

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter reports the findings and discussion of ambiguity that are encountered in academic writings that written by English Department students. This chapter consists of two parts of report: data descriptions and findings and discussion.

4.1 Data Description

There are 31 academic writings which are collected from 22 English Department students major in English Education and Language Study Program and English Literature Study Program batch 2010. Data of this study is words, phrases, clauses, sentences in academic writings of English Department students major in English Education and Language Study Program and English Literature Study Program batch 2010 that are containing of ambiguity. The academic writings are taken from *Academic Writing I* subject in forms of essays and journal articles. There are 27 essays and 4 research proposals that are analyzed by the writer.

4.2 Findings and Discussion

After analyzing 31 academic writings, the total of ambiguities that the writer encountered is 190. The writer classified the ambiguities into their types which are lexical ambiguity and structural ambiguity. The total amount of lexical ambiguity is 150. For structural ambiguity, the total amount of this type is 40. The following table is showing the number of each type of ambiguity that encountered in students' academic writings.

No.	Types of ambiguity	Number of ambiguity found
1.	Lexical ambiguity	150
2.	Structural ambiguity	40
TOTAL		190

Table 4.1 Number of each type of ambiguity that found in students' academic writings

4.2.1 Lexical Ambiguity

According to Fromkin and Rodman (1997), lexical ambiguity lexical ambiguity is an ambiguous individual word because it has two meanings, for example the word *crane* which has two meanings; either to kind of bird or to a large construction device. The writer found 150 of lexical ambiguity. Below here, the writer will give 10 following examples of lexical ambiguity that the

writer found in academic writing that written by English Department students batch 2010.

1. The example below is found from student's academic writing number 7.

*In this age, women are seen as pure and **clean**.*

This sentence is ambiguous because there is more than one meaning that can be interpreted from this sentence. The topic of the writing that the writer takes the sentence from is discussing women during Victorian age. The word that makes the sentence above is ambiguous is *clean* which can be implied to more than one meaning. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, *clean* as an adjective has 11 meanings. One of them is *clean* which means as not dirty or having a clean appearance and the other one is *clean* which means free of harmful or unpleasant things.

This sentence becomes ambiguous because there is no linguistic context that supports to imply *clean* in this context. So, it can be interpreted that women during Victorian age are clean as in their appearance, for example, women during Victorian age are very neat, clean and do not look dirty and filthy. However, in the second meaning of *clean*, the interpretation of the sentence will be women during Victorian age never do anything harmful or unpleasant things or in another word, women during Victorian age never do anything bad and disobey the law. Both of meaning can be implied

to this context because they both make sense to the readers' mind and there is no supported linguistic context that can refer to the real meaning of this sentence.

2. The example below is found in student's academic writing number 31:

*Adolescents are always doing everything for entering one of the social lives and also doing a lot of **matters** to be considered in their social life.*

The topic of the writing that the writer takes the sentence from is discussing adolescents and the self-actualization of adolescents. The sentence above is another example of lexical ambiguity that the writer found in academic writing that is written by English Department students. The sentence is ambiguous because of a word *matters* that can be interpreted more than one meaning. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, *matter* as a noun has 6 meanings and there are two meanings that can be possible to infer the word *matter* in the sentence above.

The first one is *matter* as an activity and the second one is *matter* as a problem. In the context of this sentence, both meanings of *matters* are possible to get interpreted by the readers. The sentence can be interpreted that adolescents are doing everything to get accepted in the social life including doing a lot of activities so they can be considered in the social. Otherwise, the sentence can be interpreted that adolescents are doing everything to be a part

of the social life including doing a lot of problems so they can get enough attention from the society.

Since young adults are on the stage where they want to get more recognition from other people, both meanings of *matters* in this sentence can be implied because either the young adults want to get the recognition in a good way as they participate in a lot of activities or the young adults try to get recognition from the society as they cause a lot of troubles so they will be a center of attention. There are many ways for teenagers to be a part of the society and some of teenagers do not mind if they are popular with bad reputation while some of teenagers want to consider as a role model for other fellow teenagers so they try to build a good image of themselves. Because there is no linguistic context that infers to which meaning that *matter* in this sentence belongs to, it leads the sentence above becomes ambiguous.

