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## RETHINKING LANGUAGE AND GENDER RESEARCH

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**Abstract:** Language is the main means of human communication. While the main problem of language is always related to the actors, in this case men and women. Language and gender have a very close relationship. This linkage raises another product in communication. Language diversity based on gender arises because language as a social phenomenon is closely related to social attitudes. Socially, men and women are different because society determines different social roles for them, and society expects different behavior patterns. The purpose of this study is to analyze issues related to language and gender differences that trigger male power over women. This phenomenon is included as an object of research in sociolinguistic studies. The method used in this study is a quantitative method with data collection techniques using literature studies. The results of the study show that the language differences are none other than people's perceptions of male and female (gender) stereotypes in various sectors which are then reflected in their language. This is the background why women use more standard forms than men.

**Keywords:** language; gender; discrimination

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### INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool to transform knowledge as well as a communication tool used by people to express ideas in their thinking. The expression of the language describes the tendency of the speaker community. Therefore, to learn and explain the language must undoubtedly involve the social aspects that image the society. Such as social strata, age, environment, culture and others. In contrast to what is said by (McGilvray, 2014) that language is asocial because it ignores heterogeneity that exists in society, both social status, education, age, gender of cultural background, and others. Meanwhile, gender refers to differences in male and female characters based on socio-cultural construction, which relates to the nature of status, position and role in society (Susiloningsing dan Najib, 2004:11). In addition, society has various scripts that its members follow as they learn to play masculine and feminine roles (Mose, 2004:11).

Gender is defined as the division of man into men and women based on socio-cultural constructs. The history of gender began in the 17th century precisely in England, after the industrial revolution, where at a time when humans were down as machines of production and there was a lot of sexual-based discrimination in the industrial field. The word becomes an agreement as a differentiator between men and women based on social construction. The gender difference refers to things that are quite basic between men and women. Biologically, the shape of a man's body is not the same as that of a woman. Socio-culturally, men's and women's clothing are different; The role in society is certainly different. Even in terms of language, between men and women is also different.

Differences in the use of language by men and women are very difficult if only biological tendencies. Many research results on the relationship of language and socio-political and cultural life show that the male language is indeed different from the language of women. For laypeople, the difference in male and female language is indicated by the difference in voice between adult men and women. But actually, the difference was not only located in the difference in voices, but also in the use or selection of words (lexical), sentences (grammatical) and in their delivery (pragmatic) (Kuntjara,

2003). As research conducted by (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2008) that Indian languages, in South America, some words used by men are longer in sound, than those used by women.

This language discrimination occurs in almost all patriarchal languages so that women experience a dilemma condition and at the same time experience language discrimination in two ways, namely how they are taught to speak and how the language treats women (Kuntjara, 2003). Based on previous research conducted by (Hall et al., 2020) stated that "The birth of language and gender as a field is often traced to second-wave feminism in the 1970s and 1980s. The perspective known as "difference feminism" was especially influential in the research of this period, leading to binary accounts of linguistic gender that highlighted differences between women's and men's speech".

This research is important to do because it tries to reveal the relationship between language and gender with how gender influences the way a person uses language and uses other languages. Language and gender research areas that can be studied include: differences in the use of language between men and women, patterns of differences in the use of language between men and women that can be observed by the public, differences in the way men and women are in certain groups, depictions of men and women as communicators in various media, sexist language, societal attitudes towards male and female language, the role of gender differences in language change, and how children learn to speak and write according to their gender or gender-appropriate language development. So, researchers are interested in studying more deeply related languages and gender differences that trigger male power over women in sociolinguistic studies.

#### **A brief look at the concept of gender**

According to (Umar, 2001), gender is defined as the apparent difference between men and women in terms of values and behavior. It is interpreted as a difference that is socio-cultural and is a value that refers to social relationships that provide differences in roles between men and women due to biological differences that become nature, and by society and become culture in community life. The World Health Organization provides gender boundaries as a set of roles, behaviors, activities, and queues that are considered appropriate for both men and women. The study of gender has its roots in feminist anthropology and for this reason, the term gender is often misunderstood as an exclusive concept of feminist. Gender studies basically pay attention to the cultural construction of two male and female living things. They examined differences and similarities of experience and interpretations of both in various contexts took fundamental meaning over their perception of different types of social relationships.

#### **A glimpse of the concept of language**

Language as an arbitrary sound symbol system used by members of a society to cooperate, interact, and identify themselves. Language becomes one of the natural abilities that is given to mankind, so natural that we do not realize that the language of mankind will not know and have a civilization, in which there is science and technology, and even religion. Thus, it is not an exaggeration when we say that the study of language will also be used to understand a culture. So that language can simply be concluded as a means of adaptation and communication to dream up messages with certain rules.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The method used in this research is a qualitative method with data collection techniques, namely literature studies. Literature studies can be taken by collecting references consisting of several previous studies that are then compiled to draw conclusions (Mardalis, 1999). According to (Cresswell, 2016) states that literature studies are written summaries of articles from journals, books, and other documents that describe theories and information both past and present organize literature into the required topics and documents.

