CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language and society are so closely related to one another that it is impossible for a person to understand the other person without language. People use language as a means of communication in the society. In this case, communication means the activity of expressing ideas and feelings or of giving people information. Basically, there are two ways of communication, which are verbal and non verbal. Verbally, people communicate with the other persons by directly speaking to the person or by using phone. Non-verbally, people communicate using letters or in this modern technology, people can use cellular-phones to communicate with other people. In this case, they can either make a phone call or send a message to other people.

SMS (Short Message Service) is one facility provided by cell-phones which enables people to send messages to their friends or relatives in only a few seconds. The messages sent by this service are also called the same as the service itself, "SMS". It can be in the form of questions, requests, information, et cetera. In this case, the messages or the SMS's sent are the short ones and not the long ones like those in letters because Short Message Service has a limited capacity of digits in one delivery.

Basically, the capacity of composing an SMS is limited to maximum 160 characters, but since cellular-phones keep being developed producing new types (such as Nokia types 6680, N70 et cetera) with more features, those cellular-phones

can be used to compose SMS unlimitedly. It means that even though the SMS has been composed up to 160 characters, it still can be composed continuously no matter how long it is needed. In this case, every 160 characters will be counted as one SMS, but at least composing SMS will seem to be more practical because the message screen does not always need to be changed.

In fact, this study is focusing on the language styles encountered in the SMS because it is believed that the language used in the SMS is unique. It is different from written or spoken language. What makes the language unique is characterized by the language style used in the SMS because composing an SMS is not similar to writing a letter. The language used in writing a letter has to be polite and grammatically correct, yet writing a letter has unlimited capacity of characters, so that it is easily understandable for other people. Composing an SMS is also not similar to directly telling certain information to other people. In fact, speaking is unlimited. People can talk as much as they want to and they can clarify something until the information is clear no matter how long the explanation is. On the contrary, in sending a message through SMS (in which the capacity is limited), people have to condense the information in the message or compose the message as short as possible, yet clear, so that all important information can be received in one SMS. And the most important thing is that the receiver can comprehend the content of the message even though the message may consist of lots of abbreviations and it may avoid the usage of grammar. Nevertheless, how people create an SMS depends on their creativity, and how people create the SMS will determine their language style.

However, talking about writing SMS, people usually write the messages in different styles, which are influenced by lots of factors, including the sex of the receivers, the age of the receivers, the social background of the receivers, the

relationship with the receivers, status, the topic etc. In fact, people often use a different style in addressing other people, depending on certain features of contexts. Talking to parents, for instance, will be somewhat different to talking to friends. To support this, Holzman (1997:230) further says that it is offensive to adults to be addressed in the way an adult might address younger people. Furthermore, it can be seen that in reality, even among friends the language styles used might not be the same. In the situation of a classroom, for example, talking to close friends will not be the same as talking to new friends. Therefore, concerning the phenomenon that people use different language styles in communicating with other people in general, moreover in communicating via SMS in particular triggered the writer's curiosity to do this study.

However, although it is common for lots of people to use cellular-phones, it seems that young people use the facility of sending messages via SMS more often than adults because it is cheaper than making a phone call. This is supported by the fact that generally young people are not independent yet, especially financially. They are still supported by their parents. In fact, English Department students are chosen as the participants in this study because they can be considered as young people and most of them use cell-phones. Moreover, they are the inspiration of this study. The fact that English Department students often use SMS for communicating with other people has aroused the writer's interest to do a study about the language styles encountered in the communication via SMS of those students.

1.2   Statements of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the statements of the problem are as follows:

1. Which language styles are mostly encountered in the SMS of the students of the English Department?

2. What factors mainly affect the students to use certain language styles?

1.3   Objectives of the Study

In line with the statements of the problem, the objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the language styles encountered in the Short Message Service of the students of the English Department.

2. To find out the factors which affect the students to use certain language styles.

1.4   Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to give some contribution to the field of sociolinguistics, especially about language styles dealing with SMS. Hopefully this study can make the readers aware of the development of the language usage related to the fact that the language used in the SMS is somewhat different from the language used for daily communication, especially concerning the abbreviations and grammar avoidance. Thus, the readers who read this study can also realize the existence of certain language styles in the written message (especially in this study is in the SMS) between younger people and older people.