3. The example below is found in student's academic writing number 1:

*In daily relations, rich man would likely to be more confident in walking rather than the poor one and the rich sometimes **look down** on the poor for their limitation on money.*

The sentence above is another example of lexical ambiguity that the writer encountered. The phrase *look down* in this sentence has more than one meaning in the context of the sentence. First, *look down* can be defined to its literal meaning which is using his/her eyes to see something below your eyes.

Second, *look down* can be defined as to think better than everyone else or underestimate other people. In this sentence, it is possible to decipher that rich people sometimes underestimate poor people because they have less money than rich people. Rich people think that they are better than poor people since they have more money compared to the poor. Third, *look down* in this sentence can be defined as sad. So, it is possible to interpret the meaning of the sentence as rich people sometimes become sad when they see poor people who do not have much money as the rich one.

There are three possible meanings that the writer gets from the sentence above because all those possible meanings fit with the context of the sentence. The topic of the writing that the writer takes the sentence from is discussing the social class in the society. The student who wrote this academic writing described the comparison and the differences between high class and low class in the society. The word *look down* in this sentence gives three meanings which can be related to the context of the sentence as well as to the writing itself. It happens because this sentence is lack of supported linguistic context that can help readers to find out the real meaning of the sentence. Within those three possible meanings of this sentence, it leads to many interpretations that are tremendously different with one another.

4. The example below is found in student's academic writing number 1:

*This happens because they do not have enough **materials** to put them in the front line.*

The sentence above is also another example of lexical ambiguity that the writer encountered in students' academic writing. This sentence is ambiguous because the word *materials* here can be interpreted more than one meaning. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, *materials* as a noun has 5 meanings while *materials* as an adjective has 3 meanings. There are two possible meanings that the writer can get from *material* in this sentence. The first meaning of *materials* is knowledge. So, if the writer uses the meaning of *materials* in here as knowledge, the meaning of the sentence is they do not have enough knowledge to be put in the front line. The second meaning of *materials* is something that connected to money or wealth. So, if the writer uses the meaning of *materials* as wealth or money, the meaning of the whole sentence is they do not have enough wealth to be put in the front line.

The topic of the writing that the writer takes this sentence from is discussing about social class and the differences between rich and poor people. Both meaning of *materials* can imply to the context of this writing and sentence. If the meaning of *materials* is knowledge, this sentence can be

interpreted that poor people who come from a low class and are not well-educated they do not have enough knowledge to be put in the front line. If the meaning of *materials* is wealth, this sentence can be interpreted that poor people who do not have much money and are not categorized as wealthy people, they cannot be put in the front line. Both interpretations are making sense because they suit with the context of this sentence.

5. The example below is found in student's academic writing number 4:

*Nowadays, there are a lot of **courses** in order to develop their children hobbies.*

The sentence above is lexically ambiguous due to a word *courses*. The topic of the writing that the writer takes the sentence from is discussing about a hobby that has a chance to become a job vacant. The meaning of *courses* in this sentence is ambiguous since it leads to double meaning of the word itself and also the meaning of the whole sentence. *Courses* in this sentence can be defined as school subjects or it can be defined as an after-school class. Both meaning of *courses* can imply the meaning of the sentence in this context.

If the meaning of *courses* in this sentence is subject, the meaning of the whole sentence can be interpreted that there are a lot of subjects at school that supports children's hobbies, for example, art class at school which can helps students to develop their hobby or physical education subject which can also

help students to develop their hobby and it also can make students to sharpen their ability while learning the subject. If the meaning of *courses* in this sentence is after-school class, the meaning of the whole sentence can be interpreted that there are many after-school classes that can make children's develop their hobbies, for example, singing academy which is an after-school class that can help students to develop their talent. The difference between after-school classes with subjects that students learn at school is usually the courses in after-school class is more specific and parents should pay another tuition which is quite expensive. Both meanings of this sentence are possible since they fit with the context of this sentence and this writing.

