CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter I, there are some points explained; those are the background of study, the limitation of the study, the problem formulation, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, and the organization of the study.

A.   Background of the Study

Nowadays, it has occurred many feminism movements which aim to empowering women. There are many supports, both directly and indirectly, which actively support women equality. However, there still exists any kind of oppressions toward women. They are still treated unjustly in social, politic, education, and economic area. For example, women often work more than men, yet they are paid less (Shah par. 3). Gender oppressions affect women throughout their lifetime and they are the one who always suffer the most poverty. There are many things which cause gender oppressions; one of them is the social and cultural values in the society. Abeda Sultana (2-7) states that the social and cultural values which are patriarchal are most causes which make women get oppressions. Patriarchy is the situation when the male dominates the female, both in public and private area. The patriarchal system gives men and women different gender roles in the society. In one hand, men take the dominant role who becomes the superior one in the society. On the other hand,

women take the subordinate or feminine role who becomes the inferior one. The practices of the roles happen in many spheres of women's life, such as in political, educational, and economic field. Further, Brannon (160-161) adds that those different roles then lead men and women to have different stereotype in the society. Men are the positive stereotype while women are the negative stereotype. Thus, it can be said that gender roles lead to the gender stereotypes.

Discussing about gender stereotype must be preceded by the discussion of stereotype itself. According to Lippmann (1922), stereotype is the typical picture which comes to our mind when thinking about a particular social group (qtd. in Dovidio, Hewstone and Glick 7). In the society, stereotype can have many variety of types. Like what stated by Schneider (1996) that as a typical picture about a social group, a stereotype may be negative or positive, accurate or inaccurate, justified or unjustified. It is, though, the negative, the inaccurate, and the unjustified stereotypes that cause us most concern (qtd. in Pilcher and Whelehan 167). The misleading conception toward a group usually caused by the negative of inaccurate stereotype. Further, the term of stereotypes also has many scopes and kinds; one of them is gender stereotype. "Gender stereotypes are beliefs and attitudes about the psychological traits and characteristics of men and women" (Brannon 160). It also can be said that gender stereotypes are perceptions of the society towards men and women. These perceptions sometimes may be positive, but in common they operate in negative area, especially for women.

According to Miriam Lewin (1984), the current gender stereotypes reflect the situation in the Victorian Era, in 19th century (qtd. in Brannon 161). Before the 19th century, most people lived and worked on farms where men and women worked together. The Industrial Revolution changed the lives of a majority of people in Europe and North America by moving men outside the home to earn money and leaving women at home to manage households and children. This separation was unprecedented in history, forcing men and women to adapt to different environments and roles. As men coped with the harsh business and industrial world, women were left in the relatively unvarying and sheltered environments of their homes. These changes produced two beliefs: the Doctrine of Two Spheres and the Cult of True Womanhood (Brannon 161).

Lewin (1984) defines the doctrine of two spheres as the belief that women's and men's interests diverge women and men have their separate areas of influence. For women, the areas of influence are home and children, whereas men's sphere includes work and the outside world (qtd. in Brannon 161). The Cult of True Womanhood arose between 1820 and 1860. "The attributes of True Womanhood, by which a woman judged herself and was judged by her husband, neighbors, and society could be divided into four cardinal virtues; piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity" (Welter 152).

Culturally, in a patriarchal society both men and women have their own different stereotypes. In the one hand, women are considered as weak, indecisive, and

submissive, and passive, that requires protection and guidance from men, on the other hand, men are regarded as strong, active, and self-confident (Tangapiwut 35).

The picture of women stereotype appears in many places and countries, one of them is China. Since the early time, women have been subordinate to men for most of their lives. Chinese society had been founded on the belief that the heaven is Qian and the earth is Kun. The men are defined as Qian, and women as Kun. The relationship between Qian and Kun, the heaven and the earth, illustrates the relationship between men and women. The relationship between men and women is also refined as one of Yang and Yin, with corresponding relationship of male domination and female submission, and the honoring of men and disparaging of women (Peng 150). Therefore, in patriarchal society of ancient China, the stereotypes that men are superior to women are solid in the minds of the Chinese people of thousand years.

In her book entitled *Between Worlds: Women Writers of Chinese Ancestry*, Amy Ling argues that women's were ideally supposed to revolve around the three obedience and four virtues,

> The Three Obedience enjoined a woman to obey her father before marriage, her husband after marriage, and her eldest son after her husband's death. The Four Virtues decreed that she be chaste; her conversation courteous and not gossipy; her department graceful but not extravagant; her leisure spent in perfecting needlework and tapestry for beautifying the home (qtd. in Peng 150).

