

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction focuses on the background of the study, limitation of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, and benefits of the study.

A. Background of the Study

Language is an important tool for humans to communicate with one another. Language can be spoken or written. Understanding language is difficult as it requires efforts. Understanding written language is more difficult than understanding spoken language because readers may make several interpretations. As a result, studying English is critical for students to grasp the content of books and obtain a wealth of knowledge.

Language is also used by teachers and students in the class. In order for students to comprehend the topic, teachers must use media when teaching and studying English. A textbook is one of them as it usually consists of a summary of the materials, exercises, competence tests and exercises for the semester tests. Textbooks have some advantages. Firstly, textbooks can help students to understand the materials more easily. Secondly, textbooks make students active learners. Ultimately, textbooks give students a variety of ways to study the materials.

Almost every school in the world now utilizes textbooks as the primary medium for teaching and learning in the classroom. Textbooks can be an instrument for gaining additional knowledge. However, not all textbooks are beneficial to learning. Students can practice exercises in textbooks with or without the teachers. But when students learn by themselves, they may be confused by the meaning of sentences in the textbooks because there are sometimes several possible meanings. This is referred to as unclear sentences. It is critical for students when they are unable to grasp the meaning of statements due to ambiguity.

According to Kreidler (2017), a statement with more than one interpretation is ambiguous. Fauziati (2011) further stated that a word or a sentence is ambiguous when it can be understood in more than one way, and that ambiguity is the situation of misinterpretation between the language's intended meaning and the real meaning. According to Kess (1992), the study of the term "ambiguity" becomes major issue

not only in linguistics, but also in psycholinguistics. Many psycholinguistic studies have found that ambiguous phrases cause processing variations in a number of activities, for instance, they may differ from regular unambiguous statements in these kind of tasks by generally requiring longer to analyze or deal with, as stipulated by the experimental task.

Based on some of the theories presented above, it can be concluded that ambiguity can be expressed as a word, phrase, or sentence which has multiple meanings, or is difficult to understand or explain due to various factors, such as its structure, pronunciation, or use of choice. Consequently, ambiguity in the author's writings can lead to confusion between the researcher and the readers.

When learning from textbooks, students often encounter ambiguous sentences written in the books. For instance, the ambiguous sentence found in *English for University Student* (2015) by Thalib is "I work in Jakarta as an *English* teacher" (page 4). This sentence is ambiguous because it has more than one meaning. The first meaning is how English refers to language learning or language itself. However, the second meaning is a nationality. This can lead the readers to guess the real meaning of the sentence. However, the guesses are frequently misunderstandings of the readers regarding the meanings. This is certainly not good because it will affect the readers' understandings of the materials in the textbooks.

Ambiguity is crucial to study because if there is an ambiguity in a word, phrase, or sentence, the readers may misinterpret the meaning. There are frequently ambiguous words, phrases, or sentences in textbooks, leaving the readers confused regarding the genuine meanings. As a result, ambiguity in textbooks can influence how readers interpret them. They are mostly unable to determine what the words, phrases, or sentences in the textbooks mean when it comes to the materials. One example of a textbook containing ambiguous sentences is the *English for University Student* (2015).

The researcher chose the *English for University Student* (2015) textbook by Thalib as the data source of this study. There are several reasons why the researcher chose and analyzed the data source: (1) textbooks are one of the tools of communication that almost all teachers and students use for teaching or learning;

(2) the researcher can find examples of ambiguity in the *English for University Students* (2015) textbook by Thalib; (3) the researcher is interested in understanding how to identify the ambiguity in this textbook; (4) the researcher is drawn to learn more about the ambiguity; and (5) the researcher finds something fascinating in describing the ambiguity to other researchers. As a result, this study will be useful to other researchers in future studies.

Many researchers have conducted research on ambiguity with different data sources. However, most of them, such as Pramadwityas (2017), Puspitasari (2019), Sylviana (2020), and Jannah (2021), used newspapers; Charina (2017) used newspaper headlines, jokes, riddles, and anecdotes; Dharmayanti (2017) used English advertisements of Unilever products; Faina, Rositasari & Elfarissyah (2021), Frisca (2017), and BA Ekarisna (2022) used movie scripts; Yastanti & Setiawan (2018) used lyrics of soundtrack movies; Pawestri & Wongwattana (2018) used colloquial jokes in Dagelan *Instagram* accounts; Rohmaniah (2017), Anggur (2019), and Demir (2020) used students' writings; and Khanbutayeva (2021) used selected sentences containing structural ambiguity as the data source of the studies. Meanwhile, the researcher used an English textbook as the data source of this study. Charina (2017), Faina, Rositasari & Elfarissyah (2021), Frisca (2017), Yastanti & Setiawan (2018), Sylviana (2020), and Jannah (2021) used a semantics-based approach to research framing. Meanwhile, this study used psycholinguistics approach. Different theories used by other researcher: Charina (2017) used Kreidler's theory (2002); Frisca (2017) used Stephen Ullmann's theory (1997); Yastanti & Setiawan (2018) used the theory of Hurford and Heasley (2004); and Demir used Lyons's theory (1977). Meanwhile, this study used Murphy's theory (2010) and Kreidler's theory (2017).

Based on the background regarding the ambiguity and students' difficulties in interpreting the dual meanings of words and sentences, the researcher is intended to find out the types of ambiguity found in the *English textbook for University Student* (2015) and how to disambiguate the ambiguity word, phrase or sentences found in it. Thus, the researcher proposed "Ambiguity Found in *English for University Student* (2015) Textbook by Thalib" as the title of this study.

B. Problem Statement

Based on the background that has been explained about ambiguity, which presents a problem for readers, particularly students, in understanding words and sentences that have multiple meanings. The researcher formulates two problems in this research.

1. What types of ambiguity found in the *English for University (2015)* textbook by Thalib?
2. How to disambiguate the ambiguity word, phrase or sentences in the *English for University (2015)* textbook by Thalib?

C. Objective of the Study

Based on the discussion and formulation of the problem, the researcher provides two objectives that are capable match with the formulation of the problem which are classified and listed as follows.

1. To describe the types of ambiguity found in the *English for University (2015)* textbook by Thalib.
2. To explain how to disambiguate the ambiguity word, phrase or sentences found in the *English for University (2015)* textbook by Thalib.

D. Limitation of the Study

The object in this study is limited only on the English textbook (2015) by Thalib that containing ambiguous sentence. This study focuses on identifying the type of ambiguity and how to disambiguate the ambiguity word, phrase or sentences found in *English for University Students (2015) Textbook by Thalib*.

E. Benefit of the Study

There are theoretical and practical benefit that can be taken from this study.

1. Theoretical Benefit

Theoretically, this study can be used for the researcher herself, the readers and especially for the students of English Department to expand their

knowledge about lexical, surface structure, deep structure ambiguities and learning how to disambiguate the ambiguity word, phrase or sentences that found in English textbook. Moreover, it may also be reference for language learners who are interested in the analysis ambiguities in English textbook.

2. Practical Benefit

The researcher expects that the findings of this study will be useful to both researchers and readers. This study will assist researchers become better analysts and will serve as a future reference for uncertainty. This research will assist readers in locating particular facts or sources concerning ambiguity. The researcher hopes that if the reader does an equivalent study, they will use this study as a reference. The researcher expects that this study will help readers understand uncertainty.