# CHAPTER II

# GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF

# THE OBJECT OF THE STUDY

## II. 1    Sexist Language

A fundamental characteristic of sexism is the belief that women are inferior to men. Even when a man and a woman have the same personality or equally competent in performing the same task, *she* is still to be considered inferior to *him*. Sexism has a negative impact on women, making them feel as if they were inferior to men. It causes many women afraid of pursuing successful careers, particularly "masculine" careers such as doctor, lawyer, etc.

Sexism can also influence the interaction between the sexes. Some nonverbal studies done in United States have revealed that men often unconsciously exhibit their superiority to women. When talking to a man, women typically give such low status signals as smiling, nodding, holding their arms to their bodies, or keeping their legs together, while men do in the contrary.

When sexism creates discrimination against women, it obviously creates gender inequality in occupation that lead into sexist language. According to Goshgarian, *sexist language* is any language that expresses such stereotyped attitudes and expectations, or that assumes the inherent superiority of one sex over the other.

Male and female are not sexist words, they can be applied objectively to individual people, animals and sometimes to things, whereas masculine and feminine are sexist since it is almost impossible to use them without involving cultural stereotypes. Most sex-differentiated customs have nothing to do with real differences. They have much to do with what society *wants* you to feel about yourself as a male or female person. Society decrees that it is appropriate for girls to dress differently from boys, to act differently, and to think differently. Boy must be masculine, whatever that means, girls must be feminine.

Sexist language relating to occupation does exist in our society--whether we are aware or not. There are some words that are *exclusive*, always related to a certain kind of gender. The exclusive language is usually inaccurate and unrealistic. David Graddol and Joan Swann state :

*"The notion of "sexist language" : that a language affects its speakers' perception of the world (and so sexist language actually promotes a sexist society as part of the natural order of things)".* (Graddol and Swann, 1989 : 134)

Sexist language has affected the society about the "real world". They have their own perception, not based on the reality but on the roles expected in the community. Man is strong; he is appropriate to be a leader. Thus it affects the language directly, for example in addressing the director of a certain company,

*" Bisakah saya bertemu dengan Bapak direktur perusahaan ini ?"*

*( "Could I meet the director of this company ?")*

The speaker has no idea whether the director is male or female. He or she just takes it for granted because a director is usually a man.

Other phenomenon relating to sexist language in Bahasa Indonesia is the use of /i/ to identify that the person being referred is female, for example :*karyawati, pramugari, pemudi..* It is similar to English in using

suffix "ness" (e.g, governess, mistress). As DR. Wuri (1996) said, the usage is illogical since /i/ seems small and unsignificant. Even though this kind of phenomenon is not analyzed in this paper, we should be aware about this. Women should not be treated as the inferior; it would hurt women's heart. They have been struggling to place themselves as equal as men do. Thus there would be no reason to differentiate men and women, particularly in universal thing as language.

## II. 2  *Gender Division*

Gender in our society represents an important division. Male and female are not just biological facts. They include social consequences. Language speakers learn to see their social and physical environment. They come to define the expected social roles of men and women. Women and men are treated in different ways, they are accustomed to have different experience, at school, at home, at work. Men should not cry, men do sports, men do such 'rough' things. On the other hand, women do something that is more 'polite'. Girls play dolls since they are expected to raise children in the future. Girls should be good in cooking since they have to cook for their families. Thus men and women have different life experiences to an extent that can not be satisfactorily explained by simple biological differences between sexes. These differences between women and men become such

natural and obvious parts of our life. We are sometimes unaware that the way we treat someone whether men or women cause a borderline between them, especially in the matter of profession. Men are expected to be the leaders. They are fit to be directors, engineers, doctors, surgeons while women are fit for being nurses, secretaries, baby sitters, maids. This is why it can be said that social background can influence someone's mind. If a *thief* is usually a man, the society says that all thieves are men. If someone said :

*"A thief broke my window last night "*

The first thing comes to the hearers mind is there is *a man* with mask broke the window to steal something. *A woman* never crosses their unless the speaker explained the sentence further.

*" A thief broke my window last night, she was very brave ".*

The hearers might be surprised hearing that since it was a female thief. This phenomenon also occurs in our language, *Bahasa Indonesia.* The word *thief* or *pencuri* is usually related to a certain kind of gender, that is male. It is rather difficult for the society to imagine a female thief until they meet the fact.

## II. 3  *Surabaya Society*

Migration from lower economical area to higher economical area becomes very popular in recent years. Surabaya is considered as "the land of

dream" that can promise better life for those, doing the migration. They come to Surabaya without enough education that is very important to gain their dreams. Thus Surabaya is inhabited by people with various degrees of education.

These following tables show the exact number of Surabaya population, based on their education and occupation.

