

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

People use language differently. The difference of language use can show our identity; who we are and what we do. It seems that the difference of language use is based on the social background of the people. The relationship between language and social function in the society is studied in sociolinguistics. Holmes (2013, p. 1) states that sociolinguists in studying the relationship between language and society look at the reason why people speak differently in different social context by identifying the social functions of language and the way of language are used to deliver the social meaning. People related to their social context, such as social status, age and gender use the language.

The behaviour between men and women are different. The language is used by men and women are different too. In this case, sociolinguists study the relationship between language and gender. Lakoff (1975) research on *Language and Woman's Place*, identifies women's linguistic features that distinguish from men. Lakoff (1975) proposed women's linguistic features in women utterances. According to Lakoff (1975), it seems that women's language is weak, trivial and hesitant than men's language. Women's linguistic features are proposed by Lakoff, such as precise colours terms, avoidance strong words, 'empty' adjectives, tag questions, rising intonation

on declarative, ‘superpolite’ forms, lexical hedges, intensifiers, ‘hypercorrect’ grammar and emphatic stress.

Nowadays, there are not only men and women are considered as gender identity. There are also homosexual (gay and lesbian), bisexual and transgender people. Not only focus on men and women, sociolinguists also do the research about the ways of speaking and the language used by the homosexual, bisexual and transgender people. According to Wardhaugh & Fuller (2015, p. 323), there is a research focused on distinguishing gay or lesbian language features that focus on phonology.

Transgender is a term for a person who changes his/ her biological identity into another. Transgender women, for instance, were born as men, but they feel that gender did not match with them and then they change into women. They change into women because they see and feel femininity in themselves.

Caitlyn Jenner is one of the American famous transgender women who came out as a woman (Bruce Jenner before her changes) in 2015. From her conversation on one of American popular talk shows *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, there were found some women’s linguistic features proposed by Lakoff. For example, “**Well**, it went **pretty** quick”. From this utterance, Caitlyn uses lexical hedges ‘well’ and an ‘empty’ adjective ‘pretty’ as one of the women’s linguistic features proposed by Lakoff. Those not only uttered once but also frequently found in Caitlyn Jenner utterances during the conversation. This example shows one of transgender women’s femininity beside their identity as men before they change.

The writer is interested in analysing these women's linguistic features as proposed by Lakoff that used by American famous transgender women in American popular talk show. Transgender women are chosen as objects because most of the research on language and gender seem only in the category of men and women. Transgender people especially male to female transgender seem that they do not only change their identity into women, but they also use some women's linguistic features that show their femininity.

Two of American famous transgender women; Caitlyn Jenner and Laverne Cox are chosen because they are popular. Even an international media *Time* categorises them as 25 transgender people who influenced American culture. Caitlyn Jenner (a white American was born in New York and formerly known as Bruce Jenner) is an athlete and reality television star. Laverne Cox (a black American was born in Alabama and formerly known as Roderick Laverne Cox) is an actor, reality television star, producer and transgender advocate. *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, an American popular talk show, which has the high rating, is chosen in this research for collecting the data of transgender women's utterances. Then, the writer analysis women's linguistic features and its functions in their utterances from their conversation on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

This research focuses on analysing women's linguistic features proposed by Lakoff (1975) in the utterances of two American famous transgender women; Caitlyn Jenner and Laverne Cox on American popular

talk show *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*. Related to this research, the writer focuses on the following questions:

1. What are women's linguistic features used by two American famous transgender women in their utterances in American popular talk show?
2. What are the functions of women's linguistic features used by two American famous transgender women in their utterances in American popular talk show?

1.3 Objective of the Research

Based on the research questions above, the aims of this research are:

1. To identify women's linguistic features used by two American famous transgender women in their utterances in American popular talk show.
2. To explain the functions of women's linguistic features used by two American famous transgender women in their utterances in American popular talk show.

1.4 Scope of the Research

This research is limited to women's linguistic features used by two American famous transgender women; Caitlyn Jenner and Laverne Cox on American popular talk show *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*. The women's linguistic features are identified by using the theory of women's linguistic features proposed by Lakoff (1975). Then, the writer explains the function of linguistic features as proposed by Holmes (2013).

1.5 Method of the Research

In conducting the analysis of this research, the writer uses three systematic research procedures, which are collecting the data, analysing the data and presenting the result of analysis.

In collecting the data, the observational method with non-participant observation is used, where the writer does not get involved in the conversation process. The data are taken from the utterances of two American famous transgender women; Caitlyn Jenner and Laverne Cox in their conversation on American popular talk show *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* during 2015 - 2016.

The Ellen DeGeneres Show is an American popular talk show that interview guests who include celebrities, newsmakers and ordinary people with extraordinary talent. Ellen DeGeneres is the host, Caitlyn Jenner and Laverne Cox, American famous transgender women are the guests in this talk show. This talk show talks about Caitlyn Jenner with her journey become a transgender woman, her family and marriage. On the other episode, this talk show talks about Laverne Cox and what she has done within her career.

There are several steps in collecting the data. First, the videos of *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* on ellentube.com are watched and listened carefully and repeatedly. The transcription from the video is copied. The transcription is needed to identify the accuracy of the data. Second, the note-taking technique is applied to rewrite the utterances which contains linguistic features in transcription of the video.

In analysing the data, the referential identity is used by referring to Lakoff's theory (1975). Each of the data is identified by using women's linguistic features theory proposed by Lakoff from two American famous transgender women utterances in American popular talk show. Then, the functions of women's linguistic features are explained by using Holmes theory of the functions of women's linguistic features.

In presenting the result of analysis, the writer uses two methods; they are formal and informal method. The formal method is used by using the table to present the result of analysis. On the other hand, the informal method is used by using words or statements to describe and present the result of analysis.

