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Bahasa di Era Digital: Peluang atau Ancaman?

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"Language in the Digital Era: Opportunities or Threats?"

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A SEMANTIC ANALYSIS: THE TYPES AND MOTIVATING FACTORS OF SEMANTIC CHANGE IN THE ONLINE MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

Research on semantic change has gained a great deal of attention in recent years, particularly in the form of written language, such as printed and online media. For linguists, semantic change or also known as semantic shift has aroused interest and curiosity due to the fact that it is a means of showing the development of language use. My intention for this paper is then to describe the type of and its motivating factors for semantic change which focuses on some news articles in the online newspapers (Tempo, Sindo, Kompas, and Media Indonesia). All the articles selected are concerned with the 2018 simultaneous regional elections (Pilkada), which has currently been discussed most so as to receive much attraction from public. Using descriptive qualitative method, this study will apply the framework of Hollmann (2009a) about type of semantic change and of Cheer (2007) about the reasons for semantic change. In collecting the data, this study will use a documentation method and note taking. The results showed that there are three types of semantic change were practiced in the selected online newspapers, and metaphors were the most dominantly found in the articles selected. Meanwhile, the factors that motivate the semantic change were dominated by the association with other words. The results of this study, however, cannot be generalized to all other online newspapers or media. Owing to this, it is suggested that further research may be conducted in the more online newspapers or any other media.

Keywords: semantic change, pilkada, regional election, online media

INTRODUCTION

Currently the issue of the upcoming 2018 simultaneous regional elections has received much attention from public. That is not without reason, then, some news online media, such as Tempo, Sindo, Kompas, and Media Indonesia, provide special column dealing with the news reports about regional elections in their official website. What is surprising is that some election candidates were allegedly involved in the graft or corruption case and have even been named as graft suspects by KPK (the Corruption Eradication Commission). The KPK stated that its move towards those election candidates was not related to pilkada. Nevertheless, the KPK’s move, indeed, has received special attention from the coordinative Ministry of Political, Legal, and Security Affairs (Menko Polhukam), Kemensat, asking KPK to postpone investigations into graft cases towards the candidates contesting in the upcoming concurrent regional elections. Thus, the KPK will not be accused of working as a proxy of certain parties. Furthermore, public was also surprised by the news that the KPK caught red-handed a member of Elections Supervisory Committee (Panwaslu) of Garut in the involvement of bribery case. This event was definitely embarrassing and then the neutrality of the General Elections Commission (KPU) and Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) may probably be questionable. Besides, the issue of the simultaneous regional elections has also gained special attention from Police chief (Kapolri) Genr. Tito Karnavian, suggesting that the term ‘tahun politik’ should be substituted into ‘pesia demokrasi’. This raises a question that what was wrong with the use of the term ‘tahun politik’. According to Kapolri, the term ‘tahun politik’ seems likely to give entrepreneurs and investors worries and insecurities and lead to conflicts. Thus, it can be assumed that the meaning of the compound word ‘tahun politik’ is considered to be narrowed since the term ‘tahun politik’ is only referred to the process of the votes, while the former meaning of ‘politik’ concerns more than the votes in elections, but it includes pursuing virtue collectively. That is to say that ‘tahun politik’ is considered to give more negative value rather than ‘pesia demokrasi’. Such kind of shifting meaning of the word to another is then called semantic change.

Semantic change or also known as semantic shift refers to a change in the meaning of a word which may expand or replace the original meaning by either elevating the value of the word or lowering it (Fromkin and Rodman, 1983, p.297). Further, Campbell (1998) defines semantic change as a change in the meaning or the concepts associated with a word or a term. Thus, it can be said that
semantic change describes the evolution of word usage, which is generally by changing or shifting the original meanings into the new ones, where the value of the associated words may undergo the elevation or deterioration.