*Table 1*      *: Degree of education*

*Male + Female*

| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10-14 | 2,692 | 174,387 | 87,953 | 1,582 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 266,614 |
| 15-19 | 3,389 | 15,231 | 128,104 | 124,046 | 6,355 | 18,821 | 4,140 | 0 | 300,086 |
| 20-24 | 3,634 | 9,832 | 50,655 | 48,350 | 3,458 | 34,489 | 50,367 | 10,558 | 311,343 |
| 25-29 | 6,791 | 21,336 | 51,161 | 33,004 | 3,610 | 81,215 | 32,541 | 28,024 | 257,682 |
| 30-34 | 9,131 | 24,630 | 56,923 | 32,462 | 573 | 50,741 | 24,034 | 18,600 | 217,094 |
| 35-39 | 11,241 | 15,745 | 49,113 | 29,387 | 5,497 | 30,991 | 23,207 | 17,385 | 182,566 |
| 40-44 | 11,469 | 16,093 | 32,377 | 22,422 | 4,089 | 32,832 | 13,201 | 17,410 | 149,893 |
| 45-49 | 10,315 | 12,681 | 29,309 | 17,741 | 3,586 | 17,663 | 8,544 | 8,330 | 108,169 |
| 50-54 | 19,340 | 19,361 | 26,851 | 22,223 | 3,340 | 12,978 | 5,148 | 7,358 | 116,599 |
| 55-59 | 14,936 | 14,071 | 24,287 | 6,784 | 1,168 | 4,526 | 4,819 | 1,689 | 72,280 |
| 60-64 | 19,513 | 14,373 | 17,953 | 7,859 | 1,087 | 7,409 | 3,872 | 600 | 72,666 |
| 65+ | 29,965 | 17,776 | 17,168 | 7,724 | 799 | 4,417 | 1,339 | 0 | 79,188 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 142,416 | 355,516 | 571,854 | 353,584 | 33,562 | 96,082 | 71,212 | 9,954 | 2,134,180 |

*Source : Biro Pusat Statistik Surabaya*

(1)      : Age

(2)      : Uneducated

(3)      : Have not graduated from elementary school

(4)      : Elementary school

(5)     : Junior High School

(6)     : Junior High School

(7)     : Senior High School

(8)     : Senior High School

(9)     : Academy/Diploma/University

(10)   : Total

The table shows that Surabaya is a very big city, inhabited by thousands people with various degrees of education. It is the appropriate place to do the research about the relation between language, in this case Sexist Language and education.

*Table 2        : Occupation*

*Male + Female*

| Occupation | Total Male | Total Female |
|---|---|---|
| 0/1 | 36,984 | 29,856 |
| 2 | 9,492 | 3,766 |
| 3 | 96,709 | 55,872 |
| 4 | 133,529 | 138,127 |
| 5 | 38,222 | 104,512 |
| 6 | 8,203 | 1,217 |
| 7/8/9/X | 237,097 | 96,886 |
| Total | 567,097 | 430,236 |

*Source    : Biro Pusat Statistik Surabaya*

0/1    :       : professionals, technicians, and the like

2              : leadership and implementation professions

3          : clerical professions and the like

4          : sales

5          : service

6          : agriculture and forestry

7/8/9/X     : production, operator and the like

The table shows that between male and female have similar occupation. Some of them are dominated by male and the rest are dominated by female. Yet, it does not say that a certain occupation belongs to a certain gender, both male and female can perform the same task. The reality is tried to be tested by the study, concerning about gender domination of a certain occupation.

## II. 4   *The Role of Education*

Education holds a big role in human beings' lives, since its purpose in general is to develop human resources. According to Skilbeck, there are 3 educational traditions. They are :

a. *Classical Humanism*. In this tradition the main purpose of education is to transmit valued knowledge to the next generation and to develop their general intellectual abilities.

b. *Reconstructionism*. In this tradition the main purpose of education is to bring about desired social change. In order to achieve this, the focus is

providing every individual with knowledge and skill that are useful for social life.

c. *Progressivism.* The main purpose is to enable each individual to develop towards self-fulfilment.

Concerning the study, the writer captures the relation between someone's perception and his/her knowledge. The knowledge is mainly gotten from education. The one who only gets lower education is more influenced by his/her social background. All he/she knows are what he/she has been taught by his/her parents or society. It is rooted in his/her mind. Education is one thing that would be able to lead them into reality. In accordance with *Reconstructionism,* education would be able to open the language users' mind about desired social change, thus another possibility of perception may appear.

Education increases social grades. The development of the grades brings changes of language. The language is not only the old language that is influenced by social background. We should not avoid the development. That is one of the roles of education, to develop language throughout its users then fix the inappropriate things within it.

# CHAPTER III

# PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA