

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Discussed in this chapter are some aspects that become foundation for analysing the problems in this research, i.e. the background of the research (1.1), the statements of the research problems (1.2), the purpose of the research (1.3), the significance of the research (1.4), the scope and limitation (1.5), definition on related terms (1.6), and design of the research (1.7).

1.1 The Background of the Research

There is a book written by John Gray (2000:6) entitled *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*. In this book Gray says that by nature men and women are different. Therefore, the occurring differences between men and women are not only normal but are to be expected. Further, he argues that these differences may cause frustration and disappointment; and only when men and women do not understand one another is there tension, resentment, or conflict. However, Gray does not mention why men and women are different. According to him this is so complex a question and to which there are so many answers ranging from biological differences, parental influence, education, and birth order to cultural conditioning by society, the media, and history.

Gray is right. In line with his opinion, Giddens cited by Wodak and Benke in *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics* (1997:128) defines that the term 'sex' is biological or anatomical differences between men and women whereas 'gender' is concerning the psychological, social, and cultural differences between male and female. Therefore, throughout this research the term sex is used to differentiate between men and women, and gender is to differentiate between male and female.

Even born differently men and women use a language as a tool in communication. However, in uttering something men and women often times use different language known as language style. Lakoff and Spender in Mills (2003:165) argued that

women's language style was further characterized (*sich*) by the use of elements such as hedges, tentativeness, tag-questions which seemed to these theorists to signal indirectness, mitigation, diffidence, and hesitation. In contrast to this, male speech was characterized (*sich*) as direct, forceful, and confident, using features such as direct, unmitigated statements and interruption.

These statements mean that the use of hedges, tentativeness, tag-questions is intentionally though unconsciously used by women to show indirectness, mitigation, diffidence, and hesitation. On the other hand, men tend to be direct, forceful, and confident by being direct, unmitigated and interruptive.

The men and women styles above are also reflected in their choice of language when uttering something, including taboo words. In this case Coates (1986:19) stated that

oaths, exclamations, taboo words are anything which could come under the general heading 'vulgar language'. Further, the belief that women's language is more polite, more refined – in a word, more ladylike is very widespread and has been current for many centuries.

The statements above show that unlike men, women naturally are able to choose the appropriate words to show softness, more ladylike, calmness, and polite words when they are talking.

To prove those theories in current situation, data are taken from internet media such as Twitter will be observed and analyzed in this research. Both male and female Twitter users, according to Gray, use different styles in expressing something into words or sentences, the so called tweets, in which taboo words are

frequently emerging. True that there are many similar researches on gender and language already written but this research is focusing in analyzing taboo language in Twitter, the currently popular Internet media that has thorough influence towards youngsters.

Finally, this research would find out the variation of taboo language used by male and female Twitter users, entitled **The Taboo Words Used by Both Male and Female in Twitter.**

1.2 The Statements of the Research Problems

Considering the background above, the research problems can be formulated as follows:

- 1.2.1 What is the difference between male and female Twitter users in terms of taboo words choice?
- 1.2.2 What taboo words are more likely used by male or female Twitter users?
- 1.2.3 In what context do those taboo words used by both male and female appear?

1.3 The Purpose of the Research

Related to the statements of the problem, this research aim

- 1.3.1 To identify the words choice in term of taboo words used by male and female Twitter users.
- 1.3.2 To describe the taboo languages that arise in male and female Twitter users.

1.3.3 To describe the situation in which taboo words are used by male and female Twitter users.

1.4 The Significance of the Research

Hopefully this thesis is of a reference for another research dealing with linguistics, gender, and language variation. In addition, this thesis may become an inspiration and materials of discussion for any similar research.

1.5 The Scope and Limitation

The scope of this research is in gender language and is limited to taboo language used by male and female Twitter users. In collecting and selecting the data, this research does not observe the cultural settings of Twitter users. The reason is that Twitter users, by the systems, may hide their personal identity and just put out their invented or nick names. So, the data selection of this research is dependent on observation of tweets that are matching with Jay's list of taboo words (2009), and as such becomes the scope and limitation of this research.

1.6 Definition on Related Terms

To avoid misunderstanding about the use of some key words used in this research, below are some definitions on related terms.

1.6.1 Genderlect

Based on Trudgill (2003:54) genderlect is a variety or lect that is specific to or particularly associated with either male or female speakers. This term is in most usages misleading, in that it suggests that there may be communities where male and female speakers use radically different varieties. In fact, while there are some more-or-less gender-specific usages in many if not most languages, these range from the use of a small number of words, phrase or conversational devices in some languages to particular vowels, consonants or grammatical endings in others. Most differences between male

and female speech are quantitatively-revealed tendencies rather than absolute differences.

1.6.2 Word Choice

Both female and male tend to use gender related language on their word choice. Word choice is word chosen based on gender, male and female. Lakoff in Sapiro (1986:270) argued that in many sense there are fairly distinct female and male dialect within the English language. In Lakoff's view empty adjectives like *divine, charming, cute* ... are a typical of what she calls 'women' language (1986:18). In addition, according to Jespersen in Coates (1986:19) 'vastly' and 'so' are also claimed as having 'something eternally feminine about it' and mostly used by women even though men can use it too. For example vastly obliged, vastly offended, vastly glad or vastly sorry. Large objects are vastly great, small ones are vastly little. Women also use 'so' as in the following sentence, 'It is *so* lovely!'; 'He is *so* charming!'; 'Thank you *so* much!'.

1.6.3 Taboo Language

According to Trudgill (2003:133)

language taboo has to do with words and expression which are supposed not to be used, and which are shocking, offensive, blasphemous or indecent when they are used. 'Swear words' are common examples of words which are subject to linguistic taboo.

1.7 Design of the Research

This research contains five chapters. Chapter one consists of the background of the research, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the research, the significance of the research, the scope and limitation, definition on related terms, and design of the research. Chapter two consists of the review of related literature. This chapter is describing related theories that support the research. Methodology of the research is in chapter three. Analysis of the data is in chapter four. And finally, chapter five is the summary of the research.