

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

People around the world use language to show their feelings and to communicate to other people. In communicating, some differences in the use of language can be noticed based on gender differences. Some researchers have stated that male and female have their own language to express their feeling when using language. This means that we can guess the gender of the speaker, a male or a female, just from their use of language. For example, based on Lakoff (1973) in the use of color-names, women preferred to use the word *mauve* to point a color of wall. There is no special impression if the women use the word *mauve*, but if the men should say *mauve*, one might well conclude he was either imitating a woman sarcastically, or a homosexual, or an interior decorator.

The actual data on the use of the word *mauve*, based on the gender, can be observed from a corpus. The corpus that identifies the gender of the users is the BNC (British National Corpus). The BNC is a 100 million words collection of samples of written and spoken language from a wide range of sources, designed to represent a wide cross-section of British English from the later part of the 20th century, both spoken and written (<http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/corpus/index.xml>). Based on the BNC, we can see that women use the word *mauve* 3.84 times per million words, while men use it only 2.9 times per million words. This corpus

information conforms to the opinion of Lakoff (1973) that women preferred to use the word *mauve* than men did.

Furthermore, Lakoff (1975) says that some words are only used by women and some others by men. For example the words *adorable*, *charming*, *sweet*, and *divine*, are assumed that only women who used them. The writer also checked that statement against the data in the BNC. The results are shown in the Table 1.1

Table 1.1. The data from the BNC

Female Words are Shown by Lakoff (2004)	Used by Female in the BNC	Used by Male in the BNC
Adorable	1.65	0.39
Charming	29.48	12.94
Sweet	79.17	41.44
Divine	14.12	27.4

Based on the data in Table 1.1, we can see that Lakoff's identification is appropriate for those three words, which are *adorable*, *charming*, and *sweet*. However, this is different for the word *divine*. For the word *adorable*, it is used 1.65 times by females, while males only used it 0.39 times per million words. The same results for the words *charming* and *sweet*, which are 29.48 against 12.94, and 79.17 against 41.44, for females and males, respectively. On the other hand, for the word *divine*, the frequency is higher for males (27.4), than for females (14.12). The difference is acceptable since there is a difference in the approach. Lakoff (1975) used personal observation, while the BNC is based on the corpus linguistics approach. According to Reppen and Simpson (2002, p.92), corpus linguistics is the means to explore actual patterns of language use based on large

collections of both spoken and written natural texts that are stored on computer. In this case, we can see that corpus linguistics approach can be used to check the actual use of a word.

The differences between the language used by males and females are not only limited to words, but also in phrases and sentences. The broader scale of differences can be seen in the book written by Gray (2012), *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*. In that book he described that men are Martians and women are Venusians. He stated that men and women differ in all areas in their lives. Not only do men and women communicate differently but they think, feel, perceive, react, respond, love, need, and appreciate differently. They almost seem to be from different planets, speaking different languages and needing different nourishment (Gray, 2012, p.13).

The analysis of the differences of the language of male and female can be done by focusing on the texts that they are produced. In writing English text, male and female have their own way to express their idea to other people. The differences can probably be seen in the use of words, phrases, and sentences, and even in the arrangement of ideas. Unlike conversation, writing is a more time-consuming process. It means that the writers can have more time to think about what they want to write. Moreover, in this study, the students wrote only a paragraph. A paragraph consists of only one main idea and obviously the ideas of each male and female are different.

The language to be analyzed is English. In this thesis, the writer focuses only on the use of words and the phrases in the students writing. In accordance

with Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams (2011, p.36), words are an important part of linguistic knowledge and constitute a component of our mental grammars. When you know a word, you know its sound (pronunciation) and its meaning because each word is a sound-meaning unit. They distinguish into content words which are nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs; and function words which are conjunctions, prepositions, articles, and pronouns.

On the other hand, according to Biber et al (2011, p.95) a phrase can consist of either one word or more than one word because actually words make up phrases, which behave like units. Here, they divided a type of phrase into some major types they are, noun phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase, adverb phrase and prepositional phrase.

There was research shown by Murachver and Janssen (2004), which compared the periods and the styles of New Zealand Literature that related to the gender differences. They investigated how gender influenced language used in fiction. Not only that, they also related to the genre and the period of the fiction. The research finally found that the gender was the greater effect of the authors' writer in writing the literatures. It also showed that the period has become the effect and suggest that early literature was more socio emotional (compliments, intensifiers, references to emotion), descriptive (adjectives), indirect (passive verbs), and displayed more linking between sentences (sentence-initial conjunctions) than the more interactive (first person pronouns, third person pronouns, questions), and direct, concise style of contemporary writing (short sentences, active verbs, elliptical sentences).

Another research shown by Soedjono (2012), which compared the language used of male and female peers in twitter communication. In her research, she investigated the typical words used by male and female in their tweets. The result showed that the most typical words in female tweets refer to fashion/shopping, for example *I, and, sepatu, my, lucu, order, to, iklanin,* and *kaos*, while in male tweets, male tend to discuss about sports, for example *via, friend, halamadrid, Madrid, barca, idol, gag, bu,* and *menang*.

Previous studies on language and gender focus only on the use of language by native speakers. However, in this thesis, the writer is interested in analyzing the paragraphs produced by second language learners, especially in a descriptive paragraph. This will determine whether the differences in the use of language based on gender can also be noticed among second language users. The corpus linguistics approach is used in order to obtain the actual use of the language.

## **1.2 Statements of the Problem**

Based on the background of the study, the writer formulates the statements of the problem as follows:

1. What are the similarities and the differences in the distribution of word classes used by the male and the female students in writing a descriptive paragraph?
2. What are the similarities and the differences in the diction used by the male and the female students in writing a descriptive paragraph?

3. **What are the similarities and the differences in the type of phrases used by the male and the female students in writing a descriptive paragraph?**
4. **What is the interpretation of the result of the similarities and the differences in the use of words and phrases produced by male and female students in writing a descriptive paragraph?**

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

Based on the statements of the problem, the writer formulates the objectives of the study as follows:

1. **To identify the similarities and the differences of the distribution of word classes that are used by the male and the female students in writing a descriptive paragraph.**
2. **To identify the similarities and the differences the diction used by the male and the female students in writing a descriptive paragraph.**
3. **To identify the similarities and the differences in the type of phrases that are used by the male and the female students in writing a descriptive paragraph.**
4. **To interpret the result of the similarities and the differences of words and phrases used by male and female students in writing a descriptive paragraph.**

#### **1.4 Significances of the Study**

By conducting this study, the writer hopes that this study will contribute to a better understanding on language and gender particularly in the written language of second language learners. This study is expected to inform linguists on the word classes, the dictions and the phrases that are commonly used by a particular gender. Other researchers may also use this study as a foundation to conduct further research at a larger scale. For teachers and lecturers, they will understand the characteristics of the words, word classes, phrases, and sentences which are produced by students of different gender.

#### **1.5 Definition and Key Terms**

**Word Classes** : Word is classified into two classes that are content word which consists of noun, verb, adjective, adverb; function word which consists of conjunction, articles, preposition, pronoun (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams, 2011, p.36).

**Types of Phrases** : The types of phrases divided into five major types that are noun phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase, adverb phrase and prepositional phrase (Biber et al, 2011, p.95).

**Descriptive paragraph** : A descriptive paragraph is a paragraph which creates a clear and vivid impression of the topic. It translates your experience of a person, place, or thing into words, often by appealing to the physical senses: sight, hearing, taste, touch (Anker, 1998, p.95).

# **CHAPTER II**

# **LITERATURE REVIEW**