

DISSIMILARITY: FEATURES OF WOMAN'S LANGUAGE CAUSED BY ALZHEIMER DISEASE IN 'THE NOTEBOOK'

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Abstrak

Studi ini berkaitan dengan perbedaan cara bicara karakter wanita utama di film *The Notebook* (2004) yang menderita penyakit Alzheimer sehubungan dengan teori ciri bahasa perempuan yang diusulkan oleh Lakoff (1973). Tujuan utamanya adalah membandingkan kemampuan bahasa subjek, Allison Hamilton, sebelum dan setelah ia menderita penyakit Alzheimer. Setelah menganalisis data, dapat ditemukan bahwa hanya ada tujuh ciri yang digunakan oleh kedua Allison muda dan Allison tua di film *The Notebook*. Namun, apabila dikaitkan dengan kondisi Allison tua yang menderita penyakit Alzheimer, perbedaan dalam bagaimana menerapkan teori Lakoff ini sebagian besar terlihat pada tiga fitur yang dikenal sebagai *hedging devices*, *intensifiers* dan *'hypercorrect' grammar*. Hal ini terjadi karena Allison cenderung menjadi karakter diri yang ragu dan tidak aman karena lupa akan sejarah hidupnya sendiri dan bahkan tidak mengenal orang-orang di sekelilingnya, terutama yang terdekat, suaminya. Selain itu, lingkungan dan kemampuannya dapat mempengaruhi Allison tua dalam menggunakan fitur bahasa perempuan.

Kata Kunci: bahasa wanita, penyakit Alzheimer, kemampuan bahasa, perbedaan.

Abstract

This study deals with the speech dissimilarity of main woman character who suffers from Alzheimer's disease in *The Notebook* (2004) movie relating to the theory of women's language features proposed by Lakoff (1973). The main purpose is comparing the language skill of the subject, Allison Hamilton, before and after suffering from Alzheimer's disease. After examining the data, it can be found that there are only seven features used by both young and old Allison in *The Notebook* movie. However, if it is related to the condition of old Allison who suffers from Alzheimer's disease, the differences in how to apply Lakoff's theory are mostly visible in three features which are known as *hedging devices*, *intensifiers* and *'hypercorrect' grammar*. This occurs because Allison tends to be a self-doubting character who forgets her own history and, even, does not recognize people around her, especially the closest one, her husband. Besides her surroundings and ability may influence old Allison in using the features of women's language.

Keywords: women's language, Alzheimer's disease, language skill, dissimilarity.

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INTRODUCTION

As a means of communication, language is the most unavoidable aspect that plays a significant role in human's life, since the function is used to facilitate people conveying what they think and feel (Krauss & Chiu, 1997: 41). If it is related to personal use, basically every people have their own way to use the language to differentiate themselves with others. While in terms of sociology, a person may possibly develop speech like other persons in any certain circumstances and situation

(Holmes, 1992:9). The condition when people speak the same language or use the same dialect or variety shows that language is essential for both individual and society. For instance, people tend to employ the same code in order to respect the same speech community. This is performed to maintain the relationship between the speaker and interlocutor which is easily built or broken by communicating.

In a speech community, male and female speakers who participate in a conversation should be treated equally, though it is known from previous linguistic

research that men and women's language are different. The differences between men and women speech happen as a result of their dissimilar subcultures. They grow up in different customs and ideas within society. The socialization process involving family, friends, school, or relatives will influence their masculinity and femininity. In her book *That's not What I Meant*, Tannen (1986) reveals that culture is part of past experiences producing distinct habits and patterns between men and women as a consequence of the way they are treated, to whom they are spoken to and the topic they are talked about from the time they were born (p.109). The linguistic skills obtained by people in their childhood will give impacts to the way they speak, communicate and socialize with others to reflect their gender. For example, some researches show that women interact with their interlocutors to make a connection. On the other hand, men use their language to give and gain information from others. It is owing to their young days experiences when girls always play in small groups or in pairs not to find which one is the winner or loser, but to build a new community which has a strong relationships that will possibly be exist in their adulthood. However, boy's games are more competitive, concerning to the winning and losing to prove who the best is. This case actually affects the developing of group's structures. The one who is stronger and braver will have a chance to give order to the others.

