CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL REVIEW

This chapter presents theories used to analyze the data in this research. This research examines ambiguous zeugmatic constructions whose analysis uses two approaches, i.e. syntax and semantics. The syntactic approach is used to support the analysis on identifying the syntactic features and revealing what type of zeugma the data are categorized into. In other words, it is the way or tool used to answer the first research question. Subsequently, the semantic approach is applied to examine the ambiguity encoded in the data. It is the most essential since this research is primarily focused on identifying the ambiguity in zeugmatic constructions.

2.1 Rhetorical Figures

It is first essential to explain where the term zeugma is derived from. For many scholars, it is still arguably perplexing to decide upon which the most suitable term used to clarify the origin of the term zeugma. Common language devices such as figures of speech, tropes, or rhetorical figures are often used interchangeably in referring to the most common (metaphor, simile, personification) until the rarest (hypozeuxis, syllepsis, zeugma) terms in which they are categorized into such devices. To disambiguate, this research will thereby use rhetorical figures in referring to the term zeugma.

Zeugma, as can be inferred earlier, is derived from rhetorical figures. Bizzell and Herzberg (1990: 1) state:

> "*Rhetoric has a number of overlapping meanings: the practice of oratory; the study of the strategies of effective oratory; the use of language, written or spoken, to inform or persuade; the study of the persuasive effects of language; the study of the relation between language and knowledge; the classification and use of tropes and figures; and, of course, the use of empty promises and half-truths as a form of propaganda. Nor does this list exhaust the definitions that might be given. Rhetoric is a complex discipline with a long history: It is less helpful to try to define it once and for all than to look at the many definitions it has accumulated over the years and to attempt to understand how each arose and how each still inhabits and shapes the field*."

As stated above, the writer emphasizes Bizzel's and Herzberg's point on rhetoric which claim that it is "*the study of the strategies of effective oratory*". Burton (2007) also rephrases the statement by clarifying "*rhetoric studies the effectiveness of language comprehensively"*. Despite being described in multiple ways, the highlighted definition is chosen because it contributes to the essence of zeugma as device used for effectiveness.

2.1.1 Zeugma

Originated from rhetorical figures, zeugma may not have much known let alone used in popular academics except those who are interested in studying stylistics. This results in the lack of studies or discussions of zeugma using theoretical linguistic approaches such as syntax and semantics.

Several sources are taken as the basis to explain zeugma deeply. Burton (2007) states that "*zeugma is a general term describing when one part of speech*

(most often the main verb, but sometimes a noun) governs two or more other parts of a sentence (often in a series)". Croft and Cruse (2004: 113) add that zeugma alongside with punning and syllepsis is described as "*when two antagonistic readings are simultaneously evoked in conection with a single occurrence of a word*". Moreover, Hall (2005: 96) complements the previous two notions of zeugma as "*a figure of speech, usually an adjective or verb, is apllied to two nouns, although strictly it is appropriate to only one of them or it has a different sense with each*".

Structurally, zeugma is described to contain specialized syntactic arrangements, i.e. ellipsis and coordination. It is explained by Burton (2007) that:

> "*Zeugma comprises several more specialized terms, all of which employ ellipsis and parallelism (among the governed members of the sentence). The zeugma figures are of two types: those in which the governing word is the main verb (in which case these are subsequently categorized according to the position of that governing verb), and those in which the governing word is another part of speech (usually the subject noun).*"

As stated above, zeugma is also divided into two common categories, i.e. noun zeugma and verb zeugma. It is determined according to which word class undergoing the ellipsis and hence functions as the governing word.

Example of noun zeugma derived from Burton (2007):

> *The Romans destroyed Numantia, razed Carthage, obliterated Corinth, overthrew Fregellae. —Ad Herennium*

The above example shows that the subject *The Romans* is a noun which governs not only one but also four verb phrases *destroyed Numantia*, *razed Carthage*, *obliterated Corinth*, and *overthrew Fregellae*. However, *The Romans* is

omitted in the second, third, and fourth arrangement. Hence, *The Romans* functions as the governing word of the sentence and the verb phrases *destroyed Numantia*, *razed Carthage*, *obliterated Corinth*, and *overthrew Fregellae* are the words governed. Such a construction is thereby categorized as noun zeugma.

