CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. 1. Background of the Study

The existence of human and society without language is meaningless. On the other hand, the existence of language will be more beneficial if it can be applied and spoken by human and society in daily communication. It means that the language has a main function, particularly as a means of communication. Additionally, other function of language are pointed out by Fasold (1984: 1)

> Not only do people use language to share their thoughts and feelings with other people, they exploit the subtle and not so subtle aspects of language to reveal and define their social relationship with the people they are talking to, with people who can overhear them, and even with people who are nowhere around.

It directly refers to the social facts that the functions of language above are not observed within a certain community only but also involve the relationship between such community with others.

Language is also dynamic because it is changeable based on the real condition found in society at that time. Nowadays, language has grown up and rapidly widespread because of its daily use. The kinds of language more vary. This condition is affected by social factors where such language exists. The previous statement seems related to what Yule states that "All of the social factors ... are related to variation according to the user of language. Another source of variation in an individual's speech is occasioned by the situation of use" (1985:

244). Yule's statement above suggests that actually there exists a gradation in using language based on the situation, which ranges from the very polite language for formal situation, such as language for educational purposes, to the colloquial for informal one, such as language of letter for best friends and language used when talking to other family members.

To make it more obvious, the example of that explanation is easily found in Javanese language. In general, Javanese is classified into several categories, which ranges from the most polite form, called *basa krama inggil* for formal occasion to the lowest one, called *basa ngoko*, which is usually used for informal communication. It is supposed for a Javanese speaker to use one of the categories based on the appropriate occasion. The explanation above also indicates that a Javanese speaker should be able to use varieties of Javanese.

One characteristic of informal language is the occurrence of slang. Slang has existed for long time, used by many people, especially adolescents and has highly reached the size of acceptance in society. According to Fromkin and Rodman (1988: 276), "Slang has been defined as one of those things that everybody can recognize and nobody can define". The definition suggests that society admit the occurrence of slang but not all members of society comprehend and use slang in their daily conversation. People look down on it but can hardly avoid using it.

It also shows that slang is common to a certain group only, especially adolescents. As stated by O'Grady, Dobrovolsky and Aronoff (1989: 341), "It [slang] is often applied to aspects of the language of adolescents." The use of

slang identifies themselves as members of a certain group. Therefore, slang functions as a sign of identity. As pointed out by Crystal in *Encyclopedia of the English Language*, it is clarified that "The chief use of slang ... is to show that you're one of the gang....Slang is one of the chief markers of in-group identity" (1995: 182). Although many linguists generally consider that slang is colloquial language, which has low and vulgar characteristics, it is still perceived to be flexible and suitable for informal language speakers.

Sociolinguistically, each speaker of a language may not reflect the real similarity in using language because in a certain community with the same language, there sometimes appear differences based on sex, context, and social class and so on.

In the case of sex differences, male and female are not mainly differentiated physically and psychologically, even both presumably support the creation of other variations between both sexes found in all aspect of life, including the use of language. Other findings show that sex differences influence the use of language in their daily conversation even though such differences can not be clearly indicated (See, Trudgill, 1974; Montgomery, 1994). However, there are approximately a small number of varieties found. Regarding the differences, Trudgill (1974: 86) writes:

> ... it seems certain that, although there were clear differences between men and women's speech, only a relatively small number of vocabulary items were involved. The men and women, that is, did not speak different languages. Rather, they spoke different varieties of the same language – the differences were lexical only.

In general, studies of language and sex discover that there are only a few varieties. Such varieties between both sexes mainly differ in particular vocabularies. Additionally, a complimentary thought about the context of language and sex is suggested by Johnstone in Tannen's *Gender and Conversational Interaction*. She indicates that "Evidence of a variety of kinds suggests that men and women do not – or do not always – use and interpret language the same way" (1993: 68).

One of the examples of sex differences in language use is the use of slang, which becomes the focus of this observation. In this case, using slang is commonly dominated by the males, while the females tend to choose standard forms in their conversations. It is emphasized by Poynton's assumption (1980: 67), which says that "Men use more slang than female."

In the case of speech style, the difference of male and female's speech does not mainly lie on the number of vocabularies used by both sexes. Another factor contributing to the difference is the tendency of both sexes to behave based on the society attitudes. So far, the social phenomenon reveals that basically males and females are appreciated differently and assigned to the different roles and behavior patterns. The females are likely to be more 'conservative' whereas the males tend to be more 'open' and more' aggressive'. In line with this, Trudgill (1974: 94) states that:

> Language simply reflects this social fact. Men and women's speech, as we have demonstrated, is not only different: women's speech is also (socially) 'better' than men's speech. This is a reflection of the fact that, generally speaking, more 'correct' social behavior is expected of women.

