

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1. Background of the Study.

To say that language serves as an instrument of communication is to utter a truism. Indeed, it is difficult to have any satisfactory definition of the term "language" that does not incorporate some reference to the notion of communication.

Communication is a process of intentional transmission of information by means of some established signaling systems, one of which is language (Lyons: 1977, p.32). There are two kinds of communication. The first is interpersonal communication in which only a few people are involved in the communication process. The second is mass communication in which a large number of people are involved in the process.

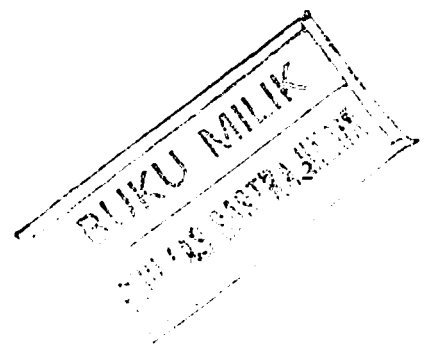
Mass communication need not always be in a two-way relationship in which both parties of the communication process give stimuli and responses. One instance of this kind of communication is when a party leader or spokesman is speaking in front of his party members in a campaign period. Mass communication also could be in a one-way relationship in which the process of giving stimuli and responses is done by one party only. Communication through radios, television, and newspapers are instances of this kind of communication.

At the present and future time, mass media (the medium on which mass communication takes place) as radio, television, and newspaper plays important role

in the society, one of the main role of which is that it brings about information from all parts of the world. We will be able to know the current situation in Chechnya, the latest invention of mobile technology in Japan, or the outcomes of the premiere league matches in England by using many kinds of mass media such as radio, television and newspaper.

Anderson and Hule in their book "Contemporary News Reporting" states that newspaper is one of the media of communication, usually published daily or weekly, by which information on current affairs, opinion, and entertaining features are circulated among the people (Anderson and Hule: 1984, p.15). Newspaper varies in content, ranging all the way from politics, economy to social aspects of life. This variety of topics can be presented to its readers in two different kinds; that is as news and features. Feature is a creative article, sometimes subjective, which aims to entertain or inform the people of an event, situation or aspects of life (Wahyudi: 1994), while news is a timely report of facts or opinion, to hold interest or importance, or both, for a considerable number of people (Charnley: 1975). Wahyudi states that newspaper is a report of facts or events or opinion which has been presented through periodical mass media (1994).

A newspaper consists of some distinct sections. There are sections of politics, economy, social, sport, and so on. Each section has its own different characteristics. One of the striking characteristics is the language that is used in each section, that is the particular kind of language usually used in a certain kind of field, such as economy, which is called register. Then, it can be said that each section of the newspaper has its own different register.



The language which is used in the sport section of a newspaper is of interesting phenomena. It is lively, playful, and metaphoric. It uses such playful words that are selected to entertain people who usually read serious news as politics and economy at the first place. This playfulness of words is possibly due to the creativity and knowledge of the sport section writers (usually known as sportswriters). In describing the winning and losing of sport games the writers use a large variety of verbs, instead of only using "win" to indicate winning and "lose" to indicate losing. The following are some examples of these verbs; beat, defeat, demolish, crash, crush, edge, end, stun, subdue, and so on. Among these verbs, some are used frequently, some are rarely.

The use of such verbs and their frequency are highly determined by contexts, either social context or linguistic context. Linguistic context means linguistic text that influences the production of the language expression, while social context means the surrounding environment, circumstances, or facts which influence the production of the language expression or utterance. According to Lyons, context means a theoretical construct, in the postulation of which the linguist abstracts from the actual situations and establishes as contextual all the factors which, by virtue of their influence upon the participants of the language events, systematically determine the form, the appropriateness, or the meaning of utterances (Lyons: 1977, p.572). In the case of the verbs used to describe winning and losing, can say that certain verbs are appropriate or inappropriate, or that they are more or less effective, in the context of the production of the verbs or of the sport news writing. In choosing the verbs to describe winning

and losing, the sportswriters systematically take into account some factors or contexts as the scores of the game and whether one team is favored or not over the other.

