textbook used in the second grade of senior high school.

2. To determine the most dominant type of lexical and structural ambiguity found in *Bahasa Inggris* textbook used in the second grade of senior high school.

D. Significances of the Study

The findings of this study were expected to be useful theoretically and practically:

1. Theoretically
 - a. The result of this study could enrich and strengthen the knowledge of the theories on ambiguity in English texts.
2. Practically
 - a. The result of this study could give a new perspective for English teacher in using or selecting the texts that they are suitable for the students' educational level.
 - b. The research findings would inspire other researchers to conduct studies in the similar fields.

E. The Scope of the Study

This study focused on analyzing types of ambiguity which was limited of lexical and structural ambiguity found in text of *Bahasa Inggris* textbook used in the second grade of senior high school. The genre text focused on analytical exposition, explanation and narrative text that were found in *Bahasa Inggris* textbook.