

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Indonesia is a multiethnic country which has a lot of cultural society. One of them is Siladangnese society. Geographically, Siladang people are living in the valley of Tor Sihite. It is located about 17 Km from Panyabungan, the capital of Mandailing Natal. This language becomes potential phenomenon in linguistics study to be researched. As it was informed by Multamia Lauder in Kompas (2008), about 736 of 746 vernaculars in Indonesia are endangered and one of them is Siladang language.

Communication is the means by which ideas and information are spread from person to person. People use communication to express feelings, emotions, opinions and values, to learn and teach, and to improve their status. Communication is therefore vital to human interaction whether between parents and children, bosses and employees or even husband and wife. The diversity and characteristics of those involved in any interaction can thus affect communication. Taking account of any diversity in interaction rather than assuming uniformity is important to achieving effective communication.

In general, society has constructed the belief that men and women behave differently to images of masculinity and femininity. As Spender (1992: 135) states that:

Male and masculine are two different concepts: the first term refers to biology and the other refers to identity. Being male is not complete without the existence of masculinity. Even some features of masculinity are quickly recognized as being a biological part of being male.

According to Herring (1992: 135):

Masculinity or femininity is not solely biological but it is constructed by the society and the surroundings we live in. Masculinity is demonstrated and expressed in various ways such as voice, physical appearance and behavior. It is also strongly associated with a deep voice, tall and wide shoulders, and a muscular body; sometimes it is portrayed in the posture and gait which require a bigger space than women.

In general, men and women are known to use language differently, but sometimes they may unintentionally exhibit feminine or masculine language characteristics respectively when they talk. Although men and women belong to the same speech community, they may use different pragmatic features. The pragmatic features used by women and men contrast to some extent in all speech communities. For example, Holmes (1993: 58) mentions the Amazon Indians' language as an extreme example, where the language used by a child's mother is different from that used by her father and each tribe is distinguished by a different language. In this community, males and females speak different languages.

A study about Siladang language has been conducted by Sinar and Syarfina (2010) which focus on the Siladang language prosody which is interrelated with gender. The data were collected by recording the utterances in three different types such as declarative, imperative and interrogative. The findings of the research shows that women's tone in speaking is higher than the man's tone but not really significant. So, it indicates that there is not a great difference in female and male Siladangnese in their utterances.

From among these researchers, Lakoff (1975) proposed theories on the existence of women's language. Her book '*Language and Woman's Place*' has served as a basis for much research on the subject. She mentions ten features for women's language. As cited in Holmes (1993, p. 314), these ten features are as follows:

1. Lexical hedges or fillers, *e.g. you know, sort of, ...*
2. Tag questions, *e.g. she is very nice, isn't she?*
3. Rising intonation on declaratives, *e.g. it's really good.*
4. Empty adjectives, *e.g. divine, charming, cute.*
5. Precise color terms, *e.g. magenta, acqamarine.*
6. Intensifiers such as *just* and *so*.
7. Hypercorrect grammar, *e.g. consistent use of standard verb forms.*
8. Superpolite forms, *e.g. indirect requests, euphemisms.*
9. Avoidance of strong swear words, *e.g. fudge, my goodness.*
10. Emphatic stress, *e.g. it was a BRILLIANT performance.*

Lakoff (1975) stated that male seldom use tag questions and hedge in language. It often find in females' language. Moreover, she believes that the use of tag question in female's language indicate the uncertainty.

The same research conducted by Deumert and Masinyana (2008) study in which there is a significant gender based difference in the number of words per SMS message. Naturally, the data shows that women generally write longer messages. The participants were asked if gender differences have an effect on the length of SMS. The female participants state that "female like to elaborate and talk more than men and we are more expressive".