The type of data the authors used in this study was data obtained from literature studies. Literature studies are a way used to collect data or sources related to topics raised in a study. The data that has been obtained is then analyzed with descriptive analysis methods. Descriptive analysis methods are carried out by describing facts which are then followed by analysis not only elaborate, but also provide adequate understanding and explanation.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Effect of Gender on Language**

Research on language and gender focuses on how gender affects language use. Gender is a factor that affects language variation. In addition, human behavior in society as a man or woman is also influenced by the use of language in the community. And in the context of gender, sex differences in conversational strategies and habits will have implications for the variety of languages used. Research on language and gender has been widely conducted by linguists by taking the context of outside culture (western culture). In the early period (1960-1970s) research was based on the grouping of speakers according to biological sex. The study highlights the phonological and grammatical differences between men and women. The paradigm of research on language and gender then changes in the conversation strategy.

One study on conversation strategies between men and women is about language politeness. Brown's research was conducted on the Maya in Mexico. Brown tested the hypothesis that women are more polite than men; Women are more sensitive to the needs of others' surfaces. He found that women used indicators of good manners more than men, and that women had "typical" feminine strategies for politeness. The results of the study are in line with (Lakoff, 1973) who argued that women use a style of speech characterized by traits that show doubt, harmony and decency: it seems reasonable to predict that women in general will speak formally and more politely, because women are culturally positioned in a status that is relatively secondary to men and because of their height. The level of decency is raised from subordinates to superiors.

In politeness, the concept of 'face' becomes the main idea where one is required to understand the need for other people when interacting or communicating. As we interact, we must be aware of the existence of two types of 'face' which refers to politeness. Brown and Levinson distinguish two types of, positive face, which means to show solidarity, and negative face, which shows a desire not to be disturbed in their actions. In addition, there are two types of politeness that are of concern when we interact with others, namely positive politeness, which is characterized by the use of informal language and offering friendships. On the other hand, negative politeness is characterized by the use of language formalities, referring to differences and unquestionability. The manners of language depend on the sociocultural, norms and rules of a place, so the values or rules of one culture can be different from other cultures. However, in the manner of language, good manners are needed so that communication can run well, so as not to threaten the faces of others.

### **The Discrimination of Language**

The problem of this difference arises due to the dominance of one party against another party which then gives birth to the stigma that women are helpless victims, while men are seen as demeaning women. This can happen because of the separation between men and women at stages in socio-cultural life. There are two things that are considered to contribute to the formation of this difference, namely: First, the problem of social relations. Similar friendships and play habits in childhood and then continue until adult friendship will give birth to groups of men and women who have their own subculture. Each of these subcultures also has patterns and styles of language that are only suitable for their groups. Problems will arise when both want to communicate. Second, it is related to biological factors and socialization. For example, boys are forbidden to play with flowers

because the flower symbolizes a soft, and gentle one is a girl. Instead, women are prohibited from wearing pants, playing ball, swords, and games that prioritize physical because the game belongs to boys and if there are girls who still play, he will be nicknamed tomboy. Another phenomenon that describes the socialization of this difference is that girls starting from childhood have gained more protection when compared to boys. If there are girls sitting impolitely, then parents will quickly reprimand, but if there is a boy who is less polite considered as an active child, even get praise. This socialization is definitely not neutral because flowers, colors, games, feelings, and behaviors (morals), are not created only for men or women, and it applies to everyone. This socialization is considered as the forerunner of the emergence of second class against women in society.

Language is the result of community consensus. The consensus itself will be greatly influenced by the domination of the existing rulers because they have the power to issue policies. In Indonesian, there are lingual units, which are biologically sexist to differentiate gender, such as the phoneme /a/ for masculine gender and the phoneme /i/ for feminine gender (Sulis, 2003:58). Many research results on the relationship between language and socio-political and cultural life show that men's language is indeed different from women's.(Kuntjara 2003:25).

The difference in language a person uses in communicating indicates that elements of power and social status play an important role, although that may not be realized by language users themselves. This occurs especially in societies with hierarchical structures, where men are more powerful than women and sociologically and epistemologically place the position of women in a state that is not strategic (not free). They became 'slaves' of men. For example, women in the Middle East who are just out of their homes must also equip themselves with various ethical formalities from the Adamites (Anshori et al., 1997) . Thus, the difference in language between male and female speech is a dimension that better reflects the overall social hierarchy (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2008).

As with sociology studies, women as objects of study are widely ignored. Only in the field of marriage and family did he see its existence. Her position in sociology, in other words, is traditional as assigned to her by the larger society: the place of women is at home" (Ehrlich, 1997). Such language discrimination is due to assumptions in society about stereotypes in men and women, and then reflected in their language. This is the background to why women use the standard form more than men.

## CONCLUSION

Talking about language related to gender will not be separated from the socio-cultural context of the community. How society civilizes the social relationships of men and women will be seen in the language they communicate on a daily day. Such language discrimination is due to assumptions in society about stereotypes in men and women in various sectors, and then reflected in their language. This is the background to why women use the standard form more than men. language and gender with how gender influences the way a person uses language and uses other languages. Language and gender research areas that can be studied include: differences in the use of language between men and women, patterns of differences in the use of language between men and women that can be observed by the public, differences in the way men and women are in certain groups, depictions of men and women as communicators in various media, sexist language, societal attitudes towards male and female language, the role of gender differences in language change, and how children learn to speak and write according to their gender or gender-appropriate language development.

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