

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter consists of many important aspects. They are women's language, Lakoff's theory of women's speech features, and previous study.

2.1 Theoretical Bases

2.1.1 Women Language

In terms of physics, male and female are different. It will influence the diverse of language styles of them. This situation is caused by the social condition where the individual lived. It can be seen on how the society views the value of words meaning. This is because of each particular society has their own parameter in seeing whether the word has an important meaning or not, Yuniarti (2014:12). Based on Lakoff, woman's language is language bounded in use to woman and language descriptive of woman itself. It makes woman's personal identity by denying the expression herself strongly and encouraging expression that make triviality and uncertainty, Lakoff (2004:42). Of course, it has correlation with woman behavior because a lot of differences in each woman depend on social status, background education, etcetera.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, (1992:90 cited in Yuniarti 2014) women's language can be said to reflect their conservatism, prestige consciousness, upward

mobility, insecurity, deference, nurturance, emotional expressivity, connectedness, sensitivity to others, solidarity. Besides, men's language is heard as evincing their toughness, lack of affect, competitiveness, independence, competence hierarchy, control. It means that the women want to be valued as the special ones on linguistics behaviour, while the men tend to see anything unworldly topics. This condition influences the way of them in describing things.

The study about women's language has been basically developed by Lakoff through her book entitled 'Language and Women's Place' in 1975. Lakoff's writing has become the basis for many researchers who conduct the research about women's language as subject. She published ten basic assumptions about what she felt as special women's language in 1975.

In her approach, Lakoff divides men and women into two discrete groups and measures the degree of linguistic differences that are found in their speech features. As a result, she found that there are several characteristics that are likely to be used by women more than men do in their social daily interaction. In language, women's language shows up in all levels of the grammar of English such as the differences in the choice and frequency of lexical items; in the situations in which certain syntactic rules are performed; in intonation and other super-segmental patterns (Lakoff: 1975). Therefore, women tend to use more intensifiers (so, very, quiet), more tag question (I think, you know, well), more empty adjectives, and so on.

2.1.2 Lakoff's Theory of Women's Speech Features

Robin Tolmach Lakoff is a professor of linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley. She becomes the first linguist who began the research for definitive features of women's speech. She introduced the terms women's language. Her book *Language and Woman's place* (1975) has been enormously influential and cited by a lot of linguists who study the search of sex differences in language use.

Lakoff's writings have become the basis for many researches to conduct the research by using women's language as subject. She published ten basic assumptions about what she felt as special women's language in 1975. Women's speech features proposed by Lakoff (1975) are lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonation on declaratives, empty adjectives, precise color terms, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, superpolite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress.

2.1.2.1 Lexical Hedges or Fillers

One of the elements of women's speech features proposed by Lakoff (2004:79) is lexical hedges. Basically the function of hedging is to show a doubt or a confidence of what has been said. Some examples of hedging in women's language is like the words *well, you see, sorta/sort of, like, you know, kinda/kind of, like, I guess, I think, and it seems like*.

Look at the examples below:

a. I guess the advisor will come this afternoon

b. Farrell is sorta tall

By looking at the example above, it can be seen that the sentence *a* indicates that the speaker feels uncertain and lack of confidence in uttering her intention. The speaker does not know exactly if the advisor will really come in the afternoon or not thus she uses the word 'I guess' to hedge her statement. Then, what the speaker means in sentence *b* is that Farrell looks neither really tall nor actually short. In the case of sentence *b*, hedges can be used to mitigate the possible unfriendliness or unkindness of the speaker's statement which is inconvenient to tell about someone's physical weakness. For the sake of politeness, hedges are used by the speaker to blunt the force of a rather painful assertion.

2.1.2.2 Tag Questions

The other women's speech feature proposed by Lakoff is tag question. Tag question is midway between an outright statement and a yes-no question. It is less assertive than the former one, but more confident than the latter (Lakoff, 2004:48). Tag question is a kind of polite statement that does not force the agreement or belief on the addressee.

