

Phenomena of the Use of Written Language in the Virtual World

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Abstract: The development of technology is so fast and tremendous that humans find ways on how to communicate fast, cheap, and practical. Several ways can be done to communicate in writing in the virtual world, for instance by using electronic mail and social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Friendster. Such habits apparently flourished to several layers of society, even though it was started by teenagers and youngsters who always appear progressive and innovative. It is not rare to find abbreviations such as *gw* (I/me), *mo* (want), *blg* (say), *thq* (thank you), *skrg otw* (now on the way), *ma* (with), *bkp* (Dad), *ke rmh y* (to the house), *se7* (agree). In this research, there are three things that can be classified, such as (1) written communication with mobile phone media (short message), (2) written communication in social media (Facebook), and (3) written communication in chatting such as in MIG 33. Written communication with short messages, can be further classified to be (1) short message that uses abbreviations (2) combination of the use of letters, abbreviations, and numbers. These two classifications are elaborated in the concept of discourse to find the series of complete communication from the beginning until finish. Written communication in short message, social media (Facebook), and in chatting, actually posses similar patterns, which are abbreviating the word, using a variation of numbers and letters, using unnecessary punctuation mark in a series of sentences, writing uppercase and lowercase letters in one sentence.

Keywords : language, written, virtual, world

1. Introduction

Language has an important role for human lives. In its use, Indonesian language is very diverse. This diversity may be caused by several factors, depending on the needs and purpose of communication. Usually, people communicate verbally and written. In verbal communication, we can directly talk face to face, or through several media such as telephone, mobile phone, or tele-conference. In verbal communication, we can speak by obeying the language rules that occur, or we can use the broad spectrum of language depending on the needs and to whom we speak and in which situation and condition we are in. Also in written language, we can use the good and proper Indonesian language, or use various languages according to the needs. The point is that in both verbal and written communication, there should be an understanding between the speaker and the listener, and between the writer and the reader so that good communication can be established.

Actually, the use of written language should be more careful and thorough, so that the readers can understand the series of sentences coherently from the beginning to the end. This is because no direct communications were done. To ensure the effectivity of the delivery of message, the grammatical functions such as subject, predicate, and object and the connection between those functions should be complete and real, so that wrong interpretations do not happen. However, based on the current reality with the advancement of knowledge and technology development, written language is no longer used carefully, and seems to be used haphazardly, especially in the virtual world.

The development of technology is so fast and tremendous, such that humans find ways to communicate efficiently, cheap, and practical. Only in seconds, they can be connected to the world without space and time limits. This is what is called the virtual world, a facility that spoils human to visit anytime, anywhere, and anyone providing that they have the necessary media to connect to the world. There are at least several ways that can be done to communicate in writing in the virtual world.

For instance by using electronic mails, social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Friendster, and many other social media that appear recently along with the human needs. Long before that, humans have also communicated in writing through mobile phones, by using short message service (SMS).

Written communication in the virtual world differs greatly with the usual daily communication. In the virtual world, humans find practicality in using sentences; this is caused by the limit of space and word character. Thus, abbreviation of words often emerges.

Habits such as the above apparently flourished to several layers of society, even though it was started by teenagers and youngsters who always appear progressive, innovative, and different from the others. It is often found abbreviation of words such as: *gw* (I/me), *mo* (want to), *blg* (say), *thq* (thank you), *skrg otw* (now on the way), *ma* (with), *bkp* (Dad), *ke rmh y* (to your house), *se7* (agree) that is compiled to become a sentence ("*Gue mau bilang terima kasih, sekarang on the way sama bapak ke rumah you, setuju.*") Or in English "I want to say thank you, now on the way with Dad to your house, agreed."). Or such as "*y, t'rah km pi g da mslh k*" ("it's up to you, but there is no problem, right?").

