THE ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL AND STRUCTURAL AMBIGUITY IN YOUR LETTERS COLUMN OF THE JAKARTA POST NEWSPAPER PUBLISHED JULY 2012

PUBLICATION ARTICLES

Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Getting Bachelor Degree of Education in English Department

by

MEGA IRAWATI
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ACCEPTANCE

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School of Teacher Training and Education
Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta

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Team of Examiners:

1. Drs. Sigit Haryanto, M. Hum (Advisor I)

2. Siti Fatimah, S. Pd. M. Hum (Advisor II)

Drs. Sofran Anif, M.Si
NIK. 547
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Mega Irawati
Drs. Sigit Haryanto, M. Hum
Siti Fatimah, S. Pd. M. Hum

English Department, School of Teacher Training and Education
Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta
E-mail: megairawati18@yahoo.co.id

ABSTRACT

The research paper entitled “The Analysis of Lexical and Structural Ambiguity in Your Letters Column of The Jakarta Post Newspaper Published July 2012” is about the type of lexically ambiguous words and types of sentences or phrases that are structurally ambiguous.

The writer understands that the ambiguity can be found in the oral conversation directly or in written. Therefore, the writer wants to find and analyze the kind of words and kind of ambiguous sentence or phrase contained in the newspaper The Jakarta Post of Your Letters column. The writer uses the data published in July 2012 and focused on the 21 letters. In analyzing the material, the writer uses the theory of Crystal (1980) that indicates the type of words, phrases and sentences. The writer also uses the theory of diagrams from George Yule (2006) which aims to show how constituents in analyzing structural ambiguous. Data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative method. After that, the writer shows the data analysis in the form of a percentage of the formula from Bungin (2001).

The results of analysis there are: thirty eight kinds of words and phrases that are ambiguous, eleven lexical ambiguous (28.9%) and twenty seven structural ambiguous (71.0%). From the data analysis can be concluded that structural ambiguity is the most dominant ambiguous appear in Your Letters column of The Jakarta Post newspaper.

Key words: lexical ambiguity, structural ambiguity, Your Letters
A. Introduction

**Background of the Study:** People interact with the other people to express their feelings, ideas, and emotions by using a language. Language has a meaning whether it is an oral or a written language. We learn the meaning in semantics. As Kearns says (2001:1), “semantics deals with the literal meaning of words and the meaning of the way they are combined”.

In communication with the other people either in oral or written forms, they use language as a media. An understanding of a written language form is more difficult than an understanding of an oral language form, and it can make the misunderstanding. This misunderstanding is known as ambiguity.

According to Kreidler (1998:298), “ambiguity is the condition whereby any linguistic form has two or more interpretations”. For example, the word of *club* has two meanings. First is as a *heavy stick*, and second is as *a social group*.

Ulmann in Tambunan (2009:8) states, “ambiguity devides into three kinds; phonetic, grammatical, and lexical”. However, the writer just uses lexical and grammatical ambiguity as the subject of analysis.

Misbakhudinmunir (2010) states, “lexical ambiguity is a word or phrase that has more than one meaning while it stands in a sentence”. For example: However, let’s be **clear**.
The word of *clear* has two possible meanings. The first, the word of *clear* can be *obvious* or *clean*. And the second, it can be *empty*. Therefore, the meaning of *clear* can be *obvious* or *empty*.

In analyzing lexical ambiguity, the writer wants to find the ambiguous word and also classifies the word based on the class of word. This classification is identified as part of speech.

Misbakhudinmunir (2010) states, “structural ambiguity occurs when a headline may have more than one alternative structure and ambivalent structure”. For example: There were a tall man and woman come to my house yesterday.

The sentence above has two alternative syntactic representations that make it structurally ambivalent. First, there were two tall people, they are the tall man and tall woman, or second, someone who is tall, only the man.

There are many reasons why the writer selects the data, because (1) *The Jakarta Post* is one of daily English newspaper in Indonesia, and (2) the writer can find the example of lexical and structural ambiguity in Your Letters column. **Limitation of the Study** of this study is to analyze the lexical and structural ambiguity in some of Your Letters of *The Jakarta Post* newspaper. **Problem Statement** of this study are: 1) which words and phrases are probably ambiguous?, 2) what classes of word are lexically ambiguous?, then 3) what kinds of sentence or phrase are structurally ambiguous?, and 4) which type of ambiguity is the most dominant?. **Objective of the Study** aims to answer the
problem stated above, as follows: 1) to find out words and sentences which are probably ambiguous, then 2) to analyze the classes of word that can be lexically ambiguous, next 3) to analyze the kinds of sentence or phrase that can be structurally ambiguous, and 4) to determine the most dominant type of ambiguity.

