

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section is the background of the study, which explains the information on the related topic and the researcher's reason to conduct this study. The second section is the statement of the research problem, which is intended to assist the researcher in solving the problem. The objectives of the study are followed by an explanation of the research object. The scope and limitations of the study, and its significance of the study, are stated in this section.

1.1 Background of the Study

The existence of language is genuinely important to help humans communicate for express their feelings through speech. Humans, as social beings, need to socialize with each other in the name of society. Thus, language belongs to society and the way it is continually influenced by social roles, which is studied in a field namely Sociolinguistics. According to Spolsky (1988), sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and society, specifically between language users and the social structures in which they belong. Holmes (2013) defines language as used to convey their identities since there are many social groups in society, which are distinguished by social status, ethnicity, age, gender, and several groups belonging to the social aspects. In addition, language encourages, inspires, and impacts how individuals act in daily life also can reveal an individual's level of confidence, behaviour, and other characteristics.

This results in language differences, giving a name to the phrase "language feature." Language feature refers to characteristics of language that humans employ while communicating with others. It includes sentence structure, punctuation, nouns, vocabulary, phrases, etc. to convey meaning in communication. Regarding the points above, each human utilizes a different feature in language usages. One of the most notable language usages of the

difference is gender, and gender has been an interesting topic to choose for many studies nowadays.

The term "gender" refers to the cultural characteristics and actions of society toward men and women. Gender differences in language have always been complicated to examine, but now widely recognized as both a linguistic and a social phenomenon and it has become a popular topic in linguistics and sociolinguistics. Men and women have their styles to communicate since men and women are different creatures. In sociolinguistics, gender discovers how men and women speak differently. Holmes (2013, p. 162), states that gender distinguishes the use of language considered on more pervasive linguistic in the society reflecting on social status and power differences. This also implied women's power and social status whereas generally being subordinate in society.

The most prominent language usage differences could be seen through the intonation, vocabulary, until the topic selection they might talk. Speakers, both men and women, always have ability in speaking in the topics they ace. Zulkarnain and Fitriani (2018) found that men tend to choose competitive topics such as sports or politics, while women prefer to discuss daily life or cooperative topics. Women concern to the fashion and decoration, they might use any color terms that unfamiliar for men like *magenta*, *sage green*, etc. In addition, Women mostly use any hedges like 'oh', 'eh', 'uhm...', etc, in their speech despite the sentence is still understandable without them, or they combine and avoid any swear words with said 'my dear', 'oh god!', and else.

Lakoff (2004) proposed that women were using language assisted by their subordinate status; 'colluding in their own subordination' through the way they spoke. Women tend to choose the appropriate words to say to the listeners so that they used polite words or almost superpolite in order to maintain their image as a feminine, gentle, and compassionate creature. The smooth, courteous, soft speech, linguistically, and socially standard are aspects of the language aspects of women's gender markers. Whereas men are more assertive and clear also tend to show their masculinity. Lakoff (2004, p. 39) stated that women experience linguistic discrimination in two ways: the way they use the language and how

language treats them. Simply, if they refuse to talk like a lady, they will be judged as unfeminine. Concerning with that points, Lakoff proposed a list of ten features in women's language, include, lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjectives, precise color terms, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoiding strong swear words, and emphatic stress.

Therefore, the researcher conducts a study on the use of women's language by women because the stereotype of women as inferiors persists, and their speeches are commonly judged as if women are required to speak as they should. Even though women's roles have equal opportunities to men's nowadays, as in education, politics, and economics, women are still supposed to speak more properly than men. As a result from all those issues, the researcher was interested in whether women genuinely possessed unique linguistic characteristics that set them apart from males. The researcher examines women's language features to explore which features are used most by women in the current era.

Women's language terms could be found on television programs, in magazines, and on any digital platform such as podcasts, which are popular enough nowadays. A podcast is an audio recording collected by episodes. It is quite similar to the radio but may listen to many times and accessed by electronic devices through the internet because it is available on demand. It showed that podcasts severed by series with various topics. There are various podcasts with many topics usually discussed such as education, health, culture, lifestyle, music, news, etc.

