

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Language exists as a system of symbol in terms of abstract thinking and senses, it reveals a method and pattern to describe the objective world (Dong, 2014). Human beings not only created language but also become the users; therefore, the study on linguistics should not only be made from the perspective of symbol but more should be people-oriented. But the most significant difference between human beings is the gender difference, therefore people of different gender from either physiology or psychology in the use of language will have their own gender characteristics which leads to the gender differences in language. Gender differences in language are not only regarded as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a social phenomenon.

Gender differences are the fundamental facts of social life and human differences. Naturally, a man is differently created from woman. For example, a man has more mass of muscle than a women does. This makes man physically stronger than woman. Women are more inhibited with feelings or emotions than men, while men are destined to more rational. Eckert & Ginet (2003) stated that learning to be male or female involves learning to look and act in particular ways, learning to participate in relationship and communities and learning to see the world from a particular perspective. It is also said that the brain of men are different from that of women. A brain is the center of senses by which human beings make senses or perceptions of the world. Since the brain of men and

women are different, a man perceives the world differently from a woman does. This is the reason why a man uses language or produces texts differently from women. In social interaction, men and women have different interests in choosing their conversation topics. Men are more interested to choose the topics about politics, economics, sports and current news. While women are more interested to choose the topics about home activities or family affairs, such as the education of children, clothes, foods and fashion.

Eggin (2004) stated that gender refers to values, rights and responsibilities socially and culturally given to someone due to the consequence of the fact that she/he is male or female. It can be simply viewed that gender determines roles someone is required to play as masculine or feminine. The way how people regard the roles has been rooted and ingrained in social practices. Due to the fact that women are physically weaker than men, in human civilizations, women are assigned to keeping home and doing house works. But nowadays, both men and women have the same rights and responsibilities in society. As seen in university, the male and female students have the same right in taking the same major. This phenomenon effect the using of language.

In affecting the language, there are four factors that affect the using of language differences, such as status, formality, affect and contact. Status is seen in participants' roles involving power relationship. Power in using language is defined as the ability to coerce over others. The using of language differences also caused by the different situation and environment as found in boarding house.

Lakoff in Holmes (2013) suggested that women's speech can be distinguished from the men's speech in a number of language characteristics, such as, lexical hedge/fillers, tag question, empty adjective, etc. While, Crawford (1997) pointed out that language characteristics of men can be identified in the using of direct sentences, brief sentences, slang or swear words, etc. But, based on the previous research observation, both men and women did not perform specific language characteristics as suggested by theories. In boarding house environment, the male students sometimes used the female language characteristics and female students used the male language characteristics as seen in the data below.

Female : Tutupkan pintu itu! (Close the door!)

Male : Aku, ka? (Me, sist?)

Female: Ya iala, siapa lagi? (Yes, of course. Who's anything else?)

Male : Jangan langsung marah-marahlah ka. (Don't be angry sist)

Female: Nyalakan lampu luar skalian! (Turn on the lamp!)

Male : Hmmmm, pelan bilangny ka. (Speak lowly, sist)

Female: Tutupkanlahalap becakap. (Close the door, you speak too much)

From the conversation above, it is seen that there is a different of using language. The female used direct sentences and brief sentences when she's talking to the male. The utterances, "*tutupkan pintu itu; nyalakan lampu luar sekalian, tutupkanlah*" are formed in imperative sentences. An imperative can directly control different aspect of another person's thinking or behavior. Based on theory, direct sentences are used by male in their communication. It's one of the male language characteristics as Crawford (1997) suggested that men are more direct than women because men use the communication to show the power. It's contrast with the conversation above. In this conversation, the female used the language characteristics of male. Vice versa, the male also used the female language characteristics as seen in the data below.

Male : Habis sabun ku lah. Bisa minta tolong abang Fit (My soap is used up . Would you help me, Fit)

Female : Malas kali lah aku keluar bang. (It's so lazy to go out, brother)

Male : Tolonglah dek. (Help me, please)

Female: Abanglah pigih, palah malu, warungnya sangat dekat pun. (Buy by yourself, don't be shy, the stall is so near)

Male : Tega kau dek liat abang pigih belinya? (Would you let me to buy by my self?)

Female: Ahhhh. modus. Pintar kali abang kalo mau nyuruh memang, biarga ngelak awak. (Ahhhh, You are so great to order someone, I can't refuse it)

Male : Serius loh dek, pigihlah. (I'm serious, Go away, please)

From the conversation above, it is seen that the male did not use their language characteristics. He avoided the using of direct and brief sentences when he ordered something. The male language characteristic is not realized in his utterances. He used the superpolite form in his utterances. It's contrast with Crawford (1997) who stated that in their communication, men use less of politeness and seldom to keep someone's feeling. Beside that, the male use term of address "dek". It is contrast with Frankie (2013) finding who found that men do not use many terms of address in their communication. On the other hand, the male's utterances are matched with findings of Xiufang Xia (2013), men like to use falling intonation to show that they are quite sure of what they are saying.

Some recent research have been conducted on investigating the language differences. Frankie (2013) in his research about gender differences in the use of linguistic forms in the speech of men and women found that (1) woman use more polite forms of address than men, ask more questions and use more humours than men; (2) both male and female are direct in their conversation, (3) both male and female do not use intensifiers and use very few fillers, hedges and affirmatives in their speech; (4) men's conversation focus on the topic of doing things i.e. works

of *entrepreneurs* whereas women centre on the topics of home, self, feelings and affiliation with others. Analysing the linguistics forms used, women appear more polite than men as they prefer using their ethnic group terms of address when addressing and referring to one another.

Based on the previous research findings, the writer is interested to investigate the gender language characteristics in different phenomena. As seen in the preliminary data above, it's find that the male and female students did not use the specific gender language characteristics in boarding house, therefore this phenomenon is important to be studied.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the background in previous part, the problems of the study are formulated as the following.

1. What are the gender language characteristics used by students in boarding house?
2. Why are the gender languages characteristics of students used in the ways they are?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

In relation to the problems, the objectives of the study are:

- 1) to find out the gender language characteristics used by students in boarding house,
- 2) to describe the reasons why the gender language characteristics used by students in the ways they are.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is focused on the different ways of male and female in using language characteristics in daily conversation. Different gender characteristic used by male and female students who live in Harianja boarding house at Jl. Teratai, Medan Estate will be observed and studied through their utterances.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

Findings of the study are expected to be useful theoretically and practically. Theoretically, findings of this study are expected to give contribution to linguistic theories about gender and language in different phenomena. In other words, the findings can add up horizons to the addings of sociolinguistics. In addition, theoretically the findings can be references for further studies.

Practically, findings of this study are expected to contribute more information about gender and language that can be practiced or to avoid misunderstanding on differences in language characteristics in the male and female conversations. Further, the findings can be a source for making rules or regulation in the boarding house particularly for writing notices.