

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Most of people in the world use English as their International language, so English has gained its popularity all over the world, including Indonesia. People who are not native can learn and use English step by step. In the past English was only taught in junior high school, but now it is different. Fauziati (2010: 89) in her book entitled *Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL)* explains that:

The decree of the Ministry of Education and Culture number 0487/4/1992, chapter VIII states that English can be taught as an extra instruction if it is needed by the local community, and if the teacher of English is available. Another decree of Ministry of Education and Culture, No 060/U/1993 states that English may be given to Elementary school students as a local content. The phenomena have caused many English educators charged with teaching teacher education and/or curriculum and materials development to raise questions about how to best to teach English as a foreign language to young children.

Now, teaching-learning can be started from kindergarten, such as pronouncing alphabetic by using games or song. In Elementary School students can learn English too, such as learning words about animals, fruits, vegetables, colors, numbers, transportation, occupation, etc. Generally, English teachers teach class that consists of 25 up to 40 students. Their time is allocated about two until four hours a week. They also use some teaching-learning media to facilitate receiving materials and to improve the student's ability in English skill, such as text book, LCD, picture, recorder, etc.

The existence of English teaching-learning process cannot be separated from teaching-learning media, especially textbook. From *Encyclopedia of Education* (2008), textbook is a printed and bound artifact for each year or course of study. They are made by corporation to follow a set standard curriculum for a school system or larger organization, such as a province. They contain facts and ideas around a certain subject.

According to Cunnings worth, Textbooks are best seen as a source in achieving aims and objectives that have already been set in terms of learner needs (1995:7). In other word, a textbook means a created material designed as materials for teaching learning process in order to increase the learners' knowledge and experience. Textbook also can be defined as a book prepared for school's students in teaching learning process.

Textbooks therefore play a very important role in language classes, and as an English teacher, it is a significant point to select a good textbook for the students to increase their skills. If the content of the textbook is too difficult, student cannot understand the important concept. Some cases in textbook can make many students confused to understand the purpose, such as: the words or sentences that have more than one meaning.

Before choosing a suitable English textbook, teacher should study the language itself especially knowing the words and the meaning. Sometimes different words have same sound but different meanings, this condition known as homophone or homonyms. Both of them occasionally create an ambiguity. According to Fauziati (2009: 63):

Knowing a word means knowing its sounds and meanings. Both aspects are very important, since the same sounds may sometimes mean different things. When different words are pronounced the same but having different meaning, they are called homophone or homonyms. Homophones are sounds which have the same pronunciation but different spelling. For example, to words to, too, and two are all pronounced /ti/ but they refer to different things. Whereas, homonyms are sounds which are pronounced and spelled identically, such as in the word well in the following sentence, “Oh well, I will dig a well to see how well the well water will well up”.

In a while people get confused to know the real meaning of a word or a sentence because it has more than one interpretation. In linguistics this term usually called ambiguity. Fauziati in her book *Psycholinguistics an Introduction* said that a word or sentence is ambiguous when it can be interpreted in more than one ways. (2009: 63).

Fromkin, Hyams, and Rodman (2009:182) in their book entitled *An Introduction to Language* said that Our semantic knowledge tells us when words or phrases (including sentences) have more than one meaning, that is, when they are ambiguous.

According to Kess (1999:133) sentences can be ambiguous on at least three levels, namely: on lexical level (lexical ambiguity), on syntactic relationship with ambiguity in the surface structure (surface structure ambiguity), and on the deep structure level of logical relationships between underlying syntactic constituent (deep structure ambiguity).

In this research paper, the writer gives some data which contain ambiguous sentences that found in English text book entitled *Backpack 4*. This follows the cases that found in Backpack 4:

(1) *Backpack* Song

That phrase is ambiguous in lexical level of meaning. The ambiguity exists because the word *Backpack* may have different meaning in this phrase: first meaning is bag that people usually wears in their back, and the second meaning is this book that entitled *Backpack*. Additional context to the phrase sometimes can disambiguate, as illustrated bellow:

- ✓ Use the picture of bag to explain backpack as bag.
- ✓ Use the picture of book to explain backpack as the title of textbook.

The type of ambiguity in that phrase is lexical ambiguity.

(2) We'll have lots of *adventures*. (backpack 4: 1)

In that sentence, homonym is located in the word *adventures*. The word *adventures* can interpret as the experience, the outdoor activity, and the knowledge. The context of that sentence does not focus in the one interpretation. So both interpretations are able to be applied in sentence above. Paraphrasing to the sentence sometimes can disambiguate, as illustrated bellow:

- ✓ We'll have lots of *experience*. (if *adventures* means *experience*)
- ✓ We'll have lots of *outdoor activities*. (if *adventures* means *outdoor activity*)
- ✓ We'll have lots of *knowledges*. (if *adventures* means *knowledge*)

The type of ambiguity in that sentence is lexical ambiguity.