The use of various verbs to describe the winning and losing of sport games is also possible for there are relationships between the verbs, that is that they have some features in common, and that, among these verbs, there exists some core words and central concept. This relationship of words underlies the notion of the semantic field theory. The assumption underlying lexical or semantic field is that lexemes can be grouped together into "lexical or semantic fields" on the basis of shared meaning and that most if not all the vocabulary of a language can be accounted for in this way (Jackson: 1988 p.210). A well known field theorist, Jost Trier, states that individual words in a language do not stand alone but are arranged in meaning-groups, that is semantic fields (Trier in Gordon: 1982, p.67). The grouping of the words, Trier further explained, is not based on the etymology or hypothetical roots, but on the conceptual contents of its members. Here, in a semantic field, as in a mosaic, the words fit together, each with different contours, and all together the words do not reduce into a useless abstraction, but merge into a conceptual unity. By these assumptions, the verbs that are used to describe the winning and losing of the sport games are held to have certain features in common and, thus, to constitute semantics fields.

In regard to all of the explanation above, the writer of this thesis would like to analyze the variety of verbs used by sportswriters in their description of winning and losing and the contexts that underlie the use of such verbs.

I.2. Statement of the Problem

Based on the above background of the study, the writer would like to find out possible answers to the following questions:

- a. What (kinds of) verbs do the sportswriters use in their description of winning and losing?
- b. Why do they choose to use such verbs to describe winning and losing?

I.3. Objective of the Study

Regarding with the statement of the problems, by conducting this study, the writer intends to find out what (kinds of) verbs the sportswriters use in their description of the winning and losing sport games. Further, he wants to know and analyze the reason why they are used – that is to know the contexts by which the sportswriters choose to use such verbs to describe winning and losing.

I.4. Significance of the Study

It is hoped that, by conducting this study, the writer can give a meaningful contribution to the linguistic study as his major educational field, especially in relation to the theory of context and semantic field. This study is also expected to give a better understanding of both theories, either to the writer himself or to other students of English Department of the Airlangga University, especially those who take linguistics class in which semantics is but a little part of its curriculum.

I.5. Scope and Limitation

As the writer has stated in the previous part of this paper, newspaper is one of the media of communication, published daily or weekly, by which information on current affairs, opinion, and entertaining features are circulated among the people. Newspaper consists of some distinct sections, for example the sections of politics, economy, social, sport, and so on. Each section of the newspaper has its own particular language style, that is that the style of language of its section differs one from another.

This study, however, will be limited only to analyzing the language that is usually used in the sport section of newspaper, in this case in the Jakarta Post English daily. In particular it will analyze the variety of verbs by the sportswriters to describe the winning and losing of sport games, especially those verbs used to give account of or report the outcomes of football games.

I.6. Theoretical Background

Semantics is the technical term used to refer to the study of meaning, and since meaning is a part of language, semantics is a part of linguistics. There is a distinction between the meaning of a word and the meaning of (non-idiomatic) phrase or sentence. In fact, the meaning of a phrase or sentence is a product of the meaning of the words of which it is composed.

Palmer's term of lexical semantics has the same meaning as the notion of structural semantics (Aminuddin: 1988). Through the notion of lexical semantics, we can state the meaning of words in term of their association with other words, called semantic relationship (sense relationship).

In analyzing the variety of verbs used by sportswriters to describe winning and losing the writer of the thesis will apply the theory of semantic field which views certain sectors of language vocabulary as consisting of closely-knit field. The assumption underlying the notion of lexical or semantic field is that lexemes can be grouped into "lexical or semantic fields" on the bases of shared meaning and that most if not all the vocabulary of a language can be accounted for in this way.

Besides using the theory of semantic field the writer will also use the theory of context to describe the phenomenon of the use of various verbs by sportswriters to indicate the winning and losing of sport games.

1.6.1. Semantic Field

The theory of semantic field is most commonly mentioned in connection with the German field theorist, Jost Trier. His works have been the subject of either favourable or adverse critical review.

