

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language as a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings has many functions. One of the language functions is as a communication device. It is like when there are two persons who do not know each other meet in a public transportation. At the beginning, they will talk about something like the weather. They choose the weather to open the conversation not because they work as weather observers who need to pay attention on the weather change, but it is only as a matter of opening the conversation. The choice of weather as a opening topic shows that language can be used in establishing such a communication with another person.

In fact, language is not only functioned as a communication device but it can also be used to share the social status and personal relationship between its users. Fishman is one of the persons who believes that opinion. According to Fishman (1972: 1), language itself is an indicator of social status and personal relationships, and also something that can typify every speech community. This shows that whenever the language is used, the language user cannot avoid giving the listeners or the readers clues about origins and what kind of person he or she is. This may happen because when someone wants to talk, he or she is influenced by his or her social factors such as the participants, the setting, the topic and the function. Trudgill (1974: 14) supports Fishman's opinion by stating that the language user's accent and speech generally shows what part of the country he or she comes from, what sort of background he or she has and also shows which speech community that he or she joins.

Moreover, there are some components in addition to the social factors that influence the usage of a particular language in a speech community, There are four different

components or commonly noticed as dimensions which are related with the factors. They are social distance, status, formality and functional scale. There is no exact number on these scales. They use High and Low as their highest and lowest scale. Similar to the factors, the dimensions also have a big impact in doing such a linguistic choice in a speech community.

The use of the term speech community itself may also been reflected from the way a language user uses the language he or she mastered. Sterling (2000: 1) states that speech community is defined as any group of people that shares some common attributes such as language, region, race, ethnicity, race, age, occupation, religion. However, eventhough it is called as community, there is no exact number that can be stated about the speech community as the members of the community may consist of some people at some quantity which can be either small or big number. The term speech community itself arises as a consequence when there are groups of people who can use more than one languages.

The ability to use more than one languages makes the members of the community having the chance to choose the language that they feel it can exactly represent what they want to share with other members. In a certain situation, the member of the society, as it represent by the speech community, may choose one language rather than the others in a given instance. Fishman as cited by Fasold (1984: 183) says that there is a kind of approaches which is called as domains that influence people in choosing which language to speak or, in other words, making language choice regarded from the sociolinguist's point of view. Domains are taken to be configurations of factors such as location, topic and participants.

One example of the domain is a family domain. It is like when a speaker is at home talking to another member of his or her family about an everyday topic. That speaker is said to be in family domain. Diglosia gives the best example of language choice according to domain. Saville- Troike (1990: 54) states that diglosia is a situation in which two or more languages in a speech community are allocated to different social function and context.

Diglossia which is related with domain analysis has its own certain degree of formality which appears in forms of High and Low languages. The level of formality makes some domains being seen as more formal than others. In a community with diglossia, the Low language is the one that will be selected in the family domain, whereas the High language will most often be used in a more formal domain such as education.

However, there is a unique speech community in Semarang. This speech community shares the same languages in having conversation with others. It consists of a group of Chinese descents who speak Dutch instead of Mandarin or Bahasa Indonesia when they are hanging out together.

Chinese descent Dutch speech community has a long history. The members of this speech community studied in a Dutch school when they were young. Eventhough they studied in a Dutch school, it does not mean that they actually studied in Netherland because before finally declaring its independence in 1945, Indonesia had been occupied by the Dutch for about 350 years. Besides occupying, the Dutch also built some Dutch schools for the kids of the European people, specifically Netherlander, who lived in Indonesia. Yet in fact, the school did not only accept the European students but also Indonesian and Chinese descent people to study there.

As the Dutch colonialization in Indonesia remained existing at that time, the role and status of Dutch was also highly being the language of government and education. Indonesian as the native language and also Chinese as the Chinese descent native language were considered as second class languages. This situation, as quoted in Burhanudeen (2003:1), happened exactly like in Malaysia which was occupied by England. Dutch in Indonesia as English in Malaysia was also regarded as an indispensable requirement for social and economic mobility. Due to these roles, the learning and use of Dutch was greatly pursued by members of the local multiracial population comprising of Indonesian, Chinese and other

immigrants. This process means that the Indonesians as well as the Chinese descent people, specifically the ones that have ever studied in a Dutch speaking school, have a kind of exposure to use Dutch rather than other languages when they are having conversation with other Dutch speaking persons.

It is interesting to see what the social factors that influence the speech community to use Dutch language. In this study, the writer gave her analysis on the social factors of the Chinese descent speech community who speak Dutch language in Semarang.

1.2 Field of the Study

The study is about the social factors which influence a speech community to use Dutch language to speak. The study is within the domain of sociolinguistics.

1.3 Scope of the Study

In this study, the writer analyzed the social factors that influence Chinese descent speech community in Semarang to use Dutch language.

1.4 Problem Formulation

This study has the following problem formulation:

- What are the social factors which lead Chinese descent speech community in Semarang to choose Dutch as one of the language that they use to speak in their community?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

This study has the following objectives of the study:

- The objective of the study is to find out the social factors which lead Chinese descent speech community in Semarang to choose Dutch as one of the language that they use to speak in their community.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The writer hopes that this study will make people know more about a speech community and also the social factors that influence its members in choosing one of the languages they are able to speak.

This study can also be seen as a stepping stone for anyone who wants to conduct a further study about the related topic. The writer also hopes that this study will make the readers know more about the sociolinguistics in general.

1.7 Definitions of Term

Social factors : the components which are generally reflect and influence linguistic choices in any situations. Not all social factors are relevant but they can be grouped in ways which are helpful in the form of the participants, the setting, the topic and the function as quoted from Holmes (2001: 5).

Chinese descent : people that their ancestors come from the mainland of China but they were not born in China.

Speech community: a group of people which share one or more than one common attribute such as religion and race.