

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. 1. Background of the study

The issues related to gender have been a particular interest in the current society. Since our world is surrounded by gender lore, we can assume that gender is so completely embedded in our life such as our institutions, our actions, our beliefs, and our desires that it seems to be completely natural (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). Furthermore, Gender is not something we are born with, and not something we *have*, but something we *do* (West and Zimmerman 1987) – something we *perform* (Butler 1990). Lorber (1994) argues that gender is so pervasive that in our society we assume it is bred into our genes. Most people find it is hard to believe that gender is constantly created and re-created out of human interaction, out of social life, and order of that social life.

Over the past few decades, some researches on gender arise massively due to the social differences that define men and women. The researchers are deeply rooted in how men and women are distinguished physically and psychologically. For example, according to Jenainati & Groves (2007) argue the role image of men exhibit “masculine” psychological traits such as aggressiveness, rationality, assertiveness, able to think logically, abstractly, and analytically, and physically stronger than women. In contrast, women will exhibit “feminine” traits such as gentleness, intuitiveness, sensitivity, emotional, compassionate, and nurturing

creatures. Those differences are translated into particular patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior specific to each gender.

In addition, the view of gender currently privileged in society at large. Members of any western industrial society are likely to be able to produce the following set of oppositions: men are strong, women are weak; men are brave, women are timid; men are aggressive, women are passive; men are sex-driven, women are relationship-driven; men are impassive, women are emotional; men are rational, women are irrational; men are direct, women are indirect; men are competitive, women are cooperative; men are practical, women are nurturing; men are rough, women are gentle (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003, p.35).

Language is the field in which gender is embedded as well, so that gender can also be observed through the language. The representation of men and women in language has been an interesting issue that a lot of linguistics researchers concern with. The researchers in this field focus themselves on four categories of gender in language; they are grammatical gender, social gender, referential gender, and lexical gender (Fuertes-Olivera, 2007, p. 220).

As mentioned earlier, there are four categories of gender; they are grammatical gender, social gender, referential gender, and lexical gender. However, since English does not have a grammatical and referential gender, the writer focuses the research on the nouns related to males and females through the nouns of possessiveness and the occupations.

One example of research related to lexical gender in written Business is conducted by Fuertes-Olivera. Fuertes-Olivera (2007, 219-234) investigates

lexical gender in specialized communication. He analyses written Business English lexis that uses the notion of lexical gender to gain a clearer picture of the changes gender neutral language (i.e. language that is fair for men and women alike) have made in business texts. He also shows in written Business English that high-level professions are related to men while low-level professions are related to women. An outline of the result of his study is presented in table 1.1.

Table 1.1 The Number of occurrences of professional titles in the WBE corpus

Reference	Professional title					
	COO	CEO	Managing Director	Dr.	Professor	Total
Reference to men	47	456	168	136	217	1024
Reference to women	8	26	10	11	57	112
Unspecified	16	159	18	20	14	227
Total	71	641	196	167	288	1363

(Fuertes-Olivera, 2007, p. 226)

Based on Table 1.1, Fuertes-Olivera finds that five high-level professions, such as COO, CEO, Managing Director, Dr., and Professor in Written Business English (WBE) mostly refer to men because the number of occurrences of those professional titles in the WBE corpus is higher for men than those for women. Conversely, there are a small number of occurrences of professional titles referring to women in WBE. Those five-high status professional titles in WBE mostly refer to men because business settings are dominated by males, particularly because management positions are filled by males, and there are many more trades and professions filled by males (Fuertes-Olivera, 2007, p. 230).

This study is different from Fuertes-Olivera who investigates lexical gender in specialized communication. In this study, the writer focuses on the nouns that are related to gender possessiveness and occupations in British

grammar book as general English. Kramarae & Treichler (1985) social gender is a category that refers “to the socially imposed dichotomy of masculine and feminine roles and character traits.” On the other hand, lexical gender refers to the existence of lexical units such as mother, son, etc. carrying the semantic property [female] or [male] ( cited in Hellinger & Bußmann, 2002, p.7).

Another research which is quite closely related to my study is conducted by Holmqvist & Gjörup. Holmqvist & Gjörup (2006) write a dissertation entitled “The Representation of Gender and Gender Roles in English Textbooks”. The researchers concern in analyzing six EFL textbooks used in secondary schools in Sweden. Two texts have been in use since the 1970s and the other four texts are published in 2004. They analyze how women and men are described and to what extent the textbooks show equality between the sexes. The result is astounding that the textbooks do not show equality between men and women. They find that the majority of occupations mentioned are held by men. Women are described either without an occupation or with a stereotypical one. Their study of occupations held by women or men in the texts, of the number of male and female authors and of the distribution of males and females in the illustrations, shows that there is a tendency in all of the textbooks to promote males and to diminish females (Holmqvist & Gjörup, 2006, p. 32).

From those two related studies, the writer is interested in conducting further research on the nouns related to males and females. To broaden the research, the writer also uses a corpus linguistics view to find out the noun collocates of men and women. According to McEnery and Wilson (2004), it is the

‘study of language based on examples of “real life” language use’ and ‘a methodology rather than an aspect of language requiring explanation or description. Moreover, according to Sinclair (2003) ‘a collocate is a general term for two/ more words occurring near each other in a text.’ The collocates that the writer analyzes in this thesis refer to the nouns of possessiveness that are usually associated with males and females.

