

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the rationale and background of conducting the study, which provides reasons for choosing this topic. Then, it serves research questions and objectives of the study and gives limitations on how the study should be shown which are elaborated in detail in the sub-chapter of the scope of the study. Significance of the study thus incorporated as contributions to the study of theoretical and practical aspects.

1.1 Background of the Study

Language and gender are two separate terms often discussed together as a relevant notion of research in many decades. Linguistics, feminist theory, and political practice are the earliest studies about gender and language subject matter. Gender has been invoked as an explanation for all manner of linguistic variation, including vocabulary innovation (Jespersen, 1922), pronunciation (Coates, 1986), grammar (Key, 1975), and communication style (Maltz and Borker, 1982). The linguistic message integrated in studies mentioned shows influential relationships between language and gender.

Gender is the construction of terms made up by society rather than a biological systemization (Coates, 2004). It has been justified as a social entity because the concept of gender in our social life is deeply ingrained in all aspects so various interests and ideologies are involved (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). The concept of gender then accustomed as an instrumental idea in language study since there are claims that gender bias is established through language.

In the realm of news reporting on sexual violence, linguistic features perform as powerful tools for shaping perceptions and understanding of gender, particularly when it comes to women's experiences. According to Yule (2010), linguistic features play a role in constructing language and allowing individuals to express themselves in a way of reaching their linguistic goal. Linguistic features refer to the characteristics or elements within a language that contribute to its structure, meaning, and expression (Victoria, et. al, 2018). For examples in a news reporting of sexual assault case: "The woman was raped by the perpetrator." In the passive voice construction, the focus shifts

from the perpetrator to the woman, but it can sometimes imply a sense of passivity or lack of agency on the part of the victim. The use of passive voice in this context may inadvertently contribute to victim-blaming or diminish the responsibility of the perpetrator.

News on sexual violence against women like rape cases is one example; Clark (1992) has shown that women are sometimes portrayed as the blamed participants of the attacks. This negative representation of women was concluded after conducting a study of news reporting in *The Sun* newspaper. This kind of representation is valid at least in the context of popular newspapers.

The idea that language treats women and men differently in media discourse is nothing new. Women have been treated inadequately in violence-related discourses, particularly the construction of media discourses of gender-based violence (Sutherland et al., 2019). It has been women who have been named and shamed in media reporting, even though women themselves are the victims. The narrow definition of women in language refers to the observation that women are more often discussed in terms of their appearance and their family relationships, whereas men are more often discussed in terms of what they do (Key, 1975). Thus, women's existence in the news industry has always been reflected as weak, vulnerable, and exploited (Alat, 2006; Carter et al., 2014). And for many decades, violence accepted as something that happens to women. Mainstream media often regard female sexuality as suitable for objectification. Susilo (2017) believes that masculine dominance persists in society, serving as a pretext for discriminating against women, with men being positioned as having authority over women. Physical abuse is viewed as a manifestation of masculine domination over femininity.

It is significant to uncover the portrayal of women in news coverage of sexual violence, as nowadays, power and ideology have been closely related to mass media, a newspaper is considered one of the strongest media to spread the news which also influences public perception (Pekkarinen, 2016). Besides, the language used by journalists is possibly purposively taken concerning achieving a certain purpose, which is either to support or marginalize certain people, groups, or ideologies. Public perception of crime is strongly impacted by media (Weitzer and Kubrin, 2004). Thus, many parties speculate an inequality depiction of news coverage on sexual violence, particularly in the unfavorable portrayal of female victims compared to the more sympathetic portrayal of perpetrators.