Such phenomena can be found in written communication through short message and Facebook. The problems that arise are whether this communication can proceed, and whether both sides can understand the messages conveyed, so that misinterpretations do not happen. This matter becomes the focus of the writer's discussion to prove that with the above abbreviations, written communication can still proceed well. The two things elaborated in this discussion are (1) written communication with mobile phone media (short message), (2) written communication in social media (Facebook), and (3) written communication in chatting in MIG 33. Written communication by short message is further elaborated into (1) short message that uses abbreviations, and (2) combination of the use of letters, abbreviations, and numbers. Both were elaborated in the concept of discourse to find the series of complete communication from the beginning until finish.

2. Theoretical Background

In analysing a discourse, three theories were used, which are the standard discourse theory by de Beunggrande dan Dressler, Grice's cooperative theory, and the famous Dell hyme's with communication taxonomy.

In written communication, various languages are often used by the language users, both standard and non-standard. It is usually found in the form of news, announcement, or advertisement. In order for that variation can be made as a communication tool, it needs to fulfil the standard of textuality. De Beunggrande dan Dressler express the seven standard of textuality, which are:

- 1) Cohesion,
- 2) Coherence,
- 3) Intentionality,
- 4) Acceptability,
- 5) Informativity,
- 6) Situationality,
- 7) Intertextuality.

Cohesion is the dependency of the elements that build a discourse. Language elements, both words and sentences that are read or heard, depend on each other and forming a series. Dressler (1981:3) stated that this dependency caused the reader or listener to be able to interpret those series without having problems.

Coherence is a configuration of concept and relation behind the text physically. This concept relation raised the relationship of cause and effect, time, action, locution, subject, object actions, purpose, and world knowledge. Concept is the configuration of knowledge that is divided into main concept and secondary concept. Main concept includes object, situation, occurrence, and action. Whereas the secondary concept includes condition, subject, attitude, relationship, attribute, form, section, cause, reason, intention, etc...

Intentionality is linked with the attitude of the writer or reader. This attitude of the writer or reader utilizes cohesion and coherence to reproduce a discourse. In conversational discourse, for instance, what can be captured by the listener or reader is the coherence of the information, and material connection of the language elements. With this coherence and cohesion, writer or speaker can find the purpose. Acceptability is connected with the attitude the reader or listener in understanding a discourse. Reader or listener utilizes cohesion and coherence in order to understand the intention of

the speaker or writer. A set of events or occurrence will form cohesion and coherence only if the event or occurrence is relevant to the reader or listener. The acquisition of knowledge of an event or occurrence is based on cooperation between speaker/writer and listener/reader. Only by this manner, the objective or purpose of the speaker/writer can be achieved.

Informativity is linked with whether a discourse (text) is expected or unexpected, whether it is known or unknown, the occurrences or events that are presented in the text is expected or unexpected, known or unknown by the reader/listener. The situationality of a text is shown by the relevance of a text towards situations or events. Of course as other standards of textuality, situationality is linked with the event that is stated with its cohesion and coherence. That text contains high informativity (Dessler, 1981:163).

Intertextuality means that the order of speech is linked by the form or meaning to their series of speech, usually the speech that precede and follow. Intertextuality actually stresses more on a standard of textuality that refers to the discourse of books, especially text books.

Grice (1957) is known with the introduction of pragmatic approach. The concept of pragmatic approach that was introduced includes three things, which are meaning, context, and communication. One of the types of pragmatic approach that is relevant to discourse is the cooperative theory. Grice's concept of central pragmatic is speaking meaning and cooperative principle.

Speaking meaning does not only include the difference between two types of meanings, which are between semantic meaning and pragmatic meaning, but also the meaning that is sourced on the intention of the addresser (speaker) in communication. Furthermore, Grice separated between non-natural meaning and natural meaning. Non-natural meaning is interpreted as the meaning that is proportional to the purpose of communication. Meanwhile, natural meaning is the meaning contained by a lingual unit, for example a word, phrase, or sentence.

