

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Language, Ideology and Point of View

The phenomenon of the emergence of sexist language can bring us into two important assumptions which underlie the notion of the term. Firstly, a language affects its speakers' perceptions of the world and so sexist language actually promotes a sexist society as part of the 'natural order' of things. Secondly, linguistic reform which might lead to a more just society is both necessary and possible. Followings are matters that help to comprehend the study thoroughly.

2.1.1 The Concept of Patriarchy

The fact that society has been patriarchal for the last 5,000 years, however, might help a lot to understand about the existence of sexist language. Sexist language is not just simply a linguistic problem but it can also be traced back to the history of its society in which the language firstly invented. According to dominance approach that concerns on the way sexism emerges in language, the general dominance of men over women will be reflected in their language patterns. The dominance of men over women is usually practiced in patriarchal communities in which men are taken as norm, as indicated in the quotation below:

A patriarchal society is based on the belief that male is superior sex and many of the social institutions and much social practices is then organized to reflect this belief; in one sense a patriarchal society is organized so that the belief in male supremacy 'comes true'. If, in a variety of ways, a community can come to accept that male are superior, that they are more worthy and more deserving... then the whole community find it sensible to provide the superior, more worthy, more deserving sex with more resources, so that males do indeed have a greater chance of appearing superior. And so the system is perpetuated. (Hodge and Kress, 1991: 83)

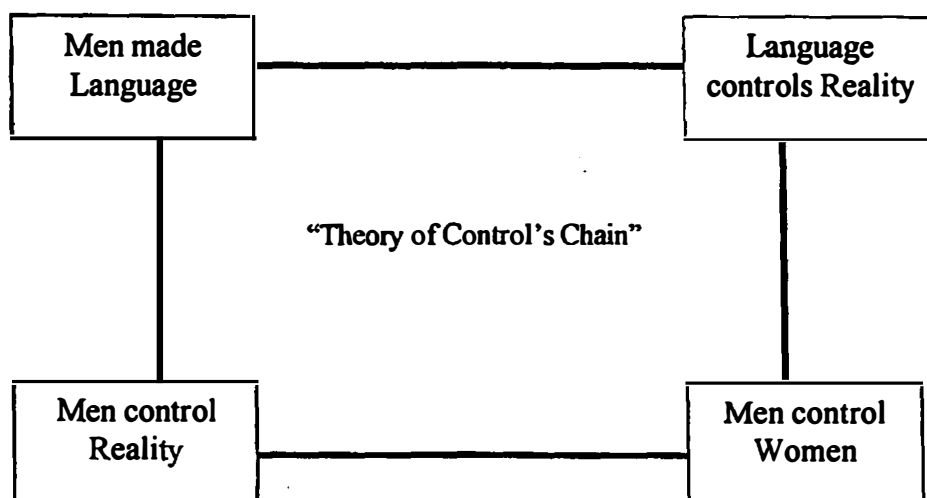
We all know that the concept of patriarchy can't be separated from the notion of endocentrism. These two terms have almost similar contribution to the major concern of sexist bias matter. According to Coates (cited in Simpson, 1993:161) endocentrism describes a male-centered world-view wherein male activities are evaluated positively while female activities negatively. The principle extends even to explanations of language itself, so that usages that are attributed to men are regarded more favorably than those attributed to women. So this means that both concepts encourage the society to have certain kinds of portraits of linguistic behavior towards men and women. Usually, men are viewed as whatever is considered positive and admirable while women are portrayed as negative and blameworthy.

Similarly, Dale Spender proposes the discussion of language and social values as the notion of a dominant social group (male, white, middle class etc.) that is somehow able to interfere its meanings on other language users. With respect to sexism Spender writes:

Males, as the dominant group, have produced language, thought and reality. Historically, it has been the structures, the categories and the meanings which have been invented by males—though not of course by *all* males—and they have been validated by reference to other males. In this process women have played little or no part. It has been male subjectivity which has been the source of those meanings, including the meaning that their own subjectivity is objectivity (cited in Graddol and Swann, 1989: 132)

Spender (cited in Simpson, 1993: 162) also proposes what is so called theory of control. This theory is formulated from the facts that underlie behind the concept of patriarchy that somehow affects type of linguistic domination. Spender makes a direct connection between this type of linguistic domination and the existence of the patriarchal order. The chain of reasoning involved in her argument might be set out as follows:

Diagram 1: The Chain of Control Theory



From the diagram above, it is understandable that by a straightforward act of linguistic appropriation, men have constructed a supremacist social position—a position that oppresses and excludes women. Men, she argues, have literally ‘made’ the English language and have never relinquished control of it. Through their control of language, men are able to exercise their control over women continually.

