

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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#### 1.1 Background of the Problem

John Steinbeck (1975:paper back cover) in his novel The Grapes of Wrath clearly pictures the social life of the Americans during the depression. "It is the story of the great migration of thousands of homeless families from the dust bowl of Oklahoma to California." Steinbeck tells the story about "the fortunes of the good family who, lured by the promise of unlimited work, pile their belongings onto a dilapidated truck and head for the Golden West, the land of plenty." But their hope was a mere promise since they had "to find their hopes shattered as they encounter bitter poverty and oppression"(1975:paper back cover).

The good family in the story represents one level of society besides the several other levels of society: the rich, the poor, the employers, and employees. Different levels of society have different variations of speech; different ways of speaking or expressing themselves.

Hymes (1974:29) states that "diversity of speech has been singled out as the hallmark of sociolinguistics." In other words, the most prominent feature of

sociolinguistics is the study on the diversity or variation of speech. Hymes (1974:29) says that systematic relations "underly the diversity of speech within communities and in the conduct of individuals", and these relations are "just as social and grammatical structures which can be object of qualitative study". Hymes (1974:29) concludes that "diversity of speech can be found in all levels and fields of society and it presents itself as a problem in many sectors of life - education, national development, transcultural communication."

This notion shows that there is not a normal person, and no normal community, which is limited to a single way of speech, to an unchanging monotony, since a diversity of speech, indicate different aspects, such as respect, insolence, meek seriousness, humor, role distance, and intimacy. These aspects can be achieved by switching from one mode of speech to another. It means that the use of a certain speech shows who the speaker is, as in the words of Holmes (1992:133) who says:

"People often use a language to signal their membership of particular groups. Social status, sex, age, ethnicity and the kind of social networks people belong to turn out to be important dimensions of identity in many communities."

The quotation obviously shows that language does not only show the person who is using it but also other aspects about him, such as his status, sex, age, occupation and religious or cultural background. These aspects are commonly found in a society.

The quotation above conforms with what Pride (1981:6) means by the components of sociolinguistics and sociolinguistics. According to him sociolinguistics is "the name most commonly given to the study of who speaks (or writes) to whom, when, where, how and why." Pride (1981:6) also adds other aspects of the speech, besides the person who speaks or the person spoken to, such as the time and place, the manner, mode, and function or use of the speech.

It should be noted that the language choice depends according to Trudgill (1974:34) on "the internal differentiation of human societies." He explains further that "different social groups use different linguistic varieties, and as experienced members of a speech community we have learnt to classify speaker accordingly". This means that social differentiation has effect on language because of its many forms, for example by class, age, sex, race or religion. Holmes (1992:6) states that these "social influences on language choice determine the types of linguistic

variation used to express and reflect social factors." The linguistic variation can be seen in the "vocabulary or word choice, in sounds, word-structures (or morphology), and grammar (or syntax)".

The choice of one linguistic variation than the other is caused by social considerations, such as the participants, social setting and the topic purpose of the interaction. Holmes (1992:9) calls these linguistic variations, which:

"refer to any set of linguistic forms which patterns according to social factors. Variety is a set of linguistic forms used under specific social circumstances, i.e. with a distinctive social distribution. Variety is therefore a broad term which includes different accents, different linguistic styles, different dialects and even different languages which contrast with each other for social reason."

However, the writer is only concerned with variation that occurs in one language, in this case English, which may be standard or non-standard English that may be used by the characters in the novel The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck.

The writer chooses this novel to analyze the speech variations with the same background which also holds true in literary works. By reading literary works, readers can obtain the description of the social life of a certain place at a certain time and they are able to get information or knowledge of many

kinds of human characters with their culture. In a novel there are many characters with different social-backgrounds. By knowing their social backgrounds, one can make linguistic choices to communicate with, or vice versa, one will be able to know from the linguistic variation chosen and why he or she chooses that specific speech variation. These are the reasons for the writer to make a study on the speech variations in the novel The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck. The writer analyzes the speech variations and the factors that affect the speech variations as shown in the dialogs in the novel.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

As it has been given above that the choice of speech variation depends on the social factors involved with the speaker, so the writer tries to analyze, first: What speech variations are used in the dialogs by the characters in the novel? and second, What social factors determine the characters to use the speech variations?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The writer tries to analyze and find out what speech variations are used in the dialogs by the

different characters in the novel, and the social factors that determine the choice of the speech variations.

#### 1.4 Significance of the Study

This analysis hopefully will result in the findings of what speech variations the characters use in their interactions in the novel and the social factors that determine the choice of the speech variations. In this way, the thesis will signify some help to the writer and students of linguistics and literature to know and understand more about sociolinguistics in its relationship to literature, especially in understanding the choice of speech variations by the different characters as represented in The Grapes of Wrath. This thesis then will be useful in contributing an understanding in the relationship between characters and the language they use in particular, and the relationship between literature and linguistics in general.

#### 1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of analysis is the language used by characters and the writer limits herself to discussing the speech variations in John Steinbeck's novel The Grapes of Wrath. The writer only takes some of the

characters who represent the different social backgrounds in the novel. Besides their different social backgrounds, these characters are chosen because they are in some way or other related to the main character Joad, in the story who interact with each other under different atmospheres, conditions and situations along their journey. In this way she shows the relationship between linguistics and characters in a literary work, and one of the aspects of linguistics namely the speech variations as used in a novel.

