



Gender Differences in Language Use under Descriptive Perspective and Qur'anic Moral Values Education

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Abstract: Studies on the differences in the use of language by men and women are indeed very limited when viewed from a purely biological tendency. In fact, many studies have found that men's language is different from women's language socio-politically and culturally. This difference is constructed by the social order that is closely related to the problem of domination of power in the relationship between men and women. The study of gender differences in language under descriptive perspective aims to reveal the facts of social life in term of differences in roles and relations between women and men in the use of language. In addition, this research also discusses the perspective of moral values education, especially those from the Qur'an regarding the differences between women and men in terms of language use.

Keywords: language, gender, descriptive perspective, linguistic behaviour, qur'anic moral values

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INTRODUCTION

It has become a common consensus that language is a communication tool used by people to express ideas. The expression of the language describes the tendency of the speaking community. Therefore, to learn and explain language, it must involve social aspects that image the community, such as social order, social strata, age, environment and others. One of the important views that emerged in studying language related to socio-cultural is that the structure or behavior of language is influenced by social structure. This view emphasizes the role of the most powerful party in society which is usually played by men to strongly influence language as a societal consensus. Thus, through language, the views and judgments of society can also be reflected on which predicates and labels are appropriate for men and women.

Language as a manifestation of culture provides an overview of social conditions, value systems, cultural behavior, and aspects of social relations in a society. One of social aspects that often becomes an important issue in people's lives is the various differences in social relations by gender. If language is a set of conventions capable of reflecting patterns of social relations, then gender differentiation will also be reflected in it. This occurs since language contains terms, concepts, or labels related to objects, behaviors, value systems, and so on. Thus, language records the assumptions that are believed by society about how a man or woman should behave. Such distinctions often referred to as sexism which leads to masculinity and femininity in language. Moreover, there has been a stereotype that in various social aspects, including language, men are relatively more advantage than women.

The study of language use relates closely to gender difference. The term of gender refers to a social construction that involves the overall difference in psychological, social, and cultural aspects between men and women. Such differences differ from one community group to another, and can change over time. The general assumption has implied that women and men are indeed different in using language because in terms of sex they are different. This opinion becomes something that is believed in society that men and women speak differently is very natural. The linguists also agree that the differences in the characteristics of the language used between men and women can be observed and distinguished.

In sociolinguistics, in general, discussions the differences in language use between women and men are concentrated in the context of social networks and speakers' meaning. The speaker's intention is largely determined by the context, namely time, place, event, class, ethnicity, religion, social environment, economy, politics, process, circumstances, and speech partners. The speaker's intention can be seen from the vocabulary he has chosen. Nevertheless, the truth remains to be questioned whether it is treated like a hypothesis to be investigated or as a claim to be agreed upon.

METHODS

This research employed library research method. Literature research is a data collection technique by deeply understanding data that is closely related to research problems. The sources of data were mostly relevant books and theories explored in reputable journals. These sources were comprehended to explore the topic in depth. This research was conducted on September 2 to November 13, 2021.

Triangulation technique was used to verify data. The content analysis was used to analyze data through determining the existence of certain concepts described in the text. The concluding remarks were formulated through drawing and integrating the researcher's ideas.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Language and Gender: Concept and Review of Research Findings

Language is essentially a symbol system which is not only a sequence of empirical sounds, but has a non-empirical meaning. Thus as a symbol system that has meaning, language is a tool of human communication, pouring out human emotions, and a means of embodiment of the human mind in everyday life, especially in seeking the essence of truth in life. Another perspective makes the differences in language systems and language structures as reflection of different responses of the world in some respects. In addition, language in a certain context is also used to fulfill the social and cultural dynamics, and strengthen the spirit of nationalism.

Gender differences in language phenomena have deep social roots and do not occur by chance. These are accepted as a fundamental fact of social dynamics and human differences human differences with all their uniqueness in terms of the phenomenon of language differences (Besnier, 2007; Hanafiyeh & Afghari, 2014; Wahyuningsih, 2018). The differences in status between men and women result in differences in duties and rights.

The sociolinguists who conduct the research on the gender differences situate the unequal status of men and women as the entity which causes the emergence of language differences. Moreover, the traditional concept of "man on the outside, woman on the inside" has dominated people's thinking for thousands of years. Men are seen as people who are most responsible for making a living for their families. On the other hand, women are always marginalized as people who are considered weak and only carry out activities in the family.