The distinction communication between the sexes has been one of interesting fields to be discussed as yet. Troutman and Robinson (1995) value men's language as powerful, serious and direct, while women's speech is more polite, uncertain, unimportant and euphemistic as a means of keeping in touch, relating to social functions (p. 209). Since women's participation in conversation tends to be more visible, it is worthy to concentrate on feature of women's speech. As it is explained in past research that women often form one female group and share one recent topic or common social event. From this manner, their speech style can be described as women's cooperative speech style, one of women's speech characteristic. However, as stated by Lakoff (1973), there are numerous characteristics of women's language and the ways how women speak one to another. In her view, female speech expresses tentativeness and uncertainty because of the extensive use of certain linguistic devices (p.45). For example, the frequent use of hedge, such as *I guess* or *I mean* is pretended to "give the impression that the speaker lacks authority" (Lakoff, 2004:79).

In relation to women's language theory, this analysis concerns only on the speech of the main woman character in *The Notebook* movie, then it is related to her linguistic skill after suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

The point of the study is comparing the linguistic skill of the main woman character before and after she suffers from Alzheimer's disease. While discussing linguistic skill, it is known that the ability of human to speak and to understand speech requires the most important organ in human body, the brain. The brain has duty to process and manage the information about many thousands of words, the syntactic constructions and their interconnections, not only to get the meanings but also to help people recognize the sounds of speech and to move the muscles of mouth to produce speech. Besides the brain also gives human power to read and write as well as to learn and acquire new knowledge and skills.

In addition the human brain is certainly responsible for all thoughts, minds and movements of the body. There are many parts of the brain having unique functions to allow humans interacting with their environment and also communicating with others. The brain's part which has obligation to handle language is located in left hemisphere. This is the logical brain responsible for words, logic, numbers, analysis, lists, linearity, sequence and controlling the right side of human body ("Brain Hemisphere," n.d.). There are two certain areas directly dealing with language, Wernicke's area and Broca's area. The relation between the structures of the brain and language production is studied in a branch of linguistics, called neurolinguistics.

As it is known that brain is the most important organ that controls and connects with every single part of human body. If the brain is not working properly, the ability of moving, processing information, speaking and understanding language can be damaged as well. There are many diseases that can harm the brain functions, one of them is Alzheimer's disease. According to Alzheimer's Association (2012), Alzheimer is a disease of the brain that causes problems with memory, thinking and behavior. A person who is diagnosed with the disease will become confused, lost in familiar places, misplace things or have trouble with language. Since the disease triggers the nerve cell death and tissue loss in the brain, the brain will shrink and disturb all its function.

Sooner or later Alzheimer's patient usually has difficulties in conversation, such as forgetting the words to be used. This is clearly different with a healthy person. Based on Lakoff's (1973) theory, women tend to use certain words included in ten features of women's language, especially when they are in healthy conditions. This phenomena will become interesting to be analyzed. In this research, the subject is only one person that is in *The Notebook* movie, Allison Hamilton. The main purpose is comparing the language skill of healthy woman and woman Alzheimer's patient in relations to women's language features revealed by Lakoff (1973).

WOMEN'S LANGUAGE

Since the main topic of the study discusses the speech of the main woman character in *The Notebook* (2004) movie, it is necessary to explain about the most influential theory on women's language developed by Lakoff (1973). She explains that women use the language to completely hide their personal identity which is known powerless, trivial and uncertain in the subject-matter (Lakoff, 1973:48). For example, women tend to use hedging and boosting modifiers to show the lack of women power in a mixed-sex interaction. While the hedges represent hesitation, boosters, on the other hand, make a statement stronger with the assumption that a woman would not be taken seriously otherwise.

Based on Lakoff works, Holmes (1992) summarizes and provides a list of ten linguistic features which characterize women's speech (p.314). In her book, it is explained that Lakoff's claims are based on her own insights and experiences which, then, is assured by some researches because the features seem so specific and easy to observe. Holmes (1992) divides the list of features into two groups. First category is 'linguistic devices which may be used for hedging or reducing the force of an utterance,' such as fillers, tag questions, and rising intonation on declaratives, and the other one is 'features which may boost or intensify a proposition's force' (p. 287), such as emphatic stress and intensifiers. Here are the lists:

1. Lexical Hedges or Fillers

As stated by Yule, people use various expressions to indicate uncertainty of what they are saying. Actually, this is the best way to survey how a cooperative interaction is in English (Yule, 1996:38). Expressions like these are called hedges. Hedges are words or phrases that make statements less forceful or assertive. People use hedges like to reduce the power of their utterances. This is one of features regularly associated with female speech. Mainly, women use hedges to respect their partner's speech because they often talk about highly sensitive and impersonal (Coates, 1986: 112). Common hedges are *I think, I guess, I'm sure, I mean, you know, well, kind of, sort of, perhaps, it seems* and even *like* that is now frequently used by younger speaker (Coates, 1986: 102).

