

by breaking down into smaller semantic components. Componential analysis sometimes known as semantic decomposition, this kind of approach has long been used to analyze meaning of certain types of nouns in terms of semantic features (1987: 274). Componential analysis also known as ‘lexical decomposition’ is any attempt to formalize and standardize procedures for the analysis of word meanings (Goddard, Cliff.1995:147).

Ottenheimer in his book entitled *The Anthropology of Language* (2006: 20) said that componential analysis is a method typical of structural semantics which analyzes the structure of a word's meaning. Thus, it reveals the culturally important features by which speakers of the language to distinguish different words in the domain. Componential analysis sometimes also called *feature analysis* or *contrast analysis* refers to the description of the meaning of words through structured sets of semantic features. Examples:

1. *Woman*: [+ Human], [+ Female], [+ Adult]
2. *Man*: [+ Human], [- female], [+ Adult]
3. *Girl*: [+ Human], [+ Female], [- adult]
4. *Boy*: [+ Human], [- female], [- adult]

From the above examples it can be concluded that componential analysis is useful for representing similarities among semantically related words. As illustrated above, a few simple features could capture similarities and differences among subclasses of people – man, woman, boy and girl. The word *girl* can have three basic factors (or semantic properties): human, young, and female. Another

example, being edible is an important factor by which plants may be distinguished from one another (Ottenheimer, 2006:20).

It is necessary to recognize three structurally important types of meaning's components in undertaking any componential analysis of a related set of meanings; they are common, diagnostic, and supplementary (Cole, Roger William. 1977:149). The common components are those feature that any set of meanings have in common. The diagnostic components are those that are characteristic of one or more of the meanings but not of all, and the supplementary components are those that may be denotatively valid but not really necessary or significant for establishing a minimal set of contrasts (1977:149).

2.2. Semantic Theory

Semantics is the study of meaning (Gregory, 2000:1). It is often used in ordinary language to denote a problem of understanding that comes down to word selection or connotation (<http://www.wikipedia.org/semantics>). Lehrer in his book *Semantic Fields and Lexical Structure* (1974:2) said that a semantic theory should be able to describe the meaning of long stretches of language – sentences, paragraphs, and discourse. From that statement it can be concluded that the major subject of semantics is deals with meaning of words that make up a sentence. Howard Gregory in his book *Semantics* (2000:1) said that the word semantic is derived from the Greek word which conveys the idea of importance (compare the English words 'meaningful' or 'significant'), while the Chinese equivalent is also used to mean interest. This suggests that the subject touches on questions of why

people bother to use language in the first place, and why we bother to listen to them. Adrienne Lehrer in her book *Semantics Fields and Lexical Structure* (1974:1) said that the word “meaning” is quite ambiguous since it is commonly used to show equivalence between expressions within a language, such as *mother* means ‘female parent’, or between languages, such as *mere* means ‘mother’ in French – still according to Lehrer – emotive meaning, connotation, and level of formality are closely related to meaning. For example, the word *slim* and *skinny* are said to have the same *cognitive meaning* but differ in their *emotive meaning*: *skinny* suggests something unfavourable, while *slim* does not. It is necessary to decide what the main focus is since it is such a vast field, touching on most aspects not only the structure but also the function of language itself. Therefore it is suggested to focus on relatively small areas of semantics. For this reason, the writer chooses humour as the subject of the study and also applies the theory of semantics to analyze humour. Here, the writer uses semantic theory that includes only on semantic ambiguity (lexical ambiguity and grammatical ambiguity) and truth conditional semantics (including causal fallacy).

2.2.1. Semantic Ambiguity

According to Hurford and Heasley (1984:121), a word or sentence is ambiguous when it has more than one sense. Then they divide the semantic ambiguity into two kinds, they are:

1. Lexical semantics ambiguity and
2. Grammatical semantics ambiguity or structural ambiguity.

According to Gregory (2000:6) in his book entitled *Semantics*, lexical semantics focuses on the meaning of words. The vocabulary of a language (the lexicon) is treated not just as a list of words but a very rich complex set of associations, a line of thought that will be explored (2000:6). From the statement above we can conclude that a sentence which is ambiguous because its words (meaning) relate to each other in different ways is called lexical semantics ambiguity. While if a sentence is ambiguous because of its structurally (grammatically) errors we can consider it as grammatical semantics ambiguity. For example of the word 'English history teacher', it is said as structural or grammatical ambiguity because each phrase can be represented in two structurally different (English history) teacher and English (history teacher). In short, grammatical or structural ambiguity occurs when a phrase or sentence has more than one underlying structure.

