CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1. Background of the Study

Language and society are so intertwined that it is impossible to understand one without language. People use language as a means of communication in the society. Communication used in the society is not limited on printed media (such as newspapers, magazines, and books) and electronic media (for example, television, radio, telephone, etc.), but also on multimedia, computer based technology integrating some but not necessarily all, of the following text, graphics, animation, sound, video, and internet services.

Communication breaks through space and time. Today, people can communicate more easily because there is a telecommunication system named Internet, which links computer around the world to provide international communication services. By using Internet, people can send message or e-mail (electronic mail), shop for products, and buy them on line, find and download software, make travel plans, do financial planning, look for a new job, read some information published on the Web, search for people, and many other interesting services. The most interesting service, which is preferred by people all over the world and in every age, is chatting.

With the advent of the Internet, chat as we know it has taken on a whole new perspective. Instead of chatting with a neighbor over the back fence, it is now

possible to chat with a "cyber" neighbor half a world or more away. With special client software, it is possible to talk to people in "real time" as opposed to waiting for e-mail. Crumlish (1998) explains that first there was a program called Talk that enabled two users to carry on sentence-by-sentence conversations. Next come Chat, which enabled multiple users to communicate in this way. Then came IRC, which stands for Internet relay chat. It is a chatting program, which invites interested users to join the channel and communicate among themselves by typing the messages to everyone on the channel or sending private messages to individuals.

As a means of communication, chatting also possesses typical characteristics of human communication. One of the characteristics is language style. While studies on the styles of conventional human communications have been abundant, there is still a little research exploring the area of language style used in chatting. This inspired the writer to conduct an investigation into the area. In this study, the writer reports a study which aims at analyzing the language styles of Internet chatting.

1.2. Statements of the Problem

Referring to the background that the writer stated above, the research questions raised in this study are:

1. What are the language functions of the utterances in the Internet chatting?

2. What are the language styles used in Internet chatting?

The second major question above is specified into two sub questions:

a. What are the verbal characteristics of messages in Internet chatting?

b. What are the mostly used grammatical patterns in Internet chatting?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

In line with the problem stated above, this study is intended to identify:

1. The language functions of the utterances in the Internet chatting.

2. The language styles used in Internet chatting. Specifically it is intended to identify:

   a. The verbal characteristics of messages in Internet chatting

   b. The mostly used grammatical patterns in Internet chatting

1.4. The Significance of the Study

The writer hopes that the result of this study will give some knowledge of language styles, language functions and verbal characteristics in the media of modern communication, especially Internet.

1.5. Scope and Limitation

Being aware how broad and complex the study is, and the limited time, energy and funds that the writer has, the writer thinks that it is necessary to limit the scope of the study. She focused her investigation on chatting in mIRC that involves conversations between herself with several non-Indonesian chatters, those who communicate in English as International language (such as Indian,

Singaporean, American, Japanese, etc), because she wants to focus on English conversation only. So, it is a written conversation by typing the messages to everyone on the channel or sending private messages to individuals. She did not determine the age and the sex of the people she chatted with, because she found that most of the chatters did not tell the truth about them, so they might pretend themselves as anybody else. Beside that, without determining the age and sex, the writer could have various language styles to investigate. In recording the data, the writer limited the time of recording to two months, on Saturdays for about 2 hours, started at 5 p.m. up to 7 p.m. The writer chooses Saturday for her investigation because she thinks that there are a lot of people chatting around that time and on that day. Every time she chats, she focuses on 7 – 10 persons and then selects the complete conversations as the samples of her investigation.

1.6.   Definition of the Key Terms

The writer finds it is useful to define several key terms used in this study. The writer hopes that the readers will have a clear picture of what this study is trying to present. There are some terms to be further explained in order to avoid misunderstanding on the parts of readers:

1. **Internet:** is a collection of networks and computers all over the world, all of which share information, or at least e-mail, using agreed-upon internal protocols.

2. **Chatting:** is means communicating live (in real time) with other people over the Internet, often just by typing, but sometimes also via voice, video, or some other medium.

3. **Language function:** is the functions of a language used in communication that are classified into:

   1. **Referential** utterances: language is used to ask for and give or provide information. (by Crystal (1993), Holmes (1992), Hudson (1993) and Anwar (1984)).

   2. **Expressive** utterances: language is used to express feelings, emotion, personality, fear and affection (by Hayakawa (1978), Crystal (1993), Hudson (1993), Holmes (1992) and Anwar (1984)).

   3. **Directive** utterances: language is used to ask someone to do something, suggest something, invite someone, and prohibit someone to do something (by Hudson (1993), Holmes (1992), and Anwar (1984)).

   4. **Phatic** utterances: language is used to express solidarity and empathy with others, establish or to reinforce social relation, and maintain a comfortable relationship between people (by Kehoe (1977), Crystal (1993), Hudson (1993), Holmes (1992) and Anwar (1984)).

   5. **Metalinguistic** utterances: language is used to comment on language itself (by Holmes (1992)).

   6. **Poetic** utterances: language is used to focus on aesthetic feature of language, e.g. a poem, an ear catching motto, a rhyme (by Holmes (1992).

4. **Language Style**: is the form of languages that speaker uses and it is characterized by a degree of formality. The language style used here ranges from the very informal to the formal one. Joos (1962:153) identifies the style in five scales:

1. **Frozen Style** refers to a very formal language style used in the respectful situation and in the formal ceremonies, such as in the president's messages, important speeches, editorial, etc.; selected standard language will be used.

2. **Formal Style** refers to language style used in formal speeches or official meetings.

3. **Consultative Style** refers to the language style used in the usual discussion at school or at business.

4. **Casual Style** refers to the language style used among friends when they are talking, doing exercises, going recreations, etc. This style is solidarity oriented. The better speaker knows the addressee, the more casual this speech style he will use.

5. **Intimate Style** refers to the language style among family members or friends. In this style there are many forms or certain terms created by them.

4. **Jargon**: is varieties of language created for specific functions by the people who engage in them regularly. They are like minidialects, but used only for the activity for which they were created.

5. **Slang**: is one of the varieties of a non-standard dialect which is used by a particular group especially youngsters. It has non-standard vocabularies composed of words and sense that are characterized primarily by connotations of extreme informality (Webster's Third New International Dictionary, 1986:2137).

6. **Telegraphic**: is sentences that are reduced into a limited number of content words. For example: Same, Great!, What major?, Time?, etc.

7. **Orthographic**: is the art of writing words with the proper letter according to standard usage (Webster's Third New International Dictionary, 1986:1594). For examples: I'm from Surabaya, My name is Suzan, I take English, etc.

1.7. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one contains the idea why the writer is interested in studying this matter, the questions to be answered, the objectives and significance of the study, definition of the key terms, supporting theories, and organization of the thesis. Chapter two deals with the basic theories of the study elaborated from the theoretical framework. The research methodology, how the study is carried out until the data collection is done will be presented in chapter three. Chapter four is about the data analysis and the interpretation of the findings. At last, chapter five will be the summary, conclusion and suggestions.