CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents the theories underlying the research. The writer uses the following theories in doing the analysis in structurally ambiguous sentences and in interpreting the findings.

2.1. Review of Related Theories

In this review of related theories, the writer reviews theory of grammar points and Phrase Structure Rules as the main reference of the study.

2.1.1. Potentially Ambiguous Grammar Points

Language consists of three major components, which are pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Grammar is a branch of linguistics dealing with the form and structure of words (morphology) and their interrelation in sentences (syntax). The study of grammar reveals how language works.

Most people first encounter grammar in connection with the study of their own, or of a second language, in a school curriculum. When people are said to have good grammar or bad grammar, the inference is that they obey or ignore the rules of accepted usage associated with the language they speak.

Grammar is considered by most people as the most important component in English language because the meaning of a sentence depends on grammar so that the sentence is meaningful or meaningless. For example, a sentence can have more than one meaning or ambiguous just because of the sentence's grammar.

Marianne Celce-Murcia and Diane Larsen-Freeman (1999) believe that there are some types of grammar points that may often cause some sentences have more than one meaning, as follow:

1. Degree comparatives and equatives

Because of the deletions that occur in degree constructions, sometimes these constructions are ambiguous, for example, a sentence such as the following:

Jane can type as well as Sarah.

a. Jane is as good a typist as Sarah.

b. In addition to Sarah, Jane can also type.

"as well as" for the first meaning expresses the similarity in their degrees of proficiency as typists and "as well as" for the second meaning is functioning as a prepositional logical connector, i.e., no element of degree is being expressed.

2. Causatives and passives "have"

The causative "have" is potentially ambiguous with the passive aux "have". The interpretation depends upon the presence of absence of intention on the part of the object, for example:

I had my beard trimmed.

a. I had my beard trimmed by the barber.

b. I had my beard trimmed when I got too close to the lawn mower.

3. Conjoined constituents

Two or more words (Noun or Verb), phrases (Noun and Verb), clauses, or sentences, which are conjoined together by conjunctions in sentences, are potentially ambiguous, for example:

Liz and Dick made many movies.

a. They made the movies together.

b. Each star made movies independent of the other.

4. Indefinite articles

The indefinite article especially in object position may be ambiguous as to whether it modifies a noun that is specific or nonspecific for the speaker. A later reference in the discourse to such an indefinite noun can help disambiguate, for example:

1. I needed a book, but I did not have:

a. one. (indefinite noun substitutes)

b. it. (definite personal pronouns)

2. I was looking for some books, but I did not find:

a. any. (indefinite noun substitutes)

b. them. (definite personal pronouns)

As the above examples how, only nonspecific, indefinite some undergoes some any suppletion in negative sentences.

5. -ing and -en forms of adjectives and verbs

The surface similarities in these forms sometimes create potentially ambiguous sentences:

1. John is entertaining.

a. He is an entertaining person. (adjective)

b. He is entertaining quests. (verb)

2. We were relieved.

a. We felt a sense of relief. (adjective)

b. Other workers came to take our places. (verb)

In both examples, the meanings of the adjective and the verb are somewhat different despite the identity in form; thus when these sentences occur in context, it is highly unlikely that they will be perceived as ambiguous.

6. Modal auxiliaries and periphrastic modals

In English modal auxiliaries (can, could, may, might, must, ought to, shall, should, will, would, dare, need and used to) are distinguished from other auxiliary verbs (be, have and do) as well as from ordinary verbs by their lack of tense and their resultant lack of subject-verb agreement; that is, modals do not inflect. Multiword forms ending in infinitive to (be able to, have/has to, etc), which function semantically like true modals (in certain of their meanings), are called phrasal modals (they are also called periphrastic modals, pseudo modals, or quasi-modals). Modal auxiliaries and periphrastic modals are potentially ambiguous in sentences, for example:

The principal said Joe may go.

a. The principal could be saying that Joe had permission to go.

b. The principal could be saying that it was possible that Joe would go.

7. Prepositions

Prepositions and prepositional phrases in sentences are potentially ambiguous, for example:

Carla drew the picture in the den.

a. Carla drew the picture while she was in the den.

b. Carla drew the picture, which was in the den.

8. Sentence-final adverbial participle clauses

While the use of a sentence-final participial clause seldom leads to ungrammatical sentences in the way that the use of the "dangling modifier" does, a potential for ambiguity exists in those cases where there is more than one noun in the main clause that could be the antecedent of the underlying subject in the participial clause:

1. Meg met Tom in the corridor laughing heartily about what had happened in the class.

a. Meg, who was laughing heartily about what had happened in the class, met Tom in the corridor.

b. Meg met Tom, who was laughing heartily about what had happened in the class, in the corridor.

In the absence of additional context, either Meg or Tom could be the underlying subject of the participial clause in this sentence. Such ambiguity, however, rarely occurs.

9. Complements of verbs of interception versus verbs of mental imagery

The verbs of interception take only the -ing participle form because the subject of the complement is discovered while in the act and thus the participle is always unbounded in time, i.e., never expresses completed action:

We { found / caught / discovered / came upon } { Billy / (him) } { stealing / steal } a cookie from the jar.

Note that these verbs of interception can never take a complement with a possessive subject (e.g., We found Billy's/his stealing a cookie from the jar …), which further proves that these -ing complements participles, not gerunds.

The verbs of mental imagery also take the -ing participle to the exclusion of the base form because the speaker/writer has formed an image of an action in progress and is reporting the image:

I can easily { remember / imagine / recall / picture } Billy / (him) { stealing / steal } a cookie from the jar.

We can paraphrase any of these sentences using "in the act of," e.g.:

I can easily picture Billy in the act of stealing a cookie from the jar.

However, some of these mental imagery verbs are ambiguous in that they can also be used to report facts:

I { remember / recall } (the fact) that Billy stole a cookie from the jar.

The paraphrase for such a factual report would not be the above mental image construction with an object + participle but possessive + gerund complement:

I { remember / recall } Billy's stealing a cookie from the jar.
(his)

In other words, "remember" and "recall" have two distinct functions taking correspondingly different types of complementation.

The possessive form in the possessive + gerund construction is often simplified to an object form. With some verbs this simplification creates ambiguity by making the mental imagery complement and the factual report complement homophonous.

10. Yes-no vs. alternative questions

Another point we should make is that sometimes questions, which on the surface appear to be alternative questions, are really not alternative questions at all, but simple yes-no questions with conjoined objects. The following question is ambiguous with regard to this distinction:

Would you like coffee or tea?

Fortunately, this sentence is ambiguous only in writing. In speech the distinction would be clear, because the intonation patterns for the two possible questions are completely different.

Would you like coffee or tea? Yes, { I'm thirsty. / coffee, please. }

Would you like coffee or tea? Coffee, thank you.

Here, the first question is an offer in the form of a yes-no question with a conjoined object (coffee or tea) and it takes rising intonation. A "yes" or "no" is required here as part of the answer. The second question is a genuine alternative question with characteristic rising plus rising-falling intonation. A "yes" or "no" answer to this question would be inappropriate.

2.1.2. The Phrase Structure Rules

Immediate constituent is a term used in grammatical analysis to refer to the major divisions that can be made within a syntactic construction, at any level. It is a technique of describing syntactic structure into immediate constituents. The words are organized into units, which will be organized into larger units later. The units are called constituents and the hierarchical of larger units in sentence is called constituent structures (Crystal, 1997: p. 68). Therefore, it is very important to break sentences down into their various constituents and establish the form classes in doing the analysis of the constituent structures of sentences. Breaking sentences into constituents is well known as parsing.

Marianne Celce-Murcia and Diane Larsen-Freeman (1999) put forth that it is important that we are able to do Phrase Structure Rules analysis when we wish to develop through understanding of the basis of structural unit of English. Therefore, they propose a list of Phrase Structure Rules in 1999 as follows:

1. $S \rightarrow \begin{cases} (sm)^n \quad S' \\ SUBJ \quad PRED \end{cases}$
2. S' → SUBJ PRED
3. SUBJ → NP