Research on semantic change has gained a great deal of attention in recent years, especially in the form of written language, such as printed and online media (e.g. Sembiring, 2013 and Kusatriyono, 2016). For linguists, semantic change has aroused interest and curiosity since it is a means of showing the development of language use. Then, it should be noted that the mass media nowadays has an essential role in the development of language use due to the fact that to deliver their reports news writers not only concern with the contents of the news but also involve how the language is constructed. More importantly, there must be the reports written for each day. Online media can even always update the news reports in seconds. Thus, it can be said that mass media becomes one of the most active practicing the language constructions. In the process of writing the news, then, the journalists may change or shift the meaning of certain words into other associated words. This is the evident that the development of language use can be detected.

The recent study then intends to investigate the types of and the reasons for shifting meaning or semantic change utilized in the selected online newspapers. Online, rather than printed, media was chosen since most people today consume more online news reports.

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY
It is worth noting that all living languages are constantly changing over time (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2009). In the process of changes, thus, a language may gain or lose the words or lexical items. In addition, the meaning of certain words may also change.

In conjunction with meaning, Leech (1981, p.1), as proposed by C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards (1923), listed what meaning refers to, among others are: an intrinsic property; the other words annexed to a word in the dictionary; the connotation of a word; the place of anything in a system; the practical consequences of a thing in our future experience; that to which the user of a symbol actually refers; that to which the user of a symbol ought to be referring; that to which the user of a symbol believes himself to be referring; and that to which the interpreter of a symbol: (1) refers, (2) believes himself to be referring, or (3) believes the user to be referring. In brief, Leech (1981) asserted that to define meaning is concerned with the science of language, not limited to a certain science. Thus, examining meaning, e.g. recognizing the relations of meaning between sentences or those which sentences are meaningful or which are not, is a linguistic phenomenon in its own right, not something outside language. In linguistics, the study of word meaning is then called semantics.

As stated earlier, meaning may undergo changes or shifts. According to Fromkin, et al (2009), the meaning of a word may become broader, narrower, or shift. A word processing such kind of changes is then known as semantic change. Since the changes in the meaning of a word are various, the semantic change is thus classified into several types. For instance, Fromkin, et al (2009) categorized semantic change into three majors, namely broadening, widening, and meaning shifts. Further, Palmer (1981) classified the semantic change into generalization, specialization, amelioration, and pejoration. Similarly, Hollmann (2009a) has the following classifications: generalization, specialization, amelioration, pejoration, metaphor and metonymy. Additionally, other types of semantic change are synecdoche, eponymy, personification, euphemism, hyperbole, and litotes (Ullman, 1972, Campbell, 1998). To conduct this study, nevertheless, Hollmann’s (2009a) theory is preferred to use. In the following each type of semantic change, then, will be discussed in turn.

To begin with, generalization, which is also known as broadening or widening, occurs when the old meaning of a word becomes broader than the new one. In the same way, a certain word could result in additional meanings while retaining the original meaning (Crowley, 1997). For example, in the Old English the word ‘trunk’ refers to the thick main stem of a tree, while in the modern English it means the main or central part of anything. We can see that the new concept of ‘trunk’ is not restricted to a tree, meaning that it is wider than the former meaning.

As opposed to generalization, the next type of semantic change is specialization. This type involves a word processing a narrower meaning than the old one. The word ‘hound’, for instance, originally has the semantic features of [+animate], [quadruped], and [canine]. Then, it undergoes the
restriction of referents, namely [hunt]. Obviously, the additional feature of [hunt] makes the word "hound" narrower than the previous meaning.

Third, amelioration or elevation refers to changes resulting in a more positive meaning than the original one, e.g., the words 'pretty' and 'knight'. The word 'pretty', whose original meaning of tricky, sly, or cunning, can nowadays be defined as attractive. Similarly, the word 'knight' in the modern English can be used in a more positive sense.

Another type of semantic change is pejoration or degeneration. This is the opposite of amelioration. Hence, pejoration occurs when the new meaning of a word becomes more negative or less favorable than the original one. An example of a word processing pejoration is 'wench', which originally means girl or young woman and changes into prostitute.

Metaphor and metonymy are the other types of semantic change. The earlier occurs when a new meaning appears as a result of associating two distinct objects or actions due to their perceived similarities. The metaphorical meaning usually involves a word with a concrete meaning taking on a more abstract sense. For example, the word 'grasp' is similarly perceived as 'understand' due to their resemblance of the process to get something. Thus, we can say that the new meaning of 'grasp' becomes more abstract than the original meaning.

