

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The recent given advances in technology, language may deviate from the current standard form to then so called non-standard form. Crystal (2011, p. 62), argues that some people see the use of nonstandard forms as a symptom of decline in educational and linguistic standards, and are vociferous in their condemnation. However, the non-standard forms can be observed not only in the words and sentences, but also in the use of punctuation. For example, the use of exclamations is only 19 (9.5 per cent) from 118 tweets analysed which expressed excitability. Far more were used for other functions, such as markers of friendly interaction (32 percent), including thanking, or to emphasize a statement of fact (29.5 per cent) (Crystal, 2011). Here is the extract:

Oh look! It's a clown trying to be a clown.

Since the use of punctuation can only be examined in the written form of language, comment forum in online communication is regarded as an appropriate platform for the analysis. Crystal (2011, p. 16) stated that spoken and written language are commonly observed in these dimensions; the phonic medium, the graphic medium, and the visual medium. Nevertheless, now the language can also be investigated in the fourth linguistic dimension which is the electronic medium (2011, p. 16). This study is aimed to confirm that the internet language is different from the language identified in the other mediums (2011, p. 17). Yahoo is one of

the biggest and the most tremendous developing media communication that appears online. Yahoo is regarded as “the first online navigational guide to the Web and a leading global Internet communications, commerce and media company that offers a comprehensive branded network of services...” (Inc., 2005). Yahoo! launched one of its tremendous services called OMG! in 2007 from the abbreviation of “Oh My God” or “Oh My Gosh”. It shares popular and update entertainment news and events of celebrities. Since it takes from OMG! of America which is accessed at <http://omg.yahoo.com>, the probable celebrities informed are those from Hollywood. OMG! provides 6 various interesting portals: News & Features, Photos, Videos, Celebs, OMG! Insider, and OSCARS. Likewise, it also allows the users of the web page to access and write released comments on the comment column that is available below each portal (See appendix 1).

It is rather unlikely that the standard use of punctuation is applicable for writing comments. The writer of the study assumes that it is a substantively kind of oral language, then, it is transformed in the form of written text. Texts are stylistically heterogeneous and have huge differences with the standard and nonstandard language (Crystal, 2011, p. 30). This is caused by the different background and culture where people have different views on how formal a piece of writing on the internet should be, or how focused or figurative it should be (2011, p. 31). However, written comments unit of discourse (sentences, paragraphs) is usually easy to identify through punctuation and layout (Crystal, 2001, p. 26).

The internet has formed the spoken language to be in the form of text that is written as the same way and naturally as in spoken form which is called as NetSpeak (Crystal, 2001, p. 17). In another term, he (Crystal, 2001, p. 48) also named it as Hybrid language which is defined as a combination of speech and writing, or the result of contact between two long-standing mediums. Therefore, the attention of this research is the online textual communication which refers to CMC (Computer Mediated Communication). It is defined as any natural language messaging that is transmitted and/or received via a computer connection (as cited in Lee, 2002). CMC is differentiated in two categories: asynchronous and synchronous, where asynchronous is the interaction that is postponed or not directly answered (Crystal, 2006). Far more, he confirms that asynchronous groups have far more members, because there is no limit to the number of people who can access the group, and there is no complication caused by members belonging to different time-zones (Crystal, 2004, p. 129).

Coherent with the CMC previous identification, it is almost certain that the data assessed in photo portal on Yahoo! OMG! is typically asynchronous, because the interaction is not immediately and indirectly responded. Notwithstanding, the written comments may possibly contain messages purposes that are about to be conveyed to other readers. Crystal (2011, p. 17) said that:

Thus, it is common to write in short sentences and use several punctuation marks to corroborate the meaning since that writing is space bound, static, and permanent; it is the result of a situation in which the writer is usually distant from the reader, and often does not know who the reader is going to be.

Punctuations are significant marks which facilitate the reader in conceiving a sentence whether it is ended or continued, it is a statement or query, and it is an exclamation or allurement. There have been several investigations of the use of punctuation in the written text on essays, while in online communication, there is only little information obtained. Kalman and Gergle (2009) found that in email, there were many repetitions of punctuation used as the importance of a cue of CMC. Furthermore, in English as a Second Language (ESL) students in using English punctuation, Hirvela, et al. (2012) examined the university students' attitudes toward punctuation in English as an attempt to generate deeper understanding about students' use of punctuation, despite the fact that they may have different notions of its functions and use in their native language. Nevertheless, they were surprised with the result of the research in which the students felt the ease of using full stop and question mark but apparently they were also lacking of confidence in identifying the rules and errors of punctuation.

As a result, the writer of the study is challenged to analyse the use of punctuation marks that is apparently crucial in linguistics perspective, in the written comment on online communication. English punctuation marks are a period, question mark, comma, semicolon, colon, apostrophe, exclamation mark, dash, parentheses, quotation mark, and hyphen (Biays & Wershoven, 2007, pp. 513-538). Moreover, punctuation includes an ellipsis (Straus, 2008, p. 53) and a slash (Hornby, 1995, p. 1403) as well. Afterwards, those variations will be used to

obtain further classifications of the use of punctuation procured in the written comments on Yahoo! OMG!

1.2 Statements of the Problem

As explained in the background of the study, the research questions in this study are related to the use of punctuation in the written comments on Yahoo! OMG! In order to gain a comprehensive analysis, the writer would like to interpose a couple questions:

1. What types of punctuation are dominantly used in the written comments on Yahoo! OMG!?
2. What are the punctuation marks frequently violate the standard forms and the new functions?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the statements of the problems, the aims of the study are:

1. To identify the types of punctuation which are mostly used by the writers of the comments on Yahoo! OMG!
2. To have the knowledge of the punctuation marks mostly violate the current standard uses and the new functions displayed.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study is expected to give both practical and theoretical contributions. By knowing the extended use of punctuation, teachers will learn the new usage of

punctuation and perhaps to integrate their teaching progression. It is also important for students to understand the functions of punctuation then they will be able to improve on their knowledge from its various incorrect uses. Moreover, the writer of the study hopes that authors of grammar books will know that the obtained data may be considered as a newest usage form of punctuation and they are expected to make this phenomenon out of its non-standard use.

Through this thesis, the writer hopes that the study will extend perspective in internet linguistics especially in identifying the use of standard and non-standard punctuation. Thus, other researchers will know the use of punctuation from the standard to the non-standard form as observed in online communication. Last, the writer expects that this study could be a worthy addition in linguistics research to the next study especially in the English Department, Faculty of Humanities of Airlangga University.

1.5 Definition of Key terms

- Asynchronous : the interactions are stored in some format, and made available to users upon demand, so that they can catch up with the discussion, or add to it, at any time – even after an appreciable period has passed (Crystal, 2004, p. 11).
- Comment : a written or spoken remark giving an opinion on, explaining or criticizing an event, a person, a situation, etc. (Hornby, 1995, p. 227).

- Standard : generally accepted as correct and widely used as the usual form (Hornby, 1995, p. 1162).
- Punctuation : a device to remove possibility causes of risk ambiguity and serious misunderstanding contained in words (Hamilton, 2007).