

**LANGUAGE AND GENDER :**  
**ANALYSIS OF MARGARET THATCHER'S QUOTES**

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**Abstract**

Language style is the entity of a speaker. There are many factors that influence one's language style, such as: gender, social status, educational background, etc. Both of men and women have their own characteristic and behavior in the society so it can make them become different in some aspect, especially in the way they use a language. It means gender influence one's language style. Men and women have different role and status in the society. The way of their thought and then represent it into a language is also different. This article describes about analysis of Margaret Thatcher's quotes. Most of Margaret Thatcher's quotes shows that she uses more Men's language than Women's language. It means that women do not automatically use the feminin language. It depends on some factors.

**Abstrak**

Gaya bahasa menunjukkan identitas seorang pembicara. Ada beberapa faktor yang mempengaruhi gaya bahasa seseorang, seperti: gender, status sosial, latar belakang pendidikan, dll. Baik laki-laki maupun perempuan memiliki karakteristik dan sifat mereka sendiri di masyarakat sehingga hal tersebut membuat perbedaan dalam beberapa aspek, contohnya dalam cara mereka menggunakan bahasa. Laki dan perempuan memiliki aturan dan status yang berbeda dalam masyarakat. Artikel ini memaparkan tentang analisis petikan kata dari Margaret Thatcher. Kebanyakan petikan kata dari Margaret Thatcher menunjukkan bahwa dia lebih banyak menggunakan bahasa laki-laki daripada bahasa feminin. Itu berarti bahwa perempuan tidak secara otomatis menggunakan bahasa feminin. Itu tergantung beberapa faktor.

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Gender and sex, although closely interwoven, are two different concepts.

reflects both outer physical differences (outer sex organs, secondary sexual characteristics, height, muscularity or amount of bodily hair) and inner physical differences like internal reproducing system, brain organization and hormone level (which to some degree may affect

behaviour and psychological condition: male sex hormone testosterone is believed to be responsible for aggression; female sex hormones oestrogens and progesterone responsible for sensitivity and also depression). One final inner difference that is to some degree important for sociolinguistics is the size of larynx. The size of larynx affects the pitch of voice; women, as well as children, usually have a "higher" voice than men. Some feminist scholars claim that it is one

of the reasons why women are stereotyped as powerless in a male-dominated society (Chambers, 2008, p.120).

Apparently, those sex differences are too few and minor for a serious linguistic comparison. What is then more important in sociolinguistics is the notion of gender. Gender is a sociological concept, which can be viewed as an accomplishment. People by their (linguistic) behaviour produce rather than reflect their gender identities (Lazar, 2005, p. 12). Gender is not a given characteristic, it is an acquired attribute. Sex is created prenatally and gender postnatally. It is something that is shaped by the expectations of society that surrounds people and is also created by people. Hailiang (2010) defines it as “the relation between men and women, both perceptual and material. Gender is not determined biologically, as a result of sexual characteristics of either women or men, but is constructed socially. It is a central organizing principle of societies, and often governs the processes of production and reproduction, consumption and distribution” (p. 126). Gender is an ideological concept, set of beliefs that people use for explaining and justifying their participation in gender order and gender inequalities (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003, p. 35).

Since the beginning of linguistic and later sociolinguistic discussion, there have always been noted differences between the language use of men and women, no matter how poor empirical evidence of those differences existed. One of the first examples of this discussion can be found in Otto Jespersen’s *Language: Its Nature, Development, and Origin* (1922, cited from Cameron, 2003). He asserts that “...women exercise a great and universal influence on linguistic development through their instinctive shrinking from coarse and vulgar expression and their preference for refined and (in certain spheres) veiled and indirect expressions” (p.449). The issue of women’s use of language became even more pressing in the 1970s. As Cheshire and Gardner-Chloros (1998) say, in the vast amount of linguistic research occurred a slight but steady pattern in women’s more frequent use of standard or “correct” variables than in men’s of the same socioeconomic class (p.5).

In this paper, the Margaret Thatcher’s quotes will be analyzed. **Margaret Thatcher** was the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1979 to 1990 and the Leader of the Conservative Party from 1975 to 1990. She was the longest-serving British Prime Minister of the 20th century and is the only woman to have held the office. A

Soviet journalist called her the "Iron Lady", a nickname that became associated with her uncompromising politics and leadership style. Her languages was powerful in many event. She also said many powerful qoutes. In this study, the Margaret Thatcher's qoutes was analyzed based on the theory of gender language.

The aims of this paper are to find the answers to these questions:

1. Do gender the main feature influence the language behaviour of Margaret Thatcher's qoutes?
2. Is Margaret Thatcher more linguistically polite than men?

## I. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Women and men do not speak in exactly the same way as each other in the community (Holmes, 1995: 164). Both of men and women have their own characteristic and behavior in the society so it can make them become different in some aspect, especially in the way they use a language. There are many factors that caused the difference of language that used by men and women. Men and women have different role and status in the society. The way of their thought and then represent it into a language is also different. Holmes in her sociolinguistics research found that the sex difference in a language is one aspect of linguistic difference in the society

reflecting social status or power difference. Both men and women use the different language in order to show their power and place in the society. Those are difference in the choice of word, vocabulary, and grammar used.

