

Ninety – year – old Morris goes to streets with a gorgeous, much younger woman on his arm. “You are really doing well, aren’t you?” he tells the elderly gent. Morris replies, “Just doing what you said Doctor: “Get a hot mama and be cheerful”. “No”, says the doctor. “I said, you’ve got a heart murmur – be careful”. (Reader’s Digest, April 2007:45)

Actually, what the Doctor means by his sentence: *you’ve got a heart murmur – be careful*” is that he would give information that the patient suffer from the heart murmur and he would also give advice to be careful from that kind of disease. It is such kind of homophony since homophone is a word pronounced like another word but with a different meaning or spelling, e.g. *some* is as the same with *sum* and the word *new* is as the same with *knew* (Oxford Advanced learner Dictionary, 1995:570). It is happen when he said that he is doing what the Doctor said: *“Get a hot mama and be cheerful”*. People also may have different experience in reading humorous stories. Some people probably consider something funny, but others may not. In this case, people should have background information in order to understand humour better, for example:

The surgeon was discussing a forth coming operation with a wealthy patient. “Would you prefer a local anaesthetic?” “I can afford the best,” replied the wealthy patient. “Get something imported”. (Soedjatmiko, 1988:106)

To understand the humour above, the readers should know the meaning of anaesthetic. According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of current English (1995:37), anaesthetic means substance that makes a person or an animal unable to feel pain, heat, cold, etc in the whole body or part of the body. This humour becomes funny when the patient being so wealthy that he/she mistaken perceive local anaesthetic (affecting a part, not the whole body) as anaesthetic that is not imported.

Several related researches has been conducted related on this topic, such as *Componential analysis on slang terms used in 'cybersex' by internet relay chat (IRC) netters* (Widjojo, 2001), *Humor pada Lawak Srimulat* (Endahwarni, 1990), *Linguistic and Cultural Analysis of American Written Verbal Humour and Its Pedagogical Implication* (Soedjatmiko, 1988), *The Study of American Two-Liner Jokes through Semantic and Discourse Analysis*

(Purwahjuni, 2001) and. But here the writer will summarize one previous study related to the topic of componential analysis. The study accomplished by Megawati Widjojo (2001) thesis entitled *Componential analysis on slang terms used in 'cybersex' by internet relay chat (IRC) netters*. In order to analyze the form of the slang terms, the writer uses the theory of slang formation by Hensaw and Montaque. She also uses the theory of componential analysis by three linguistics; David Crystal, Abdul Wahab and John Lyons to analyze the 'cybersex' slang terms into its component. The writer uses descriptive and qualitative research. The data are taken from twelve 'cybersex' IRC netters, from several 'cybersex' channels. In analyzing the data, she uses two tables; table of the categorization of slang terms into four major parts of speech and the categorization of slang terms into slang formation. She finds that theory of slang formation by Hensaw and Montaque is not complete enough to be used to analyze 'cybersex' slang terms. In the analysis of 'cybersex' slang terms into their components, the writer uses her own interpretation according to the similarities in feature, share predication, analogy, and prior knowledge. Instead of that, the writer finds that sense relation of lexemes can also be traced into our association and its function, reference, and historical background.

Based on the study above, the writer intends to make a further study on semantic aspects especially componential analysis to short text humours. The differences lay in area of study and source of the data. Widjojo used the theory of slang formation by Hensaw and Montaque and also used the theory of componential analysis by three linguistics; David Crystal, Abdul Wahab and John Lyons to analyze the 'cybersex' slang terms into its component., whereas the writer will use semantic aspect by Gregory which covers lexical and grammatical ambiguity and also truth conditional semantics (including causal fallacy) and will use the theory of componential analysis to analyze short-text humours into its component. In this study, the writer has a great interest to analyze short-text humour since it begins with an illustration or a narration followed by a punch line or funny ending. By

following the illustration, the readers can understand the humour easily. It does not happen to other jokes such like one-line and two-line jokes, most of which do not carry enough information, humour columns and literary humour are too complicated for beginner. While Widjojo took the source of data from the Internet Relay Chat (IRC) ‘cybersex’ chat’s result by printed it out.

The writer uses Reader’s Digest Asia magazine issued in October, November and December 2009 editions as the source of data, since this magazine provides more on humour section than other magazine. It offers special column for laughing as much as possible. Also, it provides the reader with various theme of humour in different situations. As one of the successful regional magazines, Reader’s Digest Asia is committed to inform, entertain and inspire people of all ages and cultures. In order to entertain the readers all over the world, Reader’s Digest Asia provide them with a forum to express their creativity in making short text humours. The humours in this magazine are written and contributed by common people from various countries and societies. Therefore it means that this magazine is qualified enough to be analyzed as the subject of the study.

1.2. Identification of the Problem

1. What are the humor components in short text humor on Reader’s Digest Asia magazine?

2. What kinds of semantic mechanisms of humor texts taken from Reader's Digest Asia of October, November and December 2009 editions sound funny?
3. Which one of these semantic mechanisms: semantic ambiguity (lexical ambiguity and grammatical ambiguity) and truth conditional semantics (including causal fallacy) occurs most?
4. How do the semantic mechanisms make the jokes funny or meaningful in contexts on Reader's Digest Asia magazine?

1.3. Research Question

Based on the background, the research questions appear as follow:

How do the semantic mechanisms make the jokes funny or meaningful in contexts on Reader's Digest Asia magazine?

1.4. Limitation of the Study

The research focuses only on the scope of semantic mechanisms of humor through componential analysis and limits her research only to the written short-text humors in Reader's Digest Asia issued in October, November and December 2009 editions. Because written short-text humors are read by many readers and do not need gestures or other paralinguistic feature such as pronunciation, intonation etc like spoken verbal humor does.

The short-text humors are analyzed within the scope of semantic mechanisms of humors, which covers: Semantics ambiguity, which consists of: Lexical ambiguity and Structural or grammatical ambiguity and also covers Truth – conditional semantics which includes causal fallacy.

1.5. Purpose of the Study

In this research, the writer wants to find out how either the semantic mechanisms or the componential analysis make the jokes funny or meaningful in contexts on Reader's Digest Asia magazine. In other words, the writer attempts to find out how the writer of the humor manipulates the semantic ambiguity and truth conditional semantics so that it determines the understanding of humor and creates the funniness. Also, the writer want to reveal what are the humor components build in short text humor that finally can create the funniness in understanding the humor.

1.6. Significance of the Study

By doing this study, the writer hopes that the findings might give a better understanding about how the theory of semantics (semantic ambiguity including lexical ambiguity and grammatical ambiguity and truth conditional semantics including causal fallacy) especially focused on componential analysis is applied in interpreting short-text humor. In addition, hopefully this study can give contribution for people outside linguistics field, who need to develop their communicative competence by way of joking. Furthermore, the writer also hopes this study will be useful for English Department students of State University of Jakarta who will take linguistics field as their final subject.