Let us just take a look at one example that best illustrates how generic ‘man’ or ‘his’ cannot play their role in representing both sexes. This example is taken from an advertisement of a certain airlines abroad called *Lufthansa*. There is a statement: ‘What does today’s *business traveler* expect of *his* airline?’ Firstly, people would read *his* as having generic reference, as it is preceded by a generic noun *business traveler*. Meanwhile, the picture that accompanies this advertisement makes it clear that the reference is only to males, since it shows a plane full of male business travelers relaxing on board of an airplane and the only female on board being the flight attendant who is serving them drinks. It is obvious that the so-called generic nouns and pronouns can not be trusted as truly generic in practice because they often turn out to be referring actually to males only (Montgomery, 1992: 65)

Accordingly, the criticisms have been directed almost exclusively at the linguistic biases that constitute a male-oriented view of the world and promoting unfair sexual discrimination and it is believed leading to a bad reputation of the role of women in society. English has received more discussion than any other language, mainly because of the impact of early American feminism.

2.1.2 'Gender' versus 'Sex'

Here, it is essential to explain about the concept of sex and gender. The term 'sex' must be clearly differentiated from 'gender' since people sometimes misinterpret both terms. Sex is the characterization division of two sexes of human beings determined biologically, which attach to certain kind of sex (for instance certain biological characteristics). Whereas the concept of 'gender' can be best described as characteristics attached to both men and women constructed socially and culturally. Gender emphasizes more on social, cultural, psychological and other non-biological aspects. Therefore, study on gender gives emphasis more to aspects of one's masculinity and femininity in certain culture. Thus, gender difference (also in language) is formed, socialized, strengthened, even legitimized socially and culturally (Fakih, 1996: 8). From the long process, the difference is assumed as fate or destiny that gives consequence of inequality of sex treatment in language. In this case, women are unequally treated, supposed as secondary position or men subordination that the domination of men over women in language comes to the forth.

The word *gender* can also give rise to misunderstanding, particularly when used in connection with language. Gender is used as a technical linguistic terms relating to the grammatical categories of words in certain language (Graddol and Swann, 1989: 7). Still related to language, gender is grammatically sex, because many languages have sex markers. In English, there are *he* and *she*; in German, there are *die* and *der*; whereas in French there are *le* and *la*. From gender system

in those languages, then appears sex interpretation in culture for instance the word *ship* is usually personified as *she* and so on.

Therefore *male* and *female* are not sexist words, but *masculine* and *feminine* almost always are. *Male* and *female* can be applied objectively to individual people and animals and, by extension, to things. *Masculine* and *feminine*, however, are as sexist as any words can be, since it is almost impossible to use both terms without invoking cultural stereotypes.

2.1.3 Sexism in Language

The relationship between language and gender has attracted considerable attention in recent years, largely as a consequence of public concern over male and female equality. Gender differences legalized and strengthened in society brings the consequence of inequality of sex manner of treatment in language. In the United States during the late 1960s and early 1970s, women began to examine carefully about gender discrimination in consciousness-raising groups, in feminist cells, in mass meeting and media events. This action gained particular attention especially feminists and later linguists who concerned about sexism whereas in fact, sexism often operates along the areas of what has conventionally been analyzed as linguistic meaning.

Every language reflects the prejudices of the society in which it evolved. Since English, through most of its history, evolved in a white, Anglo-Saxon, patriarchal society, no one should be surprised that its vocabulary and grammar frequently reflects attitudes that exclude women. Since the society—as stated

previously– has been patriarchal for the last 5,000 years, the general dominance of men over women will be obviously reflected in their language patterns. Users of language encode sexism into language either consciously or unconsciously. In this way, linguistic practices will tend to reinforce and naturalize sexist division in society. It has been public opinion that Western society is organized in terms of a patriarchal order. For that reason, it is agreed that men simply have power over women. The statement is supported by the following sentences which said that patriarchy is endemic to all types of social interaction and organization, and as language is crucial to the way society is organized, it is not surprising that language has been identified as a site of struggle by many feminist linguists (Simpson, 1993: 161).

