

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

People use language, both oral and written, to interact with their family members, friends, and other people. They can communicate efficiently and effectively if they can comprehend the language well and belong to the same group. If they do not belong to the same group, they may fail in the communication because they do not comprehend the language well and do not have the same particular set of experiences or knowledge.

The problem of understanding the language as stated above also happens to children. Actually children's language is simple but sometimes it is confusing for adults because once in a while, the children do not say something straight to the point. Indeed, the children also like to speak in incomplete ways. The problem of children's language does not only happen in the children's daily conversations but also in the children's story books. The writer finds out that the language used in the children's story books is simple but sometimes it is also confusing because it contains many hidden meanings.

One of the children's story books which is confusing for the children is the Smurf series. A Smurf uses the Smurf language to communicate with other Smurfs but their language has a lot of hidden meanings and it confuses the readers. Smurf uses the word "smurf" to replace the other words. The word "smurf" can be in the form of a verb, an adjective, and a noun. This can be exemplified as follows : "Papa Smurf! Papa Smurf! kami mensmurf banyak sekali makanan lezat di gua!". The word "mensmurf" here means "menemukan" and it is a verb.

The Smurf series, the children's story book, is a kind of discourse. According to Cook (1989) discourse is stretches of language perceived to be meaningful, unified, and purposive. And the study that deals with discourse is called discourse analysis, which according to Riley (1985:2) is an analysis of meaning, but meaning seen not in the traditional 'semantic' sense of isolated concepts. Rather, the discourse analyst studies meaning as a construct either of an individual collaborating with one or more other individuals in the creation of an unified discourse ('multi-source discourse) or of an individual interpreting a text produced by another individual and to which he does not or can not make any formal contribution ('single source discourse). In addition, discourse analysis is concerned with the study on the relationship between language and the context in which it is used. The writer chose discourse analysis theory in this study because discourse analysis theory can give an important explanation about understanding the language which is seen from the connection between language and its context which can be encountered in the Smurf series.

The writer also analysed this topic based on the reading comprehension points of view. Reading is important for all people because reading can give a lot of informations about the world. From reading, people can see the whole world. Reading comprehension strategies are needed by the readers to read a book, a novel, an article, a passage or a children's story book. To be a successful reader, people do not have to read all of the words because if they can grab the topic of each sentence or paragraph, they will be able to understand its context easily. Because of that, the readers should deal with the reading comprehension skills such as locating and interpreting topic sentences.

For this thesis, the writer has chosen the children's story book to be the topic because the children's story book gives the readers, especially the children, good values of life . One of these books in a serial of Smurf entitled "Smurf dan Raksasa Glouton" written by Peyo. The original book is in the French language and the book that the writer analysed is the Indonesian translation done by Eriwati. The writer chose "Smurf dan Raksasa Glouton" because in this book, the word "smurf" occur 13 times in 13 different contexts. The writer, moreover, chose this topic because so far there is no thesis written about children's understanding of the word "smurf" as encountered in "Smurf dan Raksasa Glouton" at the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University.

The writer has chosen the elementary school students of St. Clara Elementary School to be the target subjects of her study because of the fact that she is an alumnus of this school so it was easier to get the permission to administer the test there. As the sample of her study, the writer has chosen the fifth grade students of Santa Clara Elementary School because the writer assumes that the book "Smurf dan Raksasa Glouton" is suitable to be read for the children in the age of 10-12 although it is not mentioned by the publisher. They are assumed to have got the skills of reading and comprehending the hidden meanings of the words "smurf" as encountered in "Smurf dan Raksasa Glouton" a reading book for children.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

In line with the background of this study, the research question that guided this study was formulated as follows: “How far do the elementary school students understand the word “smurf” as encountered in “Smurf dan Raksasa Glouton?””

1.3 Objectives of the Study

As stated in section 1.2, this study intended to find out how far the elementary school students understand the word “smurf” as encountered in “Smurf dan Raksasa Glouton”.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The results of this study are expected to give an important information to the readers about the subjects’ understanding of the word “smurf” as encountered in “Smurf dan Raksasa Glouton”. The results of this study are also expected to give an important information to the Smurf publisher about how far the elementary school students understand the smurf language and also understand the content of “Smurf dan Raksasa Glouton”.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

Related to the background of the study, this study was limited into several ways:

1. From 10 series of Smurf children story book , the writer took a serial entitled ” Smurf dan Raksasa Glouton”.

2. The subjects analysed are the fifth grade elementary students. They are 40 students of the Santa Clara Elementary School. The writer chose 40 students as subjects for this study randomly. Actually, there are 3 groups in the fifth grade but the writer only chose one group, that is 5A which consists of 40 students.

3. The writer only analysed the word “smurf” as encountered in “Smurf dan Raksasa Glouton” because this word can show whether the readers can understand the content or not. If they cannot understand the meaning of this word, they may fail in reading “Smurf dan Raksasa Glouton” and they will not understand the content of the book.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

In this study, the writer used several theories. They are discourse analysis with special reference to coherence, cohesion, the principle of local interpretation, and reading comprehension.

The writer used *discourse analysis theory* in this study because *discourse analysis theory* with special reference to coherence and cohesion can give an important explanation about understanding the Smurf language in “Smurf dan Raksasa Glouton”, especially about the hidden meaning of the word “smurf”, which is seen from the connection between language and its context.

The reading comprehension theory was used in this study because this theory is needed by the writer to interpret the hidden meaning of the word “smurf” which occurs 13 times in 13 different contexts. Reading comprehension theory with its parts such as locating topic sentence and interpreting topic sentence can give an important explanation about understanding the Smurf language in “Smurf dan Raksasa Glouton”.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

In order to enable the readers to understand the meaning of the terms presented in this study, the writer provides the definition of the key-terms as follow:

1. Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is an analysis of meaning, but meaning seen not in the traditional 'semantic' sense of isolated concepts. Rather, the discourse analyst studies meaning as a construct either of an individual collaborating with one or more other individuals in the creation of an unified discourse ('multi-source discourse) or of an individual interpreting a text produced by another individual and to which he does not or can not make any formal contribution('single source discourse) (Rilley,1985;2)

2. Coherence

Coherence is the quality of being meaningful and unified (Cook ,1990;4)

3. Cohesion

Cohesion is the connection which is resulted when the interpretation of textual element is dependent on another element in text (Jan Renkema,1993;35)

4. Local Interpretation

The principle that instructs the hearer not to construct a context any larger than what he needs to arrive at an interpretation (Brown and Yule, 1983;58-59)

5. Smurf

Smurf is a blue tiny creature wearing white pants and white hat. Smurf lives in the Smurf village and uses Smurf language to communicate with one another. Smurfs are kind and helpful creatures.

1.8 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis consists of 5 chapters. Chapter 1 presents the background of the study, statements of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, theoretical framework, definition of key terms and organisation of the thesis. Chapter 2 deals with the review of related literature. Chapter 3 deals with research method. Chapter 4 presents findings and interpretation. And chapter 5 is the conclusion.