CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

People are not always aware that language and gender are related although it is known that language is used by both males and females to communicate. Gender is defined as "the condition of being male and female" (Hornby, 1989: 490).

Studies have been done in linguistics to show the relationship between language and gender which reveal different variations of language used by men and women; it can, therefore, be concluded that language use may reflect the user's gender. Concerning language and gender, Jim Vandergriff presents the following information: (1) since early 1582, women have been assumed to speak differently from men; (2) beginning in the early 1970s, the idea of 'Women's American English' is seriously investigated by Robin Lakoff, Anne Bodine, Ruth Brend, and Nancy Conklin; and (3) many researchers, Lakoff and Kramer, for example, have already asserted the existence of women's language, but none of them offer concrete evidence to support their claims (n.d.: par. 1, 4).

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Andrea D. Sims explains the connection between gender and language, adding that "Gendered language in industrial societies was not taken as a serious topic of study until the 1960s" (2004: par. 4). The topic, according to Sims, has been known since the publication of Robin Lakoff's <u>Language and Woman's Place</u> in 1975 (2004: par. 4). Later, Lakoff presents her theory of typical feminine speech style, for instance, the use of lexical hedges or fillers, tag question, avoidance of strong swearwords, and so on. (qtd. in Holmes, 1994: 286).

In reality, people's utterances may not always conform to the normal gendered speech styles. Men may speak with feminine style and women may use masculine speech styles in their utterances. These deviations can be caused by social factors, which include participants, setting, function, and topic (Holmes, 1994: 8).

I have paid special attention to some utterances that show deviation from conventional women's language, because, for me, regular utterances are not challenging enough to investigate. Then I compare these deviations with the confirmed conventional women's language. As a result, I analyze the contrasting style of language which is used by the main female characters found in the films <u>Miss Congeniality</u> and <u>G.I. Jane</u>. The analysis includes the reasons for such deviation.

I use films as the data sources because they can provide the information I need to conduct this study. In my opinion, a film can give sufficient description of the events, character, setting, plot, or other elements of it. Therefore, I do not need to imagine all those elements because the film provides them for the viewers. In addition, watching a film, which takes less time than reading a novel, enables me

to get the intonation of the utterances in it and thus makes me understand the story better.

However, in collecting the data, I found some difficulties when making the transcript of the utterances. I could not catch some words in the films, so I tried to find the scripts from the Internet. So, the subtitles and the scripts from the Internet complement each other.

I take the films Miss Congeniality and G.I. Jane because they provide the examples of language that I wish to analyze. In addition, the two films have two similarities regarding the main female characters' professions. They are both governmental officers and they are both surrounded by males in their jobs. I suspect that their jobs and professional environment have some influence on them, including their speech style.

Considering that women's language deviation has been influenced by some social factors, the linguistic area to which the study belongs is Sociolinguistics, which is defined as "…the study of language in its social context" (Coates, 1993: 4). Another author, Holmes also states that "*Sociolinguistics* is concerned with the relationship between language and the context in which it is used" (1994: 1). This sociolinguistic study will use an approach that is related to the characteristics of women's language, which will be presented in detail in Chapter Two.

It is expected that the result of this study can help people in understanding the two films, Miss Congeniality and G.I. Jane better and can also help English learners in realizing the different practice of language use by different speakers in different contexts.

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Statement of the Problem

In this thesis, the problems are formulated in the following questions:

1. What utterances of the main female characters in <u>Miss Congeniality</u> and <u>G.I. Jane</u> show deviation from conventional women's language?

2. What are the reasons for such deviation?

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this thesis are:

1. To find the utterances of the main female characters in <u>Miss Congeniality</u> and <u>G.I. Jane</u> that show deviation from conventional women's language.

2. To explain the reasons for such deviation.

Methods of Research

In writing my thesis, I start by collecting the data, consisting of the main female characters' utterances that show deviation of women's language, taken from two films, <u>Miss Congeniality</u> and <u>G.I. Jane</u>. To analyze the data, I follow the following procedure: (1) I watch the films several times to understand the stories and the language well; (2) I search for the transcripts in the Internet; (3) I complete the data, based on the subtitles and the scripts of these films; (4) I select the utterances that deviate from the theory of women's language; (5) I classify the selected deviated utterances in relation to Lakoff's theory; (6) then I try to reveal the reasons for the deviation; and (7) finally, I draw some conclusions and write the thesis.

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Organization of the Thesis

The thesis consists of four chapters. It starts with the Introduction, which contains the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Methods of Research and the Organization of the Thesis. In Chapter Two, the Theoretical Framework, I explain the sociolinguistic theories which are used to analyze the data. The third chapter presents the analysis of the deviation from women's language in <u>Miss Congeniality</u> and <u>G.I. Jane</u>. Finally, in Chapter Four, I draw some conclusions from the result of the analysis. At the end of the thesis, is the Bibliography, a list of the references that I use in this thesis, and the Appendices, which consist of the synopses of <u>Miss Congeniality</u> and <u>G.I. Jane</u> as well as the tabulated data of this study.