

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEWS

2.1. Review of Related Theories

2.1.1. Language and Gender

Discussing about the differences between men and women have always been an interesting topic in society. It can be seen from some linguists and communication experts who believe that men and women can be seen as two separate cultures because of the way they talk. However, to answer why men and women's language are differentiated, we have to look to the differences between men and women such as biological and socio-cultural factors.

Montgomery stated that in the terms of biological (anatomical) factor men and women have different voice qualities. Men's voice is thought to be lower-pitched and more resonant to women's voice (Cameron, 1990). On the other hand, for the socio-cultural factor, Lakoff (1975) said that the differences between linguistic behaviors of women and men are because they rose in different subcultures. Basically boys and girls learn two different ways of speaking. They have the same linguistic behavior influenced by her mother but as they grow up boys tend to adopt new form of expressions from their same-sex peer groups while girls tend to retain their old way of speech (Cameron, 1990).

After looking at the differences between men and women through biological and socio-cultural factors, Coates differentiates in epistemological development which characterizes the feminine and the masculine orientation. The feminine orientations typically focusing on the relationship, on connection while the masculine orientation focusing on the self, on separateness (Mills, 1995).

2.1.2. Gossip

According to Tannen, the impression that women talk too freely and too much in private situations is summed up in a word gossip (2001). Gossip is connected to women's behavior shows the facts that talk is very important in women's friendship. The characteristics of women's friendships are the willingness to share important feelings, thoughts, experiences, and support. Then gossiping is the way women achieve the bond of friendship among them. For most women, getting together and telling about their feelings and what is happening in their lives is at the heart of friendship (Tannen, 2001)

Basically women can form a speech community. Jones said that in conversations, women tend to build personal identity. They want to express themselves strongly by talking about many things that deal with women. The tendency of being accepted in speech community, from childhood, women learn and try to affirm solidarity and maintain the social relationship especially between the women involved. Thus, women have a

close relationship with gossip. Women form a speech community with language skills and attitudes as well as those shared by the wider speech community. In conclusion, as a social group, women try to provide informal communication with other women (1990).

2.1.3. Gossip Functional Categories

Following Deborah Jones, based on its function, gossip is divided into four functional categories such as house-talk, scandal, bitching, and chatting (Cameron, 1990).

a. House-talk

House-talk is the exchange of information and resources connected with the female role as an occupation usually centers on concrete tasks, as in the changes of recipes, household hints, and dress patterns. In other words, house-talk consists of things related to women's activity as female. So, in terms of house-talk, women usually talk about themselves as women and talk about their physical appearance and activities.

b. Scandal

Scandal is one aspect of gossip which is usually marked by judging of behavior of others and women in particular. On this term, women criticize other women especially in appearance and attitude.

c. Bitching

Bitching is the overt expression of women's anger at their restricted role and inferior status. While scandal keeps women's dissatisfaction focused on each other and so does not threaten men but bitching is the kind of gossip that men feel uneasy about. As a form of gossip, bitching is a form in which women only want to make their complaints is a situation where their anger will be understood and expected.

d. Chatting

Chatting is the most intimate form of gossip, a mutual self-disclosure, a transaction where the skills that women have learned as part of their job of nurturing others are turned to their own advantage. In other words, women do chatting whenever they have intimate relationship with other women to talk about their feelings. This term only happens in situation where the participants really know her partner of speaking very well so that she can share all her private life. Talking about boyfriend is a sort of privacy talk that can be categorized as chatting.

2.1.4. Conversational Features

In analyzing conversational features in each gossip, the writer used Coates' theory. As already stated in her book entitled *Women, Men and Language*, there are several aspects of conversational features such as the following:

a. Minimal responses

Minimal responses or sometimes called 'back-channels'. Some words such as *yeah* or *right* or *mhm* can be identified as minimal responses. Minimal responses mostly used by women rather than men. They use minimal responses in order to indicate the listener's support for the current speaker.

b. Hedges

Hedges have multiple functions: they can express shades of doubt and confidence; they allow us to be sensitive to others' feelings; they help us in the search for the right words to express what we mean; they help us to avoid playing the expert. Hedges are linguistic forms such as *I think*, *I'm sure*, *you know*, *sort of*, and *perhaps* which express the speaker's certainty or uncertainty about the proposition under discussion. Hedges are also useful when sensitive topics are under discussion, then hedges become a valuable resource because they mitigate the force of what is said thus protect both speaker's and hearer's face.

c. Tag questions

Tag questions are divided into two types, formal tag question and informal tag question. Formal tag questions such as "Probably industrial too, *isn't it?*" as well as informal tag questions such as *right? Ok? Really?* Tag question is used when the speaker is starting a claim but lacks full confidence in the truth of that claim for instance: "Nick

is here, isn't he?" As Lakoff says, 'a tag question is midway between an outright statement and a yes-no question. It is less assertive than the former, but more confident than the latter.

d. Questions

Questions, like hedges, are multifunctional. The basic functions of question are to construct and sustain friendship. Both questions and tag questions function to draw speakers into conversation and to keep conversations going. Questions are useful for speakers who are trying to protect their own face and that addressee and also used to invite friend to tell stories. The forms of questions as well as for *you know*.

e. Commands and directives

According to Coates, a directive as a speech act which tries to get someone to do something. The boys tend to use explicit commands such as, *Michael: gimme the pliers (Poochie gives pliers to Michael)* than the girls by contrast typically used more 'mitigated' directives such as, *Terry: hey y'all let's use these first and then come back and get the rest cuz it's too many of 'em (2004)*.

f. Swearing and taboo language

Hudges defined swearword as the way someone uses obscene words orally to insult, to curse, or even to offend something (someone or action), and emphasizing when a person has strong emotion (1981). The folk linguistics belief that men swear more than women and use

more taboo words is widespread. Men tend to use stronger expletives (damn, shit) than women (oh dear, goodness).

g. Compliments

According to Holmes, compliments are remarkably formulaic speech act. Women preferred more personalized forms (compliments with first or second person focus) while men preferred impersonal (third person) forms for instance women tend to say *I like your hair that way* but in contrast men tend to say *nice haircut!*

2.2. Review of Related Studies

The writer was inspired by the thesis of Dewi Rosita, a student from English Department of Petra Christian University. She has done the thesis entitled A Sociolinguistics Study on Speech features of Female Students of Petra Christian University while Gossiping in Campus. She analyzed about the type of speech features used by female students of Petra Christian University while gossiping in campus and then analyzed the relationship between topics of gossip and the speech features used.

The study done by Rosita looks similar with the writer's study but there are lots of differences between these two studies. Rosita used Robin Lakoff's theory in analyzing the women speech features includes lexical hedges or filler, tag questions, rising intonation on declaratives, 'empty' adjective, precise color terms, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and empathetic stress meanwhile the writer

used Coates' theory. In this view, women's language is considered as weak and unassertive (Coates, 2004).

The result of her study show that the conversational features which are mostly used by Female Students of Petra Christian University while gossiping in campus were lexical hedges and intensifiers and those which do not appear in all conversations were 'hypercorrected' grammar, 'superpolite' forms, and precise colour terms. The topics of gossip which are mostly produced by the speakers were 'house-talk' (refers to daily activities) and 'chatting' (refers to private problems). Finally, she also found that the topics of gossip influenced the amounts of conversational features produced and also influenced the kind of conversational features that occur.