6. The example below is found in student's academic writing number 5:

*As the crucial force, motivation is needed as the **big** reason for doing something.*

Above is another example of lexical ambiguity that the writer found in students' academic writing. This sentence is ambiguous because there is more than one meaning that can be deciphered from this sentence. As an adjective, there are 8 meanings of *big*. One of them is large amount of something and another one is important. Both meaning of *big* can be used to interpret the meaning of the sentence. If the word *big* means large amount of something, the sentence can be meant as that a large amount of reason that is needed for doing

something is motivation. If the word *big* means important, the sentence can be meant that motivation is needed as an important reason for doing something. Both meanings of this sentence can be related to the context of the writing and also to the sentence itself.

7. The example below is found in student's academic writing number 27:

*By online, sometimes college students could get **lost** while surfing in internet.*

The sentence above is another example of lexical ambiguity that encounter in student's academic writing that is written by English Department student. The topic of the writing that the student discussed is library at university. She suggested that all universities should concern to the condition of university's library which can support students' academic needs. The student that writes this writing states some arguments of why concrete books are more valuable than other kinds of books and then he/she states the weakness of the use of internet when students are trying to get sources online.

The sentence above that the writer takes out from the academic writing is ambiguous because it leads to double meanings of the sentence. The word that cause an ambiguity happens in this sentence is *lost*. There are two meanings that can be interpreted from this sentence. The first meaning is while going online, college students sometimes get distracted with what they

find on the internet so they lose their focus to find material on the internet. As the modern technology keeps developing, the use of internet is also developed including any kinds of things can be found on the internet. For young adults, internet is one of sources of entertainment where they can relieve their stress over their daily life activities. Most of them will spend hours in front of their computer to get online on social-networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and etc. If the meaning of *lost* in this sentence is getting distracted, it can be implied that college students are get distracted with social-networking sites instead of finding a material for their college assignment. They forget their first aim of getting online and keep chatting or doing other online activities rather than searching for their school needs. This is the meaning of *sometimes college students get lose while surfing on the internet.*

The second meaning is while going online, college students sometimes unable to operate things on the internet which makes them unable to do anything and unsuccessfully find any material on the internet. Although most of young adults are already familiar with modern technology including internet, however, there are some young adults who still cannot operate internet well. They perhaps do not know how to connect to the internet or they do not know certain websites that allow them to find school materials. This limited technology knowledge that they have becomes a barrier for them to find things online. If the meaning of *lost* in this sentence is unable to do

something, it can be inferred that college students who cannot operate the internet will be unable to do anything while surfing on the internet. This is another meaning of *college students sometimes get lost while surfing on the internet*.

Both meanings of the sentence do make a sense because it can be implied to the context of the sentence as well as to the context of the writing itself since the sentence itself is lack of linguistic context that can help to infer the real meaning of the sentence.

8. The example below is found in student's academic writing number 20:

*Actually we know that kids show is important for their **growth**.*

The sentence above is another example of lexical ambiguity that the writer encountered in one of students' academic writings. The topic of the writing that the writer takes the sentence above is discussing the effects of TV show for kids. The sentence above is ambiguous because it can be interpreted into two meanings. The word *growth* in this sentence is ambiguous because there is no co-text that can explain the meaning of *growth* in this sentence refers to. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, *growth* means the process of growing.

Because there is no co-text that tails the word *growth* in this sentence, there can be two possible meanings of this sentence. The first one is TV

shows is important for kids' development mentally. The second one is TV shows is important for kids' development physically. Both meanings of this sentence are possible because it suits with the context of this sentence as well as to the writing itself.

9. The example below is found in student's academic writing number 12:

*College students are not **bound** students anymore.*

Above is another example of a sentence that is lexically ambiguous. The writer encounters this ambiguous sentence from one of students' academic writing. The topic of the writing that the writer takes the sentence from is discussing the functions of college students besides as a student. This sentence is ambiguous because of a word *bound*. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, *bound* as an adjective can be meant as tied while *bound* as a noun can be meant as high jumps. In this sentence, the word *bound* can be inferred to both noun and adjective meaning of the word. If the meaning of *bound* is tied, the sentence meaning will be college students are not students that tied anymore. The writer can make a denotative meaning that college students are not forced to do something anymore since they are freer compared to school students.

