



Connotative and ambiguous meanings in Medan-based Waspada's headlines

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the use of connotation and ambiguity in Waspada's headlines. The Chaer's structural semantics is employed and listening and noting methods are used in data collection; while, the padan method is used in the data analysis with the decision instruments are taken from outside and are not parts of language used in the headlines. The method in the data collection refers to observation, then followed by writing technique. Data analysis is carried out with comparing method in which the instruments are beyond and are not parts of the language itself. In this case, the basic technique refers to selection of certain elements and is followed by qualitative descriptive. This means that this qualitative method as a whole involves interpretation strategies which appear in the descriptions. Understanding the object interpretation was primarily done to get the best level of objectivity. In the social sciences the data sources involve sentences. The results show theadlines have connotative words such as *telan* 'to swallow', *mendongkrak* 'to raise with a jack', *dirumahkan* 'being forced to stay at home', *menggoreng* 'to fry', *suap* 'bribery', *lahirkan* 'to produce', *lumpuhkan* 'to paralyze', and *gelapkan* 'to bring into darkness'. Furthermore, the headlines also consist of ambiguous words which make the readers confused in understanding the headlines.

Keywords: connotation, ambiguity, headlines, waspada

1. Introduction

One of strategies in delivering written messages is done through newspapers which consist of meaningful linguistic symbols that convey information to readers. Such symbols can be in the forms of words, phrases, or sentences which can always appear in the headlines which are inseparable parts of newspapers' contents. Viewed from the practical side in receiving information, the most important thing is to understand the meanings of headlines because the core purposes of information in the newspapers can be seen their headlines.

Newspapers are important to urban societies who try to seek general news, knowledge, and events concerning law, economics, corruption, and terrorism. Therefore, we did this research on the headlines of Waspada which is a daily (newspaper) and was published in Medan since January 11, 1947. It often happens after reading the headlines the readers mistakenly respond, because the contents of a headline do not match the message. What is targeted in this research is how the use of connotative and ambiguous meanings in this newspaper. Furthermore, the purpose of this study is to describe such meanings.

2. Literary Studies

The term *semantics* is actually a technical term that refers to the study of meaning and was introduced to the world by American Philological Association in 1894 although Pateda stated that the term which was popular in the early 50s was firstly introduced by Breal, a French scholar, in 1883. Semantics as a discipline appeared in the 19th century. Language scholars argued as the study of meaning, semantics

can be connected with objects in the humans' experiences about their world.

Pateda argued that empirically before one speaks and when one hears a person's utterance there is a mental process in both of them. The mental process is the one of composing semantic, grammatical, and phonological codes by the speaker, and the process of decoding such codes is done by the listener. In other words, both the speaker and the listener should undergo meaning process.

3. Research Methods

The method in the data collection refers to observation, then followed by writing technique. Data analysis is carried out with comparing method in which the instruments are beyond and are not parts of the language itself. In this case, the basic technique refers to selection of certain elements and is followed by qualitative descriptive. This means that this qualitative method as a whole involves interpretation strategies which appear in the descriptions. Understanding the object interpretation was primarily done to get the best level of objectivity. In the social sciences the data sources involve sentences.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Headlines and their connotative meanings

Data 1. Sungai Peurelak *telan* korban. (Waspada, December 31, 2017: A1) 'Peurelak river swallows its victims'

The word *telan* 'swallow' in Data 1 has connotative meaning and has, in this case, changed its meaning because of subjective values; therefore, it does not have objective value anymore. In Bahasa Indonesia the word *telan* means 'to put

food into the throat' (KBBI, 1988: 917) and it is denotative. So, the headline is connotative because it is reinforced by the word *telan* which is translated here as 'to take victims'.

Data 2. Media berperan mendongkrak pembangunan daerah. (Waspada, May 9, 2018:A5) 'Media plays a role to boost regional development'

The headline in Data 2 contains the word *mendongkrak* which carries connotative meaning and is derived from the noun *dongkrak* 'a tool used to lift motor vehicle' The word has undergone meaning change because it is influenced by subjective values and as a result it is not objective. The word *mendongkrak* literally means 'to raise a car with a jack' (KBBI, 1988: 212) and it is denotative. Thus, the headline consists of connotative word *mendongkrak* which is interpreted here as 'to speed up or to work out to finish soon'.