The semantic field theory views a language's vocabulary as being divided up into closely-knit fields. The division of the language's vocabulary into semantic fields is based on the similarity of meaning of the words comprising the fields. As Howard Jackson states in his book "Word and Their Meaning" that the assumption underlying the notion of lexical or semantic field is that lexemes can be grouped into 'lexical or semantic fields' on the basis of shared meaning and that most if not all the vocabulary of a language can be accounted for in this way (Jackson: 1988, p. 210).

The German field theorist, Trier, argued that individual words in a language do not stand alone but are arranged in meaning-groups, (that is semantic fields) (Trier in Gordon: 1982, p. 67). The grouping of the words, he further explained, is not based on

etymology (the origin of the words) nor hypothetical roots, but on the conceptual contents of its members. Here, in a semantic field, words fit together, each with different contours, and all together the words do not come to a useless abstraction, but merge into a conceptual unity.

Further about the grouping of a language's vocabulary into semantic fields, there actually is no given set of ones, no generally agreed set of labels. The number and composition of every field is the decision of individual analyst (Jackson: 1988, p. 212). So far, there is not any linguist or (in particular) semanticists who try to set up rules of semantic field - to the grouping of words into semantic field.

Although there is no such set of rules, some linguists have explicitly mentioned some foundations or basis to the constituting of lexical or semantic fields. J.M.Y. Simpson states that some fields may cohere together because they share some characteristics definable within one language, such as colours (using the terminology of physics) and family relationships (using the terms as parent, male, older, etc.) (1979, p. 191). The grouping of the words into semantic fields is also possible for there is similarity of meanings between the words, or in other words, the words within the field have some features in common (ibid, p. 201). For example, in the set of lexical items of cut, chisel, prune, slice and trim, each word within the field has one common feature that make it possible for the verbs to be grouped into the field, that is the notion of 'cut'. Each word implies the action of cutting. They differ only in the way the action of cutting is done, what things to be cut, and how the result of the cutting is.

Another way of grouping words into semantic fields may be by the notion of co-hyponymy. For example, in the set of lexical items of bush, tree, and shrub, and of

participants in the language events; preceding, concomitant, and subsequent activity; other events taking place in the vicinity, and so (ibid, p. 570-571).

Hence, we will be able to say that a certain lexeme, expression, or utterance is appropriate or inappropriate, or that it is more or less effective than another in certain contexts.

1.6.3. Related Studies

Up to the recent times, there are some students who have studied the language used in the journalism. However, only a few of them are interested in the language of sportnews. Novitri I. Ismundary is one of them. She studied the headlines of sportnews in three Indonesian newspapers, which are published in Surabaya. They are Jawa Pos, Surya, and Surabaya Post.

In her study, she analysed the variety of verbs in the headlines of sportnews, which is used to describe winning and losing. She found out that in their description of the winning and losing of sport games or events, sportswriters (writers on the sport section of a newspaper) use a large variety of verbs, instead of only using 'win' to indicate winning and 'lose' to indicate losing.

After doing the analysis, she inferred that the headlines may mention either the winning or the losing teams and may make some comments about the action of the games. The number of verbs used to describe losing is greater than those to describe winning. The various kinds of verbs describe state, process and activity. Most of the verbs that describe losing indicate the action of destruction.

Novitri Ismundary, in the presentation of data analysis, analyses the variety of verbs in terms of the theory of synonymy and hyponym. By the theory of synonymy, it

yellow, red, green, it seems to be that such fields are composed of co-hyponims, eventhough a superordinate term may be absent. In the absence of a superordinate term, the co-hyponimy may be established by implicational rules.

1.6.2. Context

It is generally agreed that a piece of language expression such as utterance and sentence produced by the speaker of the language is highly determined by context, either social context or linguistic context. Linguistic context means linguistic text that influence the production of the language expression, while the social context means the surrounding environment, circumstances, or facts which influence the production of the language expression.

