

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, some subchapters are explained generally. Those subchapters include background of the study, statement of research problem, objective of the study, significance of the study as well as scope and the limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Communication is a need of interaction which links people to one another. Communication means sharing and exchanging information through an instrument, called language. Language is a complex system which has a pattern of a structure of the society. In the study of sociolinguistics, language is defined as a social construction (Wardhaugh, 2006), in which it is influenced by social parameters such as gender, education, age, social class and so forth. Due to this fact, the way people use language can directly or indirectly affect their social world, and vice versa. When people communicate with others, they are not only using language as a mean of exchanging information, but their identities are also revealed consciously or unconsciously. Hence, the use of language variations used among speakers is unavoidable.

The occurrence of language variations is inevitable since people live in a complex world that has so many aspects. The aspects include nationality, religion, culture and belief, education, social class, race, age, as well as gender. Those

diversities may influence the way people talk to one another. People can assume that an individual belongs to one culture because of the way he or she speaks. The way Japanese people speak is different with Chinese people, and people from the upper class may speak differently with those who are from the working class. Both examples above indicate that not all people speak exactly the same. In other words, people linguistically act or behave in different ways.

For many years, language and gender have become a major interest among linguist, especially for those who are interested in language variation. Gender is one of the factors which initiate the occurrence of language variations. According to Wardhaugh (2006), gender is a social construct. It is shaped and ruled by a particular culture and society. Society treats people to different life experiences and forces them to act appropriately considering their gender role in their social surrounding. Wardhaugh (2006) argued that society subjects women to be women who are forced to act more feminine and become more powerless than men. Because of their powerlessness, being recognized and involved with one another is important. Consequently, women are said more supportive and non-competitive, while men are innately independence and more competitive with a tendency of vertical relationship (Wardhaugh, 2006).

Lakoff (1975) suggested that women's language sometimes shows their weakness and powerlessness, while men's language reflects their power and dominance. In order to be accepted and not to be discriminated by society, women should linguistically behave femininely. Having certain speech features is one of the way for women to safe their role and status in society. Lakoff (1975) has

proposed a list of ten linguistic features produced by women in her book entitled *Language and Women's Place*. In her investigation on women's linguistic features, she proposed these several characteristics: lexical hedges or fillers, specialized vocabulary (precise colors term), tag question, 'empty' adjective, rising intonation on declarative, intensifier, 'hypercorrect' grammar, 'super polite' form, avoidance of strong swear word, and emphatic stress. Another research about women's specific speech characteristics was also done by Maltz and Broker (1982). They classified women's language behaviors into two types of interactions, same-gender interaction and cross-gender interaction.

In same-gender conversation, women tend to use a strategy of getting people to be connected and keeping other speakers engaged; hence women can maintain the conversation or the interaction (Maltz & Broker, 1982). It implies that; if the interlocutor is a female, the female speaker will apply a strategy in keeping the interlocutor to be engaged by using an involvement strategy. Due to this fact, women often give more extended signs of interest during the conversation and give more responses to the speaker they speak with. On the other hand, women tend to ask more questions in mix-gender conversation as a conversational maintenance, but men usually interpret women's questions as requests for information; not as a conversational maintenance (Maltz & Broker, 1982). It indicates that female speaker feels more responsible in maintaining the conversation when having a conversation with male interlocutor.

A study of same-gender and cross-gender conversations was also done by Nordenstam (1992). She made a broad illustrations about how women and men

communicate, with regard to their language behaviors (especially topic shift, interruption or simultaneous speech and minimal response). She focuses on male's and female's linguistic behaviors in two conversational styles; same-gender conversation (all-males and all-females) and cross-gender conversation (male-female). The results of her study with regard to interruption or simultaneous speech, back-channeling and topic shift show that: (a) in same-gender conversation, women tend to use cooperative overlaps greater extent than men; (b) women use back-channeling signals and emotional short responses significantly more in single-gender conversation than in mixed-gender conversation; (c) in same-gender conversation, women show a greater interest in talking about relationship and talking about other men and women, women also use more abrupt topic shift; while in mix-gender conversation, women talk about a variety of things, and they initiate more topics. The results of Nordenstam's (1992) study with regard to linguistic behaviors are used to support the findings and the results of this present study. To reveal how and in what situation women produce a strategy (linguistic feature and linguistic behavior) in an interaction, this study provides two conversations with between a female speaker and 2 interlocutors with different gender (same-gender and cross-gender conversations).

Talk show is one of the examples of an event where conversation occurred. In America, there are a lot of talk shows which are influential in the world of entertainment. *The Ellen Show* is included as one of American most popular talk show after winning 59 *Daytime Emmy Awards* as of 2017, including four for *Outstanding Talk Show* and six for *Outstanding Talk Show Entertainment*

(Wikipedia, 2018b). It has been aired since 2001 until this present day. It is a television sitcom which is created and starred by Ellen DeGeneres. *The Ellen Show* is an upbeat-talk-and-variety show featuring celebrities' interview and music performances. Ellen DeGeneres is known as one of most famous host in America, proven by her achievements; won 30 Emmys, 20 People's Choice Awards and numerous other awards for her works and charitable efforts (Wikipedia, 2018a). She has interviewed a lot of celebrities, Hollywood actors, musicians and important people in their businesses. The variations of her guests' educational background, age, ethnicity, status and role, as well as gender encourage her to apply particular strategies. Due to those facts, the writer is interested in analyzing women's linguistic features and linguistic behaviors produced by Ellen in cross-and-same-gender conversations.