Grice (1975) revealed that in the cooperative principle, a speaker or writer should fulfil four maxims. Maxims are the principles that that need to be obeyed by the participants of communication in interacting, both textual and interpersonal in the means to smoothen the communication process. These cooperative principles are 1) maxim of quantity, 2) maxim of quality, 3) maxim of relation, and 4) maxim of manner.

In the taxonomy of Hymes (1972), a method to determine the communication events is proposed. The components of communication are shortened into speaking. The analysis of communication can be done by applying the concepts of communication units, which are: S: setting: time, place and other physical conditions. Scene: psychological balance to setting. (Record of setting can be changed, for example from formal to informal). P: Participants: speaker or sender, E: Ends: purpose and objective. A: Act sequences: form and content of message. K: Keys: tone of speaking, serious or relaxed. I: instrumentalities: channel, writings, telegraph, dialects, standard language. N: norm of interaction, norm of interpretation, and G: genre: story or advertisement, etc...

3. Discussion

Writing is an activity to create a communication between two sides by using scripts. These scripts should have a meaning so that they can be understood by two sides. Writing activity grows rapidly according to the development of age. The development rate of information technology also affects the development of writing activity. This can be seen through several means, for example through internet (e-mail, blog, website, chat, and others).

One of the aspects of writing that utilizes the growth of information technology is by SMS (short message services). The forms of SMS nowadays are increasingly diverse, which involve the mixing of languages (Indonesian with regional languages and Indonesian with foreign language), abbreviations in writing, the use of numbers instead of letters, and the use of incorrect punctuations. As the effect, the use of foreign vocabulary, invention of new terms unjustly, expansion of vocabulary meaning, and others that could not be avoided.

The use of written language in mobile phone or hand phone, well known as short message service (SMS), is a new breakthrough to deliver brief and express message and information. The use of written language in short message service (SMS) is generally short and discontinuous.

SMS language or what is termed as short message, is full of abbreviations, starting from "you" abbreviated into "u", "ga pakai lama" (don't be too long) with "gpl", and many other slang

abbreviations. The objective is to accelerate writing and saving characters due to the limit of space. With such conditions, it is expected that the message can be quickly delivered. However, sometimes these abbreviations cause trouble in reading and understanding the message. It is feared there may be miscommunications.

Written language in short message that is used by teenagers is quite different, not following the standard rules, which are the good and proper uses of written language. One of the requirements of good and proper use of language is the use of language that follows the standard rules, or considered as standard in the utilization of appropriate and harmonious style according to the group of speaker and the type of language used. Teenage language tends to choose casual style, so that it is not too normative (awkward). This is reflected in the use of vocabulary, sentence structure, and intonation. This kind of pattern is the daily written language that can be found in short messages, in Jakarta and in various parts of Indonesia. In fact, the adults are also often doing the same thing.

3.1. Written language in short messages

In accordance with what the author pointed out in the introduction, several examples of written language in short message in the form of abbreviation is presented below, followed by the meaning in English.

Dwi : *Nis, ad d rmh ga ?*

(Nis, are you at home?)

Anis: *ad, mang na pa ?*

(Yes, what's wrong ?)

Dwi : *we k rmh km y*

(I want to go to your house...)

Anis: *ok, tmbn km mo k rmh gw, ad pa ?*

(Okay, it's unusual for you to come to my house, what is the matter?)

Dwi : *we ad prlu, nnti we crtain y*

(I need something, I'll tell you later)

Anis: *oh gtu , ok we tngu d rmh.*

(Oh I see, okay I'll wait for you at home)

Also, pay attention to this short message below:

Sry bgt k ddt jd bgn, bsk krj y ka, smngt ka spy a nk jbtn. Amn qu sht ja ka, kk gmn ?u pst kk dh tdr y, sry y, udh dh swt drm ja.

The above message is a discourse that contains a series of complete sentence and meaning in English as follows.

I'm sorry, Ka Didat, to cause you to wake up. Are you working tomorrow, keep fighting so that you can get promoted. Amin. I'm fine Kak, how about you? Uh you must be asleep, I'm sorry, okay, sweet dreams.

