

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Chapter one generally contains the background of the research, statement of the problem, research objective, research significance, and definition of key terms. This chapter shows the general description of interesting phenomena that be the basis of why this research is conducted. Moreover, this chapter shows the previous studies that relate to this research, a brief explanation of the way this research is conducted, the references to questions that must be answered in this research, and some terms that are used in this research.

### 1.1 Background of Research

The important roles of language in human life have been one of the reasons for the appearance of linguistics. Something that is really useful and can support human life should be learned and developed from time to time to have a better life. As a science that concerns language, linguistics refers to the development of language in general, not only the systematic language's structure. In other words, as the human language's scientific study, linguistics is not only limited to the theory of grammar but further, discusses a large number of subfields that can deal with most of the human language phenomena (Fromkin, 2000).

The development of this science is also caused by the emergence of phenomena related to language. This is what causes linguistics to continue to be developed in order to find answers to some phenomena. The phenomena that appear

are not only directly related to internal matters in a language, but there are also phenomena concerning the relationship between language and other sciences. One of them is the phenomenon that shows involvement between the fields of language and law. These days, there are several legal cases that can be solved or analyzed using linguistics. The evidence found in a case is often evidence that can be analyzed using branches of linguistics. This is what causes the demand to present a linguist as an expert witness in a trial is increasing day by day. Language plays a big role in the judicial process, this is indicated by the high demand for presenting linguists in several trials (Coulthard & Johnson, 2007).

It also becomes a proof that applied linguistics plays an important role in demonstrating linguistic identity as a science that requires that knowledge can be felt in accordance with its axiological aspects. Unlike pure linguistics, where most of its benefits can only be felt in the realm of language, it can have an impact or benefit on a wide range of environments outside of language. It is a form of linguistic representation in contributing to human interests beyond language but still involving language. Grabe described that applied linguistics is a science that has a role to try to resolve language-based problems that people encounter in the real world (Davies, 2007).

Applied linguistics which is the combination between linguistics and law is called forensic linguistics. The term was first introduced by Jan Svartvik in 1968. Nowadays, it has begun to be studied in depth, it is proven by the existence of communities, scientific meetings, journals, and other efforts to continue to develop this science that is no less useful than other sciences. One of the concrete proofs

that this science is needed is the high demand to present expert witnesses who are a linguist in court (Coulthard et al., 2007). The language in the law field can be investigated, examined, or analyzed by a science called forensic linguistics. This science is used to provide a fact-based view in the form of language for later being a consideration in solving problems in the field of law. Olsson says that this knowledge is the interface between language, crime, and law (Olsson, 2008). Coulthard, Johnson, and Wright (2017) stated in their book there are two main areas of forensic linguistics, they are the language of the legal process and language as evidence.

The language that is used in the legal process can be one of the forensic linguistics areas, it can be legalese, emergency call, police interview, and language that is used by suspects, lawyers, witnesses, expert witnesses, prosecutors, or judges in the courtroom or it is called courtroom discourse. While language as evidence can be in the form of forensic phonetics, authorship analysis, plagiarism, and being an expert witness (Coulthard et al., 2017). Forensic linguistics can assist a legal case by providing an analysis that uses language tools. As said before, it can be used to attempt to solve some cases such as civil and constitutional law but more than that it also can be used in solving criminal law such as a murder case.

The language that will be used as the object in forensic linguistics is not only in written form but also in oral form. This research will use videos of interviews with suspects in a murder case. The suspect in the 2018 case is Christopher Lee Watts, also known as Chris Watt. “Watt Family Murders” is a murder case that took place in Frederick, Colorado. The case took four lives: Chris’

wife Shannan Cathryn Watts and their three children Bella Marie Watts, Celeste Cathryn “Cece” Watts, and their unborn child, Nico. In the investigation of the case, Chris Watts underwent three interviews which finally established him as a suspect. However, in this study, the video interview that was examined was only the first video interview between Chris Watts and an FBI agent named Grahm Coder on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2018 as an initial investigative stage of this case. There is a gap in the language used by Chris Watts, on several occasions in interviews he always uses the phrase "those girls" which refers to Bella and CeCe. From the chosen diction, it can be said that Chris no longer has a sense of having children because he prefers to use the demonstrative pronoun "those" rather than the demonstrative pronoun "my" apart from the use of the word "those" it can be interpreted that Chris seems to know about whereabouts of his children and wife and is far from home now.

Based on Gibbons’ statement in (Santoso, 2014) that there are seven linguistics areas that can be used in forensic linguistics to solve a legal case. They are transcription, lexical, morphology, syntax, semantics, and sociolinguistics. This research will use the transcription area by making the transcript of the video interview to be analyzed further. The lexical also will be used by being supported by Linguistics Inquiry and Word Count Analysis (LIWC, pronounced “Luke”) application 2022 version (LIWC-2022). This application was developed first as a tool that is an exploratory study of language and disclosure (Pennebaker & Francis, 1999) All of Watts’ words in the transcript will be submitted to the application. The result of the LIWC-2022 analysis will be in two categories which are traditional LIWC dimension and summary variables. Traditional LIWC dimension will be in

*I-word, social word, positive emotion, negative emotion, and cognitive process* that will be the basis for determining the summary variables that will be in some categories which are *analytic refers, clout, authenticity, and emotional tone* (Pennebaker et al., 2015). These data will be analyzed and explained then will be used to identify Chris Watts' stage of reaction in the video interview by using the descriptive qualitative method.