Men are perceived as having absolute authority in society. Their position even determines how they conduct a control in society. This fact is determined by the fact that the social power has an influence on the choice of strategies in the language use (Al-Khaza'leh & ZainalAriff, 2015; Desky et al., 2017, Almathkuri, 2021). Social power and control can be seen through the speech acts of men who always interrupt the conversation, especially when talking to women. In contemporary society, although many women are strikingly successful in economics, politics, and even have the same job in many fields as men, the tendency of men's attitudes to discriminate against women still exists. Men show their power through the way they talk to women. In an effort to strengthen their self-image under the shadow of male discrimination, women are encouraged to use other means to get a respectful position and use distinctive and standard language in their daily speech acts.

Socio-cultural factors have a strong influence, especially on a person's mentality, behavior, and ideology. In the concept of culture, it is found that people have certain social acknowledgments and expectations for different gender roles and behaviors (Hussein, 2012; Fleming & Brune, 2015; Morgan, 2017; Hall et al., 2020). For example, women must speak well and politely while men are relatively simple, arrogant and assertive. Such social expectations continue to be maintained and perpetuated from generation to generation.

The distinction between men and women socially even begins when a child is born. The babies are given gender specific names and educate them to grow in the desired orientation to fulfill their physiological needs and social function. Boys are expected to grow up to be independent, brave, and have a high initiative attitude under any conditions, and their speech must show manliness. On the other hand, girls are generally expected to maintain cleanliness, tidiness, and silence. They should speak softly, virtuously, and benevolently. In fact, they are required to speak elegantly with standard pronunciation and correct grammar. They are not allowed to use taboo and rude words. These show that there are high requirements for women's discourse, especially from the aspect of politeness and choice of words. This social fact indicates that gender differences have an impact on different people's treatment and acceptance. In fact, there is a positive correlation between gender role identity and cultural circles.

The facts above indicate that attitudes and adaptability greatly determine the recognition of gender roles during the process of social interaction. Therefore, boys and girls are gradually guided to develop and adapt socially according to their gender. The cultural conduct and different ways of communicating naturally form a distinctive language effect between men and women. In addition, the way women and men communicate is also closely influenced by their parenting patterns and their experiences of social interaction in childhood. Even as they grow up, the established way of communicating is difficult to break.

The use of language must also reflect various social relationships during communication. Sociolinguistic studies show that gender differences in language use in society occurs mainly due to the type of social structure, cultural background and pragmatic mentality such as social gender phenomena. The difference in language in terms of gender is a social fact that must be viewed objectively. In fact, in societies that use the same language, it is customary to accept differences among speakers of that language due to physiological, psychological, and ecological factors. The differences are mainly in the forms of changes found in the use of language mostly in terms of linguistics and paralanguage dimension.

Gender differences in language use are considered as linguistic and social phenomena. Linguists from various countries have carried out many significant in-depth explorations of the phenomenon of language use in terms of gender differences, various social, cultural, and historical contexts. It also connects to social realities and social-cultural values deeply. Gender differences also deepen our comprehension on the common laws of language and lead us to expound the internal factors in the changing of language development (Borba & Osterman, 2007; Xia, 2013; Buriro, 2018).

The linguists concluded that different contexts can lead to differences of pronunciation, vocabulary and sentence structure used by men and women. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) show that traditional social factors create a higher social status for men. This leads to their privilege of speaking and creates the difference between the speech of men and women. The Chinese linguist, Chen Songcen, points out that gender relations and age variations influence language use. The results of the research found that the uses of diction and discourse habits were closely related to differences in social status, gender and age which lead to language diversity. This is caused by at least two main reasons: firstly, people who have different social status lead to different mental states. Secondly, men and women have different social roles in society with all its complexities. These factors lead to variations in their language.

The relationship between language and gender is demonstrated by the fact that the ways of speaking between women and men are not exactly the same in any context. The difference in the language of men and women, according to some linguists, is because they have been conditioned by the society in which they were raised to be different (Ekberg & Ekberg, 2017; Beukeboom, & Burgers, 2019; Plug, et al., 2020; Simon, 2021). Meanwhile, differences in the character of the voice may be caused by the norms that govern how women should voice when they speak. Meanwhile, differences in speaking skills can be explained due to differences in educational levels between men and women. In addition to biological factors as the cause of differences between women and men in using language - differences in voice and verbal skills - social factors also explain the causes and forms of differences between the speech of men and women.