#### **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

To avoid misunderstanding of terms used in this thesis, the writer gives some definitions on speech variations, sociolinguistic domains used by characters, social factors, and fragment.

##### Speech Variations

Holmes (1992:3) defines speech variation as "a variety of ways which language provide of saying the same thing." Holmes (1992:9) explains "Variety (or sometimes code) is to refer to any set of linguistic forms which patterns according to social factors, used under specific social circumstances, i.e. with a distinctive social distribution". Variety is therefore a broad term which includes different accents, differ-



ent linguistic styles, different dialects and even different languages which contrast with each other for social reasons. In this analysis the variety refers to the standard and non-standard varieties in the English language.

Holmes (1992:82) defines as follows:

"A standard variety is generally one which is written, and which has undergone some degree of regularisation or codification (for example, in a grammar and a dictionary); it is recognised as a prestigious variety or code by a community, and it is used for H functions alongside a diversity of L varieties."

Holmes (1992:145-146) explains standard dialect is "a socially favoured dialect" and avoids its implication that non-standard dialect is a somehow deviation from the standard. Some sociolinguists use the term vernacular as an alternative to non-standard."

#### Sociolinguistic Types of Characters

Holmes (1992:179-181) divides the characters by sex and by age. She says "Women use more standard forms than men do in all social group" and this case is accounted to four reasons according to Holmes (1992:171), they are: first, to social class and related status, second, to women's role in society, third, to women's status as a subordinate group, and fourth, to the function of speech in expressing mascu-

linity."

Holmes (1992:180-181) also states that the choice of speech variations regarding to the character, that is age as she says "The social roles that women and men play, their different values and social networks (who they talk to most), and their sensitivity to contextual factors, including characteristics of the person they are talking to, are relevant factors accounting for people's speech patterns".

Besides age and sex, the choice of appropriate variation according to Fishman (1975: 44) by two interlocutors within a given speech network within a speech community, as in this thesis within the dialogs among the characters, depends on the role relationship what exists between them at any particular time. Trudgill (1984; 100-2) also gives the same idea that language has to be appropriate to the speaker using it besides to the particular occasions and situations, and in particular to the role relationships and relative statuses of the participants in a discourse. Some of the role relationship that may exist are father-son, husband-wife, clergyman-layman, employer-employee, friend-friend, lover-lover, authority-subordinate, etc. Role relationships, according to Fishman (1975: 45) are implicitly recognized and

accepted sets of mutual rights and obligations between members of the same sociocultural system. The role relationships also vary in the extent on the emphasis of mutual rights and obligations in either or both personal and transactional interactions (Fishman: 46). He says transactional interactions stress the mutual rights and obligations of the participants, while personal interactions are more informal, fluid and varied. Fishman (1975: 47) further says that the implementation of the rights and duties of a particular role relationship, together with the place (locale) and the time most appropriate or typical for that relationship construct the social situation.

The writer is concerned with the choice of speech variations, standard or non-standard (vernacular), which the characters in the novel might choose depend on their sex and age interrelated with other social factors and social situations that surround those characters.

#### Social Factors

Speech variations deal with the different social attitudes of the speakers which is usually caused by different social aspects of the speakers. The formation of speech variations according to Holmes (1992:12-14) depend on four factors, they are (1)

formal or informal situation of speaking, (2) the condition of the speaker's social status, (3) related or unrelated relationship between speaker's social status, (4) difference of age of the speakers. These components of speech answer Pride's (1981:6) questions of "who/to whom, when, where, what, how and why". Holmes (1992:12-14) gives four scales for analyzing these components; they are: (1) solidarity - social distance scale; (2) status scale; (3) formality scale; and (4) referential and affective function scales.

Thus, the writer concludes that speech variations depend on the speakers, the setting and the situation of the interaction, or in this thesis is meant social situations in which the dialogues take place among the characters in the novel.

### Fragment

The writer is dealing with fragments of dialogs in the novel, so she needs to define fragment. Webster (1990: 489) defines fragment as "part broken off, detached, or incomplete." In this case, a fragment is part broken off a dialog among the characters in the novel. The choice of fragments in this thesis is done based on the characters who are determined by relationship, status, sex, age, role relationship of

speakers, place and time of the interactions. Each fragment also represents different settings and topics of the speech in the dialogs.

### 1.7 Theoretical Framework

The writer will review the theoretical framework which deals with the speech variations, the speech components, and the kinds of speech variations.

The underlying theory the writer uses in her analysis are theories which deal with sociolinguistic types of characters which show the relationship of the choice of linguistic aspects (speech variations) and the social aspects of the characters (they are the status of characters, formality of the setting or type of interaction, and the function of the purpose or topic of interaction).

### 1.8 Organization of the Study

Chapter I is the introduction, which the writer divides it into sub-chapters: background of the problems, statement of the problems, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study. They are followed by the definitions of key terms, theoretical framework and the organization of the study. Chapter II is the review of the related literature, which consists of a review of speech

variations consisting of a review of speech components and the kinds of speech variations and sociolinguistic types of characters. Chapter III is the research methodology which is divided into the research design, the subject, the research questions, the data collection, and the data analysis. Chapter IV is the data analysis and research findings. Chapter V is devoted to the conclusion of the analysis and followed by some suggestions. Finally, this thesis is completed with a bibliography.