

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Before come to research methodology, related literature of this study may give proper informations. They are about distinction about gender and sex, Sapir-Whorf hipothesis, sexism in language, media and language, political correctness and diachronic approach or historical linguistic.

#### A. Gender and Sex

Before further discussion about English as a sexist language, for the first we discuss about gender concept and its distinction with sex. Then continue to sexism issues in English language, they are symmetry and asymmetry, markedness theory and semantic derogation.

Sex is biological category which usually has shaped since before someone is born. While gender is social category, it shows specific pattern of attitudes. We can see that the difference between sex and gender is from the design of bicycle. Bicycle designed for women usually has wider bicycle seat because women generally have bigger rare than men. This is an example of sexual difference between men and women. But, when the framework of bicycle for women do not have crossbar in order to consider women that are using skirt to ride bicycle. This is a gender differentiation, because biologically, there is no reason of why women should wear skirt while men shouldn't.

Consider at gender conception, therefore sexist language is language which represents men and women in unequal position, i. e. one gender is considered to have lower value of humanity, more simple, less of social rights than the other gender.

Sexist language provides stereotypes toward men and women that sometimes put the both gender in damages yet oftentimes put women in damages. In addition, sexist language represents men and women to unequal proportions, which one of gender has lower values of humanity than the other. As an impact, in social environment, women are to be subversive gender of men. Generally, in this society (England and western culture), men are still having higher status in working areas, where men is still having bigger properties and salary than women.

#### **B. Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis**

Discussion about sociolinguistic phenomena is almost always linked to language and culture. Sexism in a language is one of sociolinguistic phenomena related to language and culture. Next, discussion about language and culture almost always concerns Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, like Kadarisman in his article *Hipotesis Sapir-Whorf dan Ungkap Verbal Keagamaan* which is inquiring the differences of Indonesian ritualistic verbal and American based on Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis; and Haoyun Dai, Xiaodong Xu with their article *Sexism in News: A Comparative Study on the Portray of Female and Male Politicians in The New York Times*.

In this case, language is one of universal aspects exists on any culture all over the world, therefore sociolinguistic phenomena is a part of cultural phenomena. From language and culture discussion, Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis has two versions. For the first is linguistic relativity and the second is linguistic determinism (they both are contrary)<sup>22</sup>. Linguistic relativity explains that certain culture has disparity to interpret or to percept reality in the world, and the disparity exist on language used in the certain culture. The term “relativity” refers to the idea that there is no proper way to give label or name to the world realities. People in certain culture give label or name to the world realities based on their perseption, and this perception is relative which is meant diferent perception among one culture to the another.

The example of language realtivity phenomena is different interpretation of the word “rice” in English and “*nasi*” in Bahasa Indonesia. Bahasa Indonesia has four words to give name to monocotyl plant with white seed, they are “*padi*”, “*gabah*”, “*beras*” and “*nasi*”. They are all actually different based on the process of manufacture. In Bahasa Indonesia perception of word “*padi*” is still on the plant form, then “*padi*” seed is separated from its stem to be “*gabah*”, then “*gabah*” is discovered from its skin to be “*beras*”, “*beras*” is cooked to be “*nasi*” – we know that “rice” in English means “*padi*”, “*gabah*”, “*beras*” and “*nasi*” in Bahasa Indonesia. Names of “*padi*”, “*gabah*”, “*beras*” and “*nasi*” in Bahasa Indonesia is

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<sup>22</sup> Ishtla Singh, *Language, Thought and Representation* in Linda Thomas & Shan Wareing (Eds.), *Language, Society and Power: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge. 1999. Page: 37

needed to differentiate, but English only needs one word to translate the four words of Bahasa Indonesia, it is "rice".

The writer assumption of the difference of word "padi", "gabah", "beras" dan "nasi" in Bahasa Indonesia which is only "rice" in English is Indonesian culture which is still standing on agriculture as food defence, while English has turned into industrial system since industrial revolution.

The second version of Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis is language determinism which says not only people in a certain culture perception of the world realities influences their language, but also language in a certain culture determine perception or the way of thinking of people in the certain culture. People in a certain culture could not percept the world realities beyond the terms used in their language.

Today, the claim is usually referred to as the Linguistic relativity hypothesis, Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, or the Whorfian hypothesis<sup>23</sup>. In this thesis, the writer consistently uses Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis because of under consideration that the both version of Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis that are linguistic relativity is used to inquire the cause of sexism in language from cultural prespective, while linguistic determinism is used to inquire sexist language effects to social life.

