

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this introductory chapter, the background to the present study is provided along with an outline of the principal theoretical prepositions. This chapter also presents the statement of problems that this study seeks to answer, aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, research methods, the clarification of key terms, and the organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

Woman as described by Hornby (1989) in Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, is an adult female human being or female sex. While man is an adult male human being or male person under the authority of somebody else and with the qualities or strength courage, etc. (Hornby, 1989).

From the definition above, it can be said that woman and man are two different human kinds who have different characteristics. It is believed that women are like gossiping and it seems that any kind of topic would be an interesting topic to be told and shared, for example women spend a chunk of their day discussing who is dating who, their weight, sex, shopping, TV shows, diets, dress size, and so on (Shaadilive, 2013). As stated by Coates (2004, p.9) that "If three women gather together, it will become clamorous". This implies that many people stereotypically think women are more talkative than men. In addition, according to Brizendine (2006, cited in Macrae, 2006), women devote more brain cells to talking than men because women have an eight-lane superhighway (which means that they devote more brain cells for communication, emotion and

memory), while men have a small country road (which means that they have smaller areas responsible for communication, emotion, and memory).

However, in a certain situation, women are also claimed to have less confidence to talk than men because women are powerless. Lakoff (1975, cited in Holmes, 2011) asserts that women are generally lacking status in society. Therefore, it is argued that women are more subordinate than men. Moreover, they are more aware of the fact that their social status can be seen from the way they speak. Women were indicated hedging and boosting their utterance to attract the addressee's attention. In fact, suggests that "Hedging devices explicitly signal lack of confidence, while boosting devices reflect the speaker's anticipation that the addressee may remain unconvinced and therefore supply extra reassurance".

Besides hedging and boosting, women as a guardian of society's values are also expected to be polite and should speak with standard forms (Holmes, 2001). By using more standard speech forms, women can protect her 'face'. In this case, 'face' is the sense of reputation or *good name* (Thomas, 1995), central to Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness (1978 and revised in 1987, cited in Thomas, 1995). Holmes (2001, p. 159) also believes that "women's greater use of standard forms may relate not only to their own face-protection needs, but also to those of the people they are talking to."

In contrast, men and boys are generally more tolerated, more freedom, rude, and mischievous than women and girls in conversation. As described by Lakoff (1973), "as little boys, they are chastised more severely for throwing tantrums or

showing temper: ‘high spirits’ are expected and tolerated in little boys.” (p. 51). Hence, society tends to excuse a show of temper by men but not excuse it for women. They are allowed to fuss and complain, but only men can bellow in rage. To conclude, it could be argued that some characteristics that differ women from men are the way they talk and their language use. In a book entitled *Language and Women’s Place*, conducted by Robin Lakoff (1975), she claims that certain features are typical women’s language based on her observation and intuition. Lakoff (1975) also adds that women’s styles as a reflex of their powerlessness and men’s power over them. It reveals by the fact that women are forced to learn weak, trivial, and deferential style as a part of socialization. Regarding the general stereotypes of women, this study intends to investigate women’s language features particularly in social media, such as blog.

Nowadays, as reported in the article *Technologies Influence Over Societies* (“Hub Pages”, 2010) social media such as facebook, twitter, blog, youtube, and etc. cannot be separated from our daily life. The changes of information technology and communication formats have influenced the way people talk and share about their life and the way of advertising products (Mahoney, 2010). In other words, now people have digital-diary as personal journal (Beal, 2007) and digital media advertising to share their personal stories and their products by writing posts in blog everytime and everywhere. As suggested by Tyler (2002) that this phenomenon happens due to the rapid growing of internet in the globalization era. Moreover, he adds that internet can change the social life, for example people who live in two different areas can communicate easily because

of the internet. In other words, the distance is no longer problem in communication because of the internet.