Metonymy, like metaphor, involves some sort of association between the source and target concepts, but in this case there is no similarity between them. However, they are closely linked in some other way, for instance because one is part of, or contains the other. Consider the name of some people that may become common nouns, e.g., sandwich (Lord Sandwich) and boycott (the Boycotts).

Another example is that the name of an author is used for his masterpieces, e.g., 'where did you buy your Chomsky (a book written by Chomsky)?'

Moreover, there must be causes in the phenomenon of semantic change. Most linguists point out that there are two main causes of semantic change, namely linguistic factors and extra linguistic (historical) factors. A change of meaning due to linguistic factors is concerned with the factors acting within language system, including phonology, morphology, and syntax. For instance, a phrase made of two words, but the meaning of one of the words is omitted and gradually transferred to its partner. Thus, one word can stand for the whole phrase, i.e. to propose (to propose to marry). This process is so-called ellipsis. Another linguistic cause deals with discrimination of synonymy, meaning that it occurs when the synonymy of a native word is borrowed from other language. It can be exemplified by the words tide and time, which used to be synonymous but today they considerably differ. Extra linguistic factors, on the other hand, concern with a change of meaning which is most strongly pushed by various changes of a referent depend altogether on factors outside language and the speech activity. The changes can be social, economic, political, culture, scientific concepts, and so forth. The word 'atom', for example, originally meant invisible, but today it refers to small matter particle.

The factors facilitating for semantic change is also proposed by Blank (1999). He argues that the motivating factors for semantic change involve six main factors, as follows:

1. New concepts or the need for a new name
2. abstract concepts, distant, usually invisible referents
3. socio-cultural change
4. close conceptual or factual relation
5. complexity and irregularity in the lexicon
6. emotionally marked concepts

Meanwhile, Chaer (2007) stated that the phenomenon of semantic change is caused by several factors. The first factor is due to the development of science and technology. For instance, the discovery of new technology has affected the meaning of the word 'berlayar' having additional features, such as [+using machine] and [+using gasoline]. The next factor facilitating semantic change is caused by socio-cultural aspects. The words 'saudara', 'ibu', 'bapak', and 'sariena' are some examples undergoing semantic change due to socio-cultural factors. Another factor is due to the development of lexical items use. It is worth noting that there appear a number of words or terms which are specifically used in every field of sciences or activities. For instance, the words 'menggarap', 'panen', and 'bajak' are commonly used in the field of farms. However, nowadays such words can be found in other fields with the new meanings. As a result, the meaning of the word 'menggarap', for example, as in 'menggarap skripsi' and 'menggarap naskah drama' is transferred to do something. Forth, the semantic change may also be caused by exchanging the five senses.
(also known as synesthesia), e.g. the word ‘manis’ should be felt by the sense of taste, but is then changed into the sense of sight or hearing. Take the examples of the sentences ‘bertukunya sangat manis’ and ‘kata-katanya sangat manis’. At last, the meaning change may be motivated by the association of a word with another. For example, the word ‘amplop’ in the sentence ‘supaya cepat beres, beri saja amplop’ is referred to as ‘uang sogok’ (bribes). Thus, we can see that the word ‘amplop’ is associated with ‘uang sogok’.

Furthermore, some previous studies on semantic change have been conducted to analyze the type and its causes, e.g. Sembiring, 2013 and Kusriyono, 2016. First, Sembiring (2013) described the types of semantic change in the daily newspaper of Pontianak Post. The results indicated that broadening was the most frequently found in the articles, and other types are dysphemisms, euphemisms, alterations, and narrowing. Secondly, Kusriyono (2016) investigated the phenomenon of semantic change used in the rubric ‘profile’ of Tabloid Nova. Using descriptive qualitative method, his study focused on the types and the reasons for semantic change. The results showed that seven types of semantic change were applied in the rubric ‘Profile’ of Tabloid Nova, among others are: broadening, narrowing, amelioration, pejoration, synesthesia, association, and metaphor. Those types of semantic change were then caused by eleven factors which are on the basis of Suwandi’s (2011) framework. While the earlier studies concerned with printed media, such as tabloid and newspaper, the present study then dealt with online media, or specifically in the online newspapers.

