

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the study

Mass communication is becomes an important thing to help people getting in touch with others in society. It is a one-way process, with information and entertainment created and delivered by the mass media to individuals (Paxson, 2010). Thus, by using mass media, each individual can easily communicate with a large proportion of population, even in rural areas (McQuail, 2010). One of mass communication media is film. As an audio-visual media, film can be used as a tool of distributing information that properly conveys messages to the audience. Besides its role as mass communication media, film also has a role as audience entertainment. The story and scene, coupled with the music and the setting can make the audience feel entertained.

There are many types of films that have different themes in film industry. One of them is film about women. Filmmakers often take women's daily life as theme of film. They are commonly about fashion, friendship and romance. The main characters of the film itself are mostly women, for examples in *Sex and the City*, *The Women*, *The Devil Wears Prada*, and so forth. Then, as figures of the film, women are not only play as a house wife but also as a modern woman like in *The Devil Wears Prada*. Besides, they are also able to play in the action film like in *Charlie's Angels*. In those films, we can see that the various figures of women

in the film are the real examples of our interest to make women as the object of the film and they become major attraction in the entertainment world, especially in the film industry.

In relation to women, women's language often becomes an object of discussion in various studies and one of them is in sociolinguistics. In this study, many researchers are interested and curious to study about gender differences in language, especially the study about women language. According to Coates (2004) gender differences are one of the studies that are fascinating for people to be discussed, and thus, it is not surprising that there is curiosity about the way women and men talk and whether there are linguistic gender differences.

In human life, we always find language differences between women and men. Poynton (1989) gave some stereotypic portraits about the differences between them, women speak 'better' (more 'correctly' and with more 'refined' accents) than men; men usually use swear and slang word more than women; women and men talk about different things; men tell jokes and women cannot; women can smoothen over difficult social situations; and men find this more difficult.

Moreover, in women's conversations, they always show their enthusiasm and interest to express their opinion about the topics of the conversation. Gramely and Patzold (1995) state that women are thought to be more friendly, gentle, enthusiastic, smooth and calm. Women also seem to avoid certain subjects such as money, business and politics, but more concentrate on people (men, other women, themselves), clothing and decoration. For example, when they are involved in a

conversation and unconsciously see someone's accessory, they will use emphatic stress such as, "*Oh, my God, I LOVE your bracelets*". The speaker emphasizes in the word "*I love*" in order to emphasize that she is very interested in the bracelets. From the example above, stressing to the certain word to emphasize the meaning of the utterance is known as one of women's linguistic features.

Women's linguistic features are not only found in a real life, but also in the film. As stated by McLuhan (1994) that film as the extension of man, where film is literary means that the film stands for the human hand. In other words, what human can do can be done by the film because human is the creature of the film. So, women's linguistic features also can be found through the film.

One of the interesting films that present women's life is *Mean Girls*. It is one of the most popular teenage films in America in 2004. This film describes the relationship between Cady as the main character, and her friends in her new school. It is interesting to be analyzed because it exposes many sides of women's lives such as friendship, romance and fashion, especially in the girl's life. Besides that, the dialogues and the stories of this film are easy to be understood by many people. Hence, this study will be interesting to read and may help the readers understand more about women's linguistic features. From this film, the women's linguistic features are expected to be easy to find since the major actresses are female teenagers. Therefore, this film is able to present women's linguistic features in relation with the way of women speak in their society, especially for teenagers.

Women's linguistic features have been proposed by Robin Lakoff (1975). She is one of the sociolinguists who studied gender differences. She identified and classified the numbers of linguistic features that are more often used by women. They are lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonation on declaratives, 'empty' adjectives, precise colour terms, intensifiers such as *so* and *just*, 'Hypercorrect' grammar, 'Superpolite' forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress, (cited in Holmes, 1992). From those features, it is clear that women have linguistic features that are very noticeable in the language. In this study, the theory of ten women's linguistic features proposed by Lakoff is used to analyze the data. Then, from this film, we can learn the women's linguistic features as defined by Lakoff.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Based on the background of the study above, it is already stated that there are ten types of women linguistic features proposed by Lakoff (cited in Holmes, 1992). In relation to the background of the study, there are two problems to find out:

1. What kinds of women's linguistic features are used by the female teenage actresses in the dialogues of *Mean Girls* film?
2. Which types of women's linguistic features dominantly used by female teenage actresses in the dialogues of *Mean Girls* film?

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

Based on the statement above, the objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the types of women's linguistic features used by the female teenage actresses in the dialogues of *Mean Girls* film.
2. To find out the types of women's linguistic feature that is dominantly used by the female teenage actresses in the dialogues of *Mean Girls* film.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study is aimed to find out women's linguistic features used by female teenage actresses in *Mean Girls* film. Therefore, this study is expected to give information and enrich the knowledge of the students about women's linguistic features, especially they who take the linguistics major. Beside, from this study, they can know the use of women's linguistic features. In addition, they can also know about the use of women's linguistic features easily through film. Then, it is hoped that women's linguistic features are easy to understand through the film's dialogue. In addition, they can practically learn about the use of women's linguistic features through film. Furthermore, it is also hoped that this study can become a reference for linguistics students who are interested in doing further study and in conducting an analysis about language and gender, especially the study about women's linguistic features.

#### **1.5 Definition of key Terms**

1. Gender : a social construct (but one heavily grounded in sex) involving the whole gamut of genetic, psychological, social, and cultural differences between males and females (Wardaugh, 2002).

2. Women's linguistic features: a list of features which supposedly represents typical female discourse, as distinct from male talk (Lakoff, 1975)