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<sup>23</sup> Ronald Wardaugh, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics (5<sup>th</sup> edition)*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2006. Page: 222



### C. Sexism In Language

One of sociolinguistic phenomena as mentioned above is sexism in a language. Sexism in a language appears because of the influence of sexist culture or we may say extreme patriarchy in social system. This social system like this is tended to put women in disadvantaged position in all that matters. For example, generally in this society (tend to England and western people in general), man is still having higher status on job occupation, where men are still having higher property and salary than women; some of politicians, directors, judge advocates, surgeons, headmasters, director of films are dominated by men<sup>24</sup>. Sexist language also contains asymmetry representation or put men and women in unbalanced position and provides gender stereotypes. Wareing says sexism in a language can be observed in two perspectives, first, how far grammar system support sexism? and how far that aspects beyond grammar system are used to create sexism?<sup>25</sup>

English is a real example for sexist language figure, because English contains asymmetry representation in its grammar and provides gender stereotypes. About English as a figure of sexist language, Jespersen quoted by Dai & Xu says English is the most sexist language he has ever known<sup>26</sup>. Besides, English exists in a culture which used to extreme patriarchy until feminist linguistic activism emerged in early 1970's.

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<sup>24</sup> Shan Wareing, *Language and Gender* in Linda Thomas & Shan Wareing (Eds.), *Language, Society and Power: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge. 1999. Page: 107

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. Page: 107

<sup>26</sup> Haoyun Dai & Xiaodong Xu, *Sexism in News: A Comparative Study on The Portray of Female and Male Politicians in The New York Times* In *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*. Nanjing: Scientific Research Publishing Inc. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2014.45061>. 2014. Page: 710

Grammar system of English can be said to support formation of sexist language with observe assirnetry aspect. Assimetry represents masculine and feminine form improportinately and most of them put woman as subversive. Assimetry can be see from the example as follows:

**a. Generic Bias**

The example of symmetry in English language is proved from word represents concept of "horse". Horse is a generic word to say male or female.

(1) Generic : horse

Female : mare

Male : stallion

Kid : foal

Female kid : filly

Male kid : colt

The term refers to human being is used the same system but asymmetry:

(2) Generic : man

Female : woman

Male : man

Kid : child

Female kid : girl

Male kid : boy

The example number (2) shows that there is ambiguity on term “man”. Writers and speakers often disguise the difference between man in generic which means everybody includes children and women. However, the word “man” in specific way refers to man (male) only.

In addition, title sticks to a surname or family name in English is asymmetry:

(3) Women : Miss/Mrs./Ms.

Men : Mr.

An adult man has a title sticks on their surname or family name, unless he has another title such as “dr.” or “Judge”. While a woman is faced on the three choices, it is Miss, Mrs. or Ms. Therefore, when she uses a certain title sticks on her surname or family name, it indicates more information to her than a man has a title “Mr.” sticks on his surname or family name. Because “Miss” indicates she has not married yet (or wants to be seemed as unmarried woman), “Mrs.” indicates she has married and “Ms.” is relatively new which is meant to reduce inequality in this such as greeting system (Because “Ms.” does not indicate whether the woman has married or has not).

The problem is when women chose “Ms.” to obscure marital status, some parts of people may judge that certain women have divorced and the other parts may judge that certain women are feminist. For the sake of conclusion, related to these title choices, women are faced on three choices that may be able to indicate marital status or politic affiliation. This situation is never experienced by men.

Title “Miss” and “Mrs.” are the legacy of the past where inequality among genders is prominent – consider the present time – in Europe and America. But from the beginning of twentieth century, a great change happened on the political and economic rights of women, vote rights to women and effective pregnancy control policy.

Beside asymetri, English grammar that supports sexism existence is based on markedness. Markedness Theory identifies linguistic elements as marked or unmarked. Unmarked elements are more basic, natural and frequently used than marked ones. Unmarked linguistic components are generally considered positive or neutral, while marked ones are frequently related to negative senses. According to Lyons, there are two types of marking: formal marking and distributional marking<sup>27</sup>.

#### **b. Formal Marking**

Formal Marking sets out from the perspective of external characteristics. Generally speaking, in a pair of gender-opposite nouns, masculine ones are unmarked whereas feminine ones are marked with the added affixes like -ess, -ette, -rix, which may denote insignificance and humbleness. In this way, feminine nouns are often treated as derivations of masculine nouns. A large number of feminine nouns are created by adding affixes to masculine nouns, which may put women at a subordinate and secondary position.

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<sup>27</sup>John Lyons. *Semantics*. London: Cambridge University Press.1977



**c. Distributive Marking**

While Distributive Marking refers to the different distribution ranges and the frequency of occurrence. Masculine nouns can not only be used to indicate men but also function as generic nouns, but feminine nouns have limitations in distribution. So the former is unmarked and the latter is marked. For example: chairman, businessman, salesman can be used to refer to men and women, but chairwomen, businesswoman, saleswomen can only be used to refer to women. In terms of pronouns, Spender described a phenomenon: "she represents a woman but he is mankind. If she enters mankind she loses herself to be "he"<sup>28</sup>. From his statement, it is assumed that masculine pronoun can be used to denote both genders and someone whose gender is unknown, but feminine pronoun can only refer to women.