2. Tag Questions

Tag question is a question added to a declarative sentence, usually at the end, to engage the listener. According to Downing (2006), tag questions are not independent clauses, but they do require a response, and are highly interactive. Structurally, interrogatives are abbreviated yes-no interrogatives consisting of an

auxiliary (either positive or negative) and a pronoun, which repeats the subject or substitutes for it. The tag question is usually placed after a statement separated by a comma. Despite women use tag question to express affective meaning, the feature is also applied as a signals of uncertainty, verifying that something has been understood or confirm an information (Weatherall, 2002:57).

3. Rising Intonation on Declaratives

Sentence function basically indicates the purpose of a sentence, rather than sentence form that indicates how it is put together. Declarative sentences are the most common and basic function which express an idea or statement of fact, while interrogative sentences are those that ask a question. A declarative statement which are commonly used in informal speech to express surprise or ask for verification, known as declarative question. The most likely response to a declarative question is agreement or confirmation. Based on Todd and Hancock's (1986) point of view, a declarative question has the form of a statement, but has the intonation of a question when spoken and is marked by a question mark in writing.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (in *Language and Gender*, 2003:151) discuss the use of questioning intonation on statements, often termed uptalk or upspeak. They suggest that the high-rise terminal is often analyzed as a signal that those who use it do not know what they are talking about, since the statements are transformed by this intonation pattern into what sound like questions. Rather than accepting this negative view of uptalk, Eckert and McConnell suggest that questioning intonation may simply signal that the person is not giving the final word on the matter, that they open to the topic continuing, or even that they are not yet ready to cede their turn.

4. 'Empty' Adjectives

There are a number of adjectives that are mainly confined to women's speech. Women tend to use words such as *adorable, charming, sweet, lovely, dear* and *divine* more often than men do. However, there are also neutral adjectives which are available to both sexes, such as *great, terrific, cool* and *neat*. According to Lakoff, women words are potential to damage men reputation if they use them, but, the other way, women may use the neutral words without restraint. An adjective is called 'empty', if it is conveying emotional reaction rather than informational content. In this case, the word choice made by women will show their personality and determine their intention regarding subject matter (Lakoff, 1973:51-52).

5. Precise Color Terms

Women are keen on creating more color names, such as *beige*, *ecru*, *aquamarine*, *lavender*, and so on. The words are normal in women's vocabulary, but not for the most men. For example, if there are man and woman who are looking at the same wall with a pinkish shade of purple, the woman may directly say '*The wall is mauve*', with no one care about her statement. In contrast, if the man says the statement, people will definitely judge him as a effeminate man or a homosexual or an interior decorator, since it is not common for man stating that 'woman' word. Men find those descriptions of color trivial and irrelevant to the real world. She also elucidates that discrimination of color is more appropriate for women. It is because men, in our society, usually talk about 'unworldly' topic, such as high culture and the Church. Men is inclined to demote the women things that they are not concerning to, or do not involve their egos. Among these are problems of fine color discrimination (Lakoff, 1973:49).

6. Intensifiers

Intensifier is a word, especially an adverb or adjective, which has little meaning itself but is used to emphasize to another words or phrases. It is also known as booster. Lakoff (1973) states that women uses intensive *so* frequently than men. She explains that *so* is found particularly in the speech of male academics. However, there are also other intensifiers stated by her, such as *very*, *really*, *utterly* as more typical of women. However, women use *so* instead of *very* in sentences for the functions of emphasizing, amplifying, and pointing up (pp. 53-54).

7. 'Hypercorrect' Grammar (Standard Language)

Women use more grammatically correct speech than males. Studies have been done which show that women will pronounce the full form of the ending "ing" for example 'singing' vs. the male form 'singin' (Fisher, as cited in Fasold, 1990). Another study found that men delete or reduce final consonant clusters that serve grammatical functions more often than women (Wolfram, as cited in Smith, 1985).

8. 'Superpolite' Forms

Politeness has a very important social function and its use varies from culture to culture. Holmes (1995) gives a few examples, such as greeting people, complimenting, apologizing, giving encouraging, feedback, hedging directives, using first names, using formal titles and using gentle voice (p. 10). It is supported by Lakoff's (1973) claim that women's speech is much more polite than men's (p. 56). There are some points that describe women's politeness explained before.

Women tend to leave a decision open, in which they let people to give opinion, not imposing their claim. Then, a tag question also shows that women do not want to force agreement to the addressee. Relating to a request, women may choose to use a polite command instead of overt order which will show the speaker's superior position to the addressee. Even, they also use please and thank you more often in the beginning or final statement.

9. Avoidance of Strong Swear Words

Other feature of women's language is in terms of referential lexical items which is only directed to the choice of 'meaningless' matter, such as swear word. Lakoff (1973) claims that the stronger swear words are used by men and weaker ones are reserved for women. An example of a strong expletive would be 'shit' as compared to 'oh dear' used by women. If a person is asked to guess which sentence is spoken by man and by woman, he/she will definitely answer that woman uses the first sentence, although in some cases, women may use the second sentence publicly. Therefore, it can be assumed that men's language is likely being used by woman, but women's language is not easy to be adopted by men, since they still concern with the masculinity (Lakoff, 1973:50).

10. Emphatic Stress

Emphatic stress may be used in the sentence, usually to compare, correct, or clarify things. Emphatic stress singles out the word that the speaker considers the most important, and in this case even a function word may become stressed. Fromkin, Roadman and Hyams (2009:79) reveal that words classes belonging to functions words are prepositions, pronouns, determiners, conjunctions, auxiliary verbs and particles. However, according to Lakoff (1973), women often italicize or emphasize the adjective words while they give their opinions (p. 72). For example: *It was a BRILLIANT performance.*

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Alzheimer's disease is an illness of the brain. It brings large numbers of nerve cells in the brain to die. The brain will be getting smaller followed by disruption of all functions because it is covering thinking, planning and remembering areas. Alzheimer's Association (2012) illuminates that plaque and tangle are being the main suspects that cause nerve cell death and tissue loss in Alzheimer's disease. Plaques are strange protein clump which grows larger between nerve cells and tangles appear in the dead and dying nerve cells which is carried by another protein fibers. In the beginning stage, the plaques and tangles appear in the brain areas that control

learning and memory as well as thinking and planning. Then, in the next level, they become larger and interfere the patient's work or social life, since he or she develop problems with memory and thinking serious enough. Even, they also reach the areas which arrange the ability of speaking and understanding speech along with the sense of body in relation to familiar places and object. The last stage is the worst one because it causes the patients cannot communicate with others, recognize the family and care themselves.

Alzheimer's disease can cause memory loss, confusion and other symptoms associated with dementia. In accordance with daily life, the disease may affects a person to become lost in familiar places, misplace things or have trouble with language. The Alzheimer's Association (2012) mentions 10 warning signs of Alzheimer's disease in its educational brochure that explores completely about Alzheimer's disease. One of the signs is loss of the ability to use words in speaking and writing. It is explained that Alzheimer's patients may have difficulties while following or joining a conversation. For example, they may stop in the middle of a conversation, have no idea how to continue or they may repeat the speech they have said before. It is relating to the vocabulary usage in which they have problems finding the right word or call things by the wrong name, such as calling a 'watch' with a 'hand clock' (Alzheimer's Association, 2012:10). This case is in line with Obler and Gjerlow's (1999) claims that while dealing with language production and comprehension abilities analysis in dementing patients, the researcher should pay attention to the boundaries between syntax and semantics and among semantics, real world knowledge, and reasoning abilities.

In other discussion, Obler and Gjerlow (1999) utter that one of Wernicke's two patient which suffered Wernicke's aphasia was a dementing patient. The reason is patients with both Wernicke's aphasia and Alzheimer's dementia mention empty words, such as 'this' and 'the thing', and also the trivial phrases in their speech which is hard to be understood. Generally, the dementing patient has more inability to encode meanings, the relation between cognitive and language. Thus, to differentiate the patient with Wernicke's aphasia and Alzheimer's dementia, it is not sufficient to see only the language problems, but also the history of cognitive and behavioral disturbances. If the patient suffers both language and cognitive impairment, it can be assumed that it is an Alzheimer's dementia case. This is supported by the study of Stevens (1991) which clarifies that Aphasia's patients may sometimes give an imperfect response, although they seem produce phonemic paraphasia, i.e. the change of one or two phonemes in the word and neurologisms, i.e.

groups of phonemes that sound like words but cannot be identified with any possible target. On the other hand, Alzheimer's patients tend to not respond, provide inappropriate responses, or perhaps repeat the previous responses.

