CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Human beings are social creatures that their life depends on others. It means that they cannot live alone and always depend on each other to survive. Thus, they need to socialize themselves with others in their life. In order to socialize with their society, they need to communicate with the surroundings. In this case, communication is the main role in society.

According to McCombs and Becker (1979:5) communication is a process of involving some very complex human behaviors of both the sender and the receiver of the message. It means that communication needs people to have an interaction on both sides. This statement is also supported by Whitney (1991:3). He also states that communication always involves two factors. They are a source and a receiver. A source can be a human being or a media that caries a message. Conversely, a receiver is a person who receives the message from other people or mass media that enable them to communicate to one another.

In order to support the need of communication, human beings need a media, which can carry a message that they want to communicate. Many kinds of media are available nowadays. The most famous and well-known mass media in the society are newspapers. Newspapers are read by a lot of people; thus, the language should be clear and understandable. Besides, newspapers should provide

clear messages and information for readers, so that they will not misunderstand and misinterpret the intended messages.

In every newspaper, there should be a letters column. The letters here are sent by the readers. Basically, there are two types of letters in letters column. The first type is the letters between the readers and the editorial staff. The second type is the letters among the readers themselves. Both of these two types of letters in letters column are useful to make possible communication between the readers and the editorial staff or among the readers themselves. Besides, with the use of letters column, the newspaper will not be monotonous.

According to Baddock (1988:51) the letters column is the only part of a newspaper which is written by people. Letters are written by people from all walks of life, and from a variety of social and educational backgrounds. Often, the letters column is to request, complain, criticize and give suggestions. All newspapers carry a letters column, and such letters are widely read; it is an authentic way to keep in touch with thoughts and opinions.

As a part of the newspaper, the language in the letters column should also be clear and understandable. In this case, the writers of the letters should present their intended message and meaning as clearly as possible in order to avoid misunderstanding in the part of the readers. Even though it is only a letters column, many people read the letters and try to understand and interpret the messages intended by those letters.

However, vague words, phrases and sentences are still found in some letters, whether they are intentionally or unintentionally written. Vagueness often

appears in some of letters sent by the readers. Vagueness or lack of specification (Kempson 1977:124) makes readers difficult to get the intended meaning from the letters clearly. As a result, the readers can get confused and have some interpretation in the meaning.

There are many kinds of mass media available in society, but the writer chose newspaper as the media for her analysis as people prefer reading newspapers to other media. The information in a newspaper is more up-to-date every day. The writer took *Jawa Pos* Newspaper to be analyzed in her thesis, especially the letters column on "Metropolis Watch" on page 30.

"Metropolis Watch" is a letters column on Metropolis section. "Metropolis Watch" consists of letters, which are written by kinds of people, from all walks of life and from a variety of social and educational backgrounds. Some letters from the readers in this column are sent for certain purposes, such as to convey some information, to criticize, to thank or to give opinions. Unfortunately, not every letter in the letters column is written clearly and obviously, so the readers cannot understand exactly the essence of the letters. As a result, the readers can have wrong interpretation. The vagueness that is intentionally or unintentionally done makes the readers get confused in interpreting the meaning of the letters in "Metropolis Watch". Therefore, the writer tries to examine the vagueness, which appears in those letters on "Metropolis Watch".

The writer chooses *Jawa Pos* Newspaper because *Jawa Pos* is a famous newspaper in Surabaya, and Surabaya people choose *Jawa Pos* Newspaper as their "breakfast" every morning. According to the research that was conducted by

editorial staff of *Jawa Pos* Newspaper on June 12, 2001, *Jawa Pos* had the most readers (66,8%) in Surabaya. In 2004 the readers of *Jawa Pos* is getting higher and higher.

Besides, the writer selects "Metropolis Watch" to be analyzed because "Metropolis Watch", which is the only letters column in *Jawa Pos* Newspaper, has become a good media of communication among people with different ages, statues, races and religions. Furthermore, not every letter in "Metropolis Watch" is written clearly and obviously. For that reason, the writer decides to analyze "Metropolis Watch".