Meanwhile, if the meaning of *bound* is high jump which denotes to playing around, the meaning of this sentence will be college students are not a

student that is supposed to play around. The two possible meanings of this sentence are a polar opposite to each other. One is implying that college students has a lot of freedom while another one is implying that college students are not supposed to play around. In the reality, the age of college students usually starts from 18 years old until 22 years old or older. They are considered as people who already matured and legal to do any kinds of activities according to the valid law in Indonesia. As they are legal to do everything, it means they are allowed to have more freedom compared to when they were still in Senior High School.

Therefore, this case can be related to the first meaning of *bound* in this sentence. Perhaps, the writer of this academic writing wanted to state that college students are not a high school student anymore that are tied with parents' rules and teachers' rule. College students are able to control everything they desire to do either it is a positive thing or negative thing. Meanwhile, as college students are not categorized as a kid anymore, they have more responsibility that they need to carry. They have to start to think of their future and be matured. If the writer of this academic writing wanted to mean *bound* in this sentence as jumping around or playing around, it means he/she wanted to remind college students stop playing around and start to think of their future.

Although the two possible meanings of this sentence are contrasting to each other but both of them make sense to be the meaning of this sentence because they both suit with the context of the sentence as well as to the writing itself.

10. The example below is found in student's academic writing number 28:

*“Home schooling kak Seto” that already became famous **with three branches of his.***

Based on Fromkin and Rodman theory (1997), the sentence above is lexically ambiguous because of a word *his* in *with this three branches of his* which leads to double meanings of this sentence as a whole sentence. The first meaning that can be interpreted from this sentence is “Home schooling Kak Seto” is one of Kak Seto’s famous school branches. And the second meaning that can be interpreted from this sentence is “Home schooling Kak Seto” already had three branches and all of them are famous.

4.2.2 Structural Ambiguity

According to Fromkin and Rodman (1997), structural ambiguity is an ambiguous expression because it has more than one possible constituent structure. The double meaning happens not because of ambiguous words but

rather to the fact that the words in the sentence can appear in two different phrase-structure trees, both of which are permitted by the phrase-structure rules. These are 6 following examples of structural ambiguity that the writer found in 2010 students' academic writing of English Department.

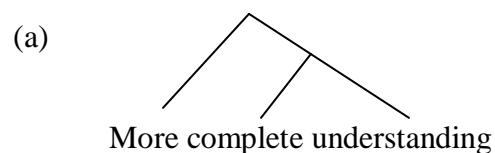
1. The example below is found from student's academic writing number 18:

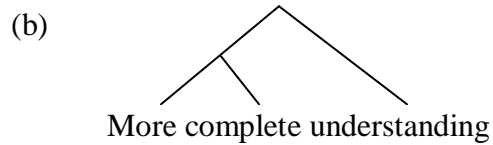
*With this understanding of the character, a reader can become more aware of other aspects of literature, such as symbolism, giving the reader **more complete understanding** of the work.*

The sentence above is an example of structural ambiguity. As Fromkin and Rodman (1997) stated that structural ambiguity happens when an ambiguous expression has more than one constituent structure. In the sentence above, the phrase *more complete understanding* has more than one constituent structure which makes the phrase to have more than one meaning. The phrase can be grouped in two ways and these are the following groups:

- (a) more (complete understanding)
- (b) (more complete) understanding

To make it clearer, these are the phrase-structure trees of this phrase:





From these two groups, it is clear that *more complete understanding* leads to double meanings of the sentence. First, it can be interpreted that with understanding a character, the reader can get more awareness in the aspects of literature which gives them understanding that is more complete than before. Second, it can be interpreted that with understanding a character, the reader can get more awareness in the aspects of literature which gives them more complete understanding.

