

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

One day I heard Zahra, my niece, and Nur, my neighbor's son, sang a song. It is one of Joshua's songs "Lonjak-lonjak". My niece could sing the song fluently, while Nur sang the song interruptedly. After singing the whole song, Zahra taught Nur the song sentence by sentence. Sometimes Nur asked Zahra the meaning or the spelling of a word.

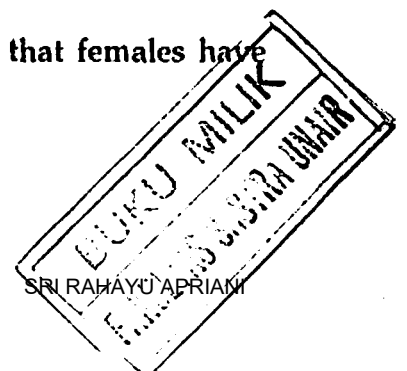
In another occasion, they watched TV together. Then there was a commercial break in which there were some advertisements, one of them was Pepsodent advertisement. The girl in that advertisement said, "Makanya pakai sikat gigi yang ada helmnya". They imitated the sentence. Nur asked Zahra what 'helm' in that sentence meant. Zahra took her toothbrush, which has a helmet on its head and showed it to Nur. Then she told Nur which part is called 'helm'. From these phenomena we can see that Zahra has more linguistic knowledge than Nur has, although Nur is one year older than Zahra.

As we know male and female are different, not only in their biological characteristics but also in their spatial abilities. Psychologically,

boys appear to be more aggressive, brave, sure of themselves and protective, while girls are generally timid, unsure of themselves, and dependent. Girls have superiority in language, whereas boys have superiority in all areas except language. According to David G. Myers, boys more often are slow to develop language. However, the average male's spatial abilities surpass those of the average female's (1989: 132). It may be because of the significant difference in male and female's brain. Women's corpus callosum is larger than men's. A study done by Bennett and Sally Shaywitz of Yale University showed that men performed their verbal task using only language areas in the left cerebral hemisphere. Women, in contrast, also used areas in the right cerebral hemisphere (Lahey, 1998:366).

The condition above is also caused by several environmental factors towards boys and girls. Parents, teachers, and people around them play an important role in their ability. Boys are usually motivated to learn mathematics by their parents and teachers. It caused boys to drop off their interest in language. Girls are considered to be more appropriate as secretaries, teachers, writers or linguists. This makes them drop off their interest in mathematics and science.

Females have better fluency and facilities in language than males. Researchers have proved through their researches that females have



better fluency and facilities in language. This is supported by large vocabularies and their sensitivity in grammar. We can see it in everyday conversation where females are more talkative than males. For most women, communication is a primary way to establish and maintain relationships. Men tend to view communication as a way of exerting control, preserving independence, and enhancing status. Consequently, men are more likely to use speech to exhibit their knowledge, skill or ability. Men often talk more easily in front of a group than with a spouse or a girlfriend. In public settings, men feel challenged to demonstrate intelligence and expertise. While for women, dinner conversation may form a crucial bond of intimacy that can make or break a relationship (Palladino and Davis, 1997:488).

The differences between male and female can be clearly seen among young children. It is because they are still in the critical period for language acquisition and therefore their language acquisition has not completed yet. They still have to develop their language. Usually a normal child acquires a language through informal exposure and feedback. That is why children's language is different from adult's language. In order to investigate the correlation between sex and children's mastery of vocabulary, a psycholinguistic approach is used.

I.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As it has been stated in the background of the study that the concern of this study is to investigate the correlation between sex and children's mastery of vocabulary. The main problem to be solved is:

Is there any correlation between sex and the mastery of vocabulary?

Hypotheses:

H₀: There is no correlation between sex and vocabulary mastery.

H₁: There is a correlation between sex and vocabulary mastery.

I.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to find out the possible correlation between sex and the mastery of vocabulary.

I.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is expected to give a meaningful contribution to the linguistic study especially to people who want to know more about children's language development. It is widely known that children's language has special characteristics that make it interesting to be discussed. This study can also help teachers to approach their students easily by using suitable

language upon consideration of children's language growth or development. Furthermore, this study is expected to help parents choose better words in building better communication with their children.

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Male and female are different not only in biological characteristics but also in their spatial ability. According to Ronald E. Smith and Irwing G. Sarason in their book *Psychology: The Frontiers of Behaviour* the biggest sex differences are found not in overall scores, but in patterns of scores for spatial abilities. Female of all ages tends to score higher than males of the same ages and education on verbal test and on test of reading comprehension. They also do better on tests that involve short-term memory speed. Male score higher in mathematical reasoning and on tests that involve visual spatial skills (1982:397).

A research done by Christine de-Lacoste Utamsing in Texas and Ralph I. Holloway in New York found a significant difference in the shapes of male and female corpus callosa, the bands of tissue connecting the hemisphere of the brain (Wittig and William, 1984:69). Men's brains are about 15% larger than women's brains on the average. Sandra Wittelson (1991) has found greater numbers of neuron in the auditory cortex and corpus callosum

of females than those of males (Lahey, 1998:365). This difference may lead differences in the communication between hemispheres. The left and the right hemispheres of men do not communicate as much as they do in women since women's corpus callosum is larger than men's. This proposal might explain why language abilities in woman are more likely to survive a stroke in the left hemisphere and that women may tap language capacity of the right hemisphere (Palladino and Davis, 1997:484).

