

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Research

There have been many researches in the field of language and gender which aimed to qualify the differences of male and female discourse features, and to quantify the differences in their usage of certain linguistic as interactional strategies during conversations. These practices have given several interpretations in understanding gender differences in various talk contexts. Researchers have tried to associate these behaviors with regard to a speaker's gender as well as group composition. These behaviors have been the bases for the various frameworks used by linguists in explaining the similarities and differences observed.

In daily communication, gendered conversational style studies have brought attention to the idea that men and women talk differently. Most studies on language and gender stress that females are generally cooperative in nature whereas males are competitive (Chavez, 2001). Cooperativeness refers to the particular type of conversation where speakers work together to produce shared meanings as women in female's talk, they share personal feelings with each other and tend to support and encourage each other by skilfully using linguistic features such as minimal responses and hedges which indicated their intimacy and great connection. While competitiveness, on the other hand, is used to describe the adversarial style of conversation where speakers vie for turns and here participants are more likely to

contradict each other than to build on each other's contribution as men in male's talk, they either have a monologue but they rarely talk about sensitive but impersonal problems and show lack of minimal response which indicated competitive in conversation. (Coates, 2004).

However, through time, where the world we live in now develops dynamically, people now are having a new understanding about the gender stereotyping. Society has gone through great changes which have been influenced the language that stereotyping of men to masculine and women to feminine are no longer prominent. In fact, society has constructed the belief that men and women behave differently to images of masculinity and femininity. Women are adapting to masculine roles and jobs while men seem to be adopting feminine characteristics in their life. More and more language and gender stereotypes are becoming inapplicable to today's men and women. What might have been true about gender stereotyping may change as constant changes are taking place in modern society.

A number of studies have also exhibited finding related with this issue. A research from Dobrica (2014) who examined gender-based differences in conversations among non-native speakers of English found that each gender group produced almost equal amount of overlaps while talking in both single- and mixed-gender conversations and that female speakers are likely to leave their sentences unfinished or to interrupt another speaker than male speakers. As proposed by some experts, interruptions are seemed rare happened in female conversation, but this finding exhibited that somehow interruption is applicable in female conversation.

Likewise, the researcher also found in a conversation which shows that although men and women are known to use language differently, but however, men and women unintentionally perform feminine or masculine speech characteristics respectively when they talk as in the their conversation below:

R: *Mana rupanya keretamu?* (Where's yours?)

H: *Kayak biasa, **taulah kau.*** (As a lways, **you know**)

R: *Kau buang aja udah itu.* (Just dump it away)

Theoretically, Coates (2004) stated that hedges are linguistic forms which express the speaker's certainty or uncertainty about the proposition under discussion. In all-male conversation, men use less of hedges and women tend to use it. However, as seen in the conversation, men also used hedge as signed in bold written form.

Another example comes from all-female conversations as following:

D: *Oia lupa. Boleh makan seafood juga kok. Tahu, tempe, telur bisa.*

Intinya, yang dimakan nya itu gak diolah dengan bahan lain kayak di sambal, tumis, gitu gitu. (L:Hmmm) Bolehnya cuma direbus,di kukus sama dibakar gak pake gula garam. (N:oooh)Sama dia suka bikin herbal gitu dari kayu manis, jahe, cengkeh, kapulaga. Sama air lemon juga. Kalau lapar kali, makan ubi dia. Sama bikin pecel juga. Tapi bumbu kacang nya biar asin pake nanas sama tomat, manis nya pake melon. (Wait, I forgot something. I am able to eat seafood, tofu, and egg. The point is that we can only eat real food, not allowed to eat cooked food. But if we want to cook it, we can only boil and steam it. no salt nor sugar. (N:oooh) And one thing, she likes to make herbal tea and lemon tea. once she feels hungry, she eat sweet potato ...)

L: *Masih lumayan enak lah kalok gitu.* (It still good though)

Theoretically, Coates (2004) stated that monologue is the stretches of conversation where one speaker holds the floor for a considerable time by taking a very long turn, ignoring other speakers' bids for the floor, and hogging the floor. In

all-male conversation, monologue is characteristic of male's talk. In contrast with men, women in all-female conversation avoid doing long monologue in conversation. However, in the conversation above, it shows that female speakers also perform monologue in their conversations.

Based on the research finding from another research and phenomenon found in the two conversations above, it can be seen that surprisingly, there is a possibility of men displaying femininity in their talk as well as women displaying masculinity in their talk too. Thus, there is possible condition where men adopt women's behavior in their communication as well as it is possible for women to adopt men's behaviour in their conversation too. This phenomenon indicates that the representation of femininity and masculinity can possibly perform by both male and female speech community in same-gender conversations.

Therefore, the researcher considered that this phenomenon is interesting to be explored more deeply to reveal more whether male and female speakers are seen as performing masculinity or femininity when they communicate with the same gender. In addition, the researcher also aimed to find out if there another reasons found that may affect their conversational strategies aside from gender bias.

1.2 The Problems of the Research

Based on the background, the problems of the research are formulated in the following questions:

1. How do male and female speakers perform their conversational strategies in all-male and all-female conversation?
2. Why do male and female speakers perform the conversational strategies as the way they do?

1.3 The Objectives of the Research

The objectives of research can be described as follows:

1. To describe how male and female speakers perform their conversational strategies in all-male and all-female conversation.
2. To elaborate the reasons for the performance of conversational strategies they used in all-male and all-female conversation.

1.4 The Scope of the Research

The present research investigated the differences in the conversational strategies of men in all-male conversations and the conversational strategies of women in all-female conversations. The focus of the study based on several linguistic features proposed by Coates (2004) such as monologue, overlap, interruption, tag-question, hedge, minimal responses, and questions. These features are chosen precisely in this study because of their suitability with local setting and the amount of attention they have received in language and gender.

1.5 The Significances of the Research

The findings of the research are expected to be useful and relevant theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the findings of this research are expected to: (1) enrich the theories in linguistics field specifically for gender language differences in conversational practices in the same-gender group conversation (2) develop the knowledge in language and gender issues about the language differences in conversational practices (3) enable people to understand more about the variations in the linguistic features of men and women in the same gender context, and that the understanding about these differences in speech will help them to understand one another better and develop an effective communication.

Practically, the findings of this research are expected to be useful for: (1) the readers consideration in conversation which they can communicate as well as they can avoid misperceive in communication, (2) the lecturers in their attempt to enrich their instructional material in the field of linguistics, and (3) for the next researches who are interested in researching and conducting any further studies about gender language differences in conversational practices, particularly in the same-sex group conversation.