In the other hand, aspects beyond grammar used to create sexism cause gender stereotypes and semantic derogation. Gender stereotypes is meant the patterns of the way men and women are talking, they are talking frequency, construction of talking change or interruption, back channel support, mitigated and aggravated form and spreading topic (see Wareing.

**d. Semantic Derogation**

While semantic derogation is a process which the words refer to women indicates negative sense or sexual connotation. Semantic means

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<sup>28</sup>Dale Spender & Paul. *Man Made Language*. London: Routledge. 1980

“meaning” and derogation means “making something worse.” Generally speaking, masculine nouns are neutral and generic, often associated with positive and affirmative meanings. However, feminine nouns are in a more specific and narrow sense, often containing negative meanings. For example, though both bachelor and spinster refer to single person, bachelor are often regarded as free-minded and happy but spinster gives people an impression of a peculiar old woman. Semantic derogation can also be found in semantic degradation or derogation that many neutral or even positive female terms were sexually derogated. Some marked feminine nouns denote not only specific occupations or positions but also marital status. Examples are ambassadress, countess, empress etc.

#### **D. Media and Language**

Media that may be used the most by people is mass media which including television, radio, newspaper or another printed media. The term “mass” refers to news/information delivered to huge amount of people or news/information which public consume the most. Therefore, language used in media is very potential to spread notion of correctness and attitude toward language use.

Mass media, to report news/information is vary. For example, “A shot B” is different with “B was shot”. This variation indicates that mass media is playing big role in language use and therefore construct people’s perception. But Thornborrow clarifies “we should not have in mind that media is in the

powerful side, while people are in the media's influence'<sup>29</sup>. The implication of what Thornborrow's quote is that people have choices to choose news/information based on people's desire, people may choose newspaper published by A beside B or even not to choose to read.

When mass media are using sexist language to report news/information to public, it is same as to give contribution in constructing sexist community, and this is dangerous. For the impact, when gender stereotypes is included in mass media and it is used frequently, at the end, sexist community will be actually formed.

In this thesis, media that will be a spotlight is *New York Times* newspaper. *New York Times* newspaper is a daily newspaper published in New York City, USA where the people speak English. This kind of mass media has big potential to spread notion of correctness and attitude toward language use with the second biggest circulation after *The Wall Street Journal*. Language used in *New York Times* is liberal, therefore has a big potential to change over times<sup>30</sup>.

#### **E. Political Correctness**

Changes happend in language, one of them is because of political correctness reason. At the core of political correctness is a reformist idea with the view and aim of changing and improving society, essentially by changing

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<sup>29</sup> Joanna Thornborrow, *Language and Gender* in Linda Thomas & Shan Wareing (Eds.), *Language, Society and Power: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge. 1999. Page: 81

<sup>30</sup> I. Westin. *Language Change in English Newspaper Editorials*. New York: Rodopi B.V. 2002.



the way things are named and framed<sup>31</sup>. These attempts are aimed mainly at establishing equality, equal representation and removing the possibility of insult in various areas and issues in which some believe a group is being discriminated against or viewed with a bias. Such sensitive issues include gender, race, national and ethnic identity, culture, religion, age, sexual preferences, disabilities and others. Political correctness, however, is not an ideology, statement of beliefs in the same way as, say, Marxism. It is instead an underlying attitude, one that is very difficult to pin down and which moves in mysterious ways<sup>32</sup>. Political correctness usually considers more about language. The way something are named and stigmatized toward language which is playing role to spread notion of correctness and attitude as mentioned above.

Linguistic case which have more consideration to be inquired is sexism. As mentioned above, sexism in language provides gender stereotypes. These stereotypes exist in language structure and culture. The impact is that sexism in language rises gender issue which represents one of gender – women at the most – in disadvantaged position. Political correctness in this case is manifested as an attempt to change language as reformist idea of this attitude in the hope of social balance and erase gender discrimination.

The linguistic change was caused by men role as language regulators. Pauwels mentions men's role as language regulators as their roles in the dictionary-making process; in the writing of normative grammars; in the

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<sup>31</sup> Tatiana Hořavová, *The Debate on Political Correctness with Special Focus on Education: Intentions, Consequences and Controversies*. Praha: Univerzita Karlova V Praze. 2013. Page: 7

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. Page: 7



establishment of language academies and other normative language institutions; and through their involvement in language planning activities<sup>33</sup>. As a matter of fact, there are something wrong with men as language regulators, the problem is, men as language regulators put women as subject of language regulation. Even though women take a part as language enforcer in language regulation.