For older people, hopefully the result of this study can give them more information about the factors which may affect the usage of certain language style in the SMS, so that they will not feel offended if they once may get an SMS which does not use the appropriate language styles. For the students, hopefully the result of this study can give them concrete examples of the application of certain language styles

for communicating in the concrete life. Moreover, hopefully this study might be able to increase the students' curiosity in having more knowledge about language styles theoretically and the application in the real life.

1.5 The Scope and Limitation

Being aware of how broad and complex the study is, the limited time, energy, and funds provided, the scope of this study is limited to 10 English Department students of Widya Mandala University, whose name are not mentioned. From each student at least two SMS's which has a reply will be taken as the data. The SMS which continues to the next SMS with the same sender and receiver in conjunction will also be taken as the data combined with the first one because the SMS's are considered as one unit of communication.

The writer will accept any language found in the SMS. Her consideration is to observe the natural condition of daily conversation of the students because the writer is curious about language styles used by them. In addition, concerning the topics of the SMS, any topics such as social and academic topics would be discussed, except love and sex because those topics are quite privacy for the participants.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This study has a close relationship to the field of sociolinguistics, since it examines the relationship between the language and the society aiming at having a better understanding of language variation, language styles, and the social factors that influence someone to use the language styles. However, the most relevant theory in this study is language styles. In addition, this study is also related to the concept of

communication lifestyle, especially the communication lifestyle of people who live in the city and also related to the concept of Short Message Service itself.

Language Variation

The language that people use in everyday life is remarkably varied. Thomas et al (1999:192) says that "language variation refers to the many ways that language system can change or vary with respect to the grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation." There are three types of language varieties in studying language variation. They are known as language, dialect, and style.

Language Styles

People usually use different language style in addressing different people, which is characterized by a degree of formality. For example: in conversation among friends, the language style used is casual which shows solidarity.

According to Martin Joos as quoted by Nababan (1991:22), there are five levels of styles: frozen style, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate style. From those five language styles, frozen style is the most formal style. It is used in a respectful situation like in the government. Formal style is less formal compared to frozen style, but it still needs formal situations such as in the meetings of company committees. Consultative style is less formal compared to formal style. It is used in usual conversations among people who still need to show respect to each other, for example among workers in a company. Casual style is less formal compared to consultative style. It is used in an informal situation like in the conversation among friends. Finally, the intimate style is the most informal style among those five styles. It is used in conversation among family or between best friends in an informal situation.

Human beings communicate differently from person to person depending on certain features of contexts. Talking to strangers, for instance, will be different from talking to friends. According to Holmes (1992), there are four social factors which determine one's choice of language, and hence language styles to communicate with other people around. They are the participants, setting, topic, and function.

1.7 Definition of the Key Terms

To clarify several terms in order to avoid misunderstanding when the readers read this research, the terms are explained below:

(1) Language Variation

It refers to the variety of languages that are used to show religion and social background. For example: someone who comes from a Chinese family, talks to her family using Mandarin, but she uses Javanese in speaking with her friends.

(2) Language Style

It refers to the manner of speaking which reflects the context in which the language is used. It is influenced by the addressee (the age and the social background that the addressee has). It this study, the language style observed is the written language used in the SMS which covers frozen style up to intimate style.

(3) Young People

It refers to people whose age is 15 to 24 years old.

(4) SMS or Short Message Service

It refers to a text message service that enables the users of cell-phones to send short messages in the form of written message to the other users and to receive short messages from other users of cell-phones.

1.8   Organization of the Study

          This study consists of five chapters. Chapter one presents the background of
the study, the statements of the problem, the objectives of the study, the significance
of the study, the scope and limitation, the definition of the key terms, the theoretical
framework, and the organization of the study. Chapter two presents related theories
which support this study and related previous studies. Chapter three presents the
research methods which consist of the nature of the study and its design, the data, the
instruments, the procedures of collecting data and the procedures of analyzing data.
Chapter four presents the data resources, the data analysis, the interpretation of the
findings, and conclusion. Finally, chapter five presents the summary that includes
suggestions and conclusion.