CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introductory explanation about reading and a correlation of newspaper in giving information. Then, the writer shows a phenomenon in reading a text, and a problem related to lexical and syntactic ambiguity. The writer also presents some important parts of this chapter that includes statements of the problem, the objective of the study, the significance of the study and the definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Reading involves the mind of the reader engaging with the language of the text: it is a two-way process that cycling the mind of a reader to text and back (Weaver, 2009, p. 1). Texts, as a medium for reading, give contributions as an information-giver in a form of newspapers, ads, and sometimes it could be enjoyed. When we are reading, a language also contributes as a major factor to readers in order to figure out what are the meanings of the texts. Sometimes, readers would be distracted by such sentences and interpretations emerge differently in obtaining the goal of the meaning as the result of the differentiations in thinking and comprehending of each person. Those different kinds of interpretation might be called ambiguity.

Ambiguity is the possibility to interpret one phrase in several ways (Gleich, Creighton, & Kof, 2010, p. 2). Although not only phrase, it appears that whenever the attachment of such an element, either a whole phrase or just a single

word in a different component, ambiguity could arises (Roura, 1995, p. 2). Ambiguity is part of the problems occurring in natural language texts (Gleich, Creighton, & Kof, 2010, p. 2). It could be looked from the problem that ambiguous phrase or even sentences might emerge multiple interpretations in comprehending the meaning. Moreover, Razeghi (2008, p. 109) argues that most people are not even aware how ambiguous words could be. They likely tend to accept all the information without knowing that some articles or texts may be not neutral in a result of ambiguities. In the term of such problems might have a chance to occur in some works in English; newspapers. In other words, that such of problems might have a higher chance to occur in many text-based works such as newspaper articles, headlines, or other contents of it. The ambiguities could be found in words, various types of sentences, such as phrase and other types of sentences.

Ambiguity is distinguished into two kinds – lexical and structural ambiguity (Fromkin et al. 2009) Lexical ambiguity, which is so *common*, indicates that the word itself has more than one meaning (Khawalda & Al-Saidat, 2012). Scheffler (1979), in Gillon's discussion of ambiguity (1990, p. 7), argues that "a word is ambiguous if its denotation on one occasion of its use diverges from its denotation on another occasion of its use." A word as well as *fire* might emerge ambiguity, as if it is known as a noun for plasma thing that can burn, or a verb for starting a shoot in a gunshot or some kind of shooting activity with armed weapon, or it can be known as an adjective or a verb of stopping an employee's job. As an example for lexical ambiguity is "*The man saw the table*;" the word

table could have two meanings in that sentence, the first roles as a noun for a kind of furniture and the second roles as a noun for a function that contains columns and rows. A sample taken is "*TNI to fire soldiers for selling ammunition,*" the word *fire* could be ambiguous since it means TNI shoots the soldiers because the soldiers were selling ammunition or TNI is stopping the soldiers from their work in TNI because the soldiers were selling ammunition, and both of the sentences use the word *fire* as a verb.

In another explanation, there is an ambiguity which uses structures, phrases, and sentences, and it might be called structural or syntactic ambiguity. Gillon (1990, p. 8) reckons that it is syntactic ambiguity or it is called *amphiboly*, when a sentence can accommodate distinct phrasal structures or the sentence might carry more than one interpretation. Later, he shows that sentence might be ambiguous since it can accommodate more than one structural analysis. A sentence *"The boy saw the man with a telescope."* could emerge ambiguity and it might be interpreted as the boy saw the man using a telescope, or the boy saw the man while the man was holding a telescope. An example taken from the data is *"Batam resident arrested in Singapore for robbery"* could be interpreted in two ways: the Batam resident was arrested in Singapore while they are doing robbery in Singapore; or the Batam resident was arrested in Singapore, however they were doing robbery in another place or country but they were arrested in Singapore.

In order to make a perfect structure of a sentence, a sentence must have at least Noun and Verb for the basic structure of the sentence so that the sentence could be arisen whether it is structurally correct or not. Additions might be

attached in a noun or verb that make them become phrase. A modifier could add an additional description of the noun or verb and make the word become quite more complex rather than only using simple noun or verb in making a sentence.

The writer attempts to discover some problems in the field of syntax, focusing on the lexical and syntactic ambiguity; and a bit in the field of semantics that deals with meaning as a result from lexical ambiguity. Texts as the information-givers could be found in any content of the newspaper, because it is the human needs to collect information. In a better view, newspapers tend to be produced in massive scales; either it is nationwide, worldwide, or posted as online news. Some names are shown as the mostly known newspapers; such as Jakarta Post, Kompas, Jawa Pos as nationwide newspapers; and New York Times as worldwide newspapers. Some only have online publication such as detik.com; however, those newspapers now have an online publication in thejakartapost.com, kompas.com, and jawapos.com.