In Indonesia, for example, sexist and misogynistic reporting on news about violence against women is conventional. This is unfortunate, given the soaring number of cases of violence against women. Data on gender violence in Central Java from November 2008 to October 2009 by Legal Resources Center-Gender Justice and Human Rights (henceforth, LRC-KJHAM) and several news reports in printed media, such as *Suara Merdeka*, *Wawasan*, *Kompas*, *Jawa Pos-Radar Semarang*, and *Solo Pos* have reported some cases of abuse against women. According to the LRC-KJHAM reports, there are 210 cases of rape (17, 193 cases reported by media), 149 domestic violence cases (73:76), 101 cases of violence in relationships (6:95), 16 cases of sexual abuse (16), 71 cases of exploitation and prostitution (71), 44 cases violence against women migrant workers (7:37), 23 cases of trafficking (23; Divisi Monitoring LRC-KJHAM, 2009).

The findings of this study presented in the form of table and used sentences to explain the data thoroughly in the discussions. In this case, this study considers the factor of comparing three quality newspapers from different cultures. The broadsheets selected were *The Jakarta Post*, *The New York Post*, and *The Sun*. In general, *The Sun* might be seen as representing the quality newspapers in UK society. *The Sun* is widely recognized as a broadsheet with a balanced representation of gender. Thus, *The New York Post* might represent US society. While the other one might be seen as a representative of Indonesian society which is influenced by Islamic culture as the country is most Muslim. The basic supposition is that there might be some disparities in the way these three quality papers portray women victims owing to the diversity in cultural background.

This study portrays the construction of women in violence against women discourses through the lens of critical discourse analysis. It employs three-dimensional framework of critical discourse analysis proposed by Fairclough (1989) to investigate the discursive construction of women in the media, with a belief that discourse is the reflection of power in society. Discursive practices carry ideological effects that contribute to the production and reproduction of an imbalance of relationships of power between men and women (Subagyo, 2010). To conclude, critical discourse analysis examines the internal and external of discourse, as well as other ideological motives and power relationships within society (Dijk, 1987; Mardikantoro, 2014; Mills, 1997; Subagyo, 2012).

1.2. Research Questions

From the background of the study above, it is formulated the following research questions:

1. What are linguistic features in the newspapers that construct women's representation in reporting of sexual violence against women cases?
2. How do the linguistic features of the newspapers construct women's representation in reporting of sexual violence against women cases?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1. To find and to explain the linguistic features in the newspapers that construct women's representation in reporting of sexual violence against women cases.
2. To explain how the linguistic features of the newspapers that construct women's representation in reporting of sexual violence against women cases.

1.4. Significance of the Study

1.4.1 Theoretical Significance

This study reveals the hidden ideologies in three newspapers with a distinct background of culture. Then, it is useful for a reader who is devoted to this matter and wants to have a deep understanding of critical discourse analysis, particularly through an approach by Fairclough (1989). Furthermore, the materials of this study can be used in research or educational processes, in teaching the discipline of discourse analysis. This work includes a wide range of media discourse discussions, and in particular, studied CDA in news reporting of sexual violence against women.

1.4.2 Practical Significance

The objectification of women is seen in the language of the mass media which significantly contributes to the perception built by the readers about a phenomenon. This study is beneficial to enhance newspaper readers' apprehension of unveiling the media's ideology, particularly in representing women. Since this work discusses women's representation in media, it creates a fighting spirit in the field of feminism in Indonesia.

1.5. Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study examines how language portrays women, using critical discourse analysis perspective. It explores how linguistic patterns shape the representation of women, revealing societal power dynamics. Through careful analysis, it uncovered how language constructs and reinforces gender norms, especially regarding women's experiences in sexual violence through theoretical framework proposed by Fairclough (1989). This study focuses in local and international media, particularly in news reporting of sexual violence against women published by three distinct background newspapers: *The Jakarta Post*, *The New York Post*, and *The Sun*. The field of language and gender is in the scope of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) since this social practice is closely related to the transfer of ideology and power.

This study focuses on investigating how gender representation is conducted in the body of the articles with various linguistic strategies such as lexical choice, pronouns, passive voice, active voice, cohesion, and coherence. The texts are extracted from each newspaper's online website. All the articles are on the same topic, sexual violence

against women. The corpora of the three broadsheets were roughly similar in word count.