Example of verb zeugma derived from Burton (2007):

> *Her beauty pierced mine eye, her speech mine woeful heart, her presence all the powers of my discourse. —Puttenham*

Unlike the previous noun zeugma, in the above example, it is the verb *pierced* that undergoes ellipsis in the second and third arrangement. Thus, *pierced* acts as the governing word and the noun phrases *mine eye*, *mine woeful heart*, and *all the powers of my dicourse* are the words governed. Hence, it is categorized as verb zeugma.

Besides its syntactic arrangements or features, the meaning resulting from zeugma is also an important discussion. Not many know that the term zeugma is often interchangeably used alongside the identical figure that is syllepsis. Many scholars attempt to sort of metonymically use the term zeugma as substitution to syllepsis. Though structurally identical, the meaning generated from both can be very distinct.

Syllepsis according to Burton (2007) is "*when a single word that governs or modifies two or more others must be understood differently with respect to each of those words. A combination of grammatical parallelism and semantic incongruity,*

often with a witty or comical effect." From that definition, there is a clear emphasis that syllepsis is more prominent in its semantic aspect.

Zeugma, on the other hand, is thus more concerned with the syntactic features it comprises while the relation of its meaning does not neccessarily have to produce antagonistic meaning such as syllepsis. It can be thoroughly literal and be perceived in mere one sense, but it is also not improbable to contain multiple meanings long as it depends on how the meaning of the construction will ultimately infer. As Burton (2007) once again states, "*Zeugma is sometimes used simply as a synonym for syllepsis, though that term is better understood as a more specific kind of zeugma: when there is disparity in the way that the parallel members relate to the governing word (as a vice or for comic effect)*." To deal with such a confusion, this research hence adapts the term zeugma to represent both the actual zeugma and syllepsis of the data that will later be analyzed.

Based on the above explanations, it can be concluded that zeugma can by all means be simply identified as a coordination structure embodying parallelism and ellipsis with its meaning generating (though not always) two or more senses or stating several ideas within one single construction.

2.2 Syntax

One of the fundamental linguistic disciplines is syntax. According to Miller (2002: xii) "*Syntax has to do with how words are put together to build phrases, with how phrases are put together to build clauses or bigger phrases, and with how*

clauses are put together to build sentences". It can be inferred that syntax concerns about the procedural steps of how to build construction of words. These constructions are ranging from phrases to clauses and from clauses to sentences which ultimately constitute such complete and valid constructions.

Prior to discussing the specified syntactic theory taken for this research, it is first essential to mention that the later discussion of coordination is adapted from John Miller's *An Introduction to English Syntax* book (2002) in which the broader discussion is derived from the discussion of constituent structure. Miller (2002: 11-21) provides theories and examples of arrangements of words. As inferred, Miller highlights that constituent structure concerns the aspects of constituting arrangements of words from the smallest to the biggest one. Firstly, he states that clauses are comprised with heads and their modifiers in which they are grouped together. Secondly, he posits three tests to determine whether a sequence of words forms a phrase, i.e. transposition, substitution and ellipsis. And lastly, Miller (2002: 18) introduces a specialized type of constituent structure where words or phrases could join with two or more other words or phrases together constituting a unity. This then results in a parallelism of its syntactic order, and such a structure is called coordination.

This research syntactically concerns zeugmatic constructions. Taking back the definition, "*zeugma is when one part of speech (most often the main verb, but sometimes a noun) governs two or more other parts of a sentence (often in a series)*" (Burton, 2007). With that said, zeugma can be syntactically categorized as

coordination structure. The scope in analyzing zeugma syntactically will hence concern the analysis of coordination structure.

2.2.1 Coordination

Coordination is one of the very common models found in syntactic constructions. Its purpose is usually none other than to combine words, phrases or clauses to join one another and become an intact unit of words, of phrases, or of clauses. Quirk and et al (1985: 918) explain about coordination alongside subordination, although only the statement about coordination is taken, that "*both coordination and subordination involve the linking of units of the same rank; but in coordination the units are constituents at the same level of constituent structure, whereas in subordination they form a hierarchy, the subordinate unit being a constituent of the superordinat unit.*" Benner (2006) also states that coordination consists of "*sentence elements that are alike in function should also be alike in construction; these elements should be in the same grammatical form so that they are parallel*".

Coordination can be found in common syntactic units: words, phrases, and clauses. Miller (2002: 18) mentions "*words of the same type can be coordinated, that is, joined by special words such as and and or. Phrases of the same type can be coordinated, and clauses of the same type*."

Below are examples of coordination derived from Miller (2002: 18):

John and his energetic wife landscaped the garden twice last year.