The differences between male and female can also be influenced by environmental factors as what has been stated by Ronald E. Smith and Irwing G. Sarason that environmental factors are no doubt important. The strong effect of the different way that male and female are treated by their parents, teachers and others have been documented. This different socialization process by account for many of the differences found between males and females (1982:378). One's ability improves when there are interest and/or motivation which stimulate him. One becomes interested in something after he has been motivated continuously. A boy, his parents and his teachers interest and motivate him to learn mathematics well, but it is not given to the girls. Girls are more considered to be appropriate as secretaries, teachers, writers or linguists. That is why they grow to have different interest and ability (Smith and Sarason, 1982: 397).

The differences that occur seem to appear among children, then decrease or totally vanish during adolescence (Feingold, 1992b in Baron, 1995:450). It may be because at this time children are still in the critical period for language acquisition. Language is acquired informally and to native proficiency during that period, whereas it is learned, often with conscious effort, and to nonnative proficiency outside it. That period may start at 2 and end in the early teens. Perhaps different areas of language have different critical periods for nativelike acquisition: phoneme discrimination within one year, pronunciation of speech sound prosody up to age 6; basic syntax including grammatical morphemes, up to age 5; complex syntax up to the early teens; vocabulary learning, throughout life; and so on (Taylor and Taylor, 1990:249). Taylor and Taylor also added that a child must build a vocabulary, acquire the standard meaning of words and learn to use words as adults do to broaden the horizon of communication.

The concept of verbal ability covers a number of different abilities, including vocabulary and verbal analogies. On measures of verbal fluency, girls usually do better than boys. Girls learn a little earlier than boys to talk, to use sentences and to use greater variety of words. They also speak more clearly, read earlier, and do consistently better than boys in tests of spelling and grammar (Gage and Berliner, 1984:200). According to Arno F.

Wittig and Gurney William women usually out-perform men on almost all measures of language ability. They tend to be more fluent in speaking and writing, they have bigger vocabularies and they are more sensitive to grammar (1984: 278).

Vocabulary is all the words known to a particular person, or used in a particular kind of work, etc. (Lado, 1961: 181). Vocabulary is very important in our life let alone for the students of language. Tarigan says in his book "Pengajaran Kosakata" that the ultimate purpose of language teaching is that students have language skill including listening, speaking, reading and writing skill. It cannot be denied that language skill needs adequate vocabulary. Or we might say, one's vocabulary power determines the quality of his/her language skill.

1.6 METHOD OF THE STUDY

There is no single way of studying children language (Crystal, 1989: 229). In this study the writer uses experimental method and in order to get the more precise result about the correlation between sex and children mastery of vocabulary, the data is analyzed by using quantitative analytic method or statistical computation.



I.6.1 Population and Sample

The population of this study is the students of SD Negeri Bunulrejo I and II Malang. The writer chooses SD Negeri Bunulrejo I and II Malang as the population since the schools are near from the writer's residence and the writer has known most of the teachers and the students. As the sample the writer chooses fourth year students of SD Negeri Bunulrejo I and II Malang by using cluster sampling method and upon consideration that they are still in the critical period for language acquisition. Therefore, the differences between male and female can be seen clearer among children. The characteristics of the respondents are:

1. Fourth year student of SD Negeri Bunulrejo I and II Malang.
2. Age between 9 up to 11 years.
3. Physically and mentally healthy.

I.6.2 Definition of key terms

Correlation : the study of the degree of relation between variables.

Coefficient of correlation: a single number that tells us to what extent two variables are related which can vary from a

value of + 1.00 up to - 1.00.

Sex : the distinction between male and female based on biological characteristics or the identity of human beings in the world.

Female : woman or the sex that can give birth to children.

Male : man or the sex that does not give birth to offspring.

Vocabulary : total number of words that make up a language or list of words with their meaning.

Vocabulary mastery : complete knowledge or great skill on vocabulary.

Vocabulary test : a test which is held to measure respondents achievement on vocabulary.

Elementary school : the stage of education between kindergarten and high school.

Elementary school students : children who are studying in elementary school, usually between 6 or 7 to about 12 years of age.

I.6.3 Techniques of data collection

It is impossible to gain linguistic corpus by using a single technique only (Samarin, 1988:118). There are two techniques applied by the writer in this study: Observation and interview approaches.

In obtaining the data the writer uses some steps:

1. Getting respondents by choosing the elementary schools that will be taken as population of the study.
2. Asking recommendations from The Department of Education and Culture Kodya Malang and from The Department of Education and Culture Kecamatan Blimbing Kodya Malang.
3. Selecting the vocabulary model test from many books on Bahasa Indonesia used in most elementary schools in Malang such as *Aku Cinta Bahasa Indonesia* jilid 3A, 3B, and 4A by Surana S.Pd.
4. Giving a small test to the respondents. The respondents are given a test on their vocabulary ability. There are thirty multiple-choice questions to which respondents have to answer in forty minutes. The questions are about synonym and antonym of nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Then the

writer asked them to make a composition consisting of 3 to 4 paragraphs.

5. Conducting an unstructured, open-ended interview and taking an interview notes.
6. Correcting the result of the test. From 70 respondents the writer only chose 60 respondents that fulfilled the requirements to be taken as sample.

I.6.4 Techniques of data analysis

The writer analyses the collected data by using a descriptive quantitative method. It explains the collected data using a statistical calculation to test the data in order to prove the hypotheses. The procedures are as follows:

1. Describing the findings found in the administration of the test. The description is about the test and the students' condition.
2. Classifying the collected data into two categories:
 - a. scores of vocabulary test of male students.
 - b. scores of vocabulary test of female students.

3. **Making tables that summarize the descriptive data and histograms to support tables.**
4. **Using statistical analysis to know the relationship between sex and male and female students' vocabulary mastery.**

CHAPTER II

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECT OF THE STUDY