CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

II.1. Language as a System of Mediation

Edward Sapir (1949: 162), a well-known linguistic theorist, once stated in his popular book 'Language' : "Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society." As suggested by Sapir above, we can say that language is a system of mediation. Or, it is a tool, which relates humans to their environment (Vygotsky 1978: 54).
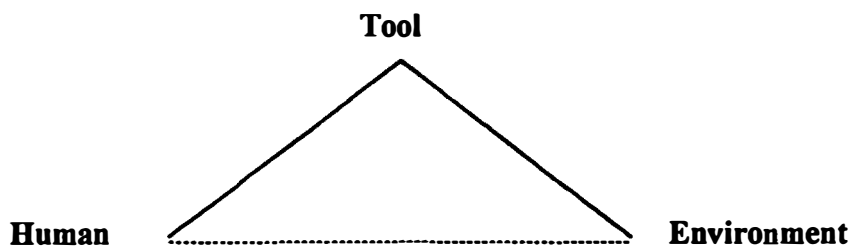
Tool

Human .... **Environment**

Figure 2.1. Tool as a mediating alternative between human and environment (Taken from Vygotsky, 1978: 55).

Humans use language to understand and interact with their environment (Crystal, 1987: 10). Whenever we communicate with others about ourselves or our circumstances or ask for information about others and circumstances, we are using language in order to exchange facts and opinions. The instrumental view of language implies the theory of language as a system of classification since it

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recognizes that linguistic expressions allow us to conceptualize and reflect upon events while we are exchanging ideas with others (Duranti, 1999: 42). To speak of language as a mediating activity means to speak of language as a tool for doing things in the world, for reproducing as much as changing reality (1999: 43). It is through language that we make friends or opponents, provoke or try to solve conflict, learn about our society and try to either adapt to it or change it.

II.2. Speech Community

Sociolinguistics is the subdicipline of linguistics that treats the social aspects of language. It is seen that language has social function towards its users. One of the most important social functions of language is to enable individuals to identify which social group they belong to as well as to separate themselves from other social group. The term "speech community" is widely used by sociolinguists to refer to a community based on language. There has been considerable confusion among those sociolinguists about what the speech community is. Bloomfield (cited in Hudson, 1980: 26) defined speech community as a group of people who interact by means of speech. Gumpers (1982: 73) created a definition on *speech community* as: "A social group which may be either monolingual or multilingual, held together by frequency of social interaction and set off from the surrounding areas by weaknesses in the line of communication." Meanwhile, Lyons (http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~patrickp/papers/speechcommunity.pdf) gave the simplest definition of *speech community* that is "all the people who use a
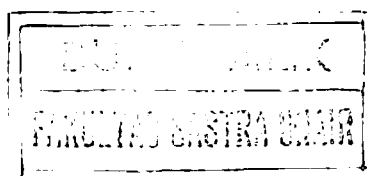
given language (or dialect)". For more complete definition, Hymes (cited in Swales, 1990: 23) stated:

> A speech community is defined, then, tautologically but radically, as community sharing knowledge of rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech. Such sharing comprises knowledge of at least one form of speech, and knowledge also of its patterns of use.
>
> (Hymes, 1974: 51)

O'Grady, Debrovolsky, and Aronoff (1989: 326) defined speech community as a group of people, who is gathered socially, by possessing certain language to maintain the relationship among its members. The size of the speech community varies in each culture. It can be as few members as family or as many members as China. In addition, the most important characteristic of the speech community is that all members of the community must interact linguistically with other members, they may share attitudes toward linguistic norms, or even they may share closely related language varieties. The term language variety itself refers to any distinguishable form of speech used by a speaker or a group of speakers (1989: 327).

Any individual may be a member of one or more speech communities. From this reason, he/she may behave differently in each speech community he/she belongs to. For example, a lecturer may use standard Indonesian when she is teaching in the class and speak Javanese when she returns home. Switching from one to another language variety, then, becomes one major tool to mark the aspects of solidarity, distance, intimacy, and formality. Crystal (1987: 38) stated that

languages, to meet the social function, have developed a wide range of varieties for accommodating the different kinds of relationship that identify the social structure of a community.

II.3. Role and Status

In a speech community, the linguistic signals—the choice of words, phrases, or even sentences, which are uttered during the communication—will automatically show the role and status of the speaker. Crystal (1987: 41) said that the most important marker of one's social position in the speech community is his/her language. He further defined *status* as the position a person holds in the social structure of a community, such as an official, a husband, a student and so on. Whereas, *roles* are patterns of behavior that should be performed by a person in accordance with the status he/she has (1987: 42). In social life, people exercise several roles because they occupy some various statuses. For instance, one person has a status in his family—as a head of family, the oldest son and so on—as well as in the place of work—as a branch manager, as an employee, etc. Each position will carry with it certain linguistic conventions, such as a distinctive mode of address, a manner of speech, or specialized vocabulary. In many cases, the linguistic characteristics of social roles are easy to identify. But there is also a problem in recognizing what one should behave when participating in an event that occurs in unfamiliar culture and languages. In fact, in some countries, how to behave towards language varies from one culture to another. Sometimes, it is

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polite for a guest to comment on the excellence of the meal in one culture, and in another, it will be regarded as impolite.