2. The example below is found from student's academic writing number 19:

*Therefore, by experiencing something new, someone will face new challenges or new problems, but actually they will be able to make someone becomes **more mature people**.*

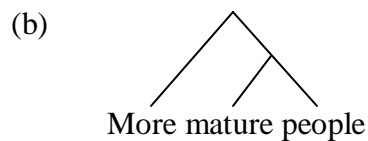
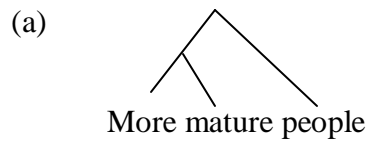
Above is the example of a sentence that is structurally ambiguous. As Fromkin and Rodman (1997) stated that structural ambiguity happens when an ambiguous expression has more than one constituent structure. The phrase *more mature people* in this sentence is ambiguous because it has more than one

constituent structure. The phrase can be grouped in two groups and these are the following groups which show the constituent structures of this phrase:

(a) (more mature) people

(b) more (mature people)

To make it clearer, these are the phrase-structure trees of this phrase:



From those following groups, it can be seen that *more mature people* is ambiguous since it has two constituent structures that lead to an ambiguity. The first meaning if the writer chooses the first constituent structure to explain the sentence meaning is if people face many challenges and new experiences, it will make them to become more mature than before. Second, if the writer chooses the second constituent structure to explain the sentence meaning, it will be if people face many challenges and new experiences, it will make the number of mature people is increasing.

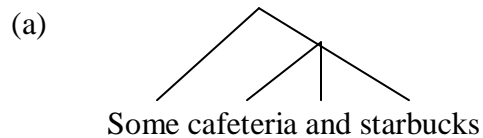
3. The example below is found from student's academic writing number 27:

*They built a big one modern-designed library equipped by air conditioner, sofas, full internet connection and the updated books even there are **some cafeteria and starbucks** near the library.*

Based on Fromkin and Rodman theory (1997), structural ambiguity is an expression that has more than one constituent structure. The sentence above is another example of structural ambiguity because of a phrase *some cafeteria and starbucks*. The topic of the writing that the writer takes the sentence from is discussing university's library and the student is talking the condition of library in University of Indonesia. The phrase *some cafeteria and starbucks* is ambiguous because it has two constituent structures which lead to double meanings to this sentence. These are the following groups of the phrase which show the constituent structure of the phrase:

- (a) some (cafeteria and starbucks)
- (b) (some cafeteria) and starbucks

To make it clearer, these are the phrase-structure trees of this phrase:



Through the following constituent groups, it is clear that this phrase cause double meanings of the sentence. The first meaning is university's library in University of Indonesia has some cafeteria and some starbucks near to library. The second meaning is university's library in University of Indonesia has some cafeteria and one starabucks near to library. Both meanings are possible to be interpreted this sentence because both meanings make sense to the readers' mind.

4. The example below is found from student's academic writing number 99:

*A teacher-centered condition in which students learn the target language through teachers' instructions and **less participate the class** is not effective.*

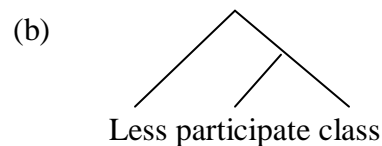
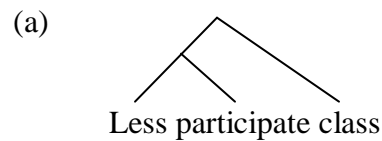
Based on Fromkin and Rodman theory (1997), structural ambiguity is an expression that has more than one constituent structure. The sentence above is another example of structural ambiguity. The phrase *less participate*

class has more than one constituent structure which leads this sentence to become ambiguous. There are two ways in grouping this phrase and these are the following groups:

(a) (less participate) class

(b) less (participate class)

To make it clearer, these are the phrase-structure trees of this phrase:



With the groups above, it is clear that this phrase is ambiguous. The first meaning of the first group means there is less participate in the class while the second meaning of the second group means there is less number of participate class. The topic of the writing above is discussing to teach foreign language to foreign learners. And both meanings of from the groups make sense if the writer wants to decipher the meaning of the sentence above. First, it can be meant that teacher-centered condition is a situation where the teacher gives the instructor which makes the students in the class is less participate which is not effective. Second, teacher-centered condition is a situation where

the teacher gives the instructor and this cause the number of class that include makes students to be participate is low and it is not effective for language learning.