Thus, there is an expectations from the society to view the females to be more 'correct' and 'better' in all aspects of life, including the use of language, particularly, the use of slang words in daily conversation.

1. 2. Statements of the Problems

1. What slang words are commonly spoken by Surabaya secondary school students in informal settings?

2. What types of syntactic categories do the slang words belong to?

3. Is it male or female that tends to use slang words in informal settings?

1. 3. Objectives of the Study

This study is conducted to reach some objectives, as follows:

1. To find out kinds of slang words which are commonly used by Surabaya secondary school students in informal settings.

2. To identify the tendency of both sexes in using slang words in informal setting.

1. 4. Significance of the Study

Firstly, this study is expected to be more beneficial in enlarging and improving the knowledge of the students of English Department about the

existence of slang words, their use and meanings in informal settings by Surabaya secondary school students.

Secondly, this study may contribute additional information to linguistic knowledge, particularly the phenomenon of slang words found in daily informal communication by Surabaya secondary school students.

1. 5. Scope and Limitation

This thesis is limited to the discussion on the use of slang words, which appeared in Indonesian language, commonly spoken by Surabaya secondary students in informal settings without including facial expressions, gestures, voice tones and any expressions taken from other languages or dialects, such as *Suroboyoan* dialect.

However, there are some disadvantages found during the writing of this thesis. The first is associated with the use of qualitative descriptive method in collecting and analyzing the data. Unconsciously, the use of this method influences the result. It means that the findings cannot be generalized to all Surabaya secondary school students' conversations because the collected data only cover small numbers of conversations everyday. Besides, the occurrences of conversations are also influenced by the settings, particularly time, place, and listeners. In other words, the use of this method concludes the result only in a narrow point of view.

Secondly, other disadvantage is the use of recording in the data collection. It relates to the presence of observer in the students groups during the conversations. Unconsciously, it also affects the topic initiated by them. They feel more uncomfortable to talk about certain topics if they know that there is a 'stranger' near them.

1. 6. Theoretical Framework

The condition of society nowadays has widely changed to be more developed. There exists much improvement and development toward all aspects of life. Linguistically, such development affects language, which continuously develops into various kinds, especially spoken language for informal situations.

According to O'Grady, Dobrovolsky, and Aronoff (1989: 341), "Slang is a label that is frequently used to denote certain informal usages of nearly anyone in the speech community." However, the existence of slang is often associated with adolescents because these particulars vocabularies are often spoken by adolescents only. To make it clearer, they also emphasize that "It [slang] is often applied to aspects of the language of adolescents".

As previously mentioned, the use of slang closely relates to the adolescents as the active speaker. Furthermore, Poynton (1980: 67) also assumes that "Men use slang more than women." In the other hand, women speak 'better', more correctly, and more standard than men.

Do males and females talk differently? This question always comes up to our mind when our discussion focuses on the use of language between males and females. Talking about language and sex will be directly linked to a main part of sociolinguistic study.

Basically, the distinctive treatment for language between males and females does not mainly derive from the stem differences in anatomy and physiology. Additionally, Montgomery, Reid and Thomas (1994: 28) also state that "the more significant differences are socially constructed". In other words, there always appears a social expectation for males and females of how to behave based on their sexual determination. This condition influences the phenomenon that females' behavior tends to be 'better' than that of males. Such statement seems to correspond to what Trudgill (1974: 92) implies that "Women in our society are, generally speaking, more status-conscious than men. For this reason, they will be more sensitive to the social significance of social-class-related..."

Furthermore, the 'better' status consciousness of females often relates to any matters of correctness, including the correctness of language use. As stated by Montgomery, Reid and Thomas (1994: 29), Women, it is said, are less assertive (more tentative) in their speech than men; it is said that they use fewer taboo forms and more euphemisms than men." To make it more obvious, Trudgill (1974: 94) also confirms that "Men and women's speech ...is not only different; women's speech is also (socially) 'better' than men's speech." Additionally, Holmes also points out that:

> In many speech communities, when women use more of a linguistic form than men, it is generally the standard form – the overtly prestigious form –

that women favor. When men use a form more often than women, it is usually a vernacular form, one which is not admire overtly by the society as a whole, which is not cited as the 'correct' form.

In this case, the writer intends to investigate the occurrence of slang words and its correlation toward the Surabaya secondary school students, especially for males and females speaker in daily conversation.

1. 7. Method of the Study

Generally, the writer conducted the observation by employing qualitative descriptive method. As pointed out by Wiersma (1993: 13), "Qualitative research is done for the purpose of understanding social phenomena, social being used in a broad sense... relies heavily on narrative description". In other words, it does not rely heavily on statistical result represented with numbers.

