CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

Schaefer (1986:61) says that language is the foundation of every culture, though particular language may differ in striking ways. He adds that language is an abstract system of word meanings and symbols for all aspects of culture. Language itself can be in the form of speech, written characters, numerals, symbols, gestures, or other nonverbal communication. In contrast to some other elements of culture, language permeates all parts of society.

Language also plays an important role in unifying members of a society. Language makes people interact and communicate with others, express their feelings and ideas. Language is also useful to persuade and control behavior, to transmit information, to create social cohesion. It is clearly seen that language and society has a dependent relationship between one another.

All societies have their own guides and principles in regulating the members of their society. They have norms, values, standards that are communicated to people through language. All those aspects are used in encouraging and enforcing what the societies view as appropriate behavior while discouraging and punishing what they consider to be improper (Schaefer,1986:62). In order for a norm and value to become significant, they must be shared, understood and learnt by the members of society.

Kartomihardjo as quoted by Prijambodo (1996:53) says that a good member of society deserves to adopt and apply the value and the norm of his society both in speech and conduct when interacting with others. The attempt to break the norms will lead to sanction, such as warning, isolation, or punishment.

Following and maintaining the social values and norms also involve speaking politely to others. By speaking politely, we can build and keep a good communication. To this point, Holmes (1992:285) states that generally speaking politeness involves taking account of the feelings of others. A polite person makes others feel comfortable. Politeness deals with respecting others. Inappropriate linguistic choices maybe considered rude. And by being polite, we can show our feelings toward others, such as respect and more important our awareness of social customs.

In Javanese, where most Indonesians speak with and one of the popular languages, being polite is obviously a complex linguistic matter. In Javanese, speaking politely is determined by the appropriate choice of speech level (unda-usuk). Geertz in Wardhaugh (1998:272) says that Javanese is a language in which it is nearly impossible to say anything without indicating the social relationship between the speaker and the listener in terms of status and familiarity. If one wants to speak to another, he must decide and know the appropriate speech style.

In Javanese there are three basic levels. The most formal high style known as krama, middle style known as madya, and the least formal is ngoko. For example, the

word 'sleeping' in ngoko is 'turu', in madya 'tilem' in krama 'sare'. Each level involves different pronunciation, grammatical form and items of vocabulary.

Another aspect in following the values and norms is by avoiding saying certain things as well as express them. Not all things can be said, not because they cannot be but because people do not talk about those things. This happens through the phenomenon called taboo. As Trudgill (1974:29) says that taboo can be characterized as being concerned with behavior which is improper; it deals with behavior which is prohibited or inhibited in an apparently irrational manner.

When we communicate with others, we just not only express ideas and thoughts but we also need to consider the social context as well as our feeling. In communication, the same message may be expressed in a very different way because we do not want to hurt someone's feeling when we want to say something unpleasant or something, which is considered taboo. And to avoid this, we can use euphemistic expressions. Euphemism according to Opdycke (1944:44) is a soft or gentle or unobjectionable manner of saying something that is reality hard, unpleasant or disagreeable in idea. And the phenomenon of euphemism widely spread within all languages and cultures. For example, the word 'died' is replaced with 'passed away'. In Javanese, where the people are known as calm and full of courtesy, it is a common thing to use euphemistic expression, such as the word 'kumpul' to replace 'laki/coitus' which means having intercourse. By using euphemistic expressions, words that sound unpleasant have been replaced by other words, which carry less negative or more positive connotation.

As human beings always communicate with others, the effort to communicate can be in the form of written materials instead of spoken, such as through magazine, newspapers. As stated above, we need to consider the social context when we communicate. And so does in the mass media. The journalists tend to avoid writing something that is hard. Rissover and Birch (1983:124) states that other papers, wishing to help their communities by keeping everyone happy, err on the other side and rarely print anything unpleasant.

Curious and interested in it, it is then decided to make a study and an analysis about the use of euphemism in the Javanese magazine, Jayabaya, in this thesis entitled A Study on The Javanese Euphemism As Used in Jayabaya Magazine.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

In line with the background of the study, the questions investigated are formulated as follows:

1. What euphemistic expressions are used in Jayabaya magazine?

2. Why euphemisms are used in Jayabaya magazine?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

This study is intended to answer the formulated research questions. As such, the objectives are:

1. To know the euphemistic expressions used in Jayabaya magazine.

2. To find out the underlying reasons of using euphemisms in Jayabaya magazine.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are most likely to enlarge the study of sociolinguistics which are still being done. Besides, this study is most likely to be taken as an input to the students who are interested in studying euphemism and is doing a research about euphemism now, and also hopefully this study could enrich the knowledge and information about euphemism.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

Due to the limited time, energy and fund available, it is decided to make a limitation of the study. Javanese magazine, Jayabaya is chosen as the source of the data and the data are taken from January until December 1998 in which the writer takes two editions from each month, so there are 24 editions all. The data are taken from all the articles of the magazine. This study is limited only in the euphemistic expressions in the Jayabaya Magazine and the same expressions will not be mentioned again.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the theories of language politeness, taboo and euphemism. Holmes (1992:296) states that generally speaking politeness involves taking account at the feelings of others. Being linguistically polite involves speaking to people appropriately in the light of their relationship to you. According to Wardhaugh (1998:234) taboo is the prohibition or avoidance in any society of behavior believed

to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment or shame. Euphemism according to Rawson (1992:377) is a mild, agreeable, or roundabout words used in place of coarse, painful or offensive ones. As such, they are outward and visible signs of our inward anxieties, conflicts, fears and shame.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

There are some terms to be further explained in order to avoid misunderstanding on the part of the readers. The terms to be defined are:

1. Connotative meanings are the subjective meanings a given individual holds of symbols used in a particular situation. (Warnich and Inch, 1994:271)

2. Euphemism is a polite but roundabout expression for things which are considered too nasty to talk about directly. (Trask, 1994:42)

3. Speech Level refers to the language varieties in which the differences between one another are determined by the difference polite behavior level between the speaker and the addressee. (Poedjosoedarmo, 1979:3)

4. Taboo is the prohibition or avoidance in any society of behavior believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety. (Wardhaugh, 1998:234)

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction. It gives some explanation to the readers about the background of the study, the statements of

the problem, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation, theoretical framework, definition of key terms and organization of the thesis.

The second chapter is a review of related literature which presents the basic theories underlying the study. The third chapter is about research methodology. It discusses the nature and research design, the source of data, the research instrument, the procedures of collecting the data, the procedures of analyzing the data, and the triangulation.

The fourth chapter talks about findings and the discussion of the findings. The last chapter of the thesis presents the summary, conclusion and some suggestions concerning the topic under study.