There are several studies that use forensic linguistics as a basis for the research, one of which is a study entitled "Applying the Scientific Principles of Language Analysis to Issues of the Law" by Robert Andrew Leonard in 2005. It is one of the previous studies that discuss how language analysis can be applied to law issues. There were some cases from the Forensic Linguistics Project at Hofstra University that can be analyzed by the scientific principles of language analysis. Some of the cases are "Spanish surnames", the "devilstrip" ransom note, and the stalker/serial murderer letters. The solution to the cases involved expertise in linguistics geography and pragmatics, analyze the repetition of a rhetorical discourse device, and skewings in the distribution of grammatical features (Leonard, 2005).

There is previous research entitled "Investigating the Use of Forensic Stylistic and Stylometric Techniques in The Analyses of Authorship on a Publicly Accessible Social Networking Site (Facebook)" by Colin Simon Michell in 2013 that discusses one of the tools usually uses in forensic linguistics, which is stylistics. Stylistics is usually used in authorship analysis and plagiarism cases. By using social media, Facebook, eight participants each are asked to submit 2,000 words of

self-authored text from their personal Facebook messages, and one of them submitted an extra 2,000 words to act as the ‘disputed text’. The first 1.000 words received were analyzed and then the 2,000-word level is used to determine what effect text length has on the effectiveness of the chosen style markers, such as keywords, function words, most frequently occurring words, punctuation, use of digitally mediated communication features, and spelling (Michell, 2013). It was found that the 2.000-word level is more effective to find certain style markers than the 1.000-word level.

In addition, previous research that is relevant to this research entitled “Forensic Linguistics Analysis of Virginia Woolf’s Suicide Notes” by Ni Luh Nyoman Seri Malini and Vanessa Tan in 2016 uses Language Inquiry and Word Count Analysis (LIWC) as a tool for finding conclusions in research in the field of forensic linguistics. Because of the misleading headline in some newspaper articles that misquoted Woolf’s suicide notes, this research aims to prove the genuineness of Virginia Woolf’s suicide notes, reveal the intention behind her suicide notes, and investigate the real motive of her suicide (Malini & Tan, 2016). This research uses the qualitative descriptive method supported by the Linguistics Inquiry and Word Count Analysis (LIWC) 2015 version program and semantic forensic analysis from a forensic linguistics perspective.

The difference that can be found in this research is first, this research will use data in oral form, even though the original data will be transcribed. Second, the language that will be analyzed is the language in the legal process, especially in a criminal law case. Third, the data obtained will be analyzed and explained then will

be used to identify the stage of reaction of a murder suspect in the video interviews. Based on the research background that has been described this research will be conducted with the title **“The Analysis of Word Use and Stage of Reaction in Chris Watts’ Interview: A Forensic Linguistics Study”**.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

The research background described above is the supporting idea for the emergence of several statements of problem that will be discussed in this study which are:

1. What is the analysis of Chris Watts’ word use in the interview transcript?
2. How is Chris Watts’ stage of reaction in the interview video?

## **1.3 Research Objective**

Based on two points of the statement of the problem above, the objective of this research is a conclusion as the answer to the two research questions. This research will find out the analysis of the interview transcript result and determine the reaction stage of a suspect in the interview video that is analyzed by the used language.

## **1.4 Research Significance**

As an implication, theoretically, this research will give a contribution to the further study and application of linguistics, especially forensic linguistics and all related branches of linguistics used in it. This research will prove that linguistics

has real use-value in human life and use-value in the development of the language itself. Practically, this research will provide additional information and knowledge about forensic linguistics which can be a source and motivation for other researchers to study more about forensic linguistics. Moreover, this research proved that language can help us on all sides of life without exception in the law field.

### **1.5 Definition of Key Terms**

In this research will appear some terms that are used to explain some details needed in this research. This part will provide the terms and their definition to be the supporting part that can help understand this research more clearly, which are:

**Forensic** : Connected with the scientific tests used by the police when trying to solve a crime (Hornby, 2018).

**Transcription** : The act or process of representing something in a written or printed form (Hornby, 2018).

**Lexical** : Connected with the words of a language (Hornby, 2018).

**Chris Watts** : He is a suspect in the “Watt Family Murders” case.

**LIWC** : It stands for Linguistics Inquiry and Word Count Analysis, an application that was developed first as a tool that is an exploratory study of language and disclosure by James W. Pennebaker and his team. It has already had five versions which are 1992, 2001, 2007, 2015, and 2022 versions (Boyd et al., 2022).