It is Feminist Linguistic Activism who tried to reform language with asking norms which are determined in language, discovered language naturally has sexist biases, took over men's domination as "norm maker" in "language planning" and positioned themselves as "norm-breakers". Pauwels gives four stages in language planning done with sociolinguistic approach.

... The sociolinguistic approach emphasizes the fact that reforms are directed at achieving social change, especially of the kind that enables greater equality, equity, and access. Within this framework the language planning process is divided into four main stages. The fact-finding stage is concerned with documenting the problematic issues and concerns. The planning stage focuses on the viability of change as well as on developing proposals for change. In the implementation stage the methods and avenues for promoting and implementing the changes are assessed and the preferred proposals are implemented. In the evaluation/feedback stage language planners seek to assess to what extent the planning and implementation processes have been successful in terms of achieving the goal of the language planning exercise. This involves examining whether the changes are being adopted by the speech community and how they are being used.<sup>34</sup>

From Pauwels sentences above, there are four stages of language planning, they are fact-finding/documentation, planning, implementing and

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<sup>33</sup> Anne Pauwels, *Linguistic Sexism and Feminist Linguistic Activism* In Janet Holmes & Miriam Meyerhoff (Eds.) *The Handbook of Language and Gender*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2003. Page: 550

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. Page: 552

evaluation. From Pauwels's four stages of language planning, only fact-finding/documentation stage discussed in this thesis, it is trying to discover and documenting grammar system and asymmetrical discourses in represent men and women.

This thesis uses diachronic approach to analyze documents found in *New York Times* newspaper, because this thesis will describe the development of sexist discourse in different points of time. 1965's is chosen as a beginning point of sexist discourse occurrence before linguistic activism who affiliated with women movement – say Feminist Linguistic Activism – started on 1970's.

#### F. Historical Linguistics<sup>35</sup>

Historical linguistics deals with language change. Historical linguistics is sometimes called *diachronic* linguistics (from Greek *dia-* 'through' + *chronos* 'time' + *-ic*), since historical linguists are concerned with change in language or languages over time. This is contrasted with *synchronic* linguistics, which deals with a language at a single point in time; for example, linguists may attempt to write a grammar of present-day English as spoken in some particular speech community, and that would be a synchronic grammar. Similarly, a grammar written of Old English intended to represent a single point in time would also be a synchronic grammar. There are various ways to study language

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<sup>35</sup> Lyle Campbell. *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction*. USA: Edinburg University Press. 1998. Page 4-5.

*diachronically*. For example, historical linguists may study changes in the history of a single language, for instance the changes from Old English to Modern English, or between Old French and Modern French, to mention just two examples. Modern English is very different from Old English, as is Modern French from Old French. Often the study of the history of a single language is called *philology*, for example English philology, French philology, Hispanic philology and so on.

. Let's take *goodbye* as a second example. This everyday word has undergone several changes in its history. It began life in the late 1500s as *god be with you* (or *ye*), spelled variously as *god be wy ye*, *god b 'uy*, and so on. The first part changed to *good* either on analogy with such other greetings as *good day*, *good morning* and *good night*, or as a euphemistic deformation to avoid the blasphemy of saying *god* (taboo avoidance) - or due to a combination of the two. The various independent words in *god be with you* were amalgamated into one, *goodbye*, and ultimately even this was shortened (clipped) to *bye*.

#### **G. The New York Times**

*New York Times* is one of the oldest and most well-known American newspapers. It was founded as early as 1785. Westin, who has investigated the language of American newspaper editorials, *New York Times*, concludes that, out of the quality newspaper, the language used by *New*



*York Times* is the most liberal and less narrative<sup>36</sup>. In other words, *New York Times* has adopted a style that is known to be politically correct and precise. Therefore, the expectation comes to findings will be fairly subtle in nature. However, such a liberal style may denote that *New York Times* is less resistant to language change than more formal and conservative newspapers editorial.

Westin explains that although *New York Times* claims to be an independent newspaper, its political orientation is commonly considered to be right-wing<sup>37</sup>. The political orientation of a newspaper is important because it has an influence on readership profiles. The social and financial status of the average readership is reflected in language choices. The largest proportion of the readership of *New York Times* belongs to the upper middle-class and the second largest proportion to the middle-class<sup>38</sup>. This further reinforces our assumption that we will not find any explicit instances of sexist language.

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<sup>36</sup> I. Westin. *Language Change in English Newspaper Editorials*. New York: Rodopi B.V. 2002. Page: 160- 161

<sup>37</sup> I. Westin. *Language Change in English Newspaper Editorials*. New York: Rodopi B.V. 2002. Page: 7

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* Page: 9-10