CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents background to the study, research questions, objectives, significance to knowledge and framework of the theories.

1.1 Background to the Study

A ‘change’ in the lexical norm of a language describes what exists in the mind of its speakers. In language perception and production, for a case, the speakers require expressions for new concepts by giving new sense and connotation into the existed words, regarding to the new communicative activities; establishing new meanings. For instance, the word *mouse* acquired a new meaning as a navigation device for computers, as illustrated by Booji (2005). In this case, this renewed word-concept was reconstructed without any change in the phonetic and/or morphologic form; only the meaning changes. In response to the case, word meanings become unstable.

Interestingly, the change may be radically different from the firstly-given meaning. The word *wencla*, for example, has experienced certain changes,

Wencla means

firstly-given meaning : child of either sex

1st change : female child

2nd change : (young) woman, especially of low origin and rude manners

The meaning modification is inevitable. Respectively, further semantic analysis gives an idea that the meaning changes into a more negative meaning; *wencla* refers to young woman who belongs to lower class with no manners. The traditional typology of semantic changes called this case as pejoration.

Pejoration, suggested by Washington (2010), is a process describing a decrease in the semantic quality of a word. In the process, in which language-internal or extralinguistic forces are involved, a semantic scope may be extended to include a new value alongside a preexisting one, or replaced by the new meaning altogether. For instance, the word *harlot* experiences extralinguistic forced, that is, historical factors which changes the meaning from 'vagabond' to 'prostitute.' Since the history of the word contributes to the process of pejoration, an etymology analysis with a semantic approach is applied in the current research. The main purpose of the research is to describe the pejoration mechanism of semantic change, particularly for political and social words.

Related to this research, there is previous research about semantic change conducted by Cook and Stevenson (2010). Cook-Stevenson's research focused on computational study of amelioration and pejoration. In order to cover untouched perspectives of Cook-Stevenson, analysis of factors contributing to the semantic change and semantic features are included. Thus, this research aims to: 1) identify the pejoration phenomena of words; and 2) reveal various factors contributing to the semantic change.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the explanation in the background to the study, the research questions can be formulated as follows:

1. What are the ultimate causes triggering pejoration?

2. What are the significant factors causing pejoration?

3. What are the semantic features identified as negative connotation of pejorative words?

1.3 Objectives

In response to the research questions, the objectives are:

1. to identify ultimate causes triggering pejoration;

2. to describe significance factors of pejoration causes; and

3. to analyze and describe the semantic features identified as negative connotation of pejorative words

1.4 Significance to Knowledge

This research describes the pejoration mechanism of words. Through the description, it is expected that the results may give expanded knowledge and understanding about evolution of word usage, especially the point in which word meaning can possibly be changed from positive to negative. In this sense, words are considered undergoing semantic change through times due to particular factors.

Respectively, the knowledge of semantic change may give speakers a particular competence in having a sense of language. Consequently, they may use language with full of consideration.

1.5 Framework of the Theories

The word innovations in semantic evolution show the phenomena triggering to the regular process in language change. The semantic analysis of the evolution produces words that bear negative connotation, typologically called pejoration. Pejoration happens when a word meaning becomes negative (Kleparski, 2007). Regarding to Kleparski's ideas, pejoration addresses the history of some of the negative terms with historical shifts in certain level. In this sense, the development of political and social words, limitation of the research, is contextualized within a broader examination. In semantic perspectives, the ideas of Washington (2010) contribute to comprehensive analysis of semantic change, especially pejoration, and support the Kleparski's argumentation.

The broader examination itself is actualized through the etymological analysis. The Liberman's ideas become the grand theory of this field. Supporting to Liberman's theory, the theory from Meilet (1974) adapted by Kleparski (2007) about semantic change is proposed. Meilet highlights three significant causes of semantic change; pejoration, that is pejoration due to linguistic causes, pejoration due to historical causes and pejoration due to social stratification. In order to give a detail description on semantic change, due to extension or replacement of the

meaning, the analysis of semantic features proposed by Voyles (1973) is provided.