Also for lexical ambiguity, Hurford and Heasley (1983:128) define it as any ambiguity resulting from ambiguity of a word. They claim that lexical ambiguity depends on homonymy and polysemy. Besides, George Yule in his book entitled *The Study of Language* (1996:118) state that there are some types of lexical relations which are usually analyzed, defined and exemplified in this following:

1. **Homonymy.** According to Ullmann (1962:156), homonymy can be different words having the same pronunciation or the same words having different meaning. Here, the writer will give example of sentence which is ambiguous from its meaning (lexical semantics ambiguity) depends on homonymy:

I'm a customer service rep for a phone company, and one day someone called to place an order for new services. After gathering his personal information, I advised the customer that he would have to provide proof of residence: a rent receipt, credit-card bill, and whatever. A few days later, I received a picture in the mail. It was of a man pointing to the house behind him (Reader's Digest, May 2003).

The event when the customer service advised his/her customer to provide proof of residence is the build up of this joke. Actually what the customer service meant with "proof of residence" was something like a rent receipt, credit-card bill etc that showed a written proof about the customer's address. However, the customer thought that the proof of residence was a picture of his house. Therefore this humor manipulates lexical ambiguity in terms of meaning, specifically homonymy. The funny thing is gained through the sentence "*A few days later, I received a picture in the mail. It was of a man pointing to the house behind him*".

2. **Homophony.** Homophone is a word pronounced like another word but with a different meaning and spelling, for example the word some & sum they pronounced /sam/; knew & new they pronounced /nju:/ (Oxford: 570).

3. **Synonymy** is a case if two word forms share at least one word sense (Gregory, 2000:2-3). In other words synonym is a word or phrase with the same or nearly the same meaning as another in the same language (Oxford: 1212). For example the word 'shut' and 'close', the word 'truthful' and 'honest' are synonyms.

4. **Antonymy** is a case if two words have opposite meanings (Gregory, 2000:27). For example the word 'old' has two possible antonyms: 'young' and 'new' (Oxford: 44)

5. **Hyponymy** is the terminology comes from Greek word *onoma* meaning 'name' and *hypo* meaning 'under'. Thus, according to Chaer (2002:98-99) in his

book entitled *Pengantar Semantik Bahasa Indonesia* the definition of hyponymy is “nama yang termasuk di bawah nama lain”. For example the word *tongkol*, *banding*, *mujair*, *lele*, *tenggiri*, *cakalang* are the hyponym of the word ‘fish’.

6. **Polysemy** is a case where a word has several very closely related senses, which Ullmann (1962:156) defines it as the same word having different dictionary entries, for example the word *mouth* can be a mouth of river or a mouth of an animal. Whereas Yule (1996:121) defined polysemy as one form (written or spoken) having multiple meanings which are all related by extension, for example the word *head*, used to refer to the object on top of your body, on top of a glass of beer, on top of a company or department; or *foot* (of a person, of bed, of mountain).

2.2.2. Truth Conditional Semantics

According to Kempson in his book entitled *Semantic Theory* (1977:23) said that a sentence can be considered true or false, following the two valued logic; states that a sentence is considered “true” if and only if the string of words meet the set of truth conditions. For example, in the sentence (*S*) *Sam loves Jessie*; *S* is true if and only if:

- a. There are two individuals in the world identified as Sam and Jessie.
- b. There is a feeling of love in Sam for Jessie.

If *S* is the name of the sentence and *p* (proposition) is the conditions guarantee the truth of the sentence, the pattern is:

S* is true if and only if *p

To know the meaning of a sentence is to know what the world would have to be like for the sentence to be true (Gregory, 2000:9). From the statement above we can conclude that if we want to know the meaning of a sentence, we must know what conditions under the sentence would be true. For example, *Snow is white*. To know the meaning of the sentence above, first is to know the conditions relevant in order to decide that *Snow is white* is true. So it is expressed by the pattern:

Snow is white if and only if snow is white

Therefore if the condition of *p* is not sufficient, the condition of *S* can be said as false, for instance: *Snow is white* if and only if grass is green. The condition cannot guarantee the truth of the sentence *Snow is white* because snow is still white although the grass is yellow or brown (Kempson, 1977:26). From the explanation above it can be concluded that the conditions which cannot guarantee the truth of a sentence might manipulate the truth-conditional semantics and this manipulation might create the joke to be funny.

Soedjatmiko (1998:34) finally remarks on his research that humor also often manipulates illogicality, which is caused by mistakes in causal reasoning or causal fallacy. Causal fallacy occurs when there is confusion between cause and effect. The confusion makes either wrong cause or wrong effects and it makes the jokes funny. Therefore it is interesting thing to know what and how semantic mechanisms manipulated in humor texts, whether it is lexical ambiguity, grammatical ambiguity, truth-conditional semantics or causal fallacy, so that it can produce laughter.

2.3. Part of Speech

According to Scott Thornbury in his book entitled *Teach Vocabulary* (2002), words belong to varieties categories of different types like noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction and determiner. The explanation of each term will be discussed in this below followings:

1. **Noun:** According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1995:791) Noun is a word used to name or identify any of a class of things, people, places, or ideas, etc.
2. **Pronoun:** According to Betty S Azar in her book entitled *Understanding and Using English Grammar* (1999:132) a pronoun is used in place of a noun. For example: *I read a book. It was good.* The noun 'it' refers to is called the 'antecedent'. A singular pronoun is used to refer to a singular pronoun and a plural pronoun is used to refer to a plural noun.
3. **Verb:** According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1995:1323) a verb is a word or phrase indicating an action, an event or a state.
4. **Adjective:** According to Betty S Azar in her book entitled *Understanding and Using English Grammar* (1999:A4) an adjective describes noun. In grammar, it can be said that adjectives modify nouns. The word 'modify' means change a little. In short we can say that adjectives give a little different meaning to a noun. For example: intelligent student, lazy student, good student or young, beautiful, old, rich, brown, French, modern. An adjective is neither singular nor plural. A final-s is never added to an adjective.

5. **Adverb:** According to Betty S Azar in her book entitled *Understanding and Using English Grammar* (1999:A4) Adverbs modify verbs. Adjectives are also used to modify adjectives, i.e. to give information about adjectives: I am extremely happy. Adverbs are also used to express time or frequency: tomorrow, today, yesterday, soon, never, usually always, yet, etc.
6. **Conjunction:** According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1995:243) conjunction is a word that joins words, phrases, or sentences. One use of conjunction is to connect words or phrases that have the same grammatical function in a sentence: and, but, or, so, therefore, since, because, because of, nevertheless, although, despite, in spite of, etc (Azar, 1999:348).
7. **Preposition:** According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1995:911) preposition is a word or group of words used before a noun or pronoun to show a place, position, time or method (in, from, to, out of, on behalf of, etc).
8. **Determiner:** According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1995:317) determiner is a word that comes before a noun to show how the noun is being used (the, some, a, an, etc).

But here in this research, the writer will use the part of speech proposed by Palmer and Blandford in their book entitled *A Grammar of Spoken English* (1959: 40-445) which was divided part of speech in eight different parts, they are: noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction and interjection. The

only one that make it different from the above part of speech (Scott Thornbury) is the position of interjection. Interjection is a word or phrase used to express sudden surprise, pleasure, annoyance, etc, e.g. Hurray, or damn! (Oxford Dictionary, 1995:623).

2.4. The Definition of Humor

According to *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (1995: 582-583), humor is the quality of being amusing or comical; while joke is a thing said to cause amusement or laughter, for example a humorous remark or a story with a funny ending or punch line (1995:641). In this case, the writer would like to clarify that humor and joke are treated as synonyms and employed interchangeably as Wilson said in his book *Jokes: Form, Content, Use and Function* (1979:2). Bergson (1911, as quoted in Wilson 1979:12) claimed that something is funny when it belongs simultaneously to two different classes and is capable of being interpreted in two different ways. When humors begin to be told, the readers or the listeners get their first perception about the meaning of humor. Suddenly (usually at the end of the humor), they realize that the first perception is wrong because of the unexpected meaning.

There are three basic types of humour:

1. Verbal humour
2. Visual humour and
3. Physical humour.

Verbal humour involves the use of words and it can be found in such things as puns, jokes and witticisms. Visual humour involves the use of images as seen in cartoons and in the physical appearance of some comedians. Physical humour relates to the use of actions. Perhaps the best example of physical humour is "slapstick" comedy which includes such wild actions as pie fights or chase scenes. There are verbal, visual, and physical forms of humour; however, it is obvious that verbal, visual or physical things alone are not funny. There are other conditions added to the verbal, visual or physical stimuli which contribute to their being humorous. In order to determine what is involved in humour and why some things are funny and others are not, it is necessary to turn to the theories of humour which have been developed by psychologists and sociologists (<http://www.lotsofessays.com/viewpaper/1705255.html>).

Based on textual classification, Soedjatmiko's classifies five discourse types of humor (1988:16), they are:

1. One-line joke is a joke that contains a single speech act.
2. Two-line joke is a joke that have question and answer form.
3. Short-text joke usually consists of a single joke. The single joke consists of a build up or the introductory part that gives some illustration before it reaches the punch line.
4. A humour column is a journalistic writing commenting or criticizing miscellaneous news, social and political events.
5. Literary humour is a humorous narrative text which uses literary elements to enrich the humour.