Research on gender differences in linguistics was started by Robin Lakoff. Through her "classical" book *Language and Women's Place* (1973), she aroused the interest of linguists in the topic of research on gender and language relations. In his book, Lakoff introduces several features of female language. (1) *Specialized vocabulary*. In contrast to male language, women tend to use more concrete color words, such as mauve, yellow, blue, cream, and lavender. The women also tend to choose concrete words that have a close relationship with life. (2) *Milder expletives*. When using harsh words, women use them in a softer tone. This is different from men who often speak in a strong tone. The different ways of speaking can occur because of the control of social conventions. (3) *Empty adjectives*. Women always use certain adjectives to express their feelings. (4) *Tag questions*. The use of tag questions is a favorite way for women to express their opinions and to be recognized by others. (5) *Intonation*. The use of a rising tone by women even in declarative sentences is intended so that their uncertainty and doubt can be expressed through a rising tone. (6) *Superpolite forms*. Women prefer indirect speech as a way of showing a more polite attitude than men. (7) *Hypercorrect grammar*. This feature is seen from the use of grammar and pronunciation; women usually speak formally not only in grammar, but also in pronunciation. (8) *Joke-telling and humor*. Compared to men, women's language lacks humor. Women are basically not good at creating humor and understanding humor. The differences in lexicon, syntax, and pragmatics mentioned above indicate the uniqueness of women's language styles, such as submissive, uncertain, and passive. Their speaking style cannot be separated from society's guidance to them and their social status which is sometimes in a marginal position.

Lakoff's research inspired further researchers, especially anthropologists and sociolinguists. The differences between the languages of the two sexes have been studied in anthropology, dialectology, and sociolinguistics. Anthropologist, Jennifer Coates, argues that from an anthropological perspective, language is considered as part of the social behavior of a particular social community. Moreover, sociolinguists use gender as a social variable to find out the relationship between language and gender.

Anthropologists focus on the difference between phonology and lexicon. They found that people in the most tribes of Montana and Gros Ventre regard pronunciation as a sign of sex. Therefore, if there is a man who talks like a woman or vice versa, then he will be considered as bisexual. The difference between the languages of men and women in their mother tongue is one of the objects of research by dialectologists. According to dialectologists, women are more conservative than men in terms of language. This condition is a result of women

spending more time at home, communicating with family members and almost never leaving their homes, and rarely interacting with strangers. In addition, women very rarely work in fields of work that require a firm way of speaking, for example in the military and sports coaches, and other. This fact makes women becoming ideal research subjects both in studying the variation of language and gender.

Nevertheless, there are still other views which argue that male language can reflect dialect characteristics, and men use dialect correctly more often. Although women are imaged as more conservative than men, on the other hand, women's language is not conservative because women can accept new vocabulary more easily than men, especially among career women and those who interact a lot with the outside world. Hence, dialectologists argue that in underdeveloped areas economically and with little contact with the outside environment, there are striking differences between the languages of women and men.

In sociolinguistics perspective, the relationship between language and gender is studied from various aspects mostly in terms of the relation between gender and politeness, and gender and language style. Sociolinguists assume that women are more polite than men. Women's language is indirect and implicit; men are the direct opposite. All researches reflect that there are many assumptions about women's language and their communicative style.

The previous studies have emphasized the aspects of differences without reporting similarities between male and female languages. Sociolinguists argue that there are natural differences between the language of men and women that are recognized when they communicate. This difference is likely to be one of the triggers for the failure of oral communication between women and men. Both men and women have their own perspective that keeps them away from prejudice and discrimination against each other.

On the other hand, there are also researchers who do not reveal all the differences in full aspects between women and men. The differences between men and women as separate communities are ignored to simplify the differences that exist between them. In order not only to rely on the gender aspect, the researchers also pointed out the importance of context in communicating because all communication occurs in a certain context. Thus, the study of gender differences in using a language requires a study of context.

In addition to examining the relation of gender and language, the similarities between them should also be considered. This is intended to obtain a comprehensive and objective explanation of the relationship between men and women. Many scholars argue that transcultural differences cause differences in language and behavioral characteristics among men and women. These cultural differences are formed gradually since childhood and are maintained throughout life. Apart from the sub-cultures themselves, they still have their own national culture, which makes them belonging to the same nation. This fact shows that in addition to their own values and ways of behavior in their sub- culture, their behavior, including language behavior, must have differences and similarities.