1. 7. 1. Definition of Key-terms

- Slang : a non-standard vocabulary composed of words and senses characterized primarily by connotations of extreme informality and typically of coinages or arbitrarily changed words, clipped or shortened forms, extravagant, forced or facetious figures of speech, or verbal novelties usually experiencing quick popularity and relatively rapid decline into disuse, example: *pedekate, ilfil, bonyok, garing* etc.

- Adolescents : young persons, who are in the developmental period of transition border from childhood to early adulthood, entering approximately at 10 to 12 years of age and ending at 18 to 22 years of age.

- Informal situations : situation which is conducted or carried out without formality. It is relaxed and casual.

- Conversation : casual, informal talk between two or more people (Bright, 1992: 306)

1. 7. 2. Location and Population

Since the research required the spontaneous conversation of Surabaya secondary school students as the data, the writer decided to directly get involved in their social environment, which could take place everywhere. In line with this, the writer selected the appropriate locations or settings to complete the data, such as school canteen, school parking lot, and school yard. The population consisted of Surabaya secondary school students aged 13 to 18 years old.

1. 7. 3. Respondents

In this research, the writer chose the respondents by applying purposive sampling. According to Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (1990: 177), "In purposive

sampling, also referred to as judgment sampling, sample elements judged to be typical, or representative, are chosen from the population".

The sample contained fifteen males and fifteen females, of 13 – 18 years of age and spoke Indonesian in most of their daily conversation.

1. 7. 4. Techniques of Data-collection

At the beginning, the writer certainly observed the qualified respondents. As previously mentioned the qualified respondents for this thesis were Surabaya secondary school students aged 13 to 18 years old and spoke Indonesian in most of their daily conversations.

Because of the extensive area of the population, the writer did not focus the observation on one definite location only. In other words, the writer decided to investigate several locations, which had the greatest tendency for the qualified respondents to exist. The writer collected the required data by using the technique of recording when the qualified respondents had been identified.

The recordings were mainly taken from secondary school students' conversations found in three conversational situations, female-female, male-male and male-female, which respectively contain five conversations. In this case, the writer merely required the data from the spontaneous conversations, which were surreptitiously recorded for about five to ten minutes. Besides, the writer just listened to what they were talking without being involved in their conversations at

all. Moreover, the writer did not inform the respondents that actually their conversations would be included as the data of her observation.

The next technique was data selection. This technique required the separation of collected data and was used to differentiate whether such data were adequate or not to be analyzed. Regarding the process of analysis, the writer decided that each qualified conversation must consist of at least three different slang words. Furthermore the qualified data would be orthographically transcribed. This technique involves changing the recording data into the written ones

Based on the description above, the techniques of data collection are listed as follows:

(i)   Observing the respondents

(ii)   Recording the respondents' conversations

(iii)   Selecting adequate conversations as the data

(iv)   Transcribing data

1. 7. 5. Techniques of Data Analysis

First of all, the technique of data analysis was identifying slang words from each conversation. The identification of slang words was applied when all qualified conversations, as the recording data, had been orthographically transcribed.

Then, the next was categorizing identified slang words from all situations based on their numbers of occurrences. Moreover, the data, which had been categorized would be listed in tables and presented in percentage.

Besides, this categorization also involved the analysis of the identified slang words and the tendency between both sexes to speak slang words more often in informal settings. So, the whole result of this thesis would be easily observed.

Thus, the techniques of data analysis can be summarized as follows:

(i)   Identifying slang words

(ii)   Categorizing slang words

(iii)   Making tables and putting figures in percentage

1. 7. 8. Organization of the Paper

The content of this thesis was arranged in four chapters. The first chapter was introduction, which consisted of seven subchapters namely background of the study, statement of the object, objectives of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework, method of the study, and organization of the paper.

The second chapter talked about literature review and related studies. Literature review focused on the explanation of theories that supported the observation, whereas related studies referred to the previous studies, whose result inspired new ideas and corresponded to the writing of this thesis, particularly the studies that emphasized on the use of slang words.
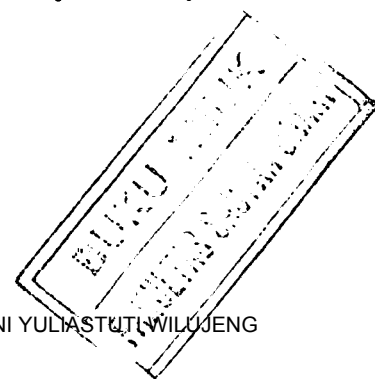
The third chapter discussed the description of collected data and analyzes them further based on the previous theories. Additionally, the result would be listed in tables and presented in percentage. Finally, the fourth chapter briefly summed up the contents of the whole chapter.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW