

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of background of the research; it explains the background of the research. Moreover, this chapter describes the purposes, the significances and the classification of key terms as well as the organization of writing of the research.

1.1 Background

The form of spoken language is full of different types of elements which convey vagueness. Vague language is a study about unruly words (e.g. 'perhaps'), indistinct (e.g. 'most') or which have some potential meanings. Vague language is different from ambiguity, ambiguity is the state of having more than one possible meaning (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 2010: 43). Most of people regard vague language as a defect that should be avoided. Different from what people assumed, some linguists have criticised that the notion is being too plain in a view of language.

Particularly, spoken language includes several expressions which carry little semantic information, especially if taken out of context, but which add an element of fuzziness to the utterance. Lakoff (1975:195) defines vague expression as, "words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy." According to Lakoff, it can serve as modifier which decrease the speaker's commitment to the propositional content of an utterance. Channell says that an expression is vague if:

- a. It can be contrasted with another word or expression which appears to render the same proposition;
- b. It is 'purposely and unabashedly vague';
- c. Its meaning arises from the 'intrinsic uncertainty' referred to Peirce.

The communicative effects related to the use of vague expressions is also discussed in Channell's book, she also identifies some of the goals which speakers achieve by using these expressions. In her discussion, Channell uses CA theory which is suggested by Levinson. Channell talks about vague language and CA within Grice's theory of implicature. According to Channell, Grice (1981:32-33) posits that interlocutors operate by using four rules of conversation, which he calls maxims, they are: maxim of quality, maxim of quantity, maxim of relation, and maxim of manner.

The reason why the maxims are relevant to vague language is that vague expressions may be used to enable speakers to follow the maxims, vague expressions often used when one of the maxims is disobeyed, and vague expressions are used to hide the actual information or disguise the actual figure.

Vague expression is less of attention in linguistic study, because of that reason, the researcher is interested in the research of the usage of vague expression in Oprah Winfrey show's conversation.

Oprah Winfrey show is an American talk show which hosted and produced by Oprah Winfrey. The show was highly influential, and many of its topics penetrated into the American pop-cultural consciousness (*Archive of American Television*). It is known as the highest-rated talk show in America. It is aired nationally since 1986-2011, this talk show ranked no. 3 among syndicated television programs (*The Economic Times, 2002*).

Here, the researcher wants to present the researchers that also have close relations with language use analysis; the first is a research by Boakye (2007) *Gender Aspects of Vague Language Use: Formal and Informal Contexts*. It revealed gender differences as regards to vague language use. The result of this research is that women used more vague expressions than their male colleagues. Males and females displayed preferences for certain vague expressions – an indication of gender construction. It was also found that the generally formal

context of meetings operated informally within the academic contexts. The informality found in academic meetings are related to the degree of distance in relationships, and the frequency of interaction among colleagues.

The second is a research by Habiba (2008) which title is *Gender and the Language of Advertising*. The result of the research showed that language, gender and advertising are very complex and intermingled issues. These elements affect and influence each other in connection with other social and cultural factors. She concluded that the media have been shown to play a crucial role in enhancing awareness and modifications of gender roles. Consequently, the Moroccan media have the power to present a fair image of Moroccan women by diminishing gender stereotypes. Women are increasingly portrayed as objects of sexual desire, being shown as attractive, thin and young by Media.

The third is a research by Permata (2013) which title is *A Comparative Study of Gender on Language Learning Strategies Preference*. This paper highlighted the differences between male and female students in LLS preference. The results show that there is no significant differences between males and females on LLS preference, either in overall strategies use or in each strategy. She concluded that gender is not the determinant factor of students' accomplishment in language learning, teachers should not be too worried about gender effects in the classroom dealing with strategies application. Instead, there should be a mutual comprehensive framework to learn students' tendencies and differences.

The last is about *The Different Writing Features Between Men and Women Personal Message on Blacberry Messenger* by Maxfirsyah (2014). The study has two major concerns. First, it discussed about the features of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) and language style use between men and women on Personal Message in Blackberry Messenger. The second discussed about theme which appear from the data.

Based on these previous studies, the researcher is interested in analysis the usage of vague expressions and the reason of its use. To limit the object of the discussion, the researcher will take two episodes of Oprah Winfrey Show.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Based on the background of the research, it can be seen that the problems of the research is to analyze the vague expression use and the reason of its use through Grice's Maxims in the talk show *Oprah Winfrey Show: Michael Jackson talks to Oprah Winfrey* and *J.K. Rowling talks to Oprah Winfrey*. There are eight types of vague expressions and four maxims that will be used to analyze the utterances in the talk show conversation. To make it simple, the researcher decided to make two research problems as the following:

1. What are the common types of vague expressions use in the talk show *Oprah Winfrey Show: Michael Jackson talks to Oprah Winfrey* and *J.K. Rowling talks to Oprah Winfrey*?
2. For what reason vague expressions are used in the talk show conversation *Oprah Winfrey Show: Michael Jackson talks to Oprah Winfrey* and *J.K. Rowling talks to Oprah Winfrey*?

1.3 Research Objective

The study especially has some purposes, they are:

1. To know what are the common types of vague expressions use in *Oprah Winfrey Show: Michael Jackson talks to Oprah Winfrey* and *J.K. Rowling talks to Oprah Winfrey*.
2. To know for what reason vague expressions are used in the talk show in both conversation.

1.4 Research Significance

This research is expected to accomplish theoretical and practical benefits elaborated as follows:

1.4.1 Academic Significance

1. The findings can become an enrichment of cognizance about vague language.
2. Regarding the result of this research, further study can be conducted to elaborate the scrutiny about related case.

1.4.2 Practical Significance

The researcher hopes that this finding can contribute to the development of linguistics and can lead to a better understanding of vague language use in communication.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1. Vague language is a study about unruly words.
2. Vague referring expressions often served as a focusing device, helping the addressee determine how much processing effort should be devoted to a given referent.
3. Grice's theory of cooperative principle is essentially the theory about how people use language to have better communication.
4. Talkshow is a television or radio programme in which famous people are asked questions and talk in an informal way about their work and opinions on various topics. (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 2010: 1525)

1.6 Organization of Writing

To simplify the whole depiction of the research, this graduating paper is organized into five chapters.

The first chapter presents the introduction part of the research comprises of background of the research that clarifies the rationale underlying the research operation, research

statements and problems, objectives of the study, and significance of the study. This chapter also reveals the clarification of key terms that become preceding guide as well as a very general description about theoretical review and organization of the undergraduate thesis.

The more detail theoretical foundation is provided in the second chapter. This chapter discusses the theory related to the research; it begins from the explanation of vague language. Further, it explains about vague expression use and pragmatics discourse helping the readers to comprehend the fundamental guide of this research.

The third chapter is research methodology. It covers the explanation about methods applied by the researcher to process the data. This chapter consists of research methodology, source of data, sample of data, technique of collecting data and technique of analyzing data.

Furthermore, the raw collected data is analyzed and is provided in the fourth chapter. This chapter similarly reports the analysis and discussion of the data summarized in the next chapter.

The final part is the fifth chapter. It consists of conclusion of the research as the final conclusion of the discussion based on the research problems. It also provides suggestion either for further researcher or the development of vague language research.