Initially, we need to understand the definition of sexist language itself. Sexist language is any language that expresses such stereotyped attitudes and expectations, or that assumes the inherent superiority of one sex over the other (Miller and Swift cited in Goshgarian, 1992: 220). Others describe that sexist language is language that expresses bias in favor of one sex and thus discriminates against the other (Montgomery, 1992: 65). According to those two definitions, it is assumed that sexist language might be directed to both kind of sexes but in fact, women would be more likely to notice sexist language when it occurs than men would, reasonably because it is usually directed toward women. In general the bias is in the favor of men and against women. Somehow, any language that discriminates against women by not adequately reflecting their role, status and presence in society is considered sexist. Sexist language – in this case English

language – has been commonly used for centuries. This has been the feminists' concern to make some significant changes to get rid our speech of gender-biased words and to make daily speech more politically equal. In recent times, some linguists have pointed out that the English language is inherently sexist because it carries certain assumptions about gender roles.

Once again, our awareness to use non-sexist language is not for censoring and limiting language but rather for expanding language so as to include all people on equal basis regardless of sex.

2.2 Researches on Similar Topic

Some scholars have conducted several researches dealing with the similar topic that is sexism within language. Apparently, sexism happens almost in all languages. A linguistic scholar named M. Rudolf Nababan from the English Department of University of Sebelas Maret Surakarta conducted such research. The result of his library research was published in *Journal of Bahasa, Sastra dan Studi Amerika* Vol.3/No.4/ September 1999. He explored about language and sexism by arranging data from various sources of literature survey that falls into several categories such as definition of sexism, forms of sexism and related approaches in defining the emergence of the sexism.

A linguistic scholar of Muhamadiyah University of Surakarta–Tri Rina Budiwati– conducted another similar research concerning gender-biased terms in Indonesian. The research was published in the *Journal of Humanity* Vol. 1/ No.2/ July–December 2000. Indonesian gender-biased terms manifest in nouns,

adjectives, verbs and compound words. Those terms can be classified into the use of generic reference, stigmatization of women's role, assumption that women have secondary role, the dominance of men to women and the honor to women.

Kidd conducted another similar research in 1971. The research was about the use of generic pronouns of *he* and *man* that is genuinely inclusive to both sexes. This study then had revealed that readers often do not read sentences containing generic pronouns as having general reference, but in fact read them as referring strictly to males. Kidd had demonstrated that when students were asked to visualize the reference of a generic pronoun, they almost invariably drew a male reference, even when the intended reference seemed at first sight to be general. This seems so surprising since the term *man* and *he* was once used as true generic but now the use of the terms has undergone some changing. The function of the terms becomes narrower and people begin to refer solely to male humans (cited in Montgomery, 1992: 65)

A research conducted by Wendy Martina in 1983 indicated that readers perceived the term *man* and *mankind* as terms referring to males only. Similarly, the English generic pronoun *he* is also frequently used strictly to males. This has been proven in another similar study presented by Graham in 1975 who found out that "of 940 uses of *he*, 97% referred to male human beings, male animals, or male-linked occupation; only 3% referred to sex-unspecified persons" (cited in Nababan, 1999: 20).

These researches have encouraged the writer to do the similar study about sexism and language in English taken from the phenomenon of sexist language used in various contexts of language use.

2.3 Guidelines of Non-sexist Language

2.3.1 The McGraw –Hill College Workbook

In *The McGraw –Hill College Workbook*, Bean (1988:185) stated briefly and effectively about some hints that can be used to avoid sexist language. It is said that many contemporary writers appreciate how the language we have inherited subtly reflects a male-dominated society. Although people cannot change a language over night, they can become aware of sexual biases in our language and try, whenever possible, to phrase sentences so as to avoid them. Here are the guidelines of non-sexist language proposed by John C. Bean:

- Avoid language that implies sexist labels or stereotypes
Referring women as *the weaker sex, the ladies, the girls* or *the distaff side* implies offensive role stereotyping even if the writer doesn't intend it.
- Whenever possible, revise sentences to avoid using the masculine pronouns *he, him, his, and himself* to refer indefinitely to people of both sexes. For example: *if a person wants to bring his text to the exam, he may* is sexist, revise the sentence into *if persons want to bring their texts to the exam, they may*.
- In general, use sparingly the constructions such as *his or her, him her, or s he* throughout texts.

- Try to avoid the use of *man* as a suffix in such words as repairman or mailman, but also try to avoid coinages that are cumbersome to read and write. Alternative expressions that can be accepted are *journalist* for *newsman*, *firefighter* for *fireman* or *supervisor* for *foreman*. Such cumbersome term can be found in the term *refuse disposal specialist* for *garbage man*.

2.3.2 American Philosophical Association

The following guidelines were originally published in *the Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* in February 1986 (Vol. 59, number 3, pp. 471-482). They were prepared at the request of *the Executive Committee of the Western Division* (now called the Central division) of the American Philosophical Association by the APA's National Committee on the Status of Women. It is explained that we should be particularly sensitive to the issue of nonsexist language— language which creates, constitutes, promotes or exploits an unfair or irrelevant distinction between the sexes. Therefore, APA— as an institution that has long focused on language— issued these guidelines of nonsexist language which are designed to foster a deeper appreciation of how easily bias slips into our thought and ideas. Summary of guidelines for nonsexist use of language can be presented as follows:

- a. Eliminate the generic use of *he* by:
 - Using plural nouns

For example: *the philosopher uses his reason to guide him* can be revised into *philosophers use their reason to guide them* or *the philosopher uses reason as a guide*.

- Deleting *he, his* and *him* altogether

For example: *if the writer plans ahead, he will save a lot of effort* can be changed into *the writer who plans ahead will save a lot of effort*.

- Substituting articles (*the, an, a*) for *his*; and *who* for *he*

For example: *a careful secretary consults her dictionary often* can be recast into *a careful secretary consults a dictionary often*.

- Using the passive voice

For example: *he must return it by the due date* can be rephrased into *it must be returned by the due date*.

b. Eliminate the generic use of *man* by:

- Substitute *man* with *person/people, individual(s), human(s), human being(s)*
- Substitute *mankind* with *humankind, humanity, the human race*
- Substitute *manhood* with *adulthood, maturity*
- Delete unnecessary references to generic *man*

c. Eliminate sexism when addressing persons formally by:

- Using *Ms* instead of *Miss* or *Mrs.*, even when a woman's marital status is known
- Using a married woman's first name instead of her husband's (e.g., *Ms. Annabelle Lee* not *Mrs. Herman Lee*)

- Using the corresponding title for females (*Ms., Dr., Prof.*) whenever a title is appropriate for males
- Using *Dear Colleague* or *Editor* or *Professor*, etc. in letters to unknown persons (instead of *Dear Sir, Gentlemen*)

d. Eliminate sexual stereotyping of roles by:

- Using the same term (which avoids the generic *man*) for both females and males (e.g., *department chair* or *chairperson*), or by using the corresponding verbs (e.g., *to chair*)
- Not calling attention to irrelevancies (e.g., *lady lawyer, woman doctor, male nurse*)

2.3.3 Linguistic Society Of America

Sexist practices are those that contribute to demeaning or ignoring women (or men) or to stereotyping either sex; sexism is often not a matter of intention but of effect. These guidelines reflect a growing body of research that indicates that many people find sexist language offensive. The guidelines of nonsexist use of language can be seen as follows:

- When possible, use plurals (*people, they*) and other appropriate alternatives, rather than only masculine pronouns and "pseudo-generics" such as *man*, unless referring specifically to males.
- In glossing forms from another language, it is possible to use forms such as third person singular in place of pronouns, thus avoiding the introduction of gender-specificity or asymmetry when it is absent in the original. For example,

sentences referring to an individual whose sex is not identified are incorrectly translated into English sentences with the pronoun *he*, which unambiguously conveys maleness in reference to specific individuals. Some writers have found the use of *he or she*, *she or he*, *s/he*, *she/he/it*, or *he/she/it* to be helpful in this regard. Others find it useful to alternate the gender of pronouns where appropriate.

