

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

‘Gender’ is used to index the wide variation in styles of behaviour between societies, but it also suggests that within them the degree of choice is fairly limited. Gender, according to Eckert (2003:9) is embedded so thoroughly in our institutions, our actions, our beliefs, and our desires, that it appears to us to be completely natural.

According to Rubin (1975) as quoted in Glover and Kaplan (2000:xxiv) men and women are, of course, different. The idea that men and women are more different from one another than either is from anything else must come from somewhere other than nature. Far from being an expression of natural differences, exclusive gender identity is the suppression of natural similarities. It requires repression: in men, of whatever is the local version of ‘feminine’ traits; in women, of the local definition of ‘masculine’ traits. The division of the sexes has the effect of repressing some of the personality characteristics of virtually everyone, men and women.

Women have a different way of speaking from men, a way of speaking that both reflect and produces a subordinate position in society.

Women's language, according to Lakoff (1972) as quoted in Eckert (2003:158) is rife with such devices as litigators (*Sort of, I think*) and inessential qualifiers (*really happy, so beautiful*). This language, she went on to argue, renders women's speech tentative, powerless, and trivial; and as such, it disqualifies them from positions of power and authority. In this way, language itself is a tool of oppression – it is learned as part of learning to be a woman, imposed on women by societal norms, and in turn it keeps women in their place.

In English, the language tells us that so many words for unpleasant talk have a semantic feature of [+female] on them (Chaika, 1982:361). Further, Chaika states gender biased language affects everyone, both males and females. However, this fact has also been biased toward the male dominated language. Chaika also states that a person who is gabby, talkative, and 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 toward women; the questions are as follows:

What is a man? There are none. A woman is a nag when she asks for something too often. What is a man? Persistent. A woman who complains or criticizes a shrew. What is man called in the same way? There is no single word for it. Women gossip, but man? They 'shoot the breeze', a far more pleasant and potent activity. (Chaika, 1982:362)

These are the proof of how English language is definitely a male-dominated language. Besides, in our culture, men are viewed as being the superior sex and this is reinforced by the use of biased terms such as 'mankind', which in

facts refer to the whole human race, ‘Policeman’ and ‘postman’ are also the two examples of 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, Neil Amstrong is “the first man to walk on the moon”.

The compulsory “Interactive English” textbooks for Junior High School students in Grobogan Regency are likely three of many books that still employ such kinds of gender biased issues. A name ‘Dr. Anthony’ (Dr. *Male name*) could be easily found in this book; meanwhile, there a single name with a considered-prestige academic title which refers to female name. In such case, we usually make a gender-biased tendency by putting into the inferior occupation. We subconsciously assume that men are having a privilege to occupy the superior occupation; e.g. ‘he’ for a doctor, businessman, professor, scientist, pilot and ‘she’ for babysitter, nurse, secretary. Moreover, women are generally assumed to be more emotional than man; *upset, sad, crying* are examples of words that are usually referred to woman.

Based on the phenomena above, the writer is interested in conducting a research towards gender biased elements. The research paper is entitled: *Gender Biased Elements in the “Interactive English” Textbooks for Junior High School Students in Grobogan Regency.*

B. Problem Statement

The problem statements formulated by the writer are as follows:

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

C. Objective of the Study

The objectives of this research are as follows:

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

D. Benefit of the Study

The writer hopes that the research would be useful for the reader. Those benefits are:

1. Theoretical Benefit

This research can make general people, including the book writers, realize that women are not supposed to be inferior to men.

2. The Practical Benefit

a. For the English Teachers

The result of this research can be used as a reference to improve the ability of English teachers in understanding more about gender biased in English textbooks.

b. Other Researchers

To give additional information for other researchers that want to conduct further research on the related field.

E. Research Paper Organization

The organization of this research paper is given in order to make the readers understand the content of the research paper as follows:

Chapter I is introduction which consists of background of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, benefit of the study, and research paper organization.

Chapter II is review of related literature. It consists of previous study, notion of gender, notion of sex and gender, gender and sociolinguistics, gender, language, and society, gender biased elements, and gender biased elements and cultural context.

Chapter III is research method. It consists of type of the research, object of the research, data and data source, technique of collecting data, and technique for analyzing data.

Chapter IV is research finding and discussion. In this chapter, the writer presents the data analysis, the result, and discussion.

Chapter V is conclusion and suggestion.