

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is the study of semantic changes in drugs slang terms taken from written materials, such as newspapers, tabloids, magazines, printed online sources (World Wide Web sites), e-mails, and official letters in Indonesia.

1.1 Background of the Study

“A desire for novelty is a perfectly normal characteristic of perfectly normal people. The drive for linguistic novelty begets slang, flamboyant advertising, and other forms of extravagant writing” (Geist, 1970: 3), so that slang might be called a novelty language; and like most novelties, slang expressions are rather likely to be in doubtful taste at the beginning. Since slang is an informal language variety used by special groups of society to communicate internally as an attempt to make people from the out-group fail to understand, consequently according to Kridalaksana (1993: 2000) it includes new words that are always changed. Therefore, slang terms are often used as the symbol of solidarity and its speaker’s membership towards a certain social group or speakers of a language (Wanter, 1998:3). It may take the form of substitution of a short word for an unrelated long one, *buck* for *dollar* and *hooey* for *nonsense* (Suswaningsri: 2001), by mangled abbreviation *salatiga* for *salah tidak pada tempatnya* (wrong in

inappropriate place) (Sahertian: 2000), or by simply shortening *tele* for *telefon* (telephone) (Rahmawati: 2000). Myers mentions that not all shortenings are generally considered as slang, and it is impossible to draw a clear line (Myers, 1963: 33). Myers notes that perhaps the best test is whether the reason is simple economy of effort or space (*POW*, *f.o.b.*, *phone*), or an attitude that is playful, disrespectful, or intended to confuse outsiders (*prof*, *pug*, *PDQ*). Trudgill in *Introducing Language and Society* categorized drug-users as an example of groups employing forms of anti-language. "Anti-language is a variety of language, usually spoken on particular occasions by members of certain relatively powerless or marginal groups in a society, which intended to be incomprehensible to other speakers of the language or otherwise to exclude them. Exclusivity is maintained by slang vocabulary, sometimes known as argot, not known to other groups, including vocabulary derived from other languages" (Trudgill, 1992: 10).

What is certain is that the things we call words very frequently have several meanings and that the meanings of words change, in time, just like the other elements in language. In changing meaning, many words become more specialized or more generalized in application, more elevated or less elevated in social status (Geist, 1970: 76, 80). The writer is interested in analyzing the semantic changes of several Indonesian and English lexicons taken as slang terms by drug addicts and dealers in Indonesia because when the writer is reading news in newspaper or watching news in television she often misunderstands because she is not looking for changes in meaning. Changes in meaning of words are sometimes so rapid that they add to difficulties of understanding between two groups of people communicating to each other. She attempts to observe drugs

slang terms on several written materials such as newspapers, magazines, printed online sources (World Wide Web sites), tabloids, and personal letters in Indonesia.

The writer does this research for a scientific reason. She does not want to expose drugs abuse in society and influence people to be successful in drugs business by mastering the slang terms. However, readers can take some advantages through this thesis, for instance they will know more about the negative effects of drugs abuse and cautious with anything that deals with drugs abuse, such as: when their roommates, colleagues, brothers talked about any tool used in inhaling drugs, or when the readers find their acquaintances deliberately deal with drugs business. Ultimately, the writer chooses slang terms of drug addicts and dealers in Indonesia as her topic because she is interested with the semantic change in the creation of drug slang terms.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study is semantic changes of several Indonesian and English lexicons of slang terms used by illicit drugs addicts and dealers community in Indonesia. The writer formulates research questions as follows:

1. What Indonesian and English borrowing words, that have undergone meaning changes, are used among drug abusers and dealers community in Indonesia as their slang terms?
2. How are the slang terms classified based on semantic change classifications?

1.3 Purpose of the study

Through this study, the writer wants to find out semantic changes classifications of several drug slang terms used among drug addicts and drug dealers in Indonesia.

1.4 Significance of the study

The study is an analysis of semantic change of Indonesian words and English borrowing words used by drug addicts and dealers in Indonesia as their slang terms. By this research, the writer hopes that this study of semantic change can give contribution to linguistic field in general and in semantic field in particular. She also hopes the readers will learn to view the illicit drugs slang speech community in Indonesia by understanding more about its slang, and enlarge their knowledge about it as a part of language in society.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

To take the data of illicit drugs slang terms, the writer gather together articles from several Indonesian written materials such as magazines, newspapers, Internet websites, and other literatures that provide information on narcotics, psychotropic, and other addictive substances slang terms. She collects the data from 2001 to 2002. The scope of the thesis is the semantic change of those terms, which are free morphemes, into slang terms, not including the phonological process of them. The writer limits her analysis on Indonesian words, which taken as illicit drugs slang terms in Indonesia. If there are some English

borrowing words slang terms found in those written materials she would put them in the Appendix.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

Semantic change: Vocabulary change occurs in a variety of ways; by developing the inner resources of the language, by borrowing, and by semantic change. Semantic change is change in meaning. In meaning, changes result from language contact, from cultural developments requiring new vocabulary, and from reshaping existing meanings (Wardaugh, 1977: 211, 213).

Slang: Slang is an informal language variety used by special groups of society to communicate internally as an attempt to make people from the out-group fail to understand (Kridalaksana, 1982: 56).

1.7 Organization of the Study

The writer organizes her research in five (5) chapters. The first chapter (Chapter I) is the introduction of her research, which contains the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the significance of the study, the scope and limitation, the definition of key term and the organization of the study. Next, in the second chapter (Chapter II), the writer talks about some theories she used in doing her analysis. In the third chapter (Chapter III), the writer explains about her method in doing her research, and the fourth chapter (Chapter IV) contains the writer's analysis of the data she got in her research. She analyzes and explains the semantic changes of illicit drugs slang

terms in Indonesia. In the last chapter (Chapter V), the writer concludes her findings based on the analysis.