This study deals only with short texts humor that consists of a single joke. The single joke consists of a build up or the introductory part that gives some illustration or narration before it reaches the punch line or the unexpected and surprising utterance that creates the funniness, for example:

“I keep seeing spots before my eyes,” said Joe. “I wonder if there’s something wrong with me”. “Have you seen a doctor?” asked Will. “No”, said Joe. “Just spots”.

(Reader’s Digest Asia, April 2003)

The introductory part of this humor lies in Joe’ utterance when he said that there was a problem (something wrong) in his eyes. Hence, the funniness of this humor is gained through Joe’s misunderstanding toward Will’s question. Actually what Will meant with his utterance “*Have you seen a doctor?*” is whether or not Joe had visited a doctor to examine his eyes’ problem. However, Joe misinterpreted Will’s utterance. Joe thought that Will asked him whether he had seen figure of a doctor. Therefore, this humor manipulates lexical ambiguity, especially on homonymy of the word “*seen*”.

2.5. Reader’s Digest Asia Magazine

Reader's Digest is a monthly general-interest family magazine co-founded in 1922 by Lila Bell Wallace and DeWitt Wallace, and based in Chappaqua, New York, United States of America. The Audit Bureau of Circulation says Reader's Digest is the best-selling consumer magazine in the USA, with a circulation of over 8 million copies in the United States, and a readership of 38 million as measured by Mediamark Research(<http://www.wikipedia.org/reader'sdigest.html>)

Although Reader's Digest was founded in the U.S., its international editions have made it the best-selling monthly magazine in the world. The magazine's worldwide circulation including all editions has reached 17 million copies and 70 million readers. Reader's Digest is currently published in 52 editions and 35 languages and is available in over 100 countries, including Slovenia, Croatia, Romania, and the People's Republic of China in 2008. Usually those versions started out as mere translations of the American version of the magazine, but over time the international editions often became unique, providing local material more germane for local readers. Local editions that still publish the bulk of the American *Reader's Digest* are usually titled with a qualifier, such as the Portuguese edition, or the Swedish edition. In 2010, the U.S. edition of the magazine was planning to decrease its circulation to 5.5 million, from 8 million, to publish 10 times a year rather than 12, and to increase digital offerings. It was also planning to reduce its number of celebrity profiles and how-to features, and increase the number of inspiring spiritual stories and stories about the military (<http://www.wikipedia.org/reader'sdigest.html>).

2.6. Theoretical Framework

In this level of the study, the writer will use and applies the theory of componential analysis to analyze kinds of humour component by dividing it into part of speech in order to identify the generalization of lexicon meaning, then the writer will use the theory of semantics especially on semantic ambiguity (lexical

ambiguity and grammatical ambiguity) and truth conditional semantics (including causal fallacy) that can make the humour sounds funny

Componential theory is one of the specific areas of the study of semantics. William O'Grady, Michael Dobrovolsky, and Francis Katamba in their book entitled *Contemporary Linguistics* (1987: 274) said that componential analysis is still another approach to meaning tries to represent a word's intension by breaking down into smaller semantic components. Ottenheimer in his book entitled *The Anthropology of Language* (2006: 20) said that componential analysis is a method typical of structural semantics which analyzes the structure of a word's meaning. Componential analysis also called *feature analysis* or *contrast analysis* refers to the description of the meaning of words through structured sets of semantic features. Examples:

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3. *Girl*: [+ Human], [+ Female], [- adult]
4. *Boy*: [+ Human], [- female], [- adult]

To summarize, one word can have basic underlying meanings that are well established depending on the cultural context. It is crucial to understand these underlying meanings in order to fully understand any language and culture.

Semantics is the study of meaning (Gregory, 2000:1). It is often used in ordinary language to denote a problem of understanding that comes down to word selection or connotation (<http://www.wikipedia.org/semantics>). Howard Gregory in his book *Semantics* (2000:1) said that the word semantic is derived from the

Greek word which conveys the idea of importance (compare the English words ‘meaningful’ or ‘significant’), while the Chinese equivalent is also used to mean interest. This suggests that the subject touches on questions of why people bother to use language in the first place, and why we bother to listen to them. Adrienne Lehrer in her book *Semantics Fields and Lexical Structure* (1974:1) said that the word “meaning” is quite ambiguous since it is commonly used to show equivalence between expressions within a language, such as *mother* means ‘female parent’, or between languages, such as *mere* means ‘mother’ in French - still according to Lehrer – emotive meaning, connotation, and level of formality are closely related to meaning. For example, the word *slim* and *skinny* are said to have the same *cognitive meaning* but differ in their *emotive meaning*: *skinny* suggests something unfavourable, while *slim* does not. It is necessary to decide what the main focus is since it is such a vast field, touching on most aspects not only the structure but also the function of language itself. Therefore it is suggested to focus on relatively small areas of semantics.