In the above clause, *John* is a phrase consisting of a single word and *his energetic wife* is a phrase consisting of three words. In spite of the disparity in length, the two phrases are coordinated – *John and his energetic wife*.

The bright and incredibly sharp air over Doubtful Sound

In the above noun phrase, the one-word adjective phrase *bright* is coordinated with the two-word adjective phrase *incredibly sharp*.

Example for coordination of clauses can be seen below as derived from Benner (2006)

We wondered who he was and what he was doing here.

In the above clause, the noun clause *who he was* is coordinated with another noun clause *what he was doing here*. The two function as object of the main clause.

These explanations about coordination is vital because the structure of zeugma has been identified to have a coordination. Thus, this will help the writer to analyze the zeugmatic constructions syntactically

2.3 Semantics

Since this research primarily concerns with identifying the ambiguity resulting in zeugmatic constructions, a linguistic approach that is suitable in examining is none other than semantics. Semantics can be said as the final stage in

language acquisition. It is arguably the last device used to fully comprehend the language after one is succeeded in accurately forming the langauge structures.

Kreidler (1998: 18-19) said "*semantics is mainly concerned with a speaker's competence to use language system in producing meaningful utterances and processing (comprehending) utterances produced by others.*" With that said, this research is hence focused on how to use basic competence of understanding meaningful utterances, in this case, as applied in zeugmatic constructions – what and how the meaning resulting from the zeugmatic constructions will later imply.

2.3.1 Meaning

Lyons (1985: 136) states "*meanings are ideas or concepts which can be transferred from the mind of the hearer by embodying them as they were, in the form of one language or another*." From such a definition alone, it can be inferred that the clarity of what meaning is is somewhat indefinable. Therefore, one cannot legitimately claim that what would or should come out as a meaning must be in line to what one preconceived of the utterances being said. It is because the thing about meaning is like a two-way street – the involvement between the speakers and the hearers. Sometimes it can be reciprocal but sometimes cannot. Such an underlying notion thus results in what semantic study refers to as ambiguity.

Theory of ambiguity for this research is derived from Lyons (1977) and Kreidler (1998). In broader discussion, Kreidler (1998: 8-12) describes and

exemplifies ten terms of basic semantic knowledge in which people in general would derive meaning:

1. Anomaly

   According to Kreidler (1998: 9) anomaly is when speakers know whether something is or is not meaningful in their language. For examples:

   1a Henry drew a picture.

   1b Henry laughed.

   1c The picture laughed.

   1d Picture a Henry drew.

   From the above examples, 1a and 1b are meaningful, while 1c and 1d are anomalous. Further. sentence 1c has the appearance of being meaningful and it might attain meaning in some children's story or the like, while 1d is merely a sequence of words.

2. Paraphrases

   Kreidler (1998: 9) claims paraphrase is when speakers of a language generally agree as to when two sentences have essentially the same meaning and when they do not. For examples:

   2a Rebecca got home before Robert.

   2b Robert got home before Rebecca.

   2c Robert arrived at home after Rebecca.

   2d Rebecca got home later than Robert.

   Sentences that make equivalent statements about the same entities, like 2a and 2c, or 2b and 2d, are paraphrases (of each other).

3. Synonyms

Synonym is defined by Kreidler (1998: 10) as two words which have essentially the same meaning. For examples:

3a Where did you purchase these tools?

use buy release modify take

3b At the end of the street we saw two enormous statues,

pink smooth nice huge original

4. Contradictory

Kreidler (1998: 10) describes contradictory as when the meaning of one sentence contradicts another sentence. For examples:

4a Edgar is married.

4b Edgar is fairly rich.

4c Edgar is no longer young.

4d Edgar is a bachelor.

Sentences that make opposite statements about the same subject are contradictory.

5. Antonyms

Antonyms are defined by Kreidler (1998: 10) as when two words have opposite meanings. For examples:

5a Betty cut a thick slice of cake,

bright new soft thin wet

5b The train departs at 12:25.

arrives leaves waits swerves

6. Semantic Features

Kreidler (1998: 10-11) explains synonyms and antonyms have to have some common element of meaning in order to be, respectively, the same or different. Words can have some element of meaning without being synonymous or antonymous. For example, we should all agree that in each of the following groups of words, 6a and 6b, all but one of the words have something in common. Which is the word that doesn't belong?

6a street lane road path house avenue

6b buy take use steal acquire inherit

7. Ambiguity

According to Kreidler (1998: 11), some sentences which have double meanings or they can be interpreted in two ways is called ambiguity. For examples:

7a Marjorie doesn't care for her parakeet.

(doesn't like it; doesn't take care of it)

7b Marjorie took the sick parakeet to a small animal hospital.

(small hospital for animals; hospital for small animals)

8. Adjacency Pair

According to Kreidler (1998: 11) adjency pair is when speakers know how language is used when people interact. If one person asks a question or makes a remark, there are various possible answers to the question or replies one might make to the remark. Thus for the question in 8a some answers are suggested, of which all but one might be appropriate. Similarly the statement in 8b is followed by several possible rejoinders, all but one of which could be appropriate.

8a When did you last see my brother?

Ten minutes ago. Last Tuesday. Very nice.

Around noon. I think it was on the first of June.

8b There's a great new comedy at the Oldtown Playhouse.

So I've heard. What's it called? When did it open?

So do I. Are you sure it's a comedy?

Kreidler adds when a question and an answer, or any two utterances, can go together in a conversation and the second is obviously related to the first, they constitute an adjacency pair. The ability to deal with adjacency pairs is part of any speaker's implicit knowledge.

9. Entailment

Entailment is defined by Kreidler (1998: 12) as when speakers are aware that two statements may be related in such a way that if one is true, the other must also be true.

9a There are tulips in the garden.

9b There are flowers in the garden.

9c The ladder is too short to reach the roof.

9d The ladder isn't long enough to reach the roof.

According to Kreidler, these pairs of sentences are examples of entailment. Assuming that 9a and 9b are about the same garden, the truth of 9a entails the truth of 9b, that is, if 9a is true, 9b must also be true. Likewise, assuming the same ladder and roof, the truth of 9c entails the truth of 9d.

10. Presupposition

Kreidler (1998: 12) describes presupposition as when speakers know that the message conveyed in one sentence may presuppose other pieces of knowledge. For instance, if 10a is accepted as true, 10b–10e must also be accepted as true.

10a Andy Murfee usually drives his Datsun to work.

10b There is a person named Andy Murfee.

10c Andy Murfee works.

10d There is a Datsun that belongs to Andy Murfee.

10e Andy Murfee knows how to drive an automobile.

Kreidler posits the meaning of sentence 10a presupposes what is expressed in 10b, c,d and e. The latter are presuppositions of 10a. Note that a presupposition does not establish the truth of anything. Sentence 10a is meaningful as it is, but it is true only if there is a person named Andy Murfee, who works and owns a Datsun, etc. The sentence is presented AS IF there is a person named Andy Murfee. (There probably is not since we created the sentence for demonstration, just as the writer of a child's arithmetic textbook turns out problems that begin "Timmy Blake has four apples…")

2.3.1.1 Ambiguity

Ambiguity is a common occurrence in communication−suggesting that it is such a rarity nowadays to communicate straightforwardly. Linguistically, it is a

multi-interpretations making as a result of multi-interpretable linguistic forms (Lyons, 1977: Kreidler, 1998).

Upon its categorization, essentially, both Lyons (1977) and Kreidler (1998) divide language ambiguity into two groups: lexical and syntactic ambiguity. The ambiguity resulted from lexical can be caused by:

1. Homonym, that is, words that are identically pronounced and spelled but the meanings are unrelated (Kreidler, 1998: 52). For example:
   i. They passed the port at midnight.

      port 1: harbour

      port 2: a certain kind of fortified wine

      (Lyons, 1977: 197)

   ii. I was on my way to the bank.

      bank 1: a financial institution

      bank 2: the edge of a stream

      (Kreidler, 1998: 52&56)
2. Polysemy, that is, according to Kreidler (1998: 52), words that are identically pronounced and spelled with related meanings, for example:

   head of a person, the head of a company, head of a table or bed, a head of lettuce or cabbage.
3. Referential ambiguity, that is, ambiguity which deals with *who-refer-to-whom*. It is caused by:
   i. an indefinite referring expression may be specific or not, for example:

      I wanted to buy a newspaper

Here a newspaper may refer to a specific newspaper or some newspaper, any newspaper. The ambiguity disappears if we add, on the one hand, *but I couldn't find it* or, on the other hand, *but I couldn't find one*.

ii. anaphora is unclear because a personal pronoun, *he, she, it or they*, can be linked to either of two referring expressions, for example:

Jack told Ralph that a visitor was waiting for him.

(*him*: Jack or Ralph?)

iii. the pronoun *you* is used generically or specifically, for example:

If you want to get ahead, you have to work hard.