- Avoid generic statements that inaccurately evoke only one sex (e.g. *Speakers use language for many purposes—to argue with their wives. . . or Americans use lots of obscenities but not around women*).
- Whenever possible, use terms that avoid sexual stereotyping. Such terms as *server*, *professor*, and *nurse* can be effectively used as gender neutral; marked terms like *waitress*, *lady professor*, and *male nurse* cannot.
- Use parallel forms of reference for women and men; e.g. cite all scholars by surname only or all by first name or initial plus surname.

2.3.4 The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)

During the 1971 Annual Convention of the National Council of Teachers of English in Las Vegas, Nevada, the Executive Committee and the Boards of Directors approved the formation of NCTE *Committee on the Role and Image of Women in the Council and the Profession*. As the result of the resolution passed by the members of NCTE at the 1974 Annual Convention, one of the committee's responsibilities was to assist in setting guidelines for nonsexist use of language in

NCTE publications. At the 1975 Annual Convention, the Boards of Directors adopted a formal policy statement that read in part: "The National Council of Teachers of English should encourage the use of nonsexist language, particularly through its publications and periodicals."

Twenty years have passed since these guidelines were created, and although language usage has begun to change, the importance of the guidelines has not diminished. Since language plays a central role in the way human beings think and behave, we still need to promote language that opens rather than closes possibilities for women and men, whether teaching in classrooms, assigning texts, determining curriculum, serving on national committees or writing in professional publications.

In the section of guidelines of nonsexist use of language, it deals primarily with word choices. Many of the examples are relatively easy to deal with, since English lexicon has a history of rapid change. Grammar is a more difficult area, and we have chosen to use alternatives that already exist in the language rather than to invent new constructions. In both cases, recommended alternatives have been determined by what is graceful and unobtrusive. The purpose of these changes is to suggest alternative styles.

The guidelines of nonsexist use of language published by the National Council of Teachers of English can be presented as follows:

1. **Generic *man***

- Since the word *man* has come to refer almost exclusively to adult males, it is sometimes difficult to recognize its generic meaning

- Sometimes the combining form *-woman* is used alongside *-man* in occupational terms and job titles, but we prefer using the same titles for men and women when naming jobs that could be held by both. Note that using the same forms for men and women is a way to avoid using the combining form *-person* as a substitute for *-woman* only.

2. Generic *he* and *his*

- Sometimes it is possible to drop the possessive form *his* altogether or to substitute it with an article
- Often, it makes sense to use the plural instead of the singular
- The first or second person can sometimes be substituted for the third person
- In some situations, the pronoun *one* (*one's*) can substitute the pronoun *he* (*his*).
- A sentence with *he* or *his* can sometimes be recast in the passive voice or another impersonal construction
- When the subject is an indefinite pronoun, the plural form *their* can occasionally be used within the sentence, especially when the reference for the pronoun is clearly understood to be plural
- Sparing use of *he or she* and *his or her* can be made. It is best to restrict this choice to contexts in which the pronouns are not repeated.

3. Sex Role Stereotyping

Word choices sometimes reflect unfortunate and unconscious assumptions about sex roles. For example that *farmers* are always *men* and *elementary school teachers* are always *women*; that men are valued for their accomplishments and

women for their physical attributes; or that men are strong and brave while women are weak and timid. We need to examine the assumptions inherent in certain stock phrases and choose non-stereotyped alternatives.

- Identify men and women in the same way. Diminutive or special forms to name women are usually unnecessary.
- Do not represent women as occupying only certain jobs or roles and men as occupying only certain others

Those are the guidelines of nonsexist language that the writer has so far successfully collected. For the reason of simplifying the accuracy and strength of each guideline, the writer then combines these four guidelines into one elaborate version of guideline. The purpose of combining those guidelines is for picking out the best part of each. Since those four guidelines have their own weakness and strength hence each version acts as a complement for one another. Finally, the result of combining those four guidelines can cover the major aim that underlies behind the making of guidelines for the nonsexist use of language. Leading to a language that treats both sexes equally will be the main purpose of nonsexist language.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

CHAPTER III