

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.4 Background of the Study

Language, according to Scholes (1960:17), is basically a means of communication to express ideas, feelings and imaginations. The language use cannot be separated from the social group of a region that uses the language. It provides people with the place in a society to convey information, to learn about the world, and to gather with others.

Language in this world – including English – is produced in spoken or written forms. The relationship between those forms is close as mentioned by Scholes (1966:186) that the form of writing has social value of speaking, and this case has been presented continuously as narrative literature of the ancient world.

Then, Labov and Fleischman in Ehrlich (1995:92) define this narrative as events in the real world and in the literary work. The first event is based on historical component which specifies the actual fact in the past – time and space – and refers to the human life and nature while the other one can be classified into two, first, non-fiction (e.g. brochures and essays); and second, fiction (e.g. poetry, drama, short story, and novel) (Little, 1966:68).

According to Kennedy (1991:231), the last example of fictional literary work – novel – is the popular English narratives in the eighteenth century that is the longest form of prose fiction (Little, 1966:68). Because of its length, all the basic elements of

a novel are able to be developed extraordinarily. Thus, the readers of it feel as if becoming witnesses in it; as same as experiencing the actual life.

Though a novel is in the written form, it represents factors appeared in the conversation of the real life through its basic elements. They are, first, characters which represent participants who use dialects to convey information and express feelings at the same time through utterances. Next is setting. It represents times and places of utterances and the physical circumstances in general. While, the third is theme. This element represents topics and the purposes of speech dealt with expressing moral and social ideas. Then, the last element is plot which represents the complexity of the participants in exploring the function of the speech.

The novel being discussed in this study, *David Copperfield*, presents unforgettable characters from multi socio-cultural, geographical and educational background in 1800s (at the Victorian Times) because of the background of its author – Charles Dickens. The characterization of ‘David Copperfield’, for example, is drawn nearly as Dickens’s self by living constantly in Portsmouth, Chatham, London, Yarmouth, Lowestoft, Broadstairs, and the Isle of Wight; having not much formal schooling; having the mother who could not spend much time on him; finding much misery and poverty at the same time finding wickedness and crime; working at a factory forcedly; and having no friends at his early years. Then, after experiencing a long period of suffering and unhappy childhood, Copperfield went to school and ended up it as “first boy” of the school, worked for a law firm, and married a woman he loved.

The writer decided to study the dialects used by the characters in a novel because they are presented by its author in the written form. Though, through that form, they are able to imitate the dialects of the real life to present an imaginary scene to the readers. Then, she chose Charles Dickens's novel entitled *David Copperfield* as she agreed with Gavin's statement (1992:x) that Charles Dickens in that novel presents the finest chapters ever written in English fiction through the reproduction of the dialects in England at the Victorian Times (1800s), for instance, the character Uriah Heep's words "*I'm 'umble*" (Leech & Short, 1981:167). Beside that, she is also interested in the theme of the novel that focuses on the human relationships across regions and social gaps.

1.5 Statements of the Problems

Experiencing a phenomenon of various dialects used in one novel, the writer is interested in investigating the following problems:

1. What dialects are used by the characters in *David Copperfield*?
2. What factors affect the characters in *David Copperfield* in using those dialects to communicate with each other?

1.6 Objectives of the Study

Referring to the research questions in statements of the problem above, this study is meant to describe:

1. The dialects used by the characters in *David Copperfield*.

2. The factors that affect the characters of *David Copperfield* to use those dialects to communicate with each other.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The writer expects that this thesis gives a contribution to sociolinguistic studies, especially those related to the varieties of dialects used in the English fictional prose. In this study, she shows that the sociolinguistic data can be obtained from written source – from characters' utterances of Charles Dickens's novel entitled *David Copperfield*. Further, she hopes this study represents Charles Dickens's genius work in creating the sense of experiencing the fictional autobiography of *David Copperfield*.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

As a purpose of analyzing the dialects used by the characters in Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*, the writer limits herself in this thesis by reviewing the related study of:

1. The linguistic features used as the parameter of the thesis here are only grammar, word spellings and word choices. The feature of pronunciation is not included since this thesis analyzes the written geographical dialects in the novel where that feature is not necessary to be considered in.
2. The contextual factors discussed here are only the settings, topics and participants of the utterances, whereas the purposes of the conversations are excluded.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

The underlying concepts of this thesis are focused on dialects, grammatical features, word choices and word spellings. Those components are significant concepts in a sociolinguistic study (Wardough, 1986:10) and they also appear in both fiction and the real life (Short, 1996:xi). In short, dialects in a written literary work are also uttered to describe regional status and social groups of the characters; similarly with the ones in a spoken form (Wolfram, 1991:261).

Therefore, the sociolinguistic approach is used in this study to uncover the relationship between the characters in the novel and the dialects used in producing utterances. In order to find out the kinds of dialects used in the novel being discussed, the writer took linguistic features – word choices, word spellings and grammar – as the parameter of this study. It is because dialects in literature also represent the linguistic features in orthographical system (Short, 1996:81). And next, the writer also analyzed the factors that affect the characters in *David Copperfield* to use their dialects in communicating with others in that novel.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation, the writer defines some key terms used in this study as follows:

1. Dialect:
 - Wolfram (1981:1) says that the term ‘dialect’ is shared by a group of speakers in a particular social and geographical variety.

- According to Leech & Short (1981:167), dialect is the particular set of linguistic features which correspond to the speech communities.
- Concerning Short (1996:81), dialect is related to what part of the country people come from.
- According to Holmes (1992:146), a dialect is used to express solidarity and affective meaning, and acquired in informal contexts.
- Radford (1999:57) states that a dialect is the ungrammatical form of a dialect used by a person who has a lack of educational training and discipline in learning.

In this study, the writer uses the term ‘dialect’ as a set of linguistic features which correspond to geography, class, or other social aspects of a participant to express solidarity and affective meaning in informal contexts (Leech & Short, 1981:167).

2. Standard English:

- Holmes (1992:83-84) says that Standard English is an influential or prestigious language variety, codified and stabilized, and used for communication at court, for literature and for communication.
- Radford, et al (1999:17) states that Standard English is the variety of language that has been written in grammar books, pronunciation and spelling conventions, and is promoted by the media and other public institutions, and is considered to be the “correct” way to speak.

Since Holmes and Radford have nearly the same statement about the term ‘Standard English’, the writer defines it as the variety of English

language that has been written, codified and stabilized (for instance, in grammar books, dictionaries, and pronunciation and spelling conventions), and used in formal contexts.

1.8 Assumption

Although the dialects being investigated in this thesis are found in a fictional novel, the writer assumed that those dialects were the accurate representation of those in real life of that era.

Identifying a certain dialect involves identifying the vocabulary, certain expressions and certain grammatical features. In this case, the writer assumed that Dickens had accurately portrayed these facts in a written form of dialects, except for the spoken features that cannot be realized explicitly in the novel.

1.9 Organization of the Study

This thesis was divided into a simple organization consisting of five chapters. The first chapter is 'Introduction' describing background of the study, statements of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, theoretical framework, definition of key terms, assumption, and organization of the study. While the second chapter concerns the 'Review of Related Literature' tracing related literature and previous study; the third chapter deals with the 'Research Method' – research design, subject, the data source, the research instrument, data collecting procedures, and data analyzing procedures; while the fourth chapter is

'Research Findings and Discussion', and the last chapter, chapter five, states the writer's 'Conclusion' related to this study.