

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

To welcome the millenium, most people become more enthusiastic performing many things for a better life. They try many ways and work hard for the better changing of their social-status. Together with this progress, their curiosity grows up. They question many things, for instance, the condition of the country, its politics, economics, and social-life. Consequently, people strive to find qualified information that fulfill their curiosity. In line with this case, the presence of mass media is very useful as one of the alternative solutions to answer the curiosity.

There are two types of mass media, the first is printed media and the second one is electronic media. The three major kinds of mass media; newspapers, magazines, and tabloids, are grouped into printed media. While televisions, radios and telephones belong to electronic media. These two types of mass media are considered as direct information where people receive from, by reading, listening, or watching the real sources as mentioned above. On the other hand, indirect information deals with an adopted information where people inherit from the 'second-hand' sources; teachers, families, friends, or even colleagues.

Printed media supplies an unlimited amount of information that is presented in written language. By reading printed media, people have expectation that they can give truth for something acquired. And as well as the world's progress, the existence of newspapers, magazines, and tabloids enrich people with

information and they compete each other performing the best. However, due to the fact that everything in the world must have plus and minus, it can not be denied that printed media also have weaknesses. One of the weaknesses is the inability to write news properly and create a good relationship between the title and the content. This situation can be a threat to the printed media themselves. It is because most people read printed media and if they make mistakes, a misunderstanding can not be prevented anymore. As a result, crisis of trust from the readers could not be prevented and they may think that the quality is not good enough. Moreover, faithful readers may leave them and thus income of the publishing company may get down.

From the three major kinds of printed media mentioned before, the researcher thought that newspaper was the most popular and interesting one to be chosen as the subject of the research concerning *vagueness* in daily life, based on the fact that most people prefer reading newspapers to magazines and tabloids. Compared with magazines and tabloids, newspaper is preferably due to its cheaper price, its latest news, its complete information and its interesting advertisements and entertainment. Whereas *vagueness* is supposed to be the main topic discussed in this study concerning the fact that many people do not realize the presence of *vagueness* or even take it as a problem in their daily life. Besides, so far the researcher finds there is no study talks about *vagueness*.

The choosing of newspaper is also supported by Miss Universe 2000, Lara Dutta. As quoted in Surya newspaper published on June 14th 2000, she says:

“The media is the greatest tool that a nation has. It highlights many issues, political, and environmental and

spurs the government and the citizen to take action. The pen is mightier than the sword, they say and I would agree. I thank the media for supporting me during my reign. I depend on them and together we can make a difference in the world.”

From Lara Dutta’s statements, it can be concluded that she appreciates mass media, specifically newspapers. She praised and thanked the media for supporting and changing her to be more popular, and she hopes that she can join newspapers for the better change of the world. She spoke out her opinion above in her visit to Surya newspaper’s office at Jalan Margorejo Indah D-108 Surabaya, on June 13th 2000. Moreover, she also stated that she would never forget Surya newspaper.

To further support this argument, Baddock in *Scoop! Communication Activities with British and American Newspaper* (1988:1) states that newspapers is a good basic for language study due to its variety of text types, languages and language styles. Newspapers are considered to be valuable carriers of news, since they help people share attitude and understand cultural values and get the great variety of information.

Newspapers could be said as the main daily menu for most people since their presence in society functions not only to convey information, ideas or opinions, but also to entertain the readers. Whereas one of the essential requirements to be a successful newspaper is that it has to be well written, therefore ambiguous meaning that may cause misunderstanding among the readers, needs to be avoided. In order to fulfill this requirement, a newspaper has to be well prepared and organized. More attention should be put on the grammar,

word choice, diction, and also vocabulary. In addition, a good newspaper should also put more efforts to the most important thing, that is the writing of news. It means that a newspaper should be able to write news while conveying information, in a complete and clear expression so that ambiguity and misunderstanding could be avoided. Simply, the titles should explain the titles exactly, so there will be an adjustment between the titles and the contents. Furthermore, the sentences should not only be grammatically correct, but also meaningfully acceptable. If a newspaper is well written, the information can be well transmitted to the readers, thereby a well understood situation would be created. On the other hand, if the information is not being communicated in a good manner, a misunderstanding or miscommunication might occur. This unwanted situation will drive the readers to a misleading of communication and it is a pity since newspapers become one of the printed media that may influence public opinion.

