

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

For many centuries, gender becomes a never-ending topic to be discussed due to its impact towards society. Gender differences may occur by means of language which is the basis of people's communication. Language is very essential for this case since it plays a role on how people have been described and looked upon. Cameron (2006: 733) states that gender is gender-linked patterns of language-use arises not because men and women are naturally different, but because of the way that difference is made significant in the organization of social life and social relations. Therefore, gender differences are likely to lead society into a social gap. According to Hellinger and Bußmann (2001) there is a gender system in language, for example, a set of rules according to which nouns are allotted to gender. Nouns in German, for instance, have their gender such father is masculine (der Vater), friendship is feminine (die Freundschaft), and rabbit is neuter (das Kaninchen). These can be identified from the suffixation. Meanwhile, in English, the gender system can be noticed from the use of pronouns such as *he* and *she*.

Since English is an International language, it is necessary to see the use of English in relation to gender system in the various English speaking countries. English has a lot of colonies in which consequently its language is also absorbed at the same time (Baugh and Cable, 1993). In the global spread of English, based

on Kachru (1992), there are three concentric circles of the language: The Inner Circle, The Outer Circle, and The Expanding Circle. The inner circle refers to English where it is originally used and developed. This inner circle consists of five countries: the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand. These countries use English as their primary language. The Outer Circle is where English language used by English colonies in Asia and Africa such India, Singapore, and Nigeria, for instance. English, in these countries, is not their first language, but has a great role in their education and court due to its high-prestige. Therefore, mostly English becomes their second-language. The last one is the Expanding Circle where English language becomes foreign language which plays no historical role in these countries such China, Japan, and Indonesia, for example.

This study only focuses on the inner circle countries where English language is used by mother-tongue English speakers. The inner circle countries (the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand) are chosen because all of these countries use the same language, English as their primary language, yet different in their language-usage. It occurs because humans have their own mental ability to produce a language. As Chomsky (2006) states that linguistic performance is associated with specific type of mental organization or nature of mind. Therefore, the difference of language usage amongst these countries may show that the society has different perceptions or stereotypes regarding the use of language.

Since this study talks about language and gender, it is necessary to talk about the four terminological distinctions of the representation of men and women in language. Based on Hellinger & Bußmann (2001, pp. 7-11) there are *grammatical gender*, *lexical gender*, *referential gender* and *social gender*. Grammatical gender is an inherent property of the noun which controls agreement between the noun (the controller) and some (gender-variable) satellite (the target which may be an article, adjective, pronoun, verb, numeral or preposition). While lexical gender is an important parameter in the structure of kinship terminologies, address term, and a number of basic nouns. Referential gender refers to the thing that identifies a referent as “female” and “male” or “gender indefinite”. Lastly, social gender which has come up from the stereotypical assumptions about what is appropriate in social roles for men and women. However, this study only applies lexical gender as the indicator to the writer in discovering gender in a language.

The study on language and gender in the English language can be seen from the point of view of lexical gender. Hellinger and Bußmann (2001, 7) defines lexical gender as “an important parameter in the structure of kinship terminologies, address terms, and a number of nouns.” For example *manager* – *manageress* which shows overt gender making by suffixation. It brings the semantic property [male] and [female] respectively. However, the male noun, i.e. *manager*, is commonly used to refer to both male and female. This makes a gender bias or an imbalance use of nouns. In this thesis, gender bias refers to the preference of using the male terms instead of the female terms. This definition is based on the definition given in OALD 8th edition, i.e. bias is “a strong feeling in

favour of or against one group of people, or one side in an argument, often not based on fair judgement.” Based on this explanation, lexical gender becomes the main source to guide writer to determine whether there is a gender bias or not in the English language used in the inner circle.

To enable the writer to obtain the data in a big number, the writer uses corpus linguistics as the research approach. Corpus linguistics itself “is the study of language data on a large scale – the computer-aided analysis of very extensive collections of transcribed utterances or written texts” (McEnery & Hardie, 2012). It is a collection of texts that have been stored in an electronic database. Hence, in regard to collect the data in the five different countries, this corpus linguistic software really assists the writer to gain the data. As the name suggests, the corpus linguistics approach uses a corpus which is “a finite set of concrete linguistic utterances that serve as an empirical basis for linguistic research” (Bußmann, 1996, 260). By using a corpus, the writer can analyze a significant amount of words as they are stored in a computer database.

Regarding on the corpus as the tool to gather the data, it leads to the writer to explore *glowbe*. *Glowbe* is The Corpus of Global Web-Based English which is composed of 1.9 billion words from 1.8 million web pages in 20 different English-speaking countries (Davies, 2013). This *glowbe* allows researchers to examine variations in English. The writer uses *glowbe* because it provides the language used by the English native speakers from the five countries that become the focus of this study.

