

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this introductory chapter, the researcher will introduce the background of this study into several sections as an overview for the readers to know about this research. These sections consist of the background of research including previous studies that became references for this research, statement of the problem, research objective, research significance, and definition of key terms.

1.1. Background of the Research

In society, we are categorized humans as women and men and it is called gender. Gender is not sex, these two are completely different. Unlike sex which is used to refer to a person's biological maleness or femaleness, gender is the cultural assumptions and roles for masculinity and femininity, as well as non-physiological aspects of being female or male (Lips, 2020, p. 7). Therefore, sex is referred to the physical appearance, whether someone has two X chromosomes or X and Y chromosomes, while gender is what society gives to us as our identity. West & Zimmerman defined that gender is not something we are born with and not something we have, but something we do (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013, p. 1). We would act, speak, and behave based on the gender embedded in us since our first breath by parents and other people around us, whether it is masculine for men or feminine for women.

Gender also affects how we speak and use language. Language itself is essential in our daily life. We use it to communicate with others to share our thoughts, ideas, perceptions, emotions, and others. Additionally, language can symbolize our different social identities, and in any particular interaction, we draw on its symbolic power to construct a particular identity or identity (Holmes, 1997, p. 195). Like Holmes stated, language can symbolize our identity. In society, there are unwritten rules and stereotypes about both genders regarding how they should speak, and it will represent who they are in the community. As an illustration, women should avoid swearing words, but it is normal for men to use swear words in their utterances. This phenomenon appears in the language field in our society based on gender.

This phenomenon indicates that women and men have language characteristics that show their status and power in the community. Robin Lakoff is a linguist that introduces women's language concepts through her book "Language and Women's Place." Lakoff stated that women's language appears because women have a lower status than men. They are powerless and considered to be subordinate in society. So, women are not allowed to speak like men (Lakoff, 1973, p. 45). Society expects women to avoid vigorously expressing their feelings and speak in uncertain, unclear, repetitious, and indirect expressions. Meanwhile, men's speech is typically precise, direct, and straightforward.

In this study, there are characteristics and functions of women's language. Lakoff identified some linguistic features often used by women rather than men: expressing women's uncertainty and lack of confidence. Lakoff states

that there are ten characteristics of women's language, which are (1) specific color terms; (2) avoidance of swear words; (3) empty adjectives; (4) tag question; (5) rising intonation; (6) hedges; (7) intensifier; (8) emphatic stress; (9) hypercorrect grammar; (10) and super polite forms (Holmes, 2013, p. 302-303). Women naturally use all those characteristics above, and it makes them speak like a lady, so it will help women to keep in their place and society can accept them.

Women's language characteristics appear in Kim Kardashian's utterances in her interview with *Vogue*. In her interview with *Vogue* under the title "At Home with Kim Kardashian – The End of An Era," she explained her feelings and thought toward her life, her family's variety show - Keeping Up with The Kims, and her business. The interview is an activity where at least two people are included, the interviewer and interviewees, to gather information from the interviewee. Kim Noel Kardashian is a model, businesswoman, socialite, and American media personality who has a powerful status in the American entertainment industry.

As a woman, she often used women's language characteristics in her utterance. This interview was not formal, so it made Kim Kardashian more expressive when she answered the questions from the interviewer. As a result of this type of interview, Kim Kardashian showed a lot of women's language characteristics in her utterance in the whole video. The researcher takes Kim's interview with *Vogue* on its YouTube channel because *Vogue* is a media institution that shapes and represents fashion knowledge while immersing itself in the industry. *Vogue* defines fashion culture as being thought-provoking, relevant, and influential (Jones, 2019, p. 4). In addition, besides examining women's language

characteristics, the researcher also will examine the functions of women's language that are found in Kim Kardashian's utterances in her interview with *Vogue* using Holmes's theory which includes showing uncertainty, to emphasize, to get a response, to express feeling, and to soften the certain expression.

Many researchers have studied women's language, and some previous studies are relevant to this topic to support and being the reference for this research, such as; *Analysis of Gender-Based Language Feature of The Main Characters in The Movie Candy Jar* by Sinta Laksmi Paramita (2019) from Universitas Diponegoro. In her thesis, she chooses to analyze women's language characteristics in a film called Candy Jar. In this research, the researcher tried to find out the types of gender-based language used by the main characters and the factors that influenced them to use the language character in the movie. In this research, the researcher analyzed the utterance of both genders. Using Lakoff's theory, the researcher finds that women's language characteristics are not relevant again. The women character in this movie can show her power through language, and in men's utterances, there can be women's characteristics. The researcher also found that besides gender, other factors can influence people in producing their utterances, such as ethnicity, age, and social status.

The second previous research is an undergraduate thesis from Sinta Juliana Dwi Amalia (2019) from the State Islamic University of Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung with the title *Women's Language Features Used by Hillary Clinton in Formal and Informal Situation*. She also used Lakoff and Holmes's theory which is supported by Heylighen and Dewaele, to find and analyze women's language

features used by Hillary in different situations. She is using qualitative research to answer the research questions in her study. The result shows that six of ten features are used in a formal situation: empty adjectives, super polite forms, hedges, hypercorrect grammar, and emphatic stress. Meanwhile, there are seven characteristics in informal situations: empty adjectives, avoidance of swear words, rising intonations, hedges, intensifier, hypercorrect grammar, and emphatic stress. She also discovered that there are similarities and differences in both situations.