METHOD

The study utilizes a textual analysis for the reason that it is a qualitative research. The method is chosen because the study examined the speech of the main woman character which was taken from the transcript of *The Notebook*. The use of this method is supported by Silverman (2010:55) who argues that qualitative research studies are precisely analyzed with textual analysis, since they are mainly concerned with organizing and categorizing large amounts of information. He also claims that textual analysis method requires the researcher to limit the materials, perhaps by only taking a few texts or parts of texts. Using this method, researcher may effectively work by analyzing only the requisite data.

Since the subject is the main woman character of *The Notebook* movie, Allison Hamilton who is suffering from Alzheimer's disease in her old age, the data employed in this study are sentences, phrases or words spoken by Allison. To get the required data, the researcher sorted out the main woman character's speech from the transcript of *The Notebook* movie. The next step was classifying the speech based on Lakoff's (1973) claim about ten features of women's language. Subsequently, the data was divided into two different scenes, i.e. young Allison and old Allison. It was performed because the study compared the speech of Allison before and after she is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. Then, it was continued by finding what features of women's language proposed by Lakoff (1973) which still exist in the speech of old Allison. The aim is to identify how Alzheimer's disease affects the language skill of the main woman character who suffers from that disease. It concerned with the way she uses her language and the way she communicate with others.

FINDINGS

In this study, the data is analyzed based on Lakoff's (1973) list of ten linguistic features which characterize women's speech. For the explanation, it compares the speech of young and old Allison containing the same feature. It aims to explore how Alzheimer's disease influence the main woman character while applying the women language theory. In addition, the situation when the features are used is also observed so that the explanation becomes clearer.

1. Lexical Hedges of Fillers

The use of lexical fillers or hedges happens quite often in the speech of Allison. Several hedges found in the movie are items such as *well, I guess, you know, kind of, I just, you see, perhaps and I think*. Both young and old Allison applies hedges to reflect a lack of confidence, show uncertainty or make the statement less forceful. *Well* is frequently used by young Allison which appears in 10 out of 20 sentences, whereas old Allison frequently mentions *I think* in her speech that is in 3 out of 8 sentences. Here is the sample:

| Conversation | |
|--|--|
| Young Allison | Old Allison |
| 20:39 Allie : Well , it's a good idea, that poetry. Mr. Calhoun : Yeah, I thought so. | 01:40:57 Allie : Well , who did all of this? Noah : I did, with a little help from my friends on the nursing staff. |

While applying the hedge, young Allison is in an informal situation wherein she has conversation with Noah's father for the first time. In response to Mr. Calhoun's story about the trick to cure Noah's stutter in his childhood, she says "**Well**, it's a good idea, that poetry". Although her utterance means that she supports and agrees with Mr. Calhoun, she uses *well* as an opener to reflect her anxiety over her opinion since she does not want to hurt Noah's heart in relation to his speech disorder. However, the utterance '**Well**, who did all of this?' is spoken by old Allison when she feels surprise since Noah has already prepared romantic dinner for them. She adds *well* in her question to show a sense of shock over what is done by Noah. She may think that Noah does not need to do that because they do not have any relationship. This is known that old Allison is suffering from Alzheimer's disease and does not recognize Noah as her husband.

2. Tag Questions

Other feature often used by young and old Allison is tag question. Both of them apply two types of tag question that can easily be recognized in 17 sentences. The first type is single word form, such as '*..., okay?*', '*..., huh?*' and '*..., right?*'. Other form is standard English tag question which is made up of an auxiliary verb and a pronoun, they are '*..., don't you?*', '*..., are ya?*', '*..., was it?*', '*..., aren't I?*', '*..., are we?*', '*..., doesn't she?*', '*..., wasn't it?*', '*..., didn't we?*' and '*..., didn't they?*'. In this feature, young and old Allison have the same purpose while adding tag questions to their speech that is to express uncertainty and ask for confirmation. The sample is described below:

| Conversation | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Young Allison | Old Allison |
| 01:03:18 | 01:12:42 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Allie : I love you. I'm going to be back from Seabrook in a couple of days, okay? | Allie : You know, I think I'll run on up and take my afternoon nap, all right? |
| Lon : Seabrook? | Nurse : Come on, honey, let's go. |

Young Allison applies this feature when she has conversation with Lon. The utterance '*I love you. I'm going to be back from Seabrook in a couple of days, okay?*' shows that she implicitly asks his permission to go to Seabrook, a place which is far from their hometown. She adds tag question at the end of her sentence in order to make sure that Lon will agree with her plan. She actually is not confident in saying the statement to her fiancé because she never goes out of the city without him, since they were together. Besides she uses '*..., okay?*' to soften her words so that it does not seem like a force.