According to John Lyons, context is a theoretical construct, in the postulation of which the linguist abstracts from the actual situation and establishes as contextual all the factors which, by virtue of their influence upon the participants in the language event, systematically determine the form, the appropriateness, and the meaning of utterances. The actual situation of utterance has some co-ordinates. One of them is spatiotemporal. Spatiotemporal co-ordinate means that every actual utterance is produced on certain time and certain place. In other words, they are either spoken or written by the speaker of a language at a particular time and at a particular place. We can say, for instance, that a particular utterance is produced by speaker X at 12 noon on 6 January 1971 in Edinburgh, and we can be more or less precise than this in specifying the spatiotemporal co-ordinates of the utterance-act (ibid, p. 570).

Other components of the actual situation of utterance also can be described in external observational terms; the appearance, bearing, and attitude of the various

means that all the verbs have similarity of meaning. The existence of synonymy relationship between the verbs can be proved by substitution - that is all the verbs can substitute one another. The synonymy relationship that exists between the verbs, however, is not of total or true synonymy, rather it is of near synonymy. It means that the substitution of one verb by another does not result in an exact sameness of sense in the part of the sentence.

Even though the object of her study is similar with the present study (in the way that she also analyses verbs describing winning and losing), that is the verbs used to describe winning and losing, there are two striking differences between these two studies. In the first place, Novitri Ismundary approaches her study by the theory of synonymy and hyponymy, while the present study by the theory of semantic field and context. And the second is that her object of the study is taken from newspapers using 'Bahasa Indonesia', while the present study from newspaper using English language. So, the verbs of winning and losing which are analysed by Novitri Ismundary are in Bahasa Indonesia, while those of the present study are in English.

I.7. Method of the Study

The method that is applied in this study is the descriptive-qualitative research. The implication of such research is that the sample which is going to be obtained will be described qualitatively. It does not need to compare variables nor to make a hypothesis, but it concerns with an observation about a population or a sample of population (Labovitz: 1982 p. 48).

1.7.1. Technique of Data Collection

In conducting this study, the writer uses the purposive sampling method. It is a method of selection whereby the data which are taken are those verbs that are used to describe the winning and losing of sport games. In the process of data collecting the writer of this thesis applies two steps of data collection. The first is observation. In the first step, he observes the language that is used in the sport section of a newspaper. In particular, he gives his focus on the verbs used by the sportswriters in their description of the winning and losing of sport games. The second is the collecting or listing of the various verbs used to describe winning and losing.

1.7.2. Technique of Data Analysis

The technique of data analysis which is used in this thesis is the qualitative descriptive analysis. Qualitative data tend to be in the forms of words, sentences, and paragraphs rather than in numbers.

In this thesis the writer describes the variety of verbs used by sportswriters in their description of winning and losing. In the analysis, the writer applies three steps of analysis. The first step is classification. In the first step, the verbs of winning and losing which have been collected are classified into those used to describe winning and those to describe losing. In the second step, the writer analyzes the use of various verbs by sportswriters to describe winning and losing in terms of the theory of context. And in the last step, he analyzes the use of various verbs in terms of the theory of semantic field.

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1.7.3. Population

A population is the aggregate of all cases that conforms to some designated set of specification. The population of this thesis is taken from The Jakarta Post English daily. For the ease of the analysis, this study is be limited only on analyzing some editions of the papers, that are from August 1997 editions to May 1998 editions. However, not all of the August 1997-to-May 1998 editions, which are totally 153 papers, will be studied for the Jakarta Post's sport section does not report the outcomes of football matches everyday.

1.8. Definition of Key Terms

- * Semantics is a part of linguistics which deals with the study of meaning in a language.
- * Semantic field is a theory within semantics which that the lexemes of a language can be grouped into semantic field on the basis of shared meaning, or that individual word in a language do not stand alone but are arranged in meaning-groups (that is semantic fields).
- * Variety is a situationally distinctive system of linguistic expression. For a newspaper, it generally is used to avoid monotony.
- * Verb is any member of a class of words that function as the main elements of predicates, typically expressing action or state.
- * Newspaper is one of the media of communication, published daily or weekly, by which information on current affairs, opinions, and entertaining features are circulated among the people.

- * Sportnews is a news or report of sport games or events.
- * Sportswriter is newspaper writer whose duty is to report or to give account of the sport games or events.
- * Win or Lose is two kinds of the results of sports games or events. Another result is draw or tie.