CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Language can be defined as a way of communication in human life. People need language to communicate, to express feelings and emotions, and to express ideas, thoughts, and imaginations either in spoken or written form. However, often in real life, people do not express their thoughts and feelings in a usual way. This is supported by Chomsky's opinion in Paul which Chomsky stated that language reflects human mental processes or shapes the flow and character of thought as people have a wide variety of interests, points of view, and intellectual backgrounds. Therefore, people may express their thoughts and feelings in a different way; a non-literal way (Paul, 2009).

Based on the event which what is really meant needed to be analyzed, the researcher would use semantics as an approach in this research as it is a language study which concerns about the meaning. According to Nick Riemer, one of the experts in Semantics field, "Semantics is to study the basic, literal meanings of words as considered principally as parts of a language system. In linguistics, semantic is the study of meaning, as used at the levels of words, phrases, and sentences as well." (Riemer, 2013: 22).

One of the topics covered in semantics study is a figure of speech. According to Gustaf Stern in (Peter, Martin, & Julian, 2007: 83), figures of speech

are intentional transfers which involve emotional (including aesthetic) factors. They serve the expressive and purposive functions of speech better than the "plain statement". Figures of speech are further divided into several kinds, and one of them is irony. According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary ("Irony," n.d.), the irony is the use of words to express something other than and especially the opposite of the literal meaning. According to Literary Device, irony can also be defined as words that their intended meaning is different from the actual meaning of the words. It may also be a situation that ends up in quite a different way than what is generally anticipated ("Irony," 2017). To put it simpler, it is a difference between appearance and reality. The definition of irony can further be divided by Muecke into two main types: verbal and situational.

Related to this research, the researcher compares her main topic to two different types of research before. The first one is a research conducted by Reyes, Rosso and Buscaldi in 2012 entitled "From Humor Recognition to Irony Detection: The Figurative Language of Social Media". The focus of this research is to analyze humor and irony to identify the key values components for their automatic processing. They focused their research on five data sets taken from Twitter by taking advantage of user-generated tags, such as "#humor" and "#irony". The results show the creative and figurative usages of language and the positive usage of humor and encouraging usage of irony (Reyes, Rosso, & Buscaldi, 2012).

Another research was conducted by Farías, Patti, & Rosso in 2016 entitled "Irony Detection in Twitter: The Role of Affective Content" In this work, they

address the problem of detecting irony in tweets, casting it as a classification problem. The classification experiments over different corpora result that affective information helps to distinguish between ironic and non-ironic tweets (Farías, Patti, & Rosso, 2016).

Based on above previous researches, both previous types of research have shown how this research is different in its major, as in this research, the researcher will conduct a research to find out the types and functions of irony expressions in Twitter.

This research is important to be conducted because people often convey their thoughts and feelings on daily basis in a non-literal meaning by using irony, yet this topic is more often analyzed only in the literary works. Therefore, this research aims to explore the meaning behind the irony expressions to classify them per type and to explore the functions of the irony expressions which occurs in a daily basis to unveil another level of irony and to clear the misunderstanding.

Irony is a common expression in daily life, and it often appears in Twitter as well. Twitter is a social mobile network with a wide range of users. Twitter users may use irony to express their daily activities or about a social phenomenon. Below are two examples of them.

Figure 1.1.1 Verbal Irony
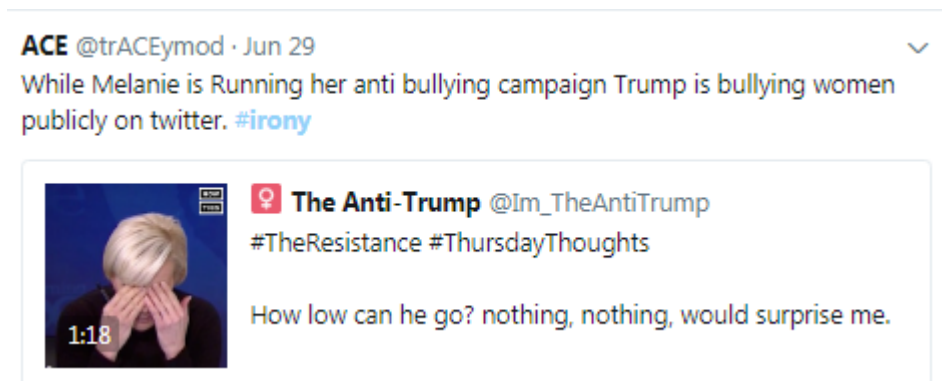
Figure 1.1.2 Situational Irony

The first tweet is "Super proud of my home state today. #irony" The second tweet is: "While Melanie is running her anti bullying campaign, Trump is bullying women publicly on Twitter. #irony"

In the first tweet, a Twitter user states she feels proud of her home state. This may seem normal, but it is actually ironic respond to a news headline of "How Illinois become America's most messed-up state." The Twitter user is actually reinforcing her thought that she feels ashamed of her home state achievement. As for the second tweet, a Twitter user presents a situation with this sentence: "While Melanie is running her anti bullying campaign, Trump is bullying women publicly on Twitter. #irony" By stating this, the Twitter user is presenting an ironic situation in which Trump and his wife are contradicting. One is campaigning anti-bullying, while another is bullying publicly. By bringing this situation unto surface, the Twitter user is applying the distancing/self-protective function of irony. This is so because the Twitter user avoids direct and harsh criticism of the event.

Based on the background of research above, the researcher is interested to explore the types and the functions of irony expressions found in Twitter.

1.2   Identification of the Problem

Based on the explanation in Background of the Research, the researcher identifies the problems as follows.

1.   There are many types of irony expressions in Twitter.

2.   There are many functions of irony expressions in Twitter.

3.   The topic that is used the most for irony.

4.   The composition frequency of irony in Twitter.

1.3   Limitation of the Problem

According to the problems that have been explained before, the researcher chooses to limit the research due to the limitation of time that researcher has. Thus, the problems are limited as follows.

1.   There are many types of irony expressions in Twitter.

2.   There are many functions of irony expressions in Twitter.

1.4   Formulation of the Problem

Based on problems that found and arranged previously, thus the researcher curious about those several problems that will be explored, and it has arranged becoming the formulation as follows.

1.   What are the types of irony expressions in Twitter?

2.   What are the functions of irony expressions in Twitter?

1.5   Objective of the Research

In accordance with the formulation of the research, the objective of this research is as follows.

1.   To find out the types of irony expressions in Twitter.

2.   To find out the functions of irony expressions in Twitter.

1.6   Significance of Research

The significances of the research are as follows.

1.   Theoretically, this research provides additional information as a reference or comparable study in linguistics, especially in Semantics.

2.   Practically, the readers are able to apply irony and develop a good sense to understand the meaning through Semantics point of view, not only in the linguistics field but also in daily life.

1.7   Definition of Key Terms

Based on what the researcher has described in the background of the research, the representative key terms that will commonly encounter by readers are as follows.

Irony: an indirect means of expression, where what is presented differs to what is implied or intended (Dracopoulos, 2006).

Semantics: a branch of linguistics was mainly concerned with how the 'meaning' was conveyed by the linguistics system consisting of different unit structures like sentence,

phrases, words, morphemes etc (Leech in Umagandhi & Vinothini, 2017: 1).

Twitter: the mobile social network that combines elements of short messaging services (SMS or texting), instant-messaging communication tools, and blog publishing software (Fitton, Gruen, & Poston, 2009: 9).