Blog, as one of the social media, provides the source for this study in searching for some clues of the use of women's language features. Weblog or known as blog serves an alternative for communication as a publicly accessible personal journal for an individual or company. The term weblog was first used by Jom Barger on his website in 1997 (Beal, 2007). Blog often represents the personality of the author individually of the company and as a vehicle for self expression and self empowerment (Beal, 2007). It can also be in the form of diary-posts, bulletin post, chronological sequence post, or to advertise products as free marketing media. Beal (2007) also stated that "to this end the most accurate and fitting evolution of today's blog comes from online diaries where the diarist would keep an online journal of themselves" (p.1). There are basically three types of blogs namely, filters, personal journals, and notebooks.

For those reasons, this study is interested in analyzing blog's postings using women's language features, proposed by Robin Lakoff framework (1975) as a tool of analysis. There have been some studies which applying this framework such as Kurihara (2009) and Permatasari (2010).

Firts, the study entitled *A Study on Women's Language in English and Japanese Societies*, was conducted by Kurihara (2009). It focused on the change of female language, especially the study of female features in English and Japanese societies referring to the references. Kurihara (2009) was interested in comparing between features of women's language in English society and features

of women's language in Japanese society phonology, gossip: a language of female secret, and the last is conclusion. He further examined whether Robin Lakoff's framework (1975) of women's language features were applicable in Japanese society in the recent time. Even, in 21st century the results showed women tend to speak softly, correctly, uncertainly, and with HRT intonation, '*onna-rashiku*' which identify feminism and indicated that Lakoff's framework was applicable.

Another study related to women's language features conducted by Permatasari (2010) who observed *Women's Speech Features Used by the Characters Sex and the City Movie*. This study focused on how the four characters of Sex and The City movie namely Carrie, Miranda, Charlotte, and Samantha use women's speech features in several setting, such as restaurant, library, apartment Mexican resort, and streets.

In analysing the data, she used descriptive qualitative method. Moreover, Permatasari (2010) proved that the characters of Sex and City movie used women's speech features which reflect uncertainty and lack of confidence because women tend to have trouble in starting conversation and avoiding saying definite things in their statement. Permatasari (2010) also stated that there were eight types of women's speech features used by the characters: *lexical hedges or fillers, tag question, rising intonation on declaratives, 'empty' adjectives, intensifiers, superpolite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress.*

Although Kurihara (2009) and Permatasari (2010) have discovered women's language features within the same framework by Robbin Lakoff (1975), they had different aspects in investigating their studies. Permatasari (2010) tried to seek the

phenomenon of women's language features only in English society which figured out by the actress in the movie. However, Kurihara (2009) tried to examine how the phenomenon of women's language features in Western Countries occurs in Japanese society.

Different from those two previous studies which observed women's language features proposed by Lakoff's framework (1975) in oral text, this present study applies the features in written text. Moreover, these are ten women's language features stated by Lakoff (1975); *lexical hedges or fillers, tag question, rising intonation on declaratives, 'empty adjectives, precise colour terms, intensifiers* such as just and so, *'hypercorrect' grammar, 'superpolite' forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress* (cited in Holmes, 2001, p. 286).

1.2 Statement of Problems

This study formulates the statement of problems as follows:

1. What features of women's language are observed in Indonesian female bloggers?
2. What is the most frequent feature of women's language used by Indonesian female bloggers?
3. What are the possible reasons that may affect the use of women's language features done by Indonesian female bloggers?

1.3 The Aims of the Study

Relevant to the statement of problems above, this study aims:

1. To examine women's language features that are observed in Indonesian female bloggers.

2. To find out the most frequent feature of women's language that are used by Indonesian female bloggers.
3. To investigate the possible reasons of using of woman's language features done by Indonesian female bloggers.

1.4 Scope of the Study

In line with the aims of the study above, this study focused on the women's language features done by Indonesian female bloggers, particularly those who have a passion in fashion and business. This study employed *Blogspot.com* from October 2011 to September 2012 as the data to be observed. The postings are about bloggers activities (routines, business, fashion, and special events). The phenomenon of women's language features were achieved through Robin Tolmach Lakoff's framework (1975) in representing women's language features. Although Lakoff's framework of women's language includes ten features, this study only focuses on nine features that relate to written text, there are *lexical hedges or fillers, tag question, 'empty adjectives, precise colour terms, intensifiers, 'hypercorrect' grammar, 'superpolite' forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress.*

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is expected to give contributions as follows:

- This research study is worth doing because this kind of study will give contributions to the practitioners for developing their knowledge about linguistics subject, especially about women's language features by Lakoff.

- Through this study, it is hoped that this study will boost the linguistics learners to pay more attention in analysing a text by linguistics features. Then, this study will attract the linguistics students because they can explore some advantages and knowledges about woman's language features in blog's postings.
- The results of this study are also expected to give contributions for linguistics lecturers to be a source and data in teaching, especially in Sociolinguistics subject of women's language features in blog's postings.
- Through this study, it is hoped that this study will give contributions and foundation for future studies in sociolinguistics, especially for the people who are interested in women's language features that will investigate deeply and specifically. Moreover, this study can be a source and a comparison for future studies in investigating women's language features by Robin Lakoff (1973).

1.6 Research Methods

To follow the aims of the study, a descriptive qualitative method was used in gaining and analyzing data. However, this study also needed quantification in the form of percentage of women's language features used by Indonesian female bloggers in order to support qualitative findings. As proposed by Benz & Newman (1998) and Denzin & Lincoln (1984), qualitative is an study about interpretative knowledge by someone about something through an interpretation and needs numerical methods, such as to calculate the percentage of women's language features. According to Alwasilah (2002), "A qualitative study involves

description and analysis.” (p. 17). It mainly discussed in describing, interpreting, and analyzing the use woman’s language features. This research study was also completed by selecting data and textual evidence to support the interpretation in answering the research questions. Thus, interview instrument was conducted in collecting the data.

The source of data of this study was taken from *Blogspot.com* which contains three Indonesian female bloggers range from 20 to 30 years old and has a passion in fashion and business. The study selected their postings about their activities (routines, business, fashion, and special events) range from October 2011 to September 2012 purposely. After collecting the data, this study conducted the analysis to gain the aims of study. Then, identifying the data by underlining every word, phrase, clause, and sentence in every posts, and classifying the data according to the relevant features of women’s language. While classifying it, interviewing is also done. After that, discussing and quantifying the data to make further interpretation. Finally, conclusions can be drawn to provide the answers belong to the problems’ statements.

1.7 Clarification of Terms

Several terms need to be clarified in order to avoid misconception and to comprehend the same notion in investigating the statement of the problems as follows:

1. Women’s language features: several aspects of language used by women to differentiate between women and men’s language characteristics. It includes *lexical hedges or fillers, tag question, rising intonation on declaratives,*

'empty adjectives, precise colour terms, intensifiers such as just and so, 'hypercorrect' grammar, 'superpolite' forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress. (Lakoff, 1975 cited in Holmes, 2001, p. 286).

2. Blog: One of social media in globalization era as digital-diary or free digital advertising. Weblog or known as blog serves an alternative for communication as a publicly accessible personal journal for an individual or company, (Beal, 2007).

1.8 Organization of the Paper

This study is presented in five chapters as follows:

CHAPTER I

This chapter contains background of the study, statement of problems, aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, research methods, clarification of the terms, and organization of the paper.

CHAPTER II

This chapter focuses on theoretical framework that provides relevant theories and concepts for conducting the study. The related previous studies are also discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER III

It discusses the research methods, including the steps and procedures of the study, the data sources of the study, and data analysis.

CHAPTER IV

This section presents the findings and discussions of the study.

CHAPTER V

The last chapter of the study reveals all the interpretation toward the results of the study. It includes conclusions and provides some suggestions for future studies in the same areas.