The newspaper is one of many media that serve information and news. It is a human need to obtain information wherever they are. One of the easier ways to collect information nowadays is through online surfing even though it is dawn in the morning. Online media, especially online newspaper, become a way of such information that could be accessed every time. Sometimes people don't have enough time to buy or bring a printed-newspaper to their works. From that case, newspaper companies tend to make a database for their news either it is published in the printed version and the online version, and the websites are not just to display home base of the newspaper company but also displaying the news. In that

case, the online version appears to have a shortened version. They have to manage the space on the online version more than the printed version, which has a bigger space. It appears that the headlines may be shortened due to its limited space. It is different with the printed version which has a headline and followed by the content directly.

Multiple interpretations are also available in any form of text, especially in newspaper headlines. Headlines of newspapers tend to be read firstly and the structure used by the author could attract readers. It makes headlines are printed or published in capital letters, bold, and have size more than the contents, so that headlines could make readers be interested in the news. However, it appears that the online version has a shortened version of headline, and if any possible interpretation is found in such headlines, it could make the readers confuse to obtain the meaning of the texts. It could be emerged as a result of people's habits, especially Indonesian native, that some of them would not read all of the contents of the news. Due to such case, the writer tends to use the online version rather than the printed version because it appears to be a bit more difficult.

Later in the sample taken, the data is arranged into classes or levels to find out the possible meanings for lexical ambiguity or possible structures of the headlines accurately for syntactic ambiguity. By ordering the headlines into classes or levels, it is hoped that the possible interpretation would not confuse the readers while understanding what the point of the headlines is. The writer presumes that the discussion is able to be read and understood easily by analyzing the headlines in detail by its words for lexical ambiguity, and using Phrase

Structure Tree or a tree diagram in order to reveal the second or more interpretations for the syntactic ambiguity.

1.2   Statement of the Problems

By using newspaper headlines as data in this study, the writer attempts to find a problem related to ambiguities. The complexity of words, phrases or sentences in the newspaper headlines could emerge questions whether it is ambiguous or not. The writer attempts to establish three research questions related to syntactic ambiguity. The research questions are:

1. What are the ambiguities of each headline?

2. What are the possible interpretations of the ambiguous headlines?

3. In which sub-column are the ambiguous headlines mostly found?

1.3   Objective of the Study

Looking from the research questions, the writer tries to interpret the objective of the study as below:

1. To find out the type of ambiguities that are found on the headlines;

2. To find out the possible interpretations of the ambiguities on the headlines;

3. To find out the most ambiguities that could occur in those sub-columns.

1.4   Significance of the Study

The writer assumes that the knowledge about ambiguities could hit the mark to readers and then they could improve more of their knowledge about ambiguities. With the number of the readers, it is hoped that they, Indonesian native, could improve their knowledge in lexical and syntactic ambiguity while reading headlines of newspaper, especially The Jakarta Post as it is used in this study.

The writer also expects that many works such as newspaper and online newspaper could emerge problems and it could be analyzed in lexical and syntactic ambiguity which are rarely used by any student who are concerned in syntax. Also, the writer expects that this study could lead and help to other students who are majoring in syntax for syntactic ambiguity and a bit of semantics for lexical ambiguity as their final assignment.

1.5   Definition of Key Terms

The writer provides an additional description for each element in this study as key terms. The key terms are:

Ambiguity : Ambiguity is the possibility to interpret one phrase in several ways (Gleich, Creighton, & Kof, 2010, p. 2). Ambiguity arises whenever the attachment of such an element, either

a whole phrase or just a single word, is possible in different constituents (Roura, 1995, p. 2).

Lexical Ambiguity : Lexical ambiguity is the multiple meanings of sentences due to words which contain multiple meaning. Lexical ambiguity emerges when there is, at least, one word in a phrase which has more than one meaning (Fromkin et al, 2009).

Syntactic Ambiguity : The case of structured sentences that have more than one meaning resulted by different phrase structure analyses (Fromkin et al, 2009, p. 594). "Syntactic ambiguity or it is called *amphiboly*, is when a sentence can accommodate distinct phrasal structures (Gillon, 1990)."

Phrase Structure Rules : Phrase structure rules specify the well-formed structures of a language precisely and concisely. Phrase Structure Rules is a rule in ordering and grouping the words into syntactic

categories (Fromkin et al, 2009, p. 131).

Phrase Structure Tree **: S**tructure of sentence that can be represented by phrase structure trees and resulted in containing syntactic categories. Phrase structure trees reflect the speaker's mental representation of sentences (Fromkin et al, 2009, p. 168).