

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In times of reading an article in a newspaper, we commonly encounter some ambiguous sentences. “A sentence is said to be ambiguous if it can be understood or interpreted in more than one way.” (Fromkin-Rodman 163). Ambiguous sentences in the article of the newspaper may lead to the readers’ misunderstanding of its content. There are two kinds of ambiguity, i.e. lexical ambiguity and syntactic ambiguity or structural ambiguity. Lexical ambiguity is a word that has some interpretation, whereas Syntactic ambiguity or structural ambiguity is the structure of sentences that allows more than one interpretation (Fromkin-Rodman 172).

In this thesis, I would like to focus on the syntactic ambiguity. The syntactic ambiguities can be dissolved through Syntax and Pragmatics. In particular, syntactic ambiguity belongs to syntax and context belongs to pragmatics. “Syntax is traditionally the name given to the study of form, positioning, and grouping, of the elements that go to make up sentences. In a word, it is about the **STRUCTURE** of sentences” (Burton-Robert 3). “Pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning, the study of contextual meaning, the study of

how more gets communicated than is said and the study of the expression of relative distance” (Yule 3).

In the syntactic ambiguity, the ambiguous sentence is usually dissolvable by means of a tree diagram. In making the tree diagram, we have to initially understand syntactic categories. “The syntactic categories of words and groups of words are revealed by the way they pattern in sentences. If we did not have knowledge of these syntactic categories, we would be unable to form grammatical sentences or distinguish between grammatical and ungrammatical sentences” (Fromkin-Rodman 210).

The significance of my discussing this particular topic is that I expect the reader of the newspaper to be more aware of the sentences they read in the newspaper. They will know which sentence in the article in The Jakarta Post that contains syntactic ambiguity. They can also be aware of the possible interpretations of the sentence that contain syntactic ambiguity. Furthermore, I expect the reader to understand what the actual meaning of the sentence that contains syntactic ambiguity is. By reading the context, the reader will not misunderstand the content of the news and be able to disambiguate the syntactic ambiguities within the sentences.

Furthermore, the role of context is very important to dissolve the ambiguity of the sentence. “Context is the parts of an utterance next to or near a linguistic unit (such as a word) which is the focus of attention. Without knowing the context, the meaning of word is likely to be ambiguous” (Crystal 82).

I choose The Jakarta Post as the source of data because The Jakarta Post is the English newspaper to be published by the Indonesian people which are sold for more than 50,000 copies a day. Moreover, I find The Jakarta Post to be a newspaper subscribed not only by Indonesian people but also by foreigners. The other reason why I

choose The Jakarta Post as the source of data is due to the fact that The Jakarta Post has received some international awards like The International Newspaper Marketing Association – Editor and Publisher Award in the category of public relations, printed media.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Hereby, I formulate three problems for my thesis:

1. Which of the sentences in the article of The Jakarta Post contains syntactic ambiguities?
2. What are the possible interpretations of the ambiguous sentence by means of tree diagrams?
3. What is the role of context in dissolving the ambiguities?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1. To analyse the sentence in the article of The Jakarta Post that contains syntactic ambiguity.
2. To know the possible interpretations of the ambiguous sentence.
3. To understand the role of context in dissolving the ambiguities.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

In gathering the data, I use some steps. First, I read the articles in The Jakarta Post. After reading the articles, I analyze the sentences in the newspaper articles that contain ambiguities. After analysing the sentences, I try to find the possible meanings of the sentences that contain syntactic ambiguities. I also draw tree diagrams for each data

of syntactic ambiguity to clarify the ambiguities. Then, I look for some clues from the context to find out what the ambiguous sentences actually mean in the articles. Last, I make some conclusions concerning the syntactic ambiguities and the role of context to disambiguate the ambiguities.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of four chapters. The first chapter is Introduction. Chapter One consists of Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research and Organization of the Thesis. The Second Chapter is Theoretical Framework. Theoretical Framework consists of the theory that I will apply to analyze my data. The third chapter is Analysis. Chapter Three consists of the data and my analysis to answer the Statement of the Problem. The Fourth Chapter is Conclusion. Aside from the four chapters, this thesis also includes Preface, Table of Contents, Abstract, Bibliography and Appendices.