This study is a replication of the previous studies. The reason for conducting a replication study is to see whether the initial findings hold over time. Besides, the writer would like to verify and extend the initial findings, especially about the four types of vagueness. In other words, the writer would like to prove whether the third type of vagueness, lack of specification, occurs the most frequently in *Jawa Pos* Newspaper as stated by the previous studies.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In connection with the background of the study above, the statement of the problem in this study is formulated as follows:

1. Does vagueness appear in every letter on "Metropolis Watch" in *Jawa Pos* Newspaper?

2. What types of vagueness are found in every letter of *Jawa Pos'* "Metropolis Watch"?

4

3. Which types of vagueness appear most frequently?

4. Where does vagueness appear the most frequently in words, phrases or sentences?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In connection with the research questions above, the objectives of this study are intended to:

1. Find out whether vagueness appears in every letter on "Metropolis Watch" in *Jawa Pos* Newspaper.

2. Analyze types of vagueness that appear in each letter of *Jawa Pos'* "Metropolis Watch".

3. Find out types of vagueness that most frequently appear.

4. Find out vagueness that most frequently appear in words, phrases or sentences.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to bring some benefits for all students of Widya Mandala Catholic University. First of all, the findings of this study are expected to give additional knowledge to students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University who study vagueness as a part of the study of Semantics. Last but not least, the result of this study provides principles of good writing for all students of Widya Mandala Catholic University and in general for people who want to write letters, especially in a newspaper.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

Based on the title, this study analyses vagueness in a newspaper. In this study, the writer limits to the four types of vagueness, which appear in words, phrases and sentences. In addition, this study is limited to "Metropolis Watch" in *Jawa Pos* Newspaper as the sources of data. "Metropolis Watch" is a letters column on page 30 of the *Jawa Pos* Newspaper. The writer took "Metropolis Watch" issued from February 9 to 18, 2004 with the assumption that ten editions are sufficient for the analysis.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is done within the field of study of Semantics. In this case, the writer takes the theory of vagueness as the focus of her analysis. Vagueness can be defined as lack of specification in term of meaning, which can cause several interpretations. According to Kempson (1977:124), there are four types of vagueness, namely referential vagueness, indeterminacy of meaning, lack of specification in the meaning of an item and disjunction in the specification of the meaning of an item. Since the object of this study is also related to newspaper, the writer also includes general concept of newspaper as mass media. Furthermore, the writer also includes principles of good writing since this study also deals with letter writing.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

The key terms for this study are:

1. Vagueness.

   Vagueness is lack of specification in term of meaning, which can cause several interpretations (Kempson, 1977:124). In other words, vagueness means a state of being not specific or exact in terms of the meaning that can make readers understand in different ways.

2. Newspaper

   Newspaper is a kind of mass media of information and enjoyment, which may be published daily (Bradley, 1971:16). According to Bradley (1971:26), newspaper gives information about the events that happen in the country, city or even local community. In this study, the writer uses *Jawa Pos* Newspaper, a national daily newspaper published in Surabaya, as source of data.

3. Letters column

   A letter column is the only part of a newspaper (with the partial exception of the classified ads), which is written by readers from all walks of life and from a variety of social and educational backgrounds (Baddock, 1988:51).

4. "Metropolis Watch"

   "Metropolis Watch" is a special column in Metropolis section of *Jawa Pos* Newspaper, which only focuses on public opinion in Surabaya. According to the editorial staff of *Jawa Pos* Newspaper on February 16, 2004, "Metropolis Watch" is a special column for the readers to

give ideas, opinions, criticism as to the problems and public services or whatever that happen in Surabaya as the capital of East Java.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I covers the background of the thesis, the research problems, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation, the theoretical framework in general, the definition of the key terms and the contents of this thesis. Chapter II includes the review of related literature. The related literature is about newspaper in general, good writing based on four basic principles, semantics in general, and the definition and the four types of vagueness in particular. Chapter III is the research method while Chapter IV discusses findings and interpretation of the findings. Chapter V consists of conclusion and suggestion.