The writer’s curiosity to know more about those two categories of gender had led the writer to explore the British Grammar book written by Raymond Murphy and published by Cambridge University Press in 2004. The writer’s reason to choose Murphy’s grammar book entitled *English Grammar in Use* is because, according to English Australia (EA) Journal, Raymond Murphy *English Grammar in Use* is the best grammar book. Furthermore, according to the publisher’s sales data, it is the world’s best-selling grammar book with over 15 million copies sold worldwide, and the main reason is that he is male author. Therefore, this study analyses how Murphy as male author represents males and females in his grammar book, for example, what nouns related to men’s and women’s possessiveness, and what occupations related to men and women in Murphy’s grammar book. Then, the writer analyzes whether those lexical items depict women in traditional gender roles or he depicts men and women in gender equity.

In order to analyze how Murphy represents males and females through males and females’ possessiveness and their occupations, the writer provides few examples related to what nouns that are associated with males and females

possessiveness, and what occupations associated with men and women in Murphy's grammar book. Those examples are given as follows:

- 1) "Gary was in a fight last night. He had his **nose** broken"

(Murphy, 2004, p. 92)

- 2) "Jill has just been to Sweden, where her **daughter** lives."

(Murphy, 2004, p. 190)

Examples 1 and 2 deal with gender possessiveness. According to the corpus, the word **nose**, in the first example, comes right after the possessive adjective *his*. In this case, the word **nose** is related to men's possessiveness, and it indicates the physical strength of a man because the context is fighting. Directly, it strengthens the assumption that men are physically strong than women. On the other hand, the word **daughter**, in the second example, comes right after the possessive adjective *her*. In this case, the author tries to depict women in their traditional roles as a mother and a wife to raise their children because women are described as nurturing creature (Jenainati & Groves, 2007). Moreover, it emphasizes women in their traditional roles as a mother and their domestic role for taking care of their children. Other examples that are related to males' and females' occupations are shown as follow:

- 3) "Kevin works in a hospital. He operates people. He is a **surgeon**."

(Murphy, 2004, p. 143)

- 4) "I couldn't hear the **teacher**. She spoke quietly and I was sitting at the back of the class." (Murphy, 2004, p. 249)

The examples 3 and 4 deal with social gender in which according to Hellinger & Bußmann (2002) since social gender is very active with English professional titles, many higher-status occupational terms such as *lawyer*, *surgeon*, or *scientist* will frequently be pronominalized by the male-specific pronoun *he* in contexts where referential gender is either not known or irrelevant. On the other hand, low-status occupational titles such as *secretary*, *nurse*, or *schoolteacher* will often be followed by anaphoric *she*. Example 4 supports Hellinger and Bußmann statements that low-status occupational as ‘teacher’ will be often followed by anaphoric *she* and is expected for female behavior, whereas, occupation as surgeon is more expected for male behavior.

### **1. 2. Statement of the problems**

Based on the background of the study, the writer formulated the statement of the problems by using corpus-driven approach as follow:

1. What are the nouns that are related to males and females’ possessiveness in Murphy’s grammar book?
2. What are the nouns that are related to males and females’ occupations in Murphy’s grammar book?
3. Based on the answers of the two questions above, does Murphy’s grammar book reflect gender equity?

### 1. 3. Objective of the study

Based on the statements of the problems, the objectives of the study are formulated as follows:

1. To determine the noun collocates related to males and females' belongings in Murphy's *English Grammar in Use*.
2. To determine the occupations held by men and women in Murphy's *English Grammar in Use*.
3. To determine gender equity in Murphy's *English Grammar in Use*.

### 1. 4. Significance of the study

This study is expected to have both theoretical and practical contributions to the studies of language. The theoretical contribution is to increase knowledge in Corpus Linguistics especially in analyzing the actual language used from British Corpus to explore the notion of gender representation.

In the practical aspect, this study will be useful for the grammar book authors in which after they know the conception of social gender, they will obtain some ideas in representing men and women in a grammar book. This study might also be useful for teachers who use Murphy's grammar book after they know about the actual language used then they can provide some example sentences to ensure gender equity.



### 1. 5. Definition of Key Terms

- Collocation** : The habitual meaningful co-occurrence of two or more words (a node word and its collocates) in close proximity to each other; as a lexical relationship; collocation can be defined quantitatively as the degree to which the probability of a word *y* occurring in text is increased by the presence of another word *x* (Halliday et al. 2004: 168).
- Gender** : Gender is the very process of creating a dichotomy by effacing similarity and elaborating on difference, and even where there are biological differences; these differences are exaggerated and extended in the service of constructing gender (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003, p. 13).
- Lexical Gender** : Lexical gender refers to the existence of lexical units such as mother, son, etc. carrying the semantic property [female] or [male] respectively, which may in turn relate to the extra-linguistic category of referential gender (or “sex of referent”) (Hellinger & Bußmann, 2002, pp. 7-8).
- Lexical Word** : One which has, or is seen as having, a lexical as opposed to a \*grammatical meaning: thus, in *this book*, *book* is a lexical word, *this* a grammatical word (Matthews, 2007)
- Noun** : Member of a large word class containing words that refers to people, things, ideas, etc. Nouns are often accompanied by a

determiner (e.g. a, the) and sometimes by an adjective (Jackson 2007: 44).