Based on the researcher observation in Aek Banir in April 2013, male and female Siladangnese used tag questions and hedges when they were speaking. The tag question often found in male utterances. The transcriptions of the utterances both of male and female language are as follow:

a. Men' utterances:

- PB : "Sio golomu?"
(what is your name?)
- HR : "jan ko golok".
(don't you laugh)
- PB : "*lah lupu oku golomu dah, sio do golomu?*"
(I have forgotten your name, so, what is your name?)
- HR : "Hendri".
"Mangapo lai disapai ho goloku?"
(why did you ask my name?)
"Anapolupo ho, *iyo?*"
(you are too forgetful, aren't you?)
"Inda itando ho lai au?"
(you even don't know me anymore)
"Sabulan ma ho dison naso ako tondo pe au".
(you have been a year here, but you still don't know me)
- PB : "Da Manyabar do ako, *iyo?*"
(you are Manyabar, aren't you?)

b. Women' utterances:

- ZR : "Komono kualo nta sude na?"
(where is our frying fan?)
- NH : "*Oku pe na ku tondo pas dah, tepe pala ahani kapalo desa naiboh, tai tong tolu doson tolu da adu. Naiboh sada, iyo?*"
(I don't know all exactly indeed, but the leader's own is it.)
but, there are three here and the other three are there. Here is one, isn't it?)
- ZR : "Nakutinggalkon pisong da adu anabanyak".
(I had left so many bananas in there).
- NH : dicalo angkang ma budak-budak nek pulang sikola' i so diobanna tong tuson boh. Mangua ho ja?
(You ask the children if they had arrived from school to bring the bananas here. Where are you going?)
- ZR : "Oku nak ko pasa, manghabis ma bolanyongku dibagas jem".
"Mang upaulak ma pisou mu, *iyo?*"
(I want to go to the market, all food restock is going end. Have I returned your knife, haven't I?)
"Bentak na lupa do au".
(I doubt that I forgot.)
- NH : "Ngape ku poresou, tai madung ma nurangku".
(I haven't checked it yet, but I think you have.)

From the above conversation, the female's conversation was longer than the male's. In female utterances, it was found tag question and hedge. The first was tag question, the word *iyo* in the sentence "Naiboh sada, *iyo*" and the tag *iyo* in "Mang upaulak ma pisou mu, *iyo*" were recognized as tag question in the conversation

uttered by female Siladangnese. The tag questions in these sentences meant to ensure something. The second was hedge, the italicized sentence here “*oku pe na ku tondoipas dah, pala ahani kapalo desa naiboh, tai tong tolu doson tolu da adu*” is a kind of hedge in Siladangnese language.

The researcher also found tag question and hedge in male utterances. A kind of hedge found in the sentence “*lah lupu oku golomu dah, sio do golomu?*” The hedge in a clause form “*lah lupu aku golomu dah*” used to lessen the impact of the next utterances. The speaker used this hedge to soften the language. There were two tag questions found, they were *Anapolupo ho, iyo* and *da Manyabar do ako, iyo*.

From the data above, it can be stated that the frequency of pragmatic feature such as tag question and hedge used by male and female Siladangnese is the same. There are two tag question found in each male and female language. The hedge also found both in male and female language. It is not only found in female utterances but also in male language.

Based on the prior observation, there was a gap between the fact and the theory. The theory proposed by Lakoff stated that tag question and hedge are rarely found in male language, whereas the fact it was found that male Siladangnese often used tag question and hedge in the utterances.

Some studies have reported significant differences in the opposite direction. In a comparison of 36 female and 50 male managers giving professional criticism in a role play, it was the men who used significantly more negations and asked more questions, and the women who used more directives (Mulac, Seibold, & Farris, 2000). However, the study did confirm that men used more words overall, whereas women used longer sentences. One possible explanation for these contradictory

reports is that the different contexts in which the language samples were generated influenced the size and direction of the gender differences.

Moreover, a number of studies have reported greater female use of tag questions (McMillan et al.: 1977). He reports that tag questions are often found in women language than men. He believes that tag question in women language show the uncertainty. As Mulac & Lundell (1994) have found further evidence that women use phrases that may communicate relative uncertainty. Uncertainty verb phrases, especially those combining first-person singular pronouns with perceptual or cognitive verbs (e.g., “I wonder if”), have been found more often in women’s writing and utterances. A related interpretation of women’s use of hedge phrases is that women are more reluctant to force their views on another person.

Consistently with this idea, Lakoff claimed that women were more likely than men in the same situation to use extra-polite forms (e.g., “Would you mind...”), a claim that was supported by subsequent empirical work (McMillan et al.: 1977). Gender differences have also been examined by studying the actual words people use. Mirroring phrase-level findings of tentativeness in female language by (Palomares and Lee: 2009) state that women have been found to use more intensive adverbs, more conjunctions such as *but*, and more modal auxiliary verbs such as *could* that place question marks of some kind over a statement. While men have been found to swear more, use longer words, use more articles, and use more references to location.