With regard to research methodology, the present study is descriptive qualitative, which attempts to examine the types and factors facilitating semantic change on some new articles in the online newspapers. All the articles selected are concerned with the upcoming 2018 concurrent regional election (henceforth Pilkada), which has recently been discussed most and get much attention from society. The data were taken from the official website of the selected online newspapers, namely Tempo, Sindo, Kompas, and Media Indonesia. To obtain and analyze the data the study involves several steps. First of all, each article was skimmed to find out the lexical items underwent semantic change. Furthermore, those lexical items were classified into the types of semantic change to which they belong. In this stage Hollmann’s (2009a) framework about the types of semantic change were applied. The next step was to describe the factors that motivate for semantic change, in which this study was on the basis of Chaer’s (2007) theory. In the end, this study drew a conclusion

FINDING AND DISCUSSION
This section is dedicated to delivering the result of the study for each objective stated earlier. The first objective is to identify the types of semantic change found in the articles selected. Secondly, the study is conducted to describe the motivating factors for semantic change used in the selected articles of the online newspapers, namely Tempo, Sindo, Kompas, and Media Indonesia.

Out of four articles selected, the results indicated that there were three types of semantic change applied, among others are: (1) generalization; (2) amelioration; and (3) metaphors. In addition, metaphors were the most frequently practiced, in which there were 16 metaphorical words. Each type of semantic change, then, will be discussed in the following.

1. Generalization (broadening)
As discussed earlier, this type is characterized by changing the meaning of an original word which becomes broader or wider. Consider the following examples.

Example 1
Setelah mencicipi kursi Wakil Wali kota Bekasi........... [Tempo]

Example 2
Khofijah mengatakan bahwa dia kerap turun melihat kondisi umat terutama pasar tradisional............. [Sindo]

Example 3
“Masing-masing kita ambil perwakilan untuk bekerja menviralakan berita-berita kegiatan politik paslon Ganjar-Yasin ...........” [Kompas]

Example 4
Massa yang diperkirakan berjumlah 25 ribu orang........... [Media Indonesia]

From the examples above, it can be shown that the meaning of the word ‘kursi’, which originally refers to a seat with legs and a back, has changed into ‘official rank’; Similarly, the words ‘umat’,
memviralkan', and 'massa' also underwent semantic change. First, the term 'umat' is particularly used to refer to the members of religious community, but the data shows that the use of the term 'umat' is referred to as society. Next, the word 'memviralkan' was derived from the word 'viral', which previously means relating to virus. However, the word 'viral' is recently defined as 'spreading very quickly to many people especially through the internet' (merriamwebster.com, 2018). It should be noted, then, the word 'memviralkan' itself has undergone morphological change, in which there was a process of affixation resulted in changing the lexical category from an adjective 'viral' into a verb 'memviralkan'. Finally, the word 'massa' shown in Example 4 underwent semantic change as well. While the former meaning of 'massa' is a large number of objects (substances) which are collected in unity, the latter meaning refers to a large number of people altogether united in one place. Hence, speaking, the meaning of words 'kursi', 'umat', 'memviralkan', dan 'massa' has broadened from the earlier concepts, but the shifts, admittedly, are determined by the use of context.

2. Amelioration

Another type which was also found in the selected articles was amelioration. Nevertheless, only one extreme undergoing amelioration was presented in the article (see Example 5).

Example 5

"Hanya pengalaman duduk di eksekutif, pria kelahiran Cirebon, 53 tahun yang lalu ini juga kaya pengalaman di lembaga legislatif, maupun berorganisasi. [Tempo]

It can be seen that the word 'pria' is considered to give more positive value compared to its synonym 'laki-laki'. In fact, the word 'pria' is more often combined with other words which result in more valuable sense, e.g. 'pria sejati' and 'pria ideaman'. By contrast, the word 'laki-laki' is commonly associated with the words resulting negative perception of the concept, such as 'laki-laki meraup keuntungan' or 'laki-laki buaya darat'.