In order to find a balanced and comprehensive perspective on gender and language relations, the differences in gender in all aspects, especially the differences between people's personalities and their communicative styles must be considered in detail by researchers. These make differences in terms of language use, lifestyle and outlook on life they. Researchers must put gender differences into context and leave

Several theories emerged in the discussion of language and gender, namely deficit, domination, radical, different, and reformist theory (Baxter, 2011). In deficit theory, women's language is considered to imitate men's language by expressing language that is not as perfect as male language. Lakoff argues that women express their language because they are marginalized in their social life. When interacting in society, women are required to speak a certain language variation that reflects their lower social level than men. Therefore, women in expressing their language are not as efficient as men. In contrast to deficit theory, dominance theory assumes that both men and women can express language differently depending on their status. This theory is supported by the findings of O'Barr and Atkins (1980), Zimmerman and West (1975), Swacker (1975), Spender (1980) and Hultz (1990). When women have a higher social status than men, they can express their language better. That is, language differences are determined by who has the most dominant role. Having power in social life makes men usually dominate the use of language compared to women.

The radical theory considers language to be used by humans as a tool to express their worldview. The men's language simply is imitated by women. This makes women have lack experience and perception because of their limited linguistic expression. According to different theory, since women and men have different socialization patterns, their sociolinguistic subcultures are also different. In this theory, the structure of women's is different from men's. Even women are considered to have advantages in certain linguistics domain.

Reformist theory contains reformist feminist ideas that criticize perceived sexist language can create bias when reality is represented. The proponents of reformist theory propose to neutralize sexist words, such as chairperson instead of chairman, Ms instead of Missus or Miss, men and women instead of men, and humanity instead of mankind.

Differences in Men's and Women's Speech

In terms of speaking or interacting, the language structure of men is different from the language patterns used by women. Women tend to focus on the affective function of an interaction than men. To bind and maintain solidarity, women generally choose to communicate in several ways. This is in contrast to the structure of male language which focuses on power and status. Women also prefer discussing personal topics to debating private issues. Women tend to avoid direct disagreements, and they tend to maintain social relationships with other people they are talking to and involve other interlocutors in the conversation (Sun, 2013; Al-Harashsheh, 2014; Dong, 2014). Therefore, they are professional conversationalists and are more cooperative than men.

Status awareness makes women tend to use more standard forms of speech than men. Women are socially required to speak according to their social class background or social status in society. In general, women use more standard forms of speech as a way to claim that they also have a high social status in society (Cameron, 2007; Abdalgane, 2019; Alderton, 2020; Badari, 2019). Therefore, women are well aware that the use of a more standard form of speech is a way to claim such status.

Gender factors in language use can be found in society where both women and men show their influence in language. However, there are certain linguistic characteristics that are only found in female speech or in male speech only. These features are usually minor differences in pronunciation and word form (morphology). Holmes (2013) reports that in Montana, for example, there is a difference in pronunciation among American Indians in Gros Ventre, where women pronounce [kja'tsa] for 'bread' and men pronounce [dʒa'tsa]. In this community, if someone uses the wrong tense, the older members of the community consider him or her bisexual. In Bengali, women use the initial [l] and men use the initial [n] in some words.

The difference in word usage between women and men can also be demonstrated through the use of different affixes as found in Yana, a North American Indian language. There is an additional suffix in some of the words used among men compared to the equivalent words used by women and for women as illustrated below:

Table 1. The Difference between Women and Men in Word-Shape in Yana, North American Indian Language (Holmes, 2013)

| Women's form | Men's form | Meaning |
|--------------|--------------|------------------|
| Ba | ba-na | deer |
| Yaa | yaa-na | person |
| Nissakle | nisa aklu-ci | he might go away |

Language variation in the speech of women and men becomes one of the wider dimensions of difference that reflects the overall social hierarchy in society. In this context, men are placed in a more powerful position than women. In Bengali society, for example, there is a prohibition for younger people to address superiors by their first name. Wives are also not allowed to address their husbands by their husbands' names. Instead, they should use certain terms, such as "suncho" which shows respect for their husbands. The same phenomenon is also found in Indonesia in which the wife also does not call her husband's name but uses a special address following local traditions in each region.