B. Underlying Theory

1. Semantic Theories

Semantics is the study of the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences. Kreidler (1998:3) states that semantics is the systemic study of meaning, and linguistic semantics is the study of how languages organize and express meanings.

2. Meaning

We are all necessarily interested in meaning concept. Kreidler (1998:3) states that linguistics also deals with the meanings expressed by modulations of a speaker’s voice and the processes by which hearer’s and reader’s relate new information they already have.

3. Lexical and Grammatical Meanings

Kreidler (1998:50) states that lexical meaning is a meaning that proposed by a lexeme. A lexeme is a minimal unit that can take part in referring or predicating.
Sentence also has several kinds of grammatical meanings. Kreidler (1998:50) states that grammatical meanings are expressed in various ways: the arrangement of words, by grammatical affixes like the-s attached to the noun dog and the-ed attached to the verb bark, and by grammatical words, or function words, like the ones illustrated in these sentences: do, not, a, some, and the.

4. Ambiguity

Kreidler (1998:11) states that a sentence that has two meanings is ambiguous. According to Kent Bach (1994:124), there are two types of ambiguity, lexical and structural.

a. Lexical Ambiguity

According to Kent Bach (1994:124), lexical ambiguity is ambiguity based on a single word. In many cases, a single word in a language corresponds to more than one thought.

b. Structural Ambiguity

Structural ambiguity occurs when a phrase or sentence has more than one underlying structure. According to Kreidler (1998:169), structural ambiguity may be in the surface structure of a sentence: words can cluster together in different possible constructions. Structural ambiguity may also be in the deep structure: one sequence of words may
have more than one interpretation, generally because the rules of sentence construction allow ellipsis, the deletion of what is ‘understood’.

5. **Part of Speech**

A part of speech is one of a group of traditional classifications of words according to their functions in context. Yule (2006:74) divides the part of speech into eight types: they are noun, article, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, pronoun, and conjunction.

6. **Kinds of Phrase**

According to Crystal (1980:170), phrase is a term used in grammatical analysis to refer to a single element of structure containing more than one word, and lacking the subject-predicate structure typical of clauses. Crystal also distinguished phrase into five types: they are noun phrase, verb phrase, adverbial phrase, adjectival phrase, and also prepositional phrase.

7. **Kinds of Sentence**

Crystal (1980:319) also said that sentence is the largest structural unit in term of which the grammar of a language is organized. Crystal classifies sentence based on the function into four types which are statement, question, command, and exclamatory.

8. **Labeled and Bracketed Sentences**

Yule (2006:80) states that an alternative type of diagram is designed to show how the constituents in sentence structure can be marked off by using
labeled brackets. The first step is to put brackets (one on each side) round each constituent, and then more brackets round each combination of constituents.

C. Research Method

In doing this research, the writer uses the descriptive qualitative research, because the writer collected the data, and then she descriptively reported the findings. No statistical computation is employed in this study.

The object of the study is analysis on words, sentences or phrases in Your Letters of *The Jakarta Post* newspaper. The data of this study are words, sentences or phrases in the data source of letter in Your Letters column of *The Jakarta Post* newspaper.

The writer uses documentation as the method of collecting the data in this research, followed these steps; first, takes the data within two week edition from July 6, 2012, second, finds 21 data to be analyzed, third, reads the data focusing on the sentences which contains the ambiguous words and phrases, and the last, writes down all the chosen sentences to be analyzed.

After gathering the data, the writer analyzed the sentences of the letters by doing some steps, as follows; reading the selected data, identifying the words, phrases, and sentences which are possibly ambiguous, classifying them into the type of ambiguity whether lexical or structural ambiguity, analyzing the lexical ambiguity by finding the meaning from the dictionary and structural ambiguity by
using labeled and bracketed phrases to find the meanings, classifying the lexically ambiguous words into parts of speech and the structurally ambiguous sentences or phrases into kinds of sentences or phrases, calculating the data in percentage to get the most dominant kind of ambiguity, and the last, drawing some conclusion.