Data 3. 5111 Tenaga honorer Pemkab Bener Meriah dirumahkan. (Waspada, December 31, 2017:A1): 'About 5111 of part-time workers at office of Bener Meriah regency are brought home'

In Data 3 the headline contains the connotative word *dirumahkan* 'forced to stay at home' in which its meaning is changing because it is influenced by subjective values but not objective. The word *dirumahkan* means 'to force employees to stay at home for an uncertain period' (KBBI, 1988: 758) although in this context the word is interpreted as 'fired from job'.

Data 4. Parpol tetap menggoreng. (Waspada, January 3, 2018:A1) 'Political parties keep frying'

With reference to Data 4 the headline has the connotative word *menggoreng* 'to fry' which has undergone subjective values but not objective. The word *menggoreng* literally means 'to fry in frying pan with cooking oil' (KBBI, 1988: 283) and the word is denotative. In this case the word might mean 'to make the situation heat'.

Data 5. KPK cari informasi baru kasus suap anggota DPRD Sumut. (Waspada, April 19, 2018:A1) 'KPK is searching new information on bribery case among North Sumatera's DPRD members'

The headline in Data 5 consists of the connotative word *suap* which has undergone meaning change because it is influenced by subjective values but not objective. The word literally means 'to put rice into the baby's mouth' (KBBI, 1988: 861); however, in this context the word *suap* is interpreted as 'bribery'.

Data 6. Popkot Medan wadah lahirkan atlet. (Waspada, May 9, 2018:B5). 'Popkot Medan becomes the place to produce athletes'

The connotative word *lahirkan* in the headline in Data 6 shows its meaning which is influenced by subjective values and means literally 'to carry out a baby from the womb or to give birth' (KBBI, 1988: 486) and this is denotative meaning. Thus, in this respect, the word *lahirkan* is interpreted as 'to produce'.

Data 7. Longsor dan banjir lumpuhkan akses transportasi. (Waspada, April 25, 2018: B12) 'Landslide and flood paralyze transport access'

The headline in Data 7 has the connotative word *lumpuhkan* 'to paralyze' which is influenced by subjective values. The word *lumpuhkan* means 'to weaken or powerless or unable to move again' (KBBI, 1988: 536) and this version is denotative meaning. Thus, the headline has a connotative meaning which is reinforced by the word *lumpuhkan* which could mean here 'to weaken'.

Data 8. Gelapkan sepeda motor teman untuk beli sabu. (Waspada, March 19, 2018:A5). 'embarrass friend's motorcycle to buy sabu'

In Data 7 the headline has the word *gelapkan* which is connotative in meaning and is influenced by subjective values. The word literally means 'cause to darken or to have no light' (KBBI, 1988: 262) and this meaning is denotative. So, the word *gelapkan* in this case is connotative in meaning and refers to 'to steal'.

4.2 Headlines and their ambiguities

Data 9. 20 jam tenggelam, seorang kakek tewas. (Waspada, April 26, 2018:A2) 'Twenty hours being drawn, an old man died'

The headline in Data 9 has two ambiguous words, such as *twenty hours being drawn* and *a grandfather was killed*. If the headline writes *seorang kakek tewas setelah tenggelam selama 20 jam* 'a grandfather died after being drawn for 20 hours' so the data is not ambiguous. The phrases *20 jam tenggelam* 'twenty hours of being drawn' and *seorang kakek tewas* 'a grandfather died' raises questions: who was drawn? and whose grandfather? In this case *seorang kakek* 'a grandfather' is interpreted as 'an old man'.

Data 10. Warga antusias jalan sehat HPN Sumut. (Waspada, March 23, 2018:A7) 'Local citizens enthusiastically take part in North Sumatera's HPN fun walk'

The headline in Data 10 is ambiguous because (1) *warga antusias* 'enthusiastic citizens', and (2) *jalan sehat HPN Sumut* 'North Sumatera's HPN fun walk' do not show why the citizens are enthusiastic and who supports the *jalan sehat*. If the headline is written as *warga antusias dalam mengikuti olah raga jalan sehat HPN Sumut* 'citizens are enthusiastic in taking parts in North Sumatera's HPN funwalk', then the coercion or ambiguity does not occur because its meaning is clear and the composition of the headline is grammatical.

Data 11. 6 Anak pasang alat bantu dengar. (Waspada, March 23, 2018:B1) 'Six children use hearing aids'

In Data 11 the headline consists of ambiguity because it can be interpreted as (1) *6 anak memasang alat bantu dengar* 'six children install hearing aids', or (2) *6 anak dipasangkan alat bantu dengar* 'six children are installed with hearing aids'. If the headline is written as *alat bantu dengan dipasangkan ke telinga 6 anak yang tuli* 'hearing aids are installed to six deaf children', then the coercion or ambiguity does not exist

because the headline provided by the researchers are grammatically correct.

Data 12. Lahirkan piagam umat Islam Sumut. (Waspada, April 2, 2018:A1) 'Muslims in North Sumatra bring forth charter' The headline in Data 12 carries ambiguity because the phrases (1) *lahirkan piagam*, and (2) *piagam umat Islam Sumut* 'Muslim's charter of North Sumatra' bring questions such as who brings forth the charter? and what does Muslims' charter of North Sumatra look like?. If the headline is written as *Kongres Umat Islam Menghasilkan Piagam Sumut* 'Congress of Muslims brings forth the North Sumatera Charter', then the coercion or ambiguity does not happen because the proposed headline is grammatically correct.

Data 13. BNN tangkap 30 Kg sabu di Aceh Timur. (Waspada, April 25, 2018:A1) 'BNN arrests 30 Kg of marihuana in East Aceh'

The headline above is ambiguous for the phrases such as (1) *BNN tangkap 30 Kg sabu* 'BNN arrests 30 kg of marihuana', and (2) *30 Kg sabu di Aceh Timur* '30 kg of marihuana in East Aceh'. The questions are: who are arrested? and who owns the marihuana? It is impossible to arrest the 30 Kg of marihuana. It is better to write the headline as *BNN menangkap seseorang yang memiliki atau membawa 30 Kg sabu di Aceh Timur* 'BNN arrests somebody who owns or carries 30 Kg of marihuana in Aceh Timur'; this headline is not ambiguous.

Data 14. 25 batang pohon ganja di ladang. (Waspada, April 25, 2018:B2) '25 marijuana trees are found in the farm' In Data 14 the headline shows its ambiguity in two respects (1) who found 25 marijuana trees?, and (2) who possessed and planted 25 marijuana trees? Since the headline is ambiguous, we suggest it should be written as *Polisi temukan 25 batang pohon ganja di ladang* 'Police found 25 marijuana trees in the farm'; then there is no coercion or ambiguity in it because it is grammatically structured.

Data 15. 5 Anak pasang kaki palsu oleh anggota dewan. (Waspada, May 17, 2018:B3) 'Five children put on prosthetic limbs by legislative members'

The headline in Data 15 also indicates ambiguity since it can be interpreted in two respects: (1) *5 anak memasang kaki palsu kepada anggota dewan* 'Five children put on prosthetic limbs to the legislative members', and (2) *Anggota dewan memasang kaki palsu kepada 5 anak* 'Legislative members put on prosthetic limbs to five children'. We suggest the headline should be written in the second option; with this, the coercion or ambiguity does not exist.

Data 16. Truk ditabrak Supra X, abang tewas, adik kritis. (Waspada, May 23, 2018:B7) 'Truck was hit by Supra X, brother died, younger brother critical'

Finally, in Data 16, the headline proves to be ambiguous in two conditions, namely (1) *Supra X menabrak truk yang menyebabkan abang tewas dan adik kritis* 'Supra X hit the truck causing dead to the brother and critical to the younger brother'. (2) *Abang dan adik menabrak kereta supra X* 'Two brothers hit the Supra X motor cycle'. We suggest that the headline should be written as *Supra X yang dikendarai oleh*

abang-beradik menabrak truk, menyebabkan si abang tewas dan si adik kritis 'Supra X driven by two brothers hit the truck, the elder died, the younger critical'. Our suggested headline seems not to bring an ambiguity in this case.

5. Conclusions

it can be concluded that drawn:

- a. The headlines have connotative words such as *telan* 'to swallow', *mendongkrak* 'to raise with a jack', *dirumahkan* 'being forced to stay at home', *menggoreng* 'to fry', *suap* 'bribery', *lahirkan* 'to produce', *lumpuhkan* 'to paralyze', and *gelapkan* 'to bring into darkness'.
- b. Furthermore, the headlines also consist of ambiguous words which make the readers confused in understanding the headlines.

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