The third previous research that was used as a reference for this research is an undergraduate thesis by Ai Umi Istiqomah (2014) from the State Islamic University of Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung with the title *Women's Language Features in Writing Journal Used by Female Students in English Department of Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung*. She analyzed women's language theory by Lakoff with a qualitative approach and descriptive method to answer her research questions. This research discusses how female students use women's language features in writing journals and analyzes what characteristics are mainly used by a female student in a writing journal. In her research, she found seven types of women's language. Furthermore, the use of intensifiers tends to be the main feature of women's language features used by female students in writing journals with 43,11 % percentage.

From those previous researches, there are some differences with this research. Even though the previous research and this research used the same main theory, they all have different problems to discuss and different data sources. This research focuses on the women's language characteristics and the function of

women's language that appears in the utterance by using Lakoff and Holmes's theory. Meanwhile, the previous research that became the reference for this study discusses different things.

The first previous study discusses the type and factors that influenced the main character to produce their utterance. This research also compared the use of women's language between men and women. Next, the second previous research chose two different situations, formal and informal, to compare the use of women's language by Hilary Clinton and find the similarities and differences between the situation by using Lakoff and Holmes theory which was supported by Heylighen and Dewaele to find and analyze women's language features used by Hillary in different situations. Meanwhile, the last previous research that was used as a reference for this research discusses how the women's language used by the student in writing journals and the most used characteristic used by them.

Meanwhile, this research used an interview of a celebrity that can easily found on YouTube, and people worldwide can watch it on their phones. The researcher chose this topic since women have their language that has been embedded since a long time ago, and it can be an identity of women to differentiate them from men.

Nevertheless, even though in this era, women and men were at the same level, women still applied these characteristics in their utterances. Women still have the stereotype that they should speak in a standard form or speak like a lady. They are supposed to speak this way, not that way, not like how men speak. Additionally,

this language phenomenon is related to society, so it is interesting since the language in society is constantly changing.

1.2. Statement of Problems

Women's language has become an exciting issue in linguistic study because a language can be delivered differently based on the speaker's gender, even if it has the same purpose. Based on the limitation of the problem and also the background analysis described above, the research problem is formulated as follows:

1. What characteristics of women's languages are found in Kim Kardashian's interview with *Vogue*?
2. What are the functions of women's languages used in Kim Kardashian's interview with *Vogue*?

1.3. Research Objective

Based on the research problems, the researcher will analyze the characteristics and functions of women's language in Kim Kardashian's utterances in her interview with *Vogue*. The research objective deals with the question of analysis above are:

1. To find out the characteristics of women's language in Kim Kardashian's interview with *Vogue*.
2. To find out the functions of women's language in Kim Kardashian's interview with *Vogue*.

1.4. Research Significance

The significance of this research is divided into two types, which are theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically

The result of this study hopefully can enrich the reader's knowledge about sociolinguistics in women's language study. Thus, by applying the theory of women's language by Lakoff and Holmes about women's language characteristics and its function, this research can show that women have their language, which is different from how men use it. This research will give a piece of new knowledge about women's language that may not be familiar but unconsciously used in women's daily life.

2. Practically

This research on women's language in the sociolinguistic field is expected to give a new understanding for the readers that maybe not be familiar with this topic but unconsciously use and find this language characteristic in women's daily life. Besides that, the researcher hopes this research can help another researcher who researches the same topic to enrich the understanding of women's language. Furthermore, this research hopefully can enrich the reader's knowledge that women and men have different ways when they speak.

1.5. Definition of Key Term

This section will contain a brief explanation of some words that are the keywords and often mentioned in this research. This section will guide and help the

reader and researcher to focus on the topic. Below is a brief explanation of some key terms:

Sociolinguistics is a study of language that focuses on language use in society and how it is developed among people. The sociolinguist finds it interesting to see that people will speak differently in social contexts. Additionally, they identify the function of language in society and how it is used to convey social meaning (Holmes, 2013, p. 1). Sociolinguistics is also learned about the relationship between language and gender because, in a hierarchical community, men and women do not speak in precisely the same way as each other in society.

Language is the systematic and conventional use of sounds, signs, or written symbols for communication or self-expression (Hoff, 2013, p. 5). Language itself is essential in our daily life. We use it to communicate with others to share our thoughts, ideas, perceptions, emotions, and others.

Women's language is used by women due to their powerless status in society which men pre-empt. The powerlessness of women can be seen in how women are expected to speak and use language (Lakoff, 1973, p. 45). Women are expected to speak inappropriate ways, avoid strong expressions, express uncertainty, and other characteristics. This characteristic often appears in women's utterances and is only used by women, differentiating them from men.

Interview is an activity where an interviewer and interviewee get some information from the interviewee. The interviewer can ask questions about the interviewee's work, life, ideas, or anything related to the topic to publish or broadcast the information (Gubrium et al., 2012, p. 231).