D. Research Finding and Discussion

1. Research Finding

The data were collected from The Jakarta Post newspaper within two week periods consist of 21 letters. The data are analyzed based on the lexical and structural ambiguity.

a. Analysis of Lexical Ambiguity

1) . . . , but also several urgent wide-ranging reforms be implemented in necessary places before things in Indonesia truly get out of hand. (Police reform badly needed, on Friday, July 06, 2012)

This letter informs us about an error of police functions in public relations. This sentences has a kind of lexical ambiguity because the phrase get out has more than one meanings like:

a. go away

b. go down

In the first meaning, the word get out may be interpreted as go away because it is the commong meaning of the word get out. But, if we replace this meaning in the sentence, the sentence does not make a sense. The second meaning is go down because the word get out is connected to
hand. So, if we replace this meaning to the sentence, the sense of the sentence is clear.

b. Analysis of Structural Ambiguity

1) . . . , there was a front page photo of several attractive female police officers posing with guns drawn. (Police reform badly needed on Friday, July 06, 2012)

The sentence above contains a kind of structural ambiguity because of the form of noun phrase attractive female police officers. This noun phrase has two different forms which make the sentence interpreted in two different meaning. This ambiguity can be shown through the following diagrams:

Diagram (a) shows the word attractive which modifies only female that is classified into noun phrase, so the sentence means “. . . ,
there was a front page photo of several police officers of attractive female posing with guns drawn”.

Diagram (b) shows the word attractive modifies the whole phrase female police officers, so the sentence means “. . . , there was a front page photo of several female police officers which is attractive posing with guns drawn”.

c. Kinds of Lexically Ambiguous Words

After analyzing the lexical ambiguous words in Your Letters column of The Jakarta Post newspaper, the writer classifies the kinds of words based on their function:

1) get out : noun
2) have to : verb
3) need to : verb
4) clear : adjective
5) power : noun
6) right : adjective
7) roots : noun
8) man : noun
9) vote : noun
10) get up : verb
11) rose : verb
d. **Kinds of Structurally Ambiguous Sentences or Phrases**

After analyzing the structurally ambiguous sentences or phrases in Your Letters column of *The Jakarta Post* newspaper, the writer wants to classify its their types of phrases based on their function:

1) attractive female police officers : noun phrase
2) prioritizing decency, respect and etiquette : noun phrase
3) horrible situations and untold misery : noun phrase
4) critical and enlightened eyes and minds : noun phrase
5) international donors meeting : noun phrase
6) military operations in the south and east : noun phrase
7) former president and peace negotiator : noun phrase
8) lowest human development index : noun phrase
9) social dilemma and economic problems : noun phrase
10) efficient communication technologies : noun phrase
11) politically courageous activities : noun phrase
12) negative stereotypes and unfair discrimination : noun phrase
13) perfect evaluation system : noun phrase
14) effective fight against corruption : noun phrase
15) certain degree of independence and needs : noun phrase
16) undeniable political truth : noun phrase
17) careless sampling and voter dishonesty : noun phrase
18) pre-election surveys and the actual vote: noun phrase
19) non-Muslim vice-governor candidate: noun phrase
20) main shopping streets: noun phrase
21) long military career: noun phrase
22) popular herbal beverage: noun phrase
23) recent nuclear power: noun phrase
24) toxic cooking oil: noun phrase
25) time of prayer and reflection: noun phrase
26) opportunity for families and friends: noun phrase
27) Australian Muslim community: noun phrase

2. Discussion of the Finding

a. The Frequency of Lexical and Structural Ambiguity

The table below are the number and the percentage of each type of lexical and structural ambiguity found in Your Letters column of The Jakarta Post newspaper published on July 2012.

Table D.2.a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Kinds of Ambiguity</th>
<th>Class of Words or Phrases or Sentences</th>
<th>Number of Case</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Lexical Ambiguity</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverb</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preposition</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronoun</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunction</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structural Ambiguity</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun phrase</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb phrase</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverbial phrase</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectival phrase</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepositional phrase</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E. Conclusion and Suggestion

1. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, the writer draws the following conclusion.
a. There are thirty eight ambiguous words and phrases in Your Letters column of *The Jakarta Post* newspaper. They are eleven cases of lexical ambiguity and twenty seven cases of structural ambiguity.

b. The result of the lexical ambiguity presents 28.9% included noun 45.4%, adjective 36.4%, and verb 18.2%. While, the result of the structural ambiguity presents 71.0% included noun phrase 100%.

c. Structural ambiguity which is functioned as noun phrase becomes the most dominant component found in Your Letters column of *The Jakarta Post* newspaper issued on July 2012 with two periods which is 21 letters.

2. **Suggestion**

At this end of this chapter, considering the importance of understanding the lexical and structural ambiguity, the writer would like to give some suggestions. For the students who are willing to conduct a research paper with same topic, it will hopefully give a clear understanding in analyzing *Your Letters* column of the newspaper using the lexical and structural ambiguity. The writer also hopes that this research can be used as the reference to complete their research paper.

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