The following speech is one of the examples taken from the data:

Ellen: *hey Justin, **would you do me a favor?** I know there is a lot going on in your life right now. But during the performance. **If you could give** some kinds of signals; so I know you're thinking of me?*

Ellen's utterance above shows the examples of some kinds of women's linguistic feature spoken by Ellen in *The Ellen Show*. The primary linguistic feature in Ellen's speech above is super polite form. Super polite form is used when the speaker wants his/her addressee to do something politely, without imposing the addressee. In the context, Ellen wants Justin to do something but afraid that she would impose him. Therefore, she uses super polite form to reduce imposition and keep her face as well as Justin's face. Super polite form is one of

women's speech feature which is often used by most women to fit the society's assumptions which considering women with the feminine qualities or weakness and subordinate toward men (Lakoff, 1975).

Linguists have done a lot of research about language and gender from different of perspectives since Lakoff published her classic work, *Language and Woman's Place*, in 1975 (Coates. 2013b). Therefore, the writer found some researchers who did an investigation on the study of language in relation with gender. A study of language and gender was done by Apriliyanto (2016) who analyzed women's speech features under the title *A study of women's speech features of female characters in Grown up 2 Movie*. Apriliyanto (2016) analyzed the linguistic features with the functions produced by all female characters in Grown up 2 movie. The amount of linguistic features produced by each women in Grown up 2 Movie is not clear, because all of the data found are put in one table and are not explained separately. A study of language and gender has also been done by Elvheim (2006) who investigated linguistic strategies used by two different hosts (male and female) in American talk show under the title *Language of American talk show hosts*. Elvheim (2006) analyzed the strategy used by Oprah and Dr. Phil by using Discourse Analysis Approach. The concept of gender differences of how the two hosts producing language choice are not clear cut, because both of the two hosts have different topics, settings and different number of guests.

Another research was done by Opina (2017) who did an analysis on linguistic features among university students entitled *Verbal communication*

behaviors: how male and female university students interact in gendered talks.

Opina more focused on verbal communication behavior of male and female speaker in same-sex and mix-sex conversations. Opina found that aside from the gender of the interlocutor and the gender composition, the nature of talk and the group size influence the use of particular behavior of the speaker. It means the gender differences cannot be interpreted as the main factor which to determine the use of language strategies used by male and female university student. However, the present study more focused on women's linguistic features and linguistic behaviors produced by female host in two different conversation settings (same-gender and cross gender conversations).

To sum up, the writer chooses to analyze women's speech features because it is an important part of language variation indicating gendered-speech characteristic which differs one gender to the opposite gender group. The settings and people involved in the conversation are also important in choosing a strategy of talking. Therefore, the writer analyzes the linguistics features and linguistic behaviors produced by female host of *The Ellen Show* in same gender and cross gender interaction. In this study, the writer investigates whether the female host operates same or different linguistic features and linguistic behaviors as her strategies in approaching her male and female guests. Thus, the writer gives the title of this study '*An analysis of women's linguistic features and linguistic behaviors produced by female host in The Ellen Show in same-gender and cross-gender conversation*'.

1.2 Statement of Problems

Considering the background of the study above, this study is suggested to address the following questions:

1. What are the types of women's linguistic features produced by Ellen in *The Ellen Show* in same-gender and cross-gender conversation?
2. What are the types of linguistic behaviors produced by Ellen in *The Ellen Show* in cross-gender conversation and same-gender conversation?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the statement of the research problems, the major objectives of this study are to:

1. Explain the types of women's linguistic features that are produced by Ellen in *The Ellen Show* in the same-gender and cross-gender conversation;
2. Explain the types of linguistic behaviors produced by Ellen in *The Ellen Show* in cross-gender conversation and same-gender conversation.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, the results of this study should give an important and useful contribution to the field of linguistic, particularly to sociolinguistic inquiry which is related to the study of gender-based language variation. Furthermore, this study offers some important insight about language variation in relation with gender, especially women's linguistic features and linguistic behaviors. Besides, this study is also expected to give some significant information both for those who

have an interest in sociolinguistics related to the study of one aspect of linguistic variation in depth, and also for those who are interested in the study of gender differences in general.

Practically, the present study suggests a better understanding for both men and women to learn the style and the different language used by the opposite gender to minimize the communication problem, as what has been stated in the background of the study. Additionally, this study suggests a strategy for women to use appropriate language speech features and linguistic behaviors in both same gender and mix gender interactions.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is sociolinguistics which deals with language variation in relation with gender. In this study, the writer chooses a list of ten women's speech features proposed by Lakoff (1975) and Nordenstam's (1992) theory of linguistic behaviors (minimal responses, topic shift and interruption or simultaneous speech) used in same-gender conversation and cross gender conversation which are relevant with the data. The limitation of this study is all Ellen's utterances which consist of women's linguistic features and linguistic behaviors in *The Ellen Show* (Ellen's 60th Birthday Episode). Ellen's utterances chosen in this study are taken from two conversational interactions, same-gender and cross gender-conversations.