CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Human beings socialize and therefore they need communication with each other. Communication becomes very important in our life. In interacting with another, people will use language to communicate. Language is 'the systematic, conventional use of sounds, signs, or written symbols in human society for communication and self expression' (Crystal, 1992: 212).

Language is an important part in communication. Language and communication are two things that cannot be separated. By using language, communication can be carried out easily.

In riddles, sometimes the readers cannot understand the funny part of the riddles. It can happen in our daily life whether we realize it or not. It is often cited that readers cannot understand riddles and that makes riddles will no longer be understood. Especially, we as the reader whose mother tongue is Indonesian, also find a little difficult in understanding foreign riddles.

A riddle is 'a form of word puzzle designed to test someone's ingenuity and lateral thinking in arriving at solution'

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(http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/riddles). People are very fond of reading or hearing riddles because the funny parts that can make them laugh and feel entertained. By applying language play, riddles can become funny, although it is assumed that riddles only make the readers think and find the answers.

I become interested in discussing the language play and background knowledge in understanding riddles since language play is one of the elements that make a riddle funny. Another element that makes a riddle funny is the relationship between the language play and the riddles itself. The relationship between them can make the readers better understand the riddles.

Furthermore, I am interested in discussing riddles because it is very enjoyable to read; besides, analyzing riddles will make me have a better insight about foreign riddles. On the other hand, most of all I can apply my knowledge of linguistic approach to analyze riddles.

I discuss the topic by using linguistic approach based on the language play. 'Language play is an action of manipulating the language by bending and breaking its rules.' (Crystal, 1998: 1). In other words, Indonesian people are not really familiar with language play so I would like to explain the language play through linguistic approach in order to get better understanding.

There are three linguistic areas that are used to discuss this topic. They are semantics, morphology, and phonology. Semantics deals with the meaning of the words. Morphology deals with word formation, whereas phonology deals with the sounds of words. By using those three fields, the riddles can be better understood and appreciated. In addition to the three linguistic areas, I find it necessary to include Pragmatics, in particular dealing with background knowledge.

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The purpose of doing the discussion by using this kind of approach is to make the reader catch the funny things and become aware of the part of the riddles that will tickle the reader's mind. In other words, this linguistic approach will enable the readers understand and enjoy the riddles much better.

My method of research is library research. I find some riddles from several internet websites.

Statement of the Problem

In this thesis I would like to discuss the following problems:

1. What is the language play used in the riddles?

2. How can a reader understand the riddles better?

Purpose of the Study

In this thesis I would like to show:

1. The language play used in the riddles.

2. Better understanding of the riddles.

Method of Research

First, I read a series of riddles from different sources, such as internet. Second, he collects, selects, and classifies the data based on the language play and understanding of the riddles. Third, he discusses them, focusing on the language play and understanding of the riddles by referring to some reference books which deal with linguistic theories and information from the internet that is related to the riddles. Finally, he draws a conclusion based on the discussion.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis, which consists of four chapters, is preceded by the Preface, Table of Contents, and Abstract. Chapter One is the Introduction. It contains the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two provides the linguistic theories used to discuss the language play. Chapter Three contains the discussion on the language play in understanding riddles. Chapter Four, the Conclusion, contains the present writer's personal comments and opinion. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which consist of a selection of riddles related to language play.