II.4. Language and Culture

Language is the principal means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in context of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways. It has been asserted by many scholars such as Sapir, and Whorf that a relationship exists between language and culture, yet the precise nature of this relationship remains contentious (Fulford, 2002). Moreover, recent social and political changes have contributed to never-ending debates on the matter. Claire Kramsch, in her newest book entitled 'Language and Culture' offers an accessible survey of key concepts by using insights from some fields, including linguistics, sociology and anthropology. She presents an interesting remark on the relationship between language and culture in reference to three concepts: language expresses cultural reality, language embodies cultural reality, and language symbolizes cultural reality. *Language expresses cultural reality* when it is used to express communicable facts, ideas or events, which refers to a stock of knowledge about the world that other people share; *language embodies cultural reality* when members of a community do not only express experience, but also create experience by giving meanings that are understandable to the group they belong to—through both verbal and non-verbal aspects of language; and finally, *language symbolizes cultural reality* when it plays as a system of signs that is seen as having itself a cultural value (Kramsch, 2002: 3).

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From Kramsch's assertion above, we know that language has a cultural, not a biologically inherited, function. 'Language' is not only a study of language and culture, but ultimately on the world of relations and influence (Bartleby, 2002). Thus, the notion of 'language and culture' focuses on the influence of cultural patterns on language and vice versa; it may help students or researchers move beyond a view centered on (and hence limited to) the patterns of particular language and culture (SRDS, 2001).

In 1991, there was a research regarding the power distance—the extent to which inequality and hierarchy are accepted in the culture—reflected in the use of language of certain communities (Burrows, 1999). According to Geert Hofstede, Indonesia has a high power distance rating and Australia has a low one (Burrows, 1999).

Two main types of politeness have been proposed by Brown and Levinson, i.e, positive and negative politeness (1978: 57). Positive politeness is the one which is used to satisfy the speaker's needs of approval, and belonging, whereas, negative politeness is the one which has the main goal of minimizing a face-threatening act (1978: 58). One important research undertaken by Geertz reveals that there is a concept of politeness reflected in the use of language levels by the Javanese society (cited-in Crystal, 1987: 40).

II.5. The Use of Language Level in Javanese

Uhlenbeck (1982: 331) explained that there are three basic and distinctive levels in Javanese language based on the usage and speakers: (a) *Krama Inggil*, or

high level, (b) *Krama Madya*, or middle level, and (c) *Ngoko*, or low level, respectively. *Ngoko* is the level of unmarked social attitude. It indicates closeness and informality. *Krama* is the formal and polite level, and *Madya* is the semi-formal level. The difference denotes that there is a social distribution among Javanese (1982: 333)

Using different language level indicates that the speakers are not equal one from another (Astuti, 2002: 18). If people consider themselves equal, they would certainly use the same language or level. On the other hand, if they use different language or levels, it means that they consider themselves different from their interlocutors. In Javanese society, the use of the speech levels of language is very much influenced by various degrees of social distance between speaker and hearer (2002: 19). As asserted by Crystal: "The choice of forms may be influenced by factors, such as age, sex, kinship relationships, occupation, or religious affiliation (1987: 40). Astuti (2002: 19) further stated: "age is the most common reason in choosing language levels in conversation: the younger one is than his interlocutor, the more tendencies he has to use higher language level.

II.6. Non-Verbal language

In a speech community, the linguistic signals—the choice of words, phrases, or even sentences, which are uttered during the communication—will automatically show the role and status of the speaker. Crystal (1987: 41) said that the most important marker of one's social position in the speech community is his/her language. He, further, defined the status as the position a person holds in

the social structure of a community, such as an official, a husband, a student and so on. Whereas the roles are patterns of behavior that should be performed by a person in accordance with the status he/she has (1987: 42). As stated by Bolinger and Sears (1981: 5): "Language is not merely an activity, that is verbal speech activity, but is actually more than that". In communication, people often use non-verbal language that consists of visible gestures, which are termed by many theorists as kinesics, or body language. Non-verbal language itself is the way to express meaning or feeling without words. In emotional and attitudinal expression, non-verbal language may totally replace the verbal language (Levine, 1983: 44).

Studies on non-verbal language have been widely conducted in any languages and cultures. These studies combine the analysis of sound and movement within communication. Paralinguistics is introduced by Trager (cited in Bright, 1992: 107) related with his study on sounds produced within interaction to replace the verbal language. He explained further that paralinguistics includes all extra speech sounds, such as hissing, whistling and imitation sounds to modify language. Kinesics is introduced by Birdwhistell (cited in Bright, 1992: 107) to designate the body movements used as tools to accompany the verbal language. It includes all body actions, postures, facial expression, gestures, and other body motions.

Apparently, the human communication cannot be separated from what so-called the non-verbal language, that comprises of paralanguage and kinesic features. All of these, together with the verbal language, establish the

comprehensive and effective communication. Chaika (1994: 123) said: " To analyze a piece of conversation, we may not only focus on the verbal utterances but also abstract structure in it." For this reason, the writer intends to use the aspects of non-verbal language to support the explanation of the linguistic signals of power and solidarity within the community observed.
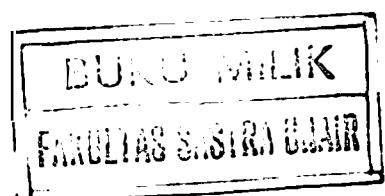
CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA