

**GENDER BIASED ELEMENTS IN THE COURSEBOOK OF ENGLISH  
FOR STUDENTS OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**



**Research Paper**

Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for Getting Bachelor Degree of Education  
in English Department

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2008**

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

Women are generally assumed to become inferior to men in many aspects of life; in short, women are located just where men's shadow falls. In the old Javanese culture, for example, women were completely determined as the servants of men as if their existence were created and devoted only for the advantages of 'the manhood power'. They were made as the kitchen people, assigned as the house keeper and prohibited to taste school. Knox, in his work entitled *The First Blast of Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, states that women are weak by nature, "... nature, I say, does paint them forth to be weak, frail, impatient, feeble and foolish." (Knox,1558). Therefore, these two issues about women, at least, can be a representation of an idea that for centuries we have lived in a male-dominated society.

English is one of the many fields in which women are explicitly and implicitly treated to be inferior to men. The English language has two sets of pronouns for the third-person singular: he/him/his and she/her/hers. It is practically impossible to talk about individuals without explicitly and implicitly mentioning their sex. When A mentions a person unknown to B, B must find out whether the third person is male or female in order to know how to phrase he/she, his/her or him/her. If A does not give any adequate information about that third person, B will usually use the pronoun he/him/his

as the ultimate choice in order to phrase an expression. In English language, the very fact tells us that so many words for unpleasant talk have a semantic feature of [+female] on them (Chaika,1982; p.361). Chaika states gender-biased language affects everyone, both males and females. However, this very fact has also been biased toward the male-dominated language. Chaika also states that a person who is *gabby*, *talkative*, *gossipy* and who acts as *a nag*, *a shrew*, *a chatterbox* must be a woman. Moreover, Chaika also initiates several questions dealing with stereotypical issues towards women; the questions are as follows:

What is a man? There is none. A woman is a nag when she asks for something too often. What is a man? Persistent. A woman who complains or criticizes is a shrew. What is a man called in the same way? There is no single word for it. Women gossip; but men? They ‘shoot the breeze’, a far more pleasant and potent activity.

These are the proofs how English language is definitely a male-dominated language. Besides, in Javanese culture, men are viewed as being the superior sex and this is reinforced by the use of biased generic terms such as 'mankind', which in fact refers to the whole human race. 'Fireman' and 'postman' are also the two examples why English is assumed as a male-dominated and gender-biased language. Society as the language user has also created stereotypical male and female gender identities. 'Dear Sir' becomes the most-used opening greeting in letters which are sent and received by people generally. Another example, Annie Edson Taylor is described as “the first **person** to go over Niagara Falls in a barrel”, while Neil Armstrong is “the first **man** to walk on the moon”.

The coursebook of English for students of Senior High School is entitled 'Linked to The WORLD 2' English for student of Senior High School, is a genre-based series that helps students develop their abilities in the four language skill (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Each unit is carefully prepared to make students comprehend the topics, with motivating task that encourage students' participation. The appropriate with the content standard curriculum of 2006.

'Linked to the WORLD 2', English for Senior High School are likely one of many books that still employ such kinds of gender biased issues. A name of 'Prof. Rudd (Prof. *male name*) could be easily found in this book; meanwhile, there is no single name with a considered-prestige academic title which refers to female name. In such case, the writer usually make a gender-biased tendency by putting female into the inferior occupation. Many times the writer subconsciously assume that men are having a privilege to occupy the superior occupation; e.g. 'he' for a professor, driver, pilot, farmer, and 'she' for a dancer, babysitter.

Based on the phenomena above, the writer is interested to conduct a research towards gender biased elements in the English textbooks which are coursebook of English for students of Senior High School in Indonesia. The paper is entitled:

**GENDER BIASED ELEMENTS IN THE COURSEBOOK OF  
ENGLISH FOR STUDENTS OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

## **B. Review of the Previous Study**

To prove the originality of her study, the researcher discusses previous studies that deal with gender used in literary work done by students of University in Surakarta.

Lina Wulandari, 2003, in her study is entitled “**SEXUAL STEREOTYPING OF WOMEN IN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE’S MEASURE FOR MEASURE**” found that there are some kinds of sexual stereotyping of women in *Measure for Measure*. The kinds of that sexual stereotyping are as follows: women were viewed to be physically and intellectually inferior to men; women were expected to have virtues like chastity, fidelity and obedience towards their husbands; women were seen to be liable to temptation and, at the same time, women were also seen as the temptress who caused men to fall into sin.

Furthermore, Nurmeilawati, 2003, in her study is entitled “**CHINEESE-AMERICAN WOMAN EXISTENTIAL CONSCIENCE AS REFLECTED IN THE NOVEL THE WOMAN WARRIOR WRITTEN BY MAXINE HONG KINSTON**” found that there are some experiences of women subordination. Those subordination experiences are varied; since the sexual harassment, physical raid of women without of marriage pregnancy, psychological terror, women’s boundaries to play only on the role of domestic affairs, and deeper to the destruction of women’s firm consciousness of their equal existence with men in society. Those experiences prove that patriarchal system has become a subjugation mechanism of women’s freedom to be equal to men and they also become an obstacle in order to explore women’s own individualized identity as human being with large capacity of everything.

The main theme of the two related studies above is closely connected to this paper. The first study is discussing about stereotypical issues upon women, meanwhile the second one is around subordination towards women. Different from those studies, the researcher presents her study by using sociolinguistic approach. This research is still concerned with the gender biased elements in the coursebook of English textbook for students of senior high school.

### **C. Research Problem**

Knowing the problem is the most important part in the research. The researcher decides some problem that will be discussed here. The problems are formulated as follows:

1. What kinds of gender biased elements appear in those English textbooks?
2. In what kinds of context of situations do gender biased elements appear?

### **D. Objectives of the Study**

Based on the problem statements above, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To describe the kinds of gender biased elements that appear in those English textbooks
2. To describe in what kinds of context of situations gender biased elements appear

### **E. Benefits of the Study**

The result of the study is expected to be beneficial in two ways:

1. Practically, the study will give additional contribution of gender biased elements in the coursebook of English for student of senior high school to the English students and English lecturer.
2. Theoretically, the study will add some literary insight in gender toward linguistics. So the other researchers may use it as one of literature reviews in their linguistics study to find out some other aspect of the English textbooks.

### **F. Limitation of the Study**

The main theme of this research is only dealing with gender biased elements that appear in the coursebooks of English for students of Senior High School. It will be concern on gender-biased elements and the kinds of context of situations do gender biased elements appear in those English textbooks.

### **G. Paper Organization**

The researches divided the paper into five chapters. Chapter I is introductory. This chapter deals with the background of the study, reviews of the previous study, research problem, objectives of the study, benefits of the study, limitation of the study and paper organization.

Chapter II is underlying theory. This chapter is dealing with sex and gender; gender; gender and sociolinguistic; gender, language and society; gender-biased elements; gender biased element and cultural context.

Chapter III is research method. This chapter consists of type of research, object of the study, type of data and data sources, method of data collection, and the technique of analyzing data.

Chapter IV is dealing with data analysis and discussion. This chapter will focus on the gender-biased elements.

Chapter V is dealing with conclusion, implication, and suggestion.