

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Language is the most powerful means of communication. It is through language that humans express their thoughts, desires, emotions and feelings. It is generally accepted that every language has a vocabulary. Many vocabularies of languages haven't been observed. Vocabulary has its dynamics. How actually the process of vocabulary changes need to be further explored. The investigation of lexicon study is interesting, because vocabulary is the area where people most notice in everyday life interaction.

Several researchers have ever done relevant studies of lexical change. They are: firstly, Ngom (2000) has ever research on Sociolinguistic Motivations of Lexical Borrowings in Senegal, secondly Su (2005) has ever researched on Chinese lexical change deals with the sociolinguistic study; thirdly Gao (2008) has ever researched on lexical changes of Chinese Internet lexical items; Fourthly Ali and Mohideen (2010) have ever researched on lexical change for professional competence in English language education and finally Karūrū (2013) has ever research on Borrowing and Communication in Language.

The lexicon is an inventory of a human being's knowledge of the words in their language. It is understood broadly as a finite list of stored forms that has meanings and the possibilities for combining them. Thus, lexicon can be defined as a list of all possible meaningful parts or combinations of parts of words that possible to stand alone to produce words. The word is a meaningful morpheme

unit used in speech or writing and belongs to a specific parts of speech either is used alone or combined to form a sentence.

Any people in this world is never exactly uses a language in the same way. According to Tagliamonte (2006:10) different ways of saying more or less the same thing may occur in every variety of language. It is obvious that because language varies not only from one individual to another but also from one sub-section of speech community to another.

Vocabulary changes as a part of language change. Ottoson (2005:97) distinguishes language change phenomena as *innovation* and *diffusion*. Innovation is the spontaneous emergence of a novel language feature that was absent in the previous generation. Diffusion, on the other hand, involves speakers imitating a novel language feature (an innovation) from another speaker. Similarly, Ke, Gong and Wang (2008:937) view language change as a diffusion process of some linguistic elements (linguistic innovations) in a language community.

Language change can be influenced by changes in the social environment of the language, in various indirect ways, but also more directly by social evaluation of specific features of language. On the most general level, one cannot exclude the possibility that general weakening of the language norms as a social institution, in times of cultural and social instability, in itself accelerates language change.

Varshney (1995:283) has distinguished lexical change into three categories, namely: loss of lexical items, change of meaning and creation of new words. From this point of view lexical change can be thought as a process in

which the word, concepts or meaning are totally or partly replaced by another lexical item.

One of the most obvious ways in lexical change is addition of new words. The phenomenon of lexical change does not only happen to other languages communities but also exists in Hokkien. One of the cases of lexical change in Hokkien is the creation of new lexical items. In this case, the writer has only focused on lexical creation. The lexical creation is divided into two processes: internal lexical creation and external lexical creation.

Internal lexical creation encompasses derivation, compounding, shortening and coinage. Firstly, derivation is the process for internal lexical creation for example, 'lao-lang' which consists of the prefix 'lao' plus 'lang' that means old people or parents. Secondly, compounding is the process for internal lexical creation for example leng-khi that means air-conditioner. It consists of the word 'leng' which represents cool and 'khi' which represents air. Thirdly, shortening is the process for internal lexical creation for example the phrase 'wa lang' become 'lan' which mean we. Finally, coinage is the process for internal lexical creation for example 'koktong' which is a brand of coffee product.

On the other hand, external lexical borrowing is created lexical items derived from other languages. Hokkien words incorporate borrowed words from other languages. 'Lokun' means doctor from Bahasa Indonesia 'dukun'. Persian loanword into Hokkien is Bazaar (بازار) which became Pa Sat (巴剎) in Hokkien which means market.

A common cause of lexical borrowing is the need to find words for objects, concepts, and places as previously stated above. However, prestige also

gives contribution to lexical borrowing. The loan word of English 'T.V.' is as a consequence of technological development that gives prestige to Hokkien speakers. 'tifi' is more prestigious than 'tien-se' in Hokkien.

Hokkien has a significant role in contributing words to other languages. Filipinos has adopted Hokkien to name on cookery such as 'tikoy, lumpia, bihon' etc. (Xuebo, 2012). Similarly, Hokkien has contributed to name concepts in Bahasa Indonesia (Zhi, 1987) such as 'sempoa, kemoceng, loteng, tauge', etc.

The increasingly modern influence nowadays leads to lexical modernization: a process by which a language standardizing, enhancing, and expanding its domains of activity (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997:69). In reality Hokkien has other lexical changes besides created lexical items borrowed from other languages. That is why the writer is interested in observing lexical changes.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the problems to be investigated are formulated as follows.

- 1) How do the lexical creations of Medan Hokkien dialect occur?
- 2) Why do the lexical creations of Medan Hokkien dialect occur the way they do?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

This study is aiming at the new phenomenon on lexical change of Hokkien in Medan. Thus, the objectives of this study are elaborated as the following.

- 1) To describe the process of lexical creations of Medan Hokkien dialect,
- 2) To explain the factors of lexical creations of Medan Hokkien dialect.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

Lexical change has several domains to be studied, it is quite impossible to cover them all. Therefore, this research limits the discussion of lexical creation particularly noun.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to have significantly relevant to the theoretical and practical aspects.

1. Theoretically, the research findings are expected to enrich the theory of lexical change particularly for understanding the processes and the reasons of lexical change in Medan Hokkien dialect.
2. Practically, the research findings are also valuable for:

Firstly, the next researchers who will be conducting research in the field of language change particularly lexical change as a review of literature.

Secondly, Hokkien speakers in Medan as a reference study.