(3) He doesn't like *diet* soda. (backpack 4: 30)

The word *diet* can be interpreted in two ways, they are: drink with low fat or less sugar content; and food to lose weight. The context of that sentence does not detail in the one of interpretations. Additional context to the sentence sometimes can disambiguate, as illustrated bellow:

- ✓ He doesn't like *diet* soda because there is less sugar. (if diet means a drink that contains less sugar)
- ✓ He doesn't like *diet* soda because he is not on diet. (if diet means a drink that use to lose weight)

The type of ambiguity in that sentence is lexical ambiguity.

(4)Cristina Aguilera has *polar bear*. (backpack 4: 56)

The sentence above has more than one way to interpret, that is: shape stuffed or doll polar bear, and the other meaning is the real polar bear. The context of that sentence does not focus in the one of meaning. So both interpretations are true to be used in this sentence above. Adding picture to the sentence sometimes can disambiguate, as illustrated bellow:



(a) Cristina Aguilera has *polar bear*
(if it means doll)



(b) Cristina Aguilera has *polar bear*
(if it means a real polar bear)

From that phenomenon in teaching learning process, some students are still confused to analyze a sentence which has more than one

interpretation in it. They should know about the spelling, pronouncing and meaning of the word to know the best interpretation in it, but some students do not know a lot of it in elementary school especially in fourth grade. The ambiguous sentence in their textbook can make them confused when they translate it. This textbook is not suitable enough if it use to teach the fourth grade of elementary school especially in Indonesia.

The writer has some reasons why the writer wants to analyze this textbook. The writer wants to know what is ambiguous word or sentence found in this textbook, and the writer wants to know about ambiguous sentences and wants to give explanation to the other researcher about ambiguous words or sentence in this English textbook entitled *Backpack 4*. The writer as the English teacher can choose not only a good book but suitable textbook for their student. So, this research gives some benefits from other researcher in the future.

The writer is interested in analyzing the ambiguous words or sentences in the fourth grade of elementary textbook which titled *Backpack 4* written by Maria Herrera and Diane Pinkley because this book is difficult to understand by the fourth grade students especially in Indonesia. This textbook was published in New York by Longman in 2013.

B. Limitation of the Study

This study is focused on the ambiguous sentence found in English textbook entitled *Backpack 4* written by Maria Herrera and Diane Pinkley. This textbook was published in New York by Longman in 2013. The data

will be analyzed using ambiguity theory from the book entitled *An Introduction to Language proposed* by Victoria Fromkin, Robert Rodman, and Nina Hyams. The writer also uses book from Kreidler entitle *Introducing semantics*.

C. Problem Statements

Based on the research background, the writer formulates the problem statement as follow:

What is the ambiguity found in the fourth grade of elementary text book entitled *Backpack 4*?

Based on the research problem above, the writer formulates the research questions as follow:

1. What are the types of ambiguous sentence?
2. What is the frequency of each ambiguity?
3. What type of ambiguity which dominantly appears in *Backpack 4*?
4. What are the causes of the ambiguous sentences?
5. What is the way to disambiguate ambiguity?

D. Objectives of the Study

Based on the problem statement, the objectives of the study in this research are:

1. To describe the types of ambiguity such as: lexical ambiguity, surface structure ambiguity and deep structure ambiguity found in *Backpack 4*.
2. To describe the frequency of each type of ambiguity.
3. To describe the dominant type of ambiguity.

4. To describe the causes of the ambiguous sentences.
5. To describe the way to disambiguate ambiguous sentences in *Backpack 4*.

E. Benefit of the Study

There are some expected benefits that could be acquired from this study. The benefits are as following:

1. Theoretical Benefit

This study contributes to the science of applied linguistic especially English Language teaching (TEFL), especially about choosing suitable teaching-learning media. This study also contributes on linguistics science especially in term ambiguity.

2. Practical Benefit

There are some practical benefits namely; this study might be useful for the teacher to improve their ways to choose teaching-learning media in teaching-learning process. The result of this study will help the English teachers and the learners to solve their problems in teaching and learning English. This result also will help the scholar to know the case of ambiguity found around them.

F. Research Paper Organization

In brief, this paper is divided into five chapters. They are:

Chapter I is introduction. It deals with background of the research, limitation of the research, problem statements, the objectives of the research, benefits of the research, significance of the research and research paper organization.

Chapter II is review of related literature. It contains previous study and underlying theory. It covers theoretical framework. Based on notion of ambiguity, types of ambiguity, the reasons of ambiguity and the way to disambiguate ambiguity.

Chapter III is research method. It includes the type of research and research design setting of the study/location, the object of the research, the data and data source, technique of data collection, data validity, and technique of data analysis.

Chapter IV is research result and discussion. This chapter comprises data analysis, its finding and discussion of the finding.

Chapter V is conclusion, constrain/weakness of the research on the data/analysis/instrument/finding, the implication of the research, and suggestion.