Miscommunication also happened in the Indonesian newspapers. It is supported by some facts as shown by several local newspapers, which one of them is Jawa Pos. Such communication can be considered as a lack of specification that bears more than one possible meaning. For instance, a news with title: "*Cak Nun: Gus Dur bisa tiru Gandhi*". A term *maqom* found in the content of this news. Unfortunately, the meaning of *maqom* in this news was not described at all. In this case, this news is not the clear one and could effect questions to the readers, because not everybody familiars with *maqom*. The second example is, "*Hati-hati Masuk Off-Road*", where seems to be an unclear news, since the meaning of *Off-*

Road was not described explicitly. These two examples of unclear news could cause different interpretations, left a 'question mark', and further might create a misunderstanding among the readers that could break down the communication.

In *Semantic* domain, an expression that has more than one possible meaning is called *ambiguity*, and the one which is not clearly expressed and lack of specification is considered as *vagueness*. *Ambiguity and vagueness* are known as one unity in *semantics*, a study of meaning relationship. Furthermore, this study discusses most about *vagueness*, which is appropriate to the research that is about the writing of politics, social-affairs, and economics news in newspaper. However, it is important to understand the difference between *ambiguity* and *vagueness*.

The word *good*, can bear ambiguous meaning, for example, if it is used in a sentence like *Nikita has good legs*. It has more than one meaning. Perhaps, Nikita has good legs, no varicose veins, no broken or badly mended bones, no weak ankles, or, it can also mean that she has beautiful legs, or she has legs which function well as an athlete or a gymnast.

A phrase like *John's book* maybe vague. *John's book* may refer to the book that John wrote, the book he owns, the book he has been reading, the book he bought, or the book he stole.

According to Channell in *Vague Language* (1994:5), people have many beliefs about language. The most important one is that 'good' usage involves (among other things) clarity and precision. Hence, it is believed that vagueness,

ambiguity, imprecision, and general woolliness are to be avoided. In connection with the use of language, Partridge in his *Usage and Abusage* states:

“The ideal at which a writer should aim, -admittedly it is impossible of attainment, -is that he writes so clearly, so precisely, so unambiguously, that his words can bear only one meaning to all averagely intelligent readers that possess an average knowledge of the language used.” (1947:25)

There are some reasons for the existence of vagueness. Crystal and Davy in *Advanced Conversational English* (1975:81) mention four reasons of vagueness, namely:

1. Memory loss -- the speaker forgets the correct word.
2. The language has no suitable exact word or the speaker does not know it.
3. The subject of the conversation does not require precision and an approximation or characterization will do, and
4. The choice of a vague item is deliberate to maintain the atmosphere.

While Ullman (1962:118) in *Semantics* says that vagueness is inherent in the very nature of language, whereas others come into play in special circumstances. In other words, it can be said that vagueness could come up by accident or on purpose.

According to Channell in *Vague Language* (1994:197), vague language is not bad or wrong, but nor it is inherently good. Its use needs to be considered with reference to context and situations, when it will be appropriate, or inappropriate. Moreover, vague language occurs in both speech and writing. However, many vague expressions occur more frequently in spoken English, and further some are highly disfavored in written English.

Vague language is a broad and fruitful area of language study, with considerable potential for further work. Therefore, since vagueness often appears in daily life specifically newspapers and becomes an interesting topic to be discussed, the researcher could find that it is interesting to analyze the quality of Jawa Pos newspaper due to the fact that Jawa Pos is a well-known newspaper with many faithful and growing number of readers. In addition, the *four kinds of vagueness* presented by Kempson in *Semantic Theory*, namely Referential vagueness, Indeterminacy of the meaning of an item or phrase, Lack of specification in the meaning of an item, and the Meaning of an item involves the disjunction of different interpretations; will be used as the vehicle to analyze the quality of Jawa Pos newspaper.