In the following, Lakoff's theory about tag question is then developed by Holmes (1992: 318) in which she said that tags are not always used to express uncertainty. It may function as facilitative devices. It is usually used by the

teacher, interviewers or those who have leadership role as their facilitative way to succeed their interaction. Besides, it may also be used to soften the directives or criticism.

For examples:

- a. Farrell is here, isn't he?
- b. Are you waiting for your friend, aren't you?

These examples above can be seen that both sentence *a* and *b* show for having more confident than latter. In sentence *a*, the speaker believes that Farrell really is in the place that the speaker means. Then, in sentence *b* have convinced on the addressee.

2.1.2.3 Rising Intonation on Declaratives

This is also one of the other women speech features in Lakoff's theory. This feature is found in a form of declarative sentence used to answer question but typically has a rising intonation similar to yes-no question intonation. As stated by Lakoff (2004:50), the use of rising intonation indicates that there is unwillingness to be very assertive in carrying an opinion. Through this feature, the speaker provides a confirmation since she is unsure if her opinion will be agreed by the addressee so that rising intonation in declaratives is used to show that the speaker leaves the decision open to the addressee in a non-forceful way.

Example:

Oh... it has already six o'clock?

Question intonation found in the sentence above is example of declarative sentence that has a rising intonation which is usually used by someone who want deliver a question. The example above means that the speaker gives the addressee the chance to negotiate the decision and find the agreement.

2.1.2.4 Empty Adjectives

The use of empty adjectives in women's language indicates that the speaker wants to show the relationship of her emotional expression with her addressee. Besides, it is also used to indicate the speaker's approbation or admiration for something (Lakoff, 2004:25). Some of these adjectives are neutral in which both men and women can use them while some of these adjectives are largely used more by women. The representatives of both types are as follows:

Neutral	Women Only
Great	Adorable
Terrific	Charming
Cool	Sweet
Neat	Lovely
	Divine

In this case, women can freely use both neutral or women's adjectives while men are more risky to use women's adjective because it can damage their reputation. Through the way women have their choice of words; they want to

show something different related to their personalities or opinion of the subject matter. Look at the examples below:

- a. What a great idea!
- b. What a divine idea!

Women may use sentence *a* under the appropriate condition while the sentence *b* is more restricted and may be used properly when it feels that the idea referred is seen as something unimportant and only an amusement for the female speaker (Lakoff, 2004: 46). In short, the women are freely in using both of them.

2.1.2.5 Precise Color Terms

In precise color term, for naming the color, women have the different interpretation with the men. They have an ability to mention clearer discriminations of color terms than men do, such as *beige*, *ecru*, *aquamarine*, *lavender*, or *mauve*. These vocabularies are often well identified by women. Meanwhile, men commonly do not concern about being precise in naming colors as well as what women do since it does not involves their egos (Lakoff, 2004:43). Arguing whether a particular color is mauve or lavender for men is seen only as a trivial matter.

2.1.2.6 Intensifiers

The other feature that is found in women's speech is intensifiers such as *so*, *just*, *very*, *such*, or *quite*. According to Lakoff (2004:48), using intensifiers seems to be a way of backing out of committing oneself strongly to an opinion, rather like tag questions. If women use hedging to express uncertainty, the use of

intensifiers in women's speech is to persuade their addressee to take them seriously and to strengthen the meaning.

Besides, Holmes (1992: 316) stated that intensifiers as boosting devices reflect the speaker anticipation that the addressee may remain unconvinced so that he or she uses intensifier to supply extra reassurance. Women boost the force of their utterances because they think that otherwise they will not be heard or paid the attention.

Here are some of the examples:

- a. We feel really enjoy!
- b. Your performance is so beautiful!