Men’s language as put by Lakoff (1975: 105) is assertive, adult, and direct, while women’s language is immature, hyper-formal or hyper-polite and non-assertive. She believes that the use of tag questions by women is the sign of uncertainty. She asserts that women are more likely to use empty adjectives such as ‘divine’, ‘charming’ and ‘lovely’. Intensifiers such as ‘so’, ‘really’ and ‘very’, and qualifiers

such as 'not exactly' and 'a bit', are more frequently spoken by women than men. Women use more tag questions, more hedges, more rising intonations and more polite forms than men use. She explains that these characteristics of 'women's language' are a result of linguistic subordination: A woman must learn to speak 'women's language' to avoid being criticized as unfeminine by society. As a result, women appear to lack authority, seriousness, conviction and confidence in their conversation.

Gender differences in communication may pose problems in interpersonal interactions leading to intolerance and disappointment. These frustrations also occur in daily communication. Thus, investigating of pragmatic features in language by men and women is important. The expectation is if the society has understood about the difference language between men and women, it will help them to avoid communication confusion or misunderstanding between genders.

Based on the observation and the finding of Sinar and Syarfina (2010) study, the researcher sees that male and female of Siladangnese seems not different in the use of tag question and hedge. The theory proposed by Lakoff (1975) stated that tag question and hedge are often found in female language, but the fact found in Aek Banir, it was found that the frequency of tag question and hedge are the same in male and female of siladangnese utterances. Therefore, the researcher wants to examine the use of tag question and hedge in the utterances of male and female of Siladangnese. This study can be used to enhance the awareness among Siladangnese people to be more appreciative with their language. It is regarded that a better understanding of gender differences will provide exposure to Siladangnese language and enable non-Siladangnese to communicate effectively with locals. Moreover, stated in UUD 1945, chapter XII and article 32; point 21 that the government respects and keeps ethnic language as the national culture. Therefore, it is very important to conduct a study on

pragmatic features of tag question and hedge used in the utterances of male and female of Siladangnese.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the researcher conducted a study about gender differences in the use of tag question and hedge among the Siladangnese people. The following questions were forwarded as the research problems:

1. What are pragmatic features of tag question and hedge found in the utterances of male and female of Siladangnese?
2. How are the differences of pragmatic features of tag question and hedge in the utterances of male and female of Siladangnese?
3. In what context do male and female of Siladangnese utter more the pragmatic features of tag question and hedge?

1.3 The Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was limited into the pragmatic features particularly tag question and hedge in the utterances of male and female of Siladangnese. The utterances were uttered by the native speaker of Siladangnese. They live in Aek Banir, Panyabungan, Mandailing Natal, North Sumatera.

There were three aspects which observed in this study. The first one was the pragmatic features of tag question and hedge in the utterances of male and female of Siladangnese. The Second was the different pragmatic features of tag question and

hedge in the utterances of male and female of Siladangnese and the third was the context of using more the pragmatic features of tag question and hedge of male and female of Siladangnese.

From ten features of female language proposed by Lakoff, the researcher select two pragmatic features namely tag question and hedge as the basis of analysis.

1.4 The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study was to find out the answer of the research problems. To be more specific the objectives of the study were:

- 1) to find out the pragmatic features of tag question and hedge in the utterances of male and female of Siladangnese
- 2) to describe the differences of pragmatic features of tag question and hedge in the utterances of male and female of Siladangnese.
- 3) to find the context of uttering more the pragmatic features of Tag question and Hedge of male and female of Siladangnese.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

A study which is designed to cover some intended result should have the significances.

A. Theoretically

1. The result of the study is considered to provide valuable understanding and to enrich the theories of gender and language in linguistic study.
2. The result of the study can be used as reference for those who want to conduct a study in gender and language.

B. Practically

The result of this study is expected to contribute faithful information about gender and language for students, teachers or lecturers, researchers and Siladangnese people.

1. Firstly, for the students, so they can enrich their knowledge about gender and language.
2. Secondly, for the teachers and lecturers, so they can use it to support the teaching and learning materials related to the gender and language.
3. Thirdly, the result of the study can be useful for researcher to gain a deep insight especially in gender and language in Siladangnese society.
4. Fourthly, the result of this study can be useful for Siladangnese people to enhance their awareness to be more appreciative with their language.