Gender differences in language use have been interpreted in various studies by three main approaches: dominance, deficit and difference.

**Dominance** is the approach Lakoff applies in her thesis (1973). As has already been mentioned above, she describes women's language as tentative, lacking power and authority, both reflecting and sustaining the subordinate position of women. It is also connected with face needs. The claim is that powerless members of society (usually women) use more prestigious forms to protect their faces and at the same time pay attention to faces of others (Cheshire and Gardner-Chloros, 1998, p.9). Cameron (1992) cites O'Barr and Atkins who claim that women's language has been wrongly named, since it is not a gender marker but a social marker (p.15). This means that the dominance approach claims that women speak the way they speak not because they are women but because they live under the men's dominance. In is not necessarily the language of women, it is rather the language of the group with the lack of

power in society. In her essay on tag questions (1992), Cameron builds on this assertion, showing that relying only on gender would bring us to too reductive results. Therefore, it is not simply gender but rather speakers' complex social position that matters most (p.24).

Lakoff's linguistic features (cited in Holmes 2001: 286) which serve as distinct markers of women's speech style, are a group of phonological, lexical and syntactical features. This group includes:

1. lexical hedges or fillers (e.g. you know, well, you see);
2. tag questions (e.g. She's very nice, isn't she?);
3. rising intonation on declaratives (e.g. It's really good?); ,,
4. empty" adjectives (e.g. divine, charming, cute);
5. precise colour terms (e.g. magenta, aquamarine);
6. minimal responses (e.g. yes, mhm, yeah);
7. intensifiers, such as just and so (e.g. I like him so much);
8. hypercorrect grammar (e.g. consistent use of standard verb

forms); (super) polite forms (e.g. indirect requests, euphemisms);

9. avoidance of strong swear words (e.g. fudge, my goodness);
10. and emphatic stress (e.g. it was a BRILLIANT2 performance).

Note: Whereas women use direct quotations, men paraphrase more often. Men and women have special lexicons. Whereas women have more words for colours, men have more words for sports. Women speak less frequently than men. Women lack a sense of humour and can't tell jokes.

These gender-specific features can be categorized into two groups:

1. "hedging devices which reduce the strength of an utterance, such as fillers, tag questions and rising intonation on declaratives;
2. and boosting or intensifying devices used to increase the force of an utterance, such as emphatic stress and intensifiers" (Holmes 2001: 287). According to Lakoff, both hedging and boosting devices signal the speaker's uncertainty, tentativeness, unassertiveness, lack of authority and self-confidence.

The **deficit** approach is to some degree similar. This approach is mostly applied to the explanation of women's higher use of standard forms and polite formulas. The proposition is that women by their more refined use of language somehow compensate for their shortcoming or try to improve their less than secure social position. Unlike men, who are judged by their occupation or earning abilities, women are judged by their appearance (Chambers, 2008, 143). The way they speak is one of the ways their status can be confirmed or even improved.

The **difference** approach was introduced by Malz and Borker (1982, cited from Bucholtz, 2003, p.49) and has been widely popularized by Deborah Tannen, for example in her book *You Just Don't Understand* (1990). This approach builds on the assertion that girls' and boys' early socialization is not identical. Their play patterns are distinctively different. Boys' groups are bigger, hierarchically structured and competitive. For them, language is a way to gain and maintain status. Girls' groups are smaller (often only two "best friends"), cooperative and supportive. Language is a tool for creating and preserving good relationships. Boys and girls learn how to communicate in their same-sex peer groups and this creates

the difference in their speaking patterns. They develop different verbal cultures. However, an important aspect of this approach emphasizes that neither men's language nor women's language is better or worse. This approach is careful not to put women in a position of victims and refuse to admit all the difference between men and women to male's dominance. This is also a reason why this approach is criticized, especially by feminist scholars (Bucholtz, 2003, p. 49).

The first two approaches are not favourable to women. It is often noted how startling it is that although women show "better" language behaviour, it is still considered as the behaviour pattern that needs explanation. In other words, men's behaviour is unmarked, while women's is marked (Bolinger, 1980, p.90-1). Men's use of language is taken as a norm and anything else is considered a deviation. This is not really surprising when accepting the dominance approach; "normal" is always what the powerful group represents and "different" or even "wrong" what subordinate group represents. There was a shift with the third approach, the difference approach, as it is trying to be more impartial, claiming that there is a difference but both women's and men's use of language are equal and just as much valuable.

In 1990s, a new approach appeared that has been later adopted in many popular books and by advertisement companies. It claims that women have an advantage over men and that they are actually superior language users and that men are linguistically unskilled and deficit speakers and often have to face serious consequences out of it.