3. Metaphor

Metaphor is the last type of semantic change which was also be utilized in the articles. Here are some examples of sentences containing the metaphorical expressions.

Examples 6

"Sebelah mencicipi kursi Wakil Wali Kota Bekasi selama satu periode, Akhmad Syaikhu kini dicalonkan menjadi Wakil Gubernur Jawa Barat. . . . . . [Tempo]

The original meaning of the word 'mencicipi' may have the following features: [+sense], [+small amount], [+drink or food]. Hence, the word 'mencicipi' as shown in Example 6 was used to express the similarity of function, meaning that the journalist intentionally described the news actor's (Akhmad Syaikhu) a short period experience as a vice mayor of Bekasi. Unfortunately, the word 'mencicipi' in the context above may give negative value to the person described, in this case Akhmad Syaikhu.

Example 7

"Putuk pimpinan PKS di Jawa Barat digantikan oleh Nur Supriyanto. [Tempo]

Due to the similarity of the position, the word 'putuk' in Example 7 was applied to describe the position of a person who is in charge of a political party while the original meaning of the word 'putuk' itself may have the features [+tip of a leaf], [-mature], and [+top].

Example 8

"Saya ingin meneobari mengelaborasi dan menangkap aspirasi umat...." [Sindo]

The word 'menangkap' is usually associated with something concrete, i.e. 'menangkap bola', 'menangkap ikan', 'menangkap pencuri', and so forth. However, the associated words 'menangkap aspirasi' in the sentence above has shown that there was a process of transferring meaning from concrete meaning to the more abstract sense.

Example 9

"Jadi, saya putar otak untuk coba di Sumatera Utara," ujar Megawati. [Media Indonesia]

Opposing to Example 8, we can see that the associated words 'putar otak', which gives more concrete sense, is preferred to use rather than 'berpikir' ('deeply think'), which is assumed to be more abstract. Besides, the use of the word 'putar otak' seems to imply that there was a great effort or strategic way to reach the goal.

Example 10

"Tentoros its dilakukan guna mendengkrak suara pemilih dalam memenangkan pasangan calon gubernur dan wakil gubernur Jawa Tengah, Ganjar Yasin dan Taj Yasin. [Kompas]"
Similar to Example 8, the word ‘mendongkrak’ is assumed to undergo a process of transferring meaning from a concrete to the abstract concept. Due to the resemblance of the function to level up something, the word ‘mendongkrak’ was then used.

Regarding with the factors facilitating for semantic change, it was found that 22 words processing semantic change were motivated by four factors, those are socio-cultural aspects, the development of lexical items use, synesthesia, and association with other words. The words, such as pra and putra, were the examples of semantic change which were caused by the socio-cultural factor due to the fact that the development of the use of those words was socially and culturally constructed. Meanwhile, the lexical items use can be exemplified by the use of the words ‘viral - (menviralkan)’, ranting, cabang, pucuk, umat, massa, etc. Synesthesia, further, was shown by the use of the word ‘mencicipi’. Eventually, the association factors were indicated by the words ‘mendongkrak’, ‘duduk’, ‘terjun’, ‘kursi’, ‘menangkap’, ‘putar otak’, menangkal, and others. Above all, we can say that the motivating factors for semantic change were dominated by association of a word with other referents.

CONCLUSION
The current study has examined the types and motivating factors for semantic change which were applied in the online newspapers selected namely Tempo, Sindo, Kompas, and Media Indonesia. Bearing in mind that the analysis and conclusion of this study is limited by merely concentrating on the meaning change of the lexical items in the selected articles of online newspapers on the issue of the 2018 concurrent regional elections (pilkada). Thus, it cannot be claimed that the conclusion applies to all other online media involving the issue of Pilkada, but it rather suggests further research in these areas.

In closing, it is expected that this research on semantic change may contribute to the field of semantics and stimulate further research to be undertaken in areas beyond the newspapers or even the media. In addition, the results of the study, pedagogically, are supposed to give some benefits for students to enable to describe semantic change.

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