4. NP → { (det)^3 (AP) N (-pl) (PrepP) ; pro ; NP' { NP ; AP ; PrepP } }

5. AP → (intens)^n ADJ^n (PrepP)

6. PrepP → Prep NP

7. PRED → AUX VP (Advl)^n

8. Advl → { Advl CL ; Advl P ; PrepP }

9. Advl CL → adv sub S

10. Advl P → (intens)^n ADV

11. AUX → { { T ; M } (pm) (perf) (prog) ; -imper }

12. T → { -past ; -pres }

13. perf → have . . . -en

14. prog → be . . . –ing

15. VP → { cop { NP ; AP ; PrepP } ; V (NP)^2 (PrepP) }

16. NP → { (det)^3 (AP) N (-pl) (PrepP) ; pro }

S: Sentence
sm: sentence modifier
n: number
S': Sentence core
SUBJ: Subject
PRED: Predicate
NP: Noun Phrase
N: Noun
-pl: plural inflection
pro: pronoun
VP: Verb Phrase
V: Verb
det: determiner
intens: intensifiers
AP: Adjective Phrase
Adj: Adjective
Advl: Adverbial
Advl CL: Adverbial Clause
Advl P: Adverbial Phrase
adv sub: adverbial subordinator
Adv: Adverb
PrepP: Preposition Phrase
Prep: Preposition
Aux: Auxiliary
T: Tense
M: Modal
cop: copular verb
-imper: imperative mood
-past: past tense
-pres: present tense
pm: phrasal modal
perf: perfect
prog: progressive

2.2. Review of Related Studies

There are some studies that have been done by other people concerning ambiguity. As the matter of fact, their studies are useful for background references of this research. In this related studies, the writer would like to review two others studies, which were done by Silvia Hartono and Diana Kusumawati, that have same topic as that of the writer.

2.2.1. The Structural Ambiguity in News Headlines in The Jakarta Post Newspaper by Silvia Hartono

The Structural Ambiguity in News Headlines in The Jakarta Post Newspaper by Silvia Hartono in 1999 analyzed the structural ambiguities in news headlines in the Jakarta Post newspapers by using Andrew Radford's theories, which classify the ambiguities into phrases and sentences. She collected the data for the structural ambiguities study in 1 week and found 25 ambiguities. She found that the ambiguities are mostly caused by the arrangement of the

prepositional phrases in sentences (20 ambiguities=80%), which are used as an adverb of place in the sentence, besides, the ambiguities could also be caused by the arrangement of the noun phrases in sentences (5 ambiguities=20%), such as "Tommy had offered a proposal to renovate the Tanah Abang market in Central Jakarta.". The ambiguous part is "in Central Jakarta" because the prepositional phrase can modify the verb phrase (it means that Tomy had offered a proposal to renovate the Tanah Abang market while he was in Central Jakarta) or the noun phrase (it means that Tomy had offered to renovate the Tanah Abang market which is in Central Java).

The writer's study is similar to Silvia Hartono's study. Both the writer's and Silvia Hartono's study are about structural ambiguities and use The Jakarta Post newspapers as the source of data. On the other hand, Silvia Hartono's study did not analyze the structural ambiguities in Your Letters of The Jakarta Post newspaper, but it only analyzed the news headlines in The Jakarta Post newspaper. Silvia Hartono's study has led the writer to use Phrase Structure Rules as his theory to do the analysis.

2.2.2. The Study of Ambiguity in the Articles of Hello Magazine by Diana Kusumawati

In addition to Silvia Hartono's study, there has been another study on structural and lexical ambiguity. The Study of Ambiguity in the Articles of Hello Magazine by Diana Kusumawati in 2001 analyzed the structural ambiguities in Hello magazines by using Andrew Radford and Diane D. Bornstein's theories, and the lexical ambiguities in Hello magazines by using Jacob and Rosenbaums' theories. She found out that the structural ambiguities appear more frequently than the lexical ambiguities. She found 16 structural ambiguities and 4 lexical ambiguities from 20 ambiguities, so the frequency of structural ambiguities is 80% and the frequency of lexical ambiguities is 20%.

Diana Kusumawati's study also analyzed the structural ambiguities, besides the lexical ambiguities. Therefore, there is a similarity between her study and the writer's study, which is the analysis of structural ambiguities. However, the writer does not analyze lexical ambiguities. Furthermore, Diana Kusumawati's study inspired the writer to carry out a study on structural ambiguities.