When we look at the examples above, in sentence *a*, using the word 'really' as the function for strengthen the meaning of the enjoyable. It means that in the utterance has extra enjoy in their feeling. Then, in sentence *b*, the word 'so' helped the utterance to making convince which she really nuts about the performance.

2.1.2.7 Hypercorrect Grammar

Women should behave politely and does not talk roughly. One of the examples that is brought up by Lakoff (2004:80) is the use of *g'* in the word *singin'* which is dropped more by men than what women do. As a further explanation, Holmes (1992:167) said that in every social class, women tend to use more grammatical standard form than men do, while men use more vernacular

form than women do. It is said that women use more *-ing* pronunciations and fewer *-in* pronunciations than men do in words like *planning* and *doing*.

Come after Lakoff's theory, there are several reasons stated by Holmes (1992:171) that explain why women use more standard form than men. Firstly, women generally lack status in the society. In this way, standard speech form is associated with high social status so that women use more standard speech as way of claiming such status. Secondly, there is an expectation from the society to see women as behavior model. Little boys are generally allowed more freedom than little girls. Misbehavior from boys is tolerated while girls are more quickly corrected.

2.1.2.8 Superpolite Forms

The eighth feature of women's language is super polite form. This is related to the fact that women are supposed to behave and communicate politely and carefully. Women shows their use of super polite form in their speech through several ways, some of them are by having less assertive, making an indirect request, using euphemism, using hypercorrect grammar, and so on. Women's speech differs from men's in that women are more polite, which is precisely as it should be since women are the preservers of morality and civility, (Lakoff, 2004:77)

Examples:

- a. Would you please turn on the lamp, if you don't mind?

b. Could you give me the example?

The examples above show that women try to be polite by making their request indirectly, which is delivered in a form of question. Through this way, they leave the decision to receive the request depend on the addressee without an attempt to impose what they want or appear in their mind. The more particles in a sentence that reinforce the notion, that it is a request rather than an order, the politer the result (Lakoff, 2004: 50).

2.1.2.9 Avoidance of Strong Swear Words

Swearing is kinds of interjection that can express extreme intensify. It has been widely considered as an expression of very strong emotion. Women usually use softer forms such us '*Oh, Dear!*' or '*Darn!*' while the men use stronger ones such as '*Dammit!*' or '*Shit!*', (Rafi', 2014:19)

Lakoff (2014:44), stated that as children, women are encouraged to be 'little ladies'. Little ladies do not scream as vociferously as little boys, are chastised more severely for throwing tantrums or showing temper: 'high spirits' are expected and therefore tolerated in little boys; docility and resignation are the corresponding traits expected of little girls.

For examples:

- a. Oh Dear, you broke my glasses
- b. Shit, you broke my glasses

From the examples above, we can see the different between the sentence *a* and sentence *b*. We can classify the sentence *a* as part of 'women's language', then *b* as 'men's language'.

2.1.2.10 Emphatic Stress

The last feature of women's language is empathic stress, known as speaks in italics. It refers to the way of expressing uncertainty with our own self-expression. The speaker uses tone to emphasize certain words such as *great*, *so*, *really*, *very*, or *quite*. Lakoff (2004:81) defined that speaking in italics is a form of direction to tell someone how to react since what is said by the speaker is less convincing therefore he or she would better use double force to ensure that the addressee can understand what the speaker wants to say.

Examples:

- a. It is *great* performance!
- b. Did you know my score? *Really*?

The word *great* in sentence *a* and *really* in sentence *b* are some of the examples of an emphatic stress. These words can be used to strengthen the meaning of the utterances.

2.2 Previous Studies

This topic of research has been conducted by some previous researchers which had the different result. Fadhila Nur Kartika (2015) from Airlangga

University investigated about woman linguistics feature used by Oprah Winfrey in same-sex and cross-sex communication using Lakoff theory. She found six woman's language features in the conversation. Yet, some features did not find such as precise color term, 'hypercorrect' grammar, and 'superpolite' form.