Women are presented as model speakers, as a goal to achieve. Men's lack of interaction and sympathy, inability to create rapport, to listen and to share feelings and emotions with others can result in unhappiness, unemployment or educational underachievement (Cameron, 2003, p.453-8). An old stereotype of talkative, emotion-sharing woman remains; however, in the earlier view it was a negative evaluation of women, and in this "**new deficit approach**" the stereotype has gained a new, positive value. Talbot (2003) points out that those new stereotypes are as reductive and problematic as the old ones, the only difference is that they place women and men rather differently (p.481). In sociolinguistics, nothing should be taken for granted or attempted to make generalisations about. What is important for any analysis is to take gender into consideration with other sociological factors like age, class or social

environment and then try to investigate any linguistic situation in its contexts (i.e. to take into consideration also Halliday's concepts of field, tenor and mode: what the subject matter spoken about is, who the participants are and what the channel is).

Finally, Professor Tanne discussed language and gender in her book "You Just Don't Understand", published in 1990. She summarized her book in an article in which she states that there are a series of contrasts between the ways in which males and females communicate.

**a. Status vs. support**

Tannen claims that men grow up in a world in which conversation is competitive and therefore strive to ensure that others don't dominate them. Women however, use conversation to gain support and confirmation rather than status.

**b. Independence vs. intimacy**

Tannen claims that due to the fact that men are concerned with status, they focus more on independence. Women, on the other hand, think in terms of intimacy, seeking support and closeness from their partner.

**c. Advice vs. understanding**

Men like to find solutions whereas women seek sympathy and understanding. Whilst a man might seek to find a way of solving a problem that their wife or

girlfriend might have, Tannen claims that what the wife or girlfriend really wants is sympathy.

**d. Information vs. feelings**

Men exchange information briefly, for example in a telephone conversation to arrange a meeting. However, women will spend an hour on the telephone talking about feelings and emotions.

**e. Orders vs. proposals**

Tannen claims that men make orders by using more direct imperatives whilst women suggest things in more indirect ways.

**f. Conflict vs. compromise**

Whilst men are more likely to voice their opposition to a suggestion in the workplace or home, according to Tannen, women are less likely to object and assert themselves. They might delay their opposition to the suggestions and complain later.

**II. DISCUSSION**

**A. THE ANALYSIS OF MARGARET THATCHER'S QUOTES**

There are many powerful quotes of Margaret Thatcher in many events. The following are the analysis of some of the Margaret Thatcher's quotes

1. *"In politics, If you want anything said, ask a man. If you want anything done, ask a woman."*

In this quote, Margaret Thatcher talks about gender-roles, gender-stereotypes, men, women.

2. *"Being powerful is like being a lady. If you have to tell people you are, you aren't."*

From the quote above, it can be concluded that Margaret Thatcher did not afraid discuss about power which always be talked by men. In this case, she talks about appearances, power.

3. *"Look at a day when you are supremely satisfied at the end. It's not a day when you lounge around doing nothing; it's a day you've had everything to do and you've done it."*

Margaret Thatcher talks about accomplishment, achievement, challenge in this quotes.

4. *"I am extraordinarily patient, provided I get my own way in the end."*

In this quote, she talks about patience, perseverance.

5. *"I always cheer up immensely if an attack is particularly wounding because I think, well, if they attack one personally, it means they have not a single political argument left."*

Margaret Thatcher try to give humor in her statement but she also talks inspirational, politics, slander, wisdom.

6. *"When I'm out of politics I'm going to run a business, it'll be called rent-a-spine"*

In this quote, she also talks about politics through humor.

7. *I'm back... and you knew I was coming. On my way here I passed a cinema with the sign 'The Mummy Returns'."*

Same as the previous quotes, in this quotes, she also talks about politics through humor.

8. *"Don't follow the crowd, let the crowd follow you."*

In this quote, Margaret Thatcher talks about leadership.

9. *"To those waiting with bated breath for that favorite media catchphrase, the U-turn, I have*

*only this to say, 'You turn if you want; the lady's not for turning.'*"

Margaret show stubbornness in this quote, while Tannen claims that due to the fact that men are concerned with status, they focus more on independence. Women, on the other hand, think in terms of intimacy, seeking support and closeness from their partner.

10. *"If you set out to be liked, you would be prepared to compromise on anything at any time, and you would achieve nothing."*  
~ Margaret Thatcher"

As the previous quotes, she shows her freedom in this quote.

## B. THE FINDING

Based on the Lakoff's theory, women lack a sense of humor and can't tell jokes. But from the 10 Margaret Thatcher's quotes, there are 3 quotes that express humor. It means that Margaret prefers to use Male language.

In addition, based on the Deborah Tannen theory, women think in terms of intimacy, seeking support and closeness from their partner. But Margaret Thatcher's quotes show about her independence or freedom in some of her quotes.

Whilst men are more likely to voice their opposition to a suggestion in



the workplace or home, according to Tannen, women are less likely to object and assert themselves. They might delay their opposition to the suggestions and complain later. In her quotes, Margaret Thatcher show that she prefer to have conflict than to compromise.

### III. CONCLUSION

Most of Margaret Thatcher's quotes shows that she uses more Men's language than Women's language because she uses the words that show independency, freedom, conflict, and sometimes she uses humor. It means that women do not automatically use the feminin language. It depends on the background of education, social status and some other factors that can influence someone in using the language.

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