According to Allifiansyah (2018), the term "podcast" is an abbreviation for "iPod Broadcasting," which represents the Apple iPod as the original platform for providing podcasts. Essentially, a podcast is a tool used to send, receive, and listen to information generated by both professional and amateur radio on demand. The podcaster, the podcast maker, aimed to deliver his or her thoughts about a specific topic through the podcast. People could select which podcasts may listen according to the topics that interest them to perceive different perspectives. Thus, the way podcasters express themselves through podcasts that

based on utterance will be influenced by their language usage. It means that the study of linguistic towards the podcast analysis is essential to gain the understanding of linguistic fields.

Since multiple podcasts are now available on various digital platforms, the researcher intends to examine Najwa Zebian's podcast, entitled *Stories of the Soul*. It is a type of conversational podcast that focuses on mental health issues, such as self-love, emotional manipulation, grief, and etc. The podcast itself is merely an interview between Najwa Zebian and several guests. They talk about their perspectives and impressions of the problems they are experiencing in life. The stories from the people that might be related will give new perceptions to the audiences. Based on Najwa Zebian's website (n.d), the podcast claimed that the audiences could learn how to heal pain and rise from lower phase. Najwa Zebian herself is a well-known author, poet, and public speaker who may have had prior linguistic experience, it described on how Najwa communicate with her guests through the podcast. The way she choose the phrases to open her podcast, *Stories of The Soul*, is quite typical, as in:

(1) "... Everyone around you has a story beyond what you see, a story that is so deep." (Eps. 02, 00:01:34)

(2) "Hello, my loves. I hope you're all well..." (Eps. 2, 00:02:23-00:02:24)

From the utterances above, it shows there is an element of femininity in the language usage. As in dialogue (1), the phrase '*so deep*' indicates as intensifier which intend to strengthen her expression of the utterance. The way she greets the audience by the use of '*my loves*' phrase in dialogue (2) also showing enough her femininity. Men will avoid using that kind of phrase since they will be ridiculed and have their identity questioned in the community or even lose their masculinity.

The guests' utterances of the conversation are not included, therefore men's utterances do not conduct in this study since the researcher only focused on Najwa Zebian's utterances in the *Stories of the Soul* podcast with the use of women's language. As a result, Women Language theory by Lakoff (2004) also the function of women language features theory by Pearson

(1985) are required because it could provide the occurrence of women's speech characteristics regard to the way women communicate in daily life.

Along with this study, Lakoff's theory about women's language has been used in several studies related, such as Oktapiani et al., (2017), Apridaningrum (2018), Retiningrum (2020), and Setyadi (2020). Hence, the several linguists' approach to discover the function also used in the mentioned studies, such as, Jakobson and Lakoff. However this study is using Pearson's theory because it is suitable for this study to examine the functions in detail. The previous studies have many kind of subjects such as movies, shows and others about to become the data source, but it rarely used podcast as the data subject. Thus, the podcast are employed as the source of data for this research to characterize and distinguish it from past researches. This study is beneficial because it offers different viewpoint on the study of women's language through podcast which are still uncommon.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background of the study above, the research question is formulate as follows:

1. What are types of women's language features produced by Najwa Zebian in the podcast *Stories of The Soul*?
2. What are the functions of women's language features produced by Najwa Zebian in the podcast *Stories of The Soul*?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the statement of the research problem, the researcher arranges the objectives of the study, as follows:

1. To discover the women's language features used by Najwa Zebian in the podcast *Stories of The Soul*.
2. To examine the functions of language features used by Najwa Zebian in the podcast *Stories of The Soul*.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research encouraged to own theoretical and practical significance, particularly in the Sociolinguistics field. Theoretically, the purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of women's and men's language features. Along with this research, the researcher hopes to provide an additional reference for future sociolinguistics analytical research.

Practically, this research will assist readers, particularly English Study Program students, by enriching the understanding of women's language features that they could learn through a variety of media such as books, television, radio, podcasts, etc. This study is aimed to raise readers' understanding of how the podcast program adds insight of women's language and its function. They could utilize this research as a guideline for future related studies.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this research is the Sociolinguistics field, which focuses on women's language as seen through the female host's utterances in the *Stories of The Soul* podcast. The data for this research is taken from Listen Notes website. The research focus of this study is limited to the use of the participant's utterances as data, which is only the host herself. Some podcast's elements such as introduction, closing, and advertisement will not be included.