Isni Al Rafi' (2014) from State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya analyzed about women's speech features used by the main characters in "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe" movie. Based on Lakoff theory, she found nine types of women's speech features used by the main characters of this movie. One feature which did not occur in the dialogues is precise color terms. Moreover, the most frequently by the main character's speech feature of this movie are lexical hedges or fillers and intensifier.

Then, Didin Fitria Andhira (2014) from State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya conducted research under the title *A Study of Woman's Speech Features of A Main Character in Iron Lady Movie Used By Phyllida Lloyd*. Through the analysis used Lakoff theory, she found nine types of woman's speech features that used by the main character while vocabulary (precise colors terms) is not found.

The next previous researcher is Wahyu Dwi Yuiniarti (2014) from State Islamic University of Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Her research title is *An Analysis of Hillary Clinton's Speech Features on International Speeches In 2013*. She used Lakoff theory in her research. Based on that theory, she found seven

features are classified as woman's speech feature used by Hillary Clinton. While the other speech features are not found, such as precise color term and absence of humor (avoidance of strong words).

Other previous study such as, J. Camille Hall, Joyce E. Everett, and Johnnie Hamilton-Mason (2012) conducted a journal entitled *Black Women Talk About Workplace Stress and How They Cope*. The purpose of this study was to explore work-related stressors that affect the lives of Black women and how they cope with them. Using an exploratory design with grounded-theory methods, five basic themes emerged that identify when racism and sexism are experienced as stressors for African American women in the workplace. The results from this study indicate African American women use emotion and problem focused coping responses to manage stress (e.g., racism and sexism) in the workplace.

Maria Cheng (2006) explored in her article under title *Constructing a new political spectacle: tactics of Chen Shui-bian's 2000 and 2004 Inaugural Speeches*. She examined how the Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian uses political language rhetoric as a powerful tool to defuse dangerously tense relations with China, repair relations with the US government and gain public support in the country. She focused on Chen's inaugural speeches delivered on 20 May 2000 and 2004, which present the rationale for his new administration and his socio-political ideologies, and she reviewed his political spectacle for Taiwan.

Mark Dyreson (2003) established a journal of contemporary history with the title *Icons of Liberty or Objects of Desire? American Women Olympians and*

the Politics of Consumption. He explained that American women were increasingly enmeshed in the process of making national identity through sport. America's women Olympians had risen to compete with movie stars as the idols of the new consumer culture that was reshaping American political and social life. In many ways, women athletes were caught in the middle of these changes. They were both symbols of new rights and powers, and sexual commodities who ranked alongside movie stars in American popular culture. A sizeable contingent of the American press celebrated the women's track and field team as icons of liberty that had helped the USA to Olympic glory.

Occasionally, this present research is different with the previous researches. Here, the researcher tries to find the woman's language theories applied on Michelle's way of speech as the first African American first lady. According to Collins (1986, cited in Bass, 2009) explained that African American women have an outsider-within status that makes this group aware of what must be done to liberate other oppressed people within their sphere of influence. *Outsider within* refers to the disempowerment of African American women within interactive systems of power, race, gender, and social class.

Moreover, in Bass' research about how African American women leaders do their experiences with intersectionality. She said that "African American women educators respond with a righteous indignation to social injustices against vulnerable disenfranchised students. Perhaps it is a personal awareness of race, gender, and social class (intersectionality) and the relentless pursuit for social

justice that promotes a call to action within African American women when they witness injustices” (Bass, 2009: 620). It means that African American women have a fierce desire to achieve something because they always feel injustices in their intersectionality.

Here, Michelle Obama as the object of this research will show how she uses the women’s language in giving the speech since this activity as the first African American first lady. The researcher used Lakoff’s theory to answer her research problems. The purposes of this research are to find the women’s speech features that used by Michelle Obama as the first African American first lady, to find out the type of women’s speech features which occurs most frequently by Michelle Obama in her speeches and to know the purpose of women’s speech features used by her.