(Is *you* the addressee or is this sentence a general platitude?)

iv. a noun phrase with *every* can have distributed reference or collected reference, for example:

I'm buying a drink for everybody here.

(One drink for all or one drink for each?)

(Kreidler, 1998: 151-152)

As for the ambiguity resulting in phrasal or clausal form or in other words it is called syntactic ambiguity, Kreidler (1998: 169-170) divides it into nine categories as follows:

1. Constructions containing the coordinators *and* and *or*, for example:

John and Mary or Pat will go.

[John] and [Mary or Pat], [John and Mary] or [Pat]

We'll have bacon or sausage and eggs.

[bacon] or [sausage and eggs], [bacon or sausage] and [eggs]

2. A coordinate head with one modifier, for example:

   The only people left were old men and women.

   [old men] and [women], old [men and women]

   The postman left a letter and a package for Ellen.

   [a letter] and [a package for Ellen], [a letter and a package] for Ellen

3. A head with a coordinate modifier, for example:

   Your essay should contain four or five hundred words.

   [4] or [500], [400] or [500]

4. A head with an inner modifier and an outer modifier:

   The sick pet was taken to a small animal hospital.

   [small] [animal hospital], [small animal] [hospital]

5. A complement and modifier or two complements:

   Joe bought the book for Susan.

   [bought] [the book for Susan], [bought the book] [for Susan]

   The tourists objected to the guide that they couldn't hear.

   [objected to] [the guide that they couldn't hear], [objected to the guide] [that they couldn't hear]

6. Certain function words, including not, have possible differences in scope, for example:

   The tennis courts are open to members only on Thursdays.

   [members only] or [only on Thursdays]

   I'd like to find ten more interesting articles.

   [ten more] [interesting articles] or [ten] [more interesting articles]

They didn't leave because they were angry.

[didn't leave] [because…] or [didn't] [leave because…]

7. Gerund+object or participle modifying a noun.

   Overtaking cars on the main road can be dangerous.

   ('Overtaking cars is dangerous' or 'Cars overtaking are dangerous')

8. Adjective+infinitive, tied to subject or to complement:

   The chicken is too hot to eat.

   ('Too hot to eat anything' or 'too hot for anybody to eat it')

9. Ellipsis in comparative constructions:

   I like Mary better than Joan.

   ('Better than I like Joan' or 'better than Joan likes Mary')

In addition to lexical and syntactic ambiguity, there is also another element resulting ambiguity, that is, tropes. Tropes or language figures such as metaphor, metonym, allegory, and paradox to name a few which embody non-literal meaning are likely to cause multilayers of interpretation especially when they are widely used in literature. The ambiguity then is such an unavoidable matter in reading literature. Quiroga-Clare (2003) states in her journal entitled *Language Ambiguity: A Curse and A Blessing*:

> "*We tend to think of language as a clear and literal vehicle for accurately communicating ideas. But even when we use language literally, misunderstandings arise and meanings shift. People can be intentionally or unintentionally ambiguous. Nevertheless, when someone uses a potentially ambiguous sentence or expression, usually the intention was to express only one meaning. As we know, most words can have denotations, apparent meanings, connotations and implied or hidden meanings. Also, we often use words in a figurative way. Even though figurative language is more often*

> *used in poetry and fiction, it is still very common in ordinary speech. Ambiguity is a poetic vehicle. It is human nature to try to find meaning within an exchange. A text is given to us and in return we give our interpretation. Our own associations give understanding of what is presented to us.*"

Quiroga-Clare's idea above is essential in understanding language ambiguity both theoretically and practically and thus will support some findings in relation to ambiguity resulting from the tropes besides mere lexical or syntactic aspect.

In addition, as the above theories exemplify only basic semantic ambiguity, this research is concerned with semantic ambiguity in relation to zeugmatic constructions. Though such an underlying problem is still rarely discussed comprehensively, as inferred from Lyons (1977: 404-409), some zeugma are likely to be grammatically ambiguous. For instance, a sentence, "*We heard your voice and him slam the door."* (Lyons, 1977: 405) is structurally a zeugma. The verb *heard* governs the object noun phrase *your voice* and *him slam the door* respectively. However, there is ambiguity lies in this zeugmatic construction as to whether one would interpret that the subject *we* heard (1) your voice−without indication that the object noun phrase *your voice* has something to do with the verb phrase *slam the door* in which the verb is uninflected, and (2) him slam the door; or (1) your voice slam the door and (2) him slam the door. Such a theory is then served as the basis in developing the problem concerning ambiguous zeugmatic constructions.