Furthermore, short messages using the variation of letters, abbreviations, and numbers are presented as follows.

Mus : *Oo..3mX n4 Ka'imnd4h cXrnX d 690R p4 95n??..n4 MyuZ tau pRasa4n n4*

ka'ind4h..... ka' ot6 9x 6'mksd 9!2 kox mus tau dy syn9 69tz 5 ka'ind4h

Indah: *skrg ka indah da drmlt td ka otb ngbhs soal bgor jd ka indh agk ksl j..mus knl sm orng'y gag?*

Mus : *dx knl. . .95n or9 n4, kyx 4p,5u mint fot n4 tp y9 d krm fot n4 ka'ind4h*

Indah : *ouh, gag knl y. . .dl ka otb prnh cnita gag tntng una??*

Mus : *ka ' ot6 pnh cr!t lox k4' un4 tu 16h tua, tp pnd!em lox ka'ot6 dx nanya dul 9!2, cu5n tu che y9 muz tau, iy che k4t n4 krudun9an n4 1o5 prnh !!at oxxx*

The above dialog is a series of short messages that contains a complete discourse and English meaning as the following.

Mus : Oh, are you in Bogor now? Mus understand how Kak Indah feels... Kak Otib did not mean to do that. Mus know he loves Kak Indah very much...

Indah : Now I'm at my house, Kak Otib was discussing about Bogor, so Kak Indah was a little bit annoyed.. Do you know the person?

Mus : No I don't... how is the person? I want her picture, but you send the picture.

Indah : Oh, you don't know.. Did Kak Otib ever tell you about Una??

Mus : Kak Otib told me that Kak Una is older but reserved, if Kak Otib doesn't ask she won't ask first... That's all Mus know, that's right, Mus knows that she wears hijab; Mus haven't seen the person yet.

3.2. Dialog in social media (Facebook)

The use of written language in Facebook language in the status is generally short, discontinuous, abbreviated, mixture of languages, and using punctuations, numbers, and deleting the functions of a sentence, especially in teenagers who often use written language in Facebook status. The example of a dialog taken from the social media is shown in Figure 1.

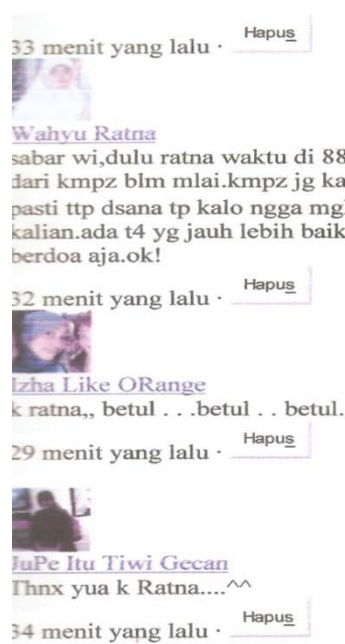


Figure 1. a dialog taken from social media

The above dialog has the full discourse and meaning in English as below :

Be patient, Tiwi. It also happened when Ratna was in SMA 88, the school had greeted well and directly asked for a letter but the campus had not yet started. The campus is also waiting for a letter from diknas. If it's your fortune in that school, you would still be there. But if not, maybe the school that Tiwi chose was not the best for your group. There are far better places that Allah has prepared for Tiwi and friends, now what is left is to pray.
Thank you, Ratna.

3.3. Dialog (chat) in MIG 33

This site is very popular among youngsters, even though in reality, adults like to make use of this site. Usually they use Yahoo Messenger or YM, because this is a site that can use web cam and headset for the user. Here are the dialog of Dini and one of her friends named Ken.

rifky_thea : Askum
niepuspitasari : ws..

rifky_thea: *Lam ken,ku ken , nak mana*
nieuspitasari: *nak tng...u nak mn?*
rifky_thea: *Tng.mana? Ku krwg*
nieuspitasari: *pakem..ouhh krwng.*
rifky_thea: *Pakem kaya rem aja*
nieuspitasari: *pasar kemis mksudnya...*
rifky_thea: *Owh.tanggerang ya*
nieuspitasari: *y...*