1.2 Statements of the Problems

The statements of the problems under discussion are formulated as follows

1. What kinds of vagueness are found on politics, social-affairs, and economics news in the first pages of Jawa Pos newspaper during the May-2000 edition?
2. How is the quality of Jawa Pos newspaper on May-2000 in terms of writing politics, social-affairs, and economics news in the first pages viewed from the four kinds of vagueness?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study is intended to:

1. Find out the kinds of vagueness that are found on politics, social-affairs, and economics news in the first pages of Jawa Pos newspaper during the May-2000 edition, and
2. Judge the quality of Jawa Pos newspaper on May 2000 in terms of writing politics, social-affairs, and economics news in the first pages viewed from the four kinds of vagueness.

1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study

Being aware of how broad the discussion of this study would be, the researcher finds it is necessary to limit it. This study discusses the four kinds of vagueness found in politics, social-affairs, and economics news at the first pages of Jawa Pos newspaper that published during May 2000. The researcher chose May-2000 edition because it is the latest data that could be taken as the subject of the research. While the first pages are chosen due to the fact that they always present the most interesting and latest news, which are firstly read by most people. So, if there is any mistake on the first pages, it can not be hesitated anymore that many readers would face misunderstanding. Only the politics, social-affairs and economics news that will be further analyzed and discussed, and not the articles, advertisements or other things presented in Jawa Pos. It is simply based on the fact that most people prefer reading news to any other section in the newspapers.

Therefore, the three major kinds of news section; politics, social-affairs, and economics, are the most important parts that require more attention.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study lets other people know more about vagueness especially in newspapers. Besides, this study warns people that vagueness in newspapers should be avoided since its existence creates misunderstanding among the readers. This study also lets other people know the quality of Jawa Pos newspaper of the May-2000 edition in terms of avoiding vagueness in news writing, at the end of this study.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

Some key terms appear very frequently in this study. That is why to avoid misunderstanding, they need to be defined as follow:

1. Semantics:

- ◆ a study of meaning (Leech 1977:X).

2. Analysis:

- ◆ a study of something by examining its parts and their relationship (Cowie, 1994).
- ◆ an examination of something together with thoughts and judgement about it (Procter, 1982).

Based on these two definitions, *Semantic Analysis* can be defined as a study of meaning by examining its parts and their relationship together with thoughts and judgement about it.

3. Newspaper:

- ◆ a paper that is printed and distributed daily, weekly, or at some other regular and usually short interval and that contains news, articles of opinion, features, advertising, or other matter regarded as current interest (Gove, 1986).

4. Vagueness:

- ◆ an expression which lack of specification (Kempson, 1977:124).
- ◆ not clearly expressed or perceived, not specific or exact; imprecise. (Cowie, 1994).
- ◆ not clearly described, expressed, felt, or understood (Procter, 1982).

It can be concluded that *Vagueness* is an expression which lack of specification; not clearly expressed, described, perceived, felt or understood; not specific or exact; imprecise.

5. Quality:

- ◆ a degree of goodness or worth (Cowie, 1994).

6. News:

- ◆ a report of a recent event. (Gove, 1986).

1.7 Theoretical Framework

There are some major theories used in this study. Each of them supports this study and very useful as the researcher's vehicle to make a research concerning vagueness in Jawa Pos newspaper. The major theories are Characteristics of Vague Expression or Word, Two Significant Implications of Research into the Uses of Vague Language, Four Factors of Vagueness, Four Kinds of Vagueness, How to Write a Title, and Language of Newspaper Reporting. However, only the Four Kinds of Vagueness used as the main theory to analyze the news in Jawa Pos newspaper and judge its quality in terms of writing news. Furthermore, the detail discussions of the major theories are presented in Chapter II.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I deals with the Introduction including Background of the Study, Statements of the Problems, Objectives of the Study, Scope and Limitation of the Study, Definition of Key Terms, Theoretical Framework, and Organization of the Study. Chapter II concerns Review of the Literature including the Underlying Theories and Related Study. Chapter III talks about Methodology including the Research Design, the Data, the Data Collection, the Data Analysis Procedure, and the Parameter. Chapter IV presents the Findings. The last chapter, chapter V, deals with Conclusion and Suggestions.