The corpus at *glowbe* can be accessed from the website <http://corpus2.byu.edu/glowbe/>. In this website, the writer can find incredibly wide-range of phenomena in words, phrases, grammatical construction, synonyms, customized lists, and collocates. It provides data on differences of many English dialects in 20 different countries and its frequency as well. Besides, the user can also compare them in this corpus database. For example, the writer can compare the nouns usage of *manager* and *manageress* between the United States and Great Britain as it can be seen in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 The use of the word *Manager* and *Manageress* in the United States and Great Britain

	Manager	Manageress
United States	22,689	5
Great Britain	54,414	49

The finding of this preliminary data shows that there is a greatly significant difference. The frequency of *manager* is highly dominated in both countries while the frequency of *manageress* is just a small fraction of the frequency of *manager*. These data can be used as a reflection on how society is looked upon. This early finding shows the very small preference in using the gender marked item for female, in which we can infer that there is a gap of lexical gender between man and woman. Due to this fact, the writer is interested in examining this topic further.

The studies on language and gender using the corpus linguistics approach have been carried out by several researches. The studies that are closely related to this thesis are Romaine (2003), Fuertes-Olivera (2007), and Kristanti (2013). Romaine (2003) examines the use of lexical gender in British and American English using BNC as the source for British English and Brown Corpus as the source for American English. The finding shows that the British variety lags in the usage of many reforms such the general *Ms*. Fuertes-Olivera (2007, pp. 219-234) investigates lexical gender in specialized communication in which the data are taken from WBE (Wolverhampton Corpus of Written Business English). He reports that in business-field, *men* are highly dominated in top-position. The other one is a study conducted by Kristanti (2013) who identifies males and females are portrayed in Murphy's grammar book by looking at the noun possessiveness and their occupations. Even though she claims that in spite the gender stereotyping is still found in the object of the study, the text has tried to portray males and females equally in some occupations. However, the finding shows that by looking at the total number comparison of males and females as well as in the noun belongings, *men* are still in the higher position in the work-place while women are mostly depicted in the domestic field.

None of the studies mentioned above that have compared the use of lexical gender in the inner circle countries of English language which consist of the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. The analysis of this study focuses on the use forms of addresses and professional titles. Regarding forms of addresses, there are *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Miss.* and *Ms.* Each of them carries its

semantic property, for example, Ms. has been mostly used to refer to a career woman, while Mrs. refers to a married woman (Fuertes-Olivera, 1991). While in professional titles, there are CEO and COO, for example. Based on Fuertes-Olivera (2001), these both high-level professions are mostly filled by men because business settings are dominated by males whereas women are associated with caring and domestic space. These facts indicate that there is a gender bias; because comparing to men; although they are single or get divorce, they are not marked, but women have different terms on them defining whether they are single or married already. Moreover, in the work-place, men are dominated the top position. Thus, based on these explanations, this study is expected to show how lexical gender items, especially forms of addresses and professional titles, have been used in the five English speaking countries.

1.2.Statement of the Problems

Based on the explanation of the background of the study above, the writer formulates the research questions below:

1. What are the most frequent forms of addresses used in the inner circle countries of the English language?
2. What are the most frequent professional titles for males and females in the inner circle countries of the English language?
3. Which country, among the five inner circle English speaking countries, is the most gender-bias?

1.3. Objectives of the study

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

1. To determine the most frequent forms of addresses used in the inner circle countries of the English language.
2. To determine the most frequent professional titles for males and females in the inner circle countries of the English language.
3. To determine the most gender-bias country, among the five inner circle English speaking countries.

1.4. Significance of the study

This study is expected to give both theoretical and practical significance to the study of language, particularly on the aspect of lexical gender. For theoretical significance, hopefully, this study can bring beneficial insights to linguists working on language and gender. The finding of this study will also trigger other researchers to conduct further study or similar topic on lexical gender in various disciplines.

In practical significance, the reader will gain the knowledge regarding the current situation of lexical gender occurred in the inner circle countries. The readers will know the distribution of use of forms of addresses and professional titles in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand. They will also know which country shows more gender bias than the other countries.

1.5. Definition of Key Terms

- Lexical gender : An important parameter in the structure of kinship terminologies, address term, and a number of basic nouns. (Hellinger and Bußmann, 2001, pp. 7-8)
- The Inner Circle : It refers to five countries: the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand in which English is originally used and developed. (Kachru, 1992)
- Gender-bias : The preference of using the male terms instead of the female terms (OALD, 2010)
- Corpus Linguistics : The study of language data on a large scale – the computer-aided analysis of very extensive collections of transcribed utterances or written texts. (McEnery & Hardie, 2012)
- Corpus : A finite set of concrete linguistic utterances that serve as an empirical basis for linguistic research. (Bußmann, 1996, 260)
- Glowbe* : The Corpus of Global Web-Based English which is composed of 1.9 billion words from 1.8 million web pages in 20 different English-speaking countries (Davies, 2013)