The above dialog contained a full discourse and meaning in English as follows.

rifky_thea : Asssalamualaikum
nieuspitasari : waalaikumsalam
rifky_thea: Greetings, I'm Ken where do you come from?
nieuspitasari: From Tangerang ... Where do you come from?
rifky_thea: Which part of Tangerang? I'm from Kerawang
nieuspitasari: Pakem, .oh Kerawang .
rifky_thea: Pakem (grip) just like a brake
nieuspitasari: I mean Pasar Kemis...
rifky_thea: Oh.Tanggerang
nieuspitasari: yes.....

From the elaboration above, it evidently affect the students who are in the process of learning, especially in the learning of writing. In one side, there is a positive aspect that the students are motivated to write, but on the other side, the students write by mixing the good and proper Indonesian language with slang. This surely cannot be justified. It is widely known that in the learning process, a teacher is obliged to teach the good and proper Indonesian language. Therefore, if a teacher finds a student using slang in the learning process and he/she is speaking, the teacher can correct it. However, if the student uses slang in writing, then it is the obligation of the teacher to correct and return the student's work, so that the student knows the language errors that was made.

4. Conclusion

Written communication in short messages, in social media (Facebook), and in chatting are in fact having a similar pattern. This pattern contains abbreviation of words, the use of a variation of numbers with letters, the use of unnecessary punctuations in a series of sentences, writing uppercase and lowercase letters in a sentence.

Written communication in short messages, in social media (Facebook), and in chatting can work well and smoothly if the two sides understand the symbols or punctuations used. Even though various forms were written, both sides can communicate well. This means that the patterns used have already become an agreement between the users.

By looking at the dialog as a complete unit, we can conclude that the three written dialog models that are discussed above fulfil the criteria as a discourse. This can be proven by the existence of communication that still flows even when using various patterns.

This discussion is very interesting to be further studied as a more complex research. There are many benefits that can be obtained, in which we are able to know about the variation of languages, so that we know that such language that has been elaborated are used in daily written communication by the community in electronic mails, social media, and chat.

The author hopes that what has been described above can be a contemplation that the written communication language has grown rapidly, according to the creativity and ability of someone to invent new things.

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Biodata

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Since 1989, he has been a permanent lecturer in IKIP Muhammadiyah Jakarta that is recently changed its name into UHAMKA (Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof.DR. HAMKA). He finished his undergraduate study in IKIP Negeri Jakarta, study program Indonesian Language and Literature Education in 1988, and his postgraduate study in UNPAD Bandung in the field of Linguistic Studies in 1996. Now he is finishing his doctorate study in Universitas Negeri Jakarta, study program Language Education. He has served as the Head of Librarian UHAMKA, and now other than teaching, he is also concentrating on several local researches, as a form of Tridarma University. Various national and international seminars has been attended, as speaker, moderator, as well as participant. Several research results that has been discussed in seminars are: "Maximizing the Function of Right and Left Brain (Multiple Intelligence) in the Language Field" (HPBI 2006), "Skill in Teaching Indonesian Language in English, especially Pronunciation for Preschool Teachers in Pra Bilingual Kindergarten, DKI Jakarta" (2006), and "Enhancement of the Students' Ability in TK Al-Afshah to Communicate in Simple English with Communicative Language Teaching" (2008). The newest activity is as a speaker in the National Seminar that was held by FIB Universitas Indonesia on February 2010, with the title "Slang Vocabulary in DKI Jakarta, Study of Phonology and Semantics". Several awards that has been obtained are: 1) The Best Participant of National Public Security and Discipline Trainers that was held by POLRI, MENPORA and KNPI, and 2) 2nd Champion in Reading Excerpt of Buya HAMKA Literature, 2nd Champion in writing the article "Sang Pemimpin (The Leader)" that was held by UHAMKA in 2012.