From the statement, it can be seen that the fate of women is very bad. They have to be passive and obedient toward men and the society. The four virtues also tell that the women could only stay at home laboring at agriculture, weaving, cooking, washing; they are not permitted to enter the society and engage in social activity. Furthermore, if women follow the three obedience and four virtues, they will be considered as a decent woman.

Similarly, Tangapiwut (45) also states that the Chinese society believes that women's opinion is a selfish desire. It is not good for a woman to express her opinion because it is not a proper thing to do. From the situations, it can be said that in China's patriarchal society, to be an ideal woman, a woman should be passive and submissive.

There are many ways to find the picture of women stereotype, one of them is by using literature, for example reading a novel. *The Joy Luck Club* novel explores the cultural and gender stereotyping of Chinese women. This novel tells about the story of four Chinese women who experience negative stereotypes in their Chinese patriarchal society. In dealing with the oppression of negative stereotypes, the Chinese women then do some efforts to fight the stereotypes. By fighting the negative stereotypes, the women also want to get a better life, without any oppressions anymore.

There is one dialogue which shows one of the examples of women stereotype. It is "Haven't I taught you that it is wrong to think of your own needs? A girl can never ask, only listen" (Tan 70). In the dialogue, women are stereotyped to be

passive. They are only able to follow the society without any excuse to express their opinion. Hence, the women do not get equality since they cannot express what they feel.

In short, women stereotype bring negative impacts for women, such as, it limits women's capacity to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives and life plans (ohchr.org par. 2). Since women become passive and silent, indirectly they have lost their freedom in their lives, because to be free, someone should not be passive, in other words, women should be active. Women stereotype also decreases women's efforts to develop their personal abilities. Someone who is passive and silent automatically will not be able to maximize her personal ability, such as working outside the house and expanding their outer world knowledge.

The Joy Luck Club novel did a nice job to inspire the women, especially Chinese and Chinese American women. The novel consists of many struggles by the Chinese women in facing the women stereotype. Those struggles can be learned and practiced by other women if someday they face the same stereotype. By reading the novel, it can be noticed that the women should not just sit and wait for a prince to take them out, but they must be active and pursue their ambition with their own spirit.

Based on explanations in the previous paragraphs, this study aims at analyzing the issue about women stereotype and how they struggle to face the stereotypes. Therefore, this study is entitled, "An Analysis on Woman Stereotype of the First Generation Chinese Immigrant Women as Reflected in *The Joy Luck Club* Novel". In

this study, the focus is the first generation of Chinese immigrant women because this generation experiences stereotypes more than the second generation because the second generation lives in America since they are young so they do not experience stereotype as much as the first generation.

B.   Limitation of the Study

Based on problem formulation, the study wants to limit the problem here only to the analysis of the Chinese women characters. Those Chinese women are the first generation women in *The Joy Luck Club* novel; they are Lindo Jong, Ying Ying St. Clair, Suyuan Woo, and An-mei Hsu.

C.   Problem Formulation

There are two problems investigated in this study, as follows:

1. How is Chinese women stereotype depicted in *The Joy Luck Club* novel?
2. How do the first generation of Chinese immigrant women struggle against Chinese women stereotype as reflected in *The Joy Luck Club* novel?

D.   Objective of the Study

There are two objectives of study, as follows:

1. To describe Chinese women stereotype depicted in *The Joy Luck Club* novel.

2. To describe how the first generation of Chinese immigrant women struggle against Chinese women stereotype as reflected in *The Joy Luck Club* novel.

E.   Significance of the Study

By this study, the study is intended to achieve the significance mentioned below:

1. The study will give a deep explanation about gender and the stereotypes of Chinese women. This study is expected to give the students, especially those who study literature, more knowledge of understanding and appreciating literary works, mainly those which are about women. The readers are also expected to be more aware of women's unfortunate position from the past up to the present through the history.

2. This study brings an issue that women can be strong and active like men. It is believed that men and women are both human, so what men can do also can be done by women. It is also to inspire and support the women in the world to improve their abilities on every possibility they have on themselves.

3. By reading this final project, it is expected that the readers will understand the stereotypes of Chinese women in *The Joy Luck Club* novel and be encouraged to make deeper literary research on women stereotype.

F.   Organization of the Study

The final project is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is introduction which contains the background of study, the limitation of the study, the problem formulation, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, and the organization of the study. The second chapter is reviews of related literature, which consists of two sub-chapters. They are synopsis of *The Joy Luck Club* novel and related literature. The third chapter contains the research method which consists of types of research, data organizing, and analyzing the data. The fourth chapter presents findings and discussions of the data analysis that solves the problem formulation. The fifth chapter contains the conclusion and the suggestion.