The differences in language variations of women and men in a community actually reflect the limitations of roles in the community based on gender differences. The certain exclusive forms of speech that are only spoken by men are actually intended to reflect exclusive social roles. Most women tend to consider the language and its features (e.g. accents, voices, intonations, etc.) more than men do (Pebrianti, 2013; Bui, 2021). When women and men have overlapping social roles in a particular community, their speech variations also overlap (Kitzinger, 2007). In other words, the female and male variations are not completely different, but there is the same form in their speech in different amounts and frequencies. However, the position of women who are placed lower than men makes them to secure their social status linguistically through the use of standard variations of language.

The Alternative Explanation on Male-Female Differences in Linguistic Behaviour

The research on the relationship between language and gender was pioneered by Robin Tolmach Lakoff who proposed a theory of the existence of women's language (1975). Lakoff stated that there are many reasons underlying the differences between women and men in language. For example, men's language is more assertive, mature, and men tend to speak openly with the correct vocabulary. In contrast, the language used by women is not assertive, uses figurative words, is careful in expressing things, and often uses more polite words or through gestures (Castaneda-Pena, 2008).

The general assumption underlying the differences between women and men in using language is that there are differences in gender. Linguists also agree that the differences in the characteristics of the language

used between men and women can be observed and distinguished. Thus, that men and women speak differently is very natural (Coulmas, 2005: 36).

In a sociolinguistic perspective, the study of language differences between women and men relates to the context of speakers' social networks and meaning. The meaning which is created by the speaker is determined by the context, such as time, place, event, class, ethnicity, religion, social environment, economy, politics, process, circumstances, and speech partners. Moreover, the speaker's meaning can be understood from the vocabulary he chooses. In Indonesian, for example, the words such as *to marry* and *to divorce* are only expressed by men. This occurs since the right to marry and divorce belongs to men only.

The new trend in the study of the relationship between language and gender is indicated by the scope of the study that is no longer only in the linguistics domain, but also psychology. Almost all psychologists agree that men and women differ fundamentally in the way they use language to communicate. Psychologists claim that men use a language to get a thing or to solve a problem, but women talk more often than men and use a language for affective function, such as talk more about feeling and maintaining harmonious relationship (Chaplin, 2015; Romera, 2015). Moreover, men use competitive language which reflects their effort to achieve and maintain social status. On the contrary, women use cooperative language which aims at creating equality and harmony.

Language differences between men and women sometimes lead to misunderstandings. In fact, between men and women actually have their own differences and there is no better or worse in terms of language use. These differences arise due to several factors, namely biological and socio-cultural factors.

The Qur'anic Moral Values Education on Gender Differences in Language

In the perspective of Qur'anic moral values education, the Qur'an provides guidance to women in communicating as explored from the verse of al-Ahzab, 32. This verse is historically addressed to the Prophet's wives and reveals their characteristic. Nevertheless, the moral values contained in the verse analytically are intended for all Muslim women since the Prophet's wife is a role model for them.

The moral value that can be extracted from the verse regarding women's communication etiquette is self-control and wisdom value. In terms of self-control and wisdom value, women are prohibited from speaking in a graceful, flirtatious, and seductive way when talking to men. On the other hand, they should speak decisively and with dignity so as not to provoke the desire of those whose hearts and minds are dirty to do indecent things. This is certainly different when they talk to their husbands. Moreover, this prohibition does not mean the prophet's wife had bad behavior and should be prohibited and prevented. However, this prohibition is meant to encourage them to always be committed and consistent to the highest quality of virtue. This is in accordance with the guidance of the Qur'an which places women as dignified human beings who upholds the norms of decency (Mohammad & Lehmann, 2011; Soomro & Khuhro, 2018; Patoari, 2019).

The self-control and wisdom value applies for all Muslim women. The point is that a woman should not talk to other people in the way she talks to her husband. This value applies not only to women, but also to men. Men are also required to uphold courtesy and fairness when talking to women. They are prohibited from speaking seductively towards a woman who is not his wife. In addition, women are required to be wise in speaking according to prevailing norms and manners. Moreover, this guidance is in line with their role as mother who must be a role model for their children.

CONCLUSION

Language and gender are concerned with how gender affects women and men in using language. The relation between language and gender indicates that women and men do not speak in exactly the same way to each other in any community. The difference in the language of men and women occurs since they have been conditioned by the society in which they were raised to be different. In term of Qur'anic moral values education, the unique way in communication leads to understand and apply the values of self-control and wisdom value.

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