CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Language is a tool that people use to communicate. It is the tool for people to communicate with others. It is the most important part and it cannot be separated from people's communication. Although sometimes it is not always easy to convey what we really mean, language is the main tool for people to say their purposes. Language is "a human system of communication which uses structured vocal sounds and can be embodied in other media such as writing, print, and physical signs" (McArthur 571). Language itself consists of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. Each element has their own meaning and we can find many interpretations behind the speaker's speech. For example, a word can denote something abstract such as <u>fear</u> and <u>kindness</u>. A word can also denote a person or thing with a concrete meaning like <u>builder</u> and <u>table</u>. In short, a word may have numerous meanings and it may have different meanings for different people.

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In this thesis, I decide to discuss ambiguities in some articles which are taken from an Internet newspsper, The Sun. I choose The Sun because it contains a lot of interesting topics in a lot of fields, especially topics that happen and mostly talked about in Britain. Besides, the topics are always written in daily language so that the readers will find them easier to follow when they read them.

Ambiguity refers to a word or a sentence that contains more than one meaning. When we read something ambiguous, we always get confused because it can be interpreted differently. Ambiguity cannot be avoided. It can happen when the writer uses unclear definitions. Based on <u>The Oxford Companion to English Language</u> by Tom McArthur, ambiguity deals with "actual or potential uncertainty of meaning, especially if a word, phrase or sentence can be understood in two ways" (32).

Ambiguity can happen both in oral and written texts. In an oral texts, we may find ambiguity in people's speech. Sometimes when we are speaking with someone else, we say something ambiguous and a second afterwards we realize that there is misunderstanding between us as the speaker and our hearer. On the other hand, it can also make us confused because we do not know what the real meaning of the ambiguous part is. Meanwhile, ambiguity in written texts deal with the ambiguity that appears in any kinds of writings such as articles in newspapers or magazines, novels, short stories, et cetera. In my thesis I would like to discuss ambiguity which is found in written texts. It is easier to analyze the ambiguity in written texts than in oral ones.

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I choose ambiguity as the topic of my thesis because ambiguity often causes a lot of misunderstandings. On the one hand, some people can understand the intended message of the text, but on the other hand some other people tend to get a different meaning. It is possible that ambiguity will make us laugh because the meaning is funny when people interpret it differently from what is actually intended.

For this thesis, I would like to concentrate on the meanings that are hidden behind the words or sentences which contain ambiguity. I will use the role of context to show that the ambiguity can eventually be restricted into having one single meaning. In addition, I would like to restrict the topic of my thesis on the ambiguities contained in words and phrases.

I wish that this thesis will give a benefit both for the readers who read my thesis and for the article's writers. For the readers, they can be more aware about what ambiguity is and everything related to it. And for article writers, it is greatly hoped that they may be more careful to choose suitable words when they are writing articles so that the result of their writing will not make the readers have wrong or different interpretations from the meaning that is actually intended.

The field of study of my thesis belongs to **semantics**. Semantics deals with the study of meaning of words or sentences. "Semantics is used for the study of meaning in natural language such as word meaning and sentence meaning" (Mey 830). By studying semantics we learn how language is used to convey meaning and how language and people interact to produce and express meaning. I am interested to discuss semantics because it contains a lot of important things to be learned. Semantics itself has many branches. We study not only homonyms,

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hyponyms, synonyms, or antonyms, but also the ambiguity of words or sentences, the changes in meaning, entailment, definiteness, paraphrases, and many others.

Number of words: 765

Statement of the Problem

In this thesis, there are three problems that I would like to discuss. They are:

1. What kinds of ambiguities are found in the articles?

2. What are the possibilities of meaning that can be interpreted?

3. What is the intended meaning of each of the ambiguous phrases or words based on the context?

Purpose of the Study

Through this thesis I want to show:

1. The kinds of ambiguities found in the articles.

2. The possibilities of meaning that can be interpreted.

3. The intended meaning of each of the ambiguous phrases or words based on the context.

Method of Research

First, I read some reference books. Second, I browse several data from the Internet and select some articles that contain ambiguities. Then I gather the relevant data from the source. Next, I analyze the data by using the theories I have got from the reference books. Finally, I write the research report.

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Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter One is the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is the Theoretical Framework, which contains some explanation about Semantics focusing on one of its topics, ambiguity. Chapter Three is the analysis of the ambiguities found in the articles. Chapter Four is the conclusion of the whole analysis. It also contains my comments, opinions, and some suggestions for future studies. The last is the Bibliography, which lists the references and the sources of the data I use in writing this thesis, and the Appendix, which contains the complete news articles as the data.