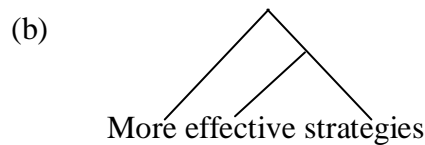
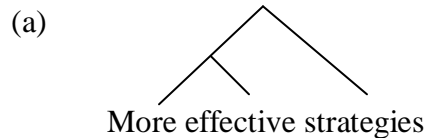
5. The example below is found from student's academic writing number 99:

*In addition, students need **more effective strategies** to learn the target language.*

Based on Fromkin and Rodman theory (1997), structural ambiguity is an expression that has more than one constituent structure. Above is another example of a structurally ambiguous sentence that the writer encounters in one of students' academic writings. The topic of the writing that the writer takes the sentence from is discussing English learning to English foreign learners. The phrase *more effective strategies* is ambiguous because it leads to double meaning of the sentence since this phrase has more than one constituent structure. To make it clear, these are the following groups of the constituent structure for the phrase above:

- (a) (more effective) strategies
- (b) more (effective strategies)

To make it clearer, these are the phrase-structure trees of this phrase:



Looking through the two groups above, it is clear that the phrase *more effective strategies* has more than one constituent structure. The first constituent structure means strategies that are more effective than other strategies while the second constituent structure refers to the number of effective strategies. If the writer uses the first constituent structure, the meaning of the sentence becomes students need strategies that are more effective than any other strategies to learn the target language. If the writer uses the second constituent structure, the meaning of the sentence becomes students need more amount of effective strategies to learn the target language.

6. The example below is found from student's academic writing number 8:

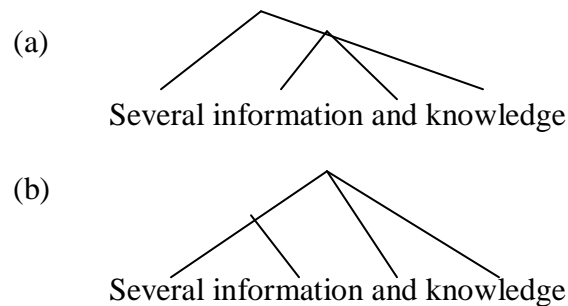
Consequently, they just know several information and knowledge.

Based on Fromkin and Rodman theory (1997), structural ambiguity is an expression that has more than one constituent structure. The sentence above is another example of structural ambiguity because of the phrase

several information and knowledge. The phrase has more than one constituent structure which leads to ambiguity. The topic of the writing that the writer takes the sentence from is discussing the benefits of doing homework. These are the following groups of the phrase constituent:

- (a) several (information and knowledge)
- (b) (several information) and knowledge

To make it clearer, these are the phrase-structure trees of this phrase:



From the two groups above, it is clear that the phrase *several information and knowledge* is ambiguous because it can be meant in two meanings from those constituent groups. The first meaning of the first group is several information and several knowledge and the second meaning of the second group is several information and a knowledge. If the writer uses the first constituent structure to interpret the sentence, the interpretation of the sentence will be they just know several information and several knowledge. If the writer uses the second constituent structure to interpret the sentence, the

interpretation of the sentence will be they just know several information and a knowledge. Both meaning can be used since both make sense to be interpreted that way.

4.2.3 Reason Lexical Ambiguity as Most Found Type of Ambiguity

After analyzing 31 academic writings of English Department students, the writer found more lexical ambiguity than structural ambiguity. The total number of lexical ambiguity reaches to 150 while structural ambiguity is only 40. The writer found the reason lexical ambiguity is encountered more than structural because usually the students do not put linguistic context that can support the meaning of the sentence. They pay less attention to linguistic context which makes the word is ambiguous and available in all the contexts. The lack of linguistic context gives an impact for a sentence to have more than one meaning and makes the meaning of the sentence is unclear.