Meanwhile, old Allison uses '*..., all right?*' in her sentence for the reason that she hesitates the correctness of her statement. If taking a look at the utterance '*You know, I think I'll run on up and take my afternoon nap, all right?*', she applies not only tag question, but also other feature of women's language, i.e. hedges, in the beginning of the sentence. Since both tag questions and hedges have function to reflect doubt, so it means that she indirectly asks for permission to leave the conversation. Her uncertainty becomes clearer, because the statement above is uttered by old Allison not long after she agrees to meet Noah's children, which is known as her children as well. As an Alzheimer's patient, it is normal if she changes her mood faster, moreover, when she feels unfamiliar with the people around her.

3. Rising Intonation on Declaratives

For this features, Allison says 49 declarative statements in rising intonation to change the function to be question. The statements are not only sentence, but also single word and phrase. In the movie, young Allison rises her intonation on 23 complete sentence, on the contrary, old Allison mostly utters a single word in rising intonation. This occurs because Alzheimer's disease suffered by old Allison make her difficult to create or speak a complete sentence which consists of a subject, a verb and an object or complement. The samples are elucidated below:

| Conversation | |
|---|--|
| Young Allison | Old Allison |
| 01:19:42 Noah : I wrote you 365 letters. I wrote you every day for a year. Allie : You wrote me? | 01:47:09 Allie : Remember that story you were reading to me? Noah : Why, yes. |

While rising the intonation of her statement, young Allison is debating with Noah. In her utterance 'You wrote me?', it can be seen that she is surprised to know the truth that Noah wrote a letter every day for 365 days for her. The scene tells that she is angry because Noah never contacts her after their separation. She considers Noah just playing with her love. Her aim in using this feature is to show uncertainty her since she does not receive a single letter sent by Noah until that moment. A bit different, old Allison has only intention to change her statement to be a question while applying this feature. She does not truly rise her intonation when she asks Noah 'Remember that story you were reading to me?'. It can be happen because she does not want to ruin the romantic situation while dancing with Noah that will not last long. With this feature, she attempts to look for verification from Noah about her opinion

4. 'Empty' Adjectives

This is one of the restricted features to be used by women in their speech. In the movie, 'empty' adjective is used once by young Allison to express her emotional reaction. She uses this feature in order to make the conversation more intimate, since it is the first time she meet Noah's father. The whole explanation is described below:

20:15
 Allie : Oh, that was **a lovely poem**. What was it?
 Noah : El...
 Mr. Calhoun : Whitman.

Young Allison applies this feature when she is in a casual situation. The setting of that conversation is when Allison visit Noah's home at night and she accidentally listens to the poem read by Noah. From the utterance, it can be seen that young Allison wants to show the good attitude and strive to be closer to Noah's father who is been there. That is why she conveys her emotional approval of the poem by adding *lovely*, an 'empty' adjective that has function to make her word more feminine.

5. Precise Color Terms

Although the use of precise color terms is actually identical to women, there is no single Allison's speech containing this features that can be found in the movie.

6. Intensifiers

Five different intensifiers used by Allison to strengthen her opinions are found in the movie. They are items, such as *really*, *so*, *very*, *too* and *totally*. If young Allison is known applying all intensifiers in some of her utterances, however there are only 4 sentences containing intensifiers *so* or *really* spoken by old Allison. In depth,

really is commonly used by young Allison which appears in 6 out of 15 sentences, whereas the most frequently used intensifier by old Allison is *so* that can be noticed in 3 out of 4 sentences. Nonetheless, both of them have same purpose while inserting the intensifiers into their speech. They wants to emphasize what is considered important, so that the hearer will definitely pay full attention to that point. Here is the explanation:

| Conversation | |
|---|--|
| Young Allison | Old Allison |
| 01:17:24 Allie : And you really did it. Noah : What? Allie : Everything. The house... it's beautiful what you did. | 41:19 Allie : But what he really should have done is just told those parents to go to hell. Just stick it where the sun don't shine. |

The word *really* is an intensifier frequently used by young Allison. The utterance 'And you *really* did it' is said by young Allison when she is in an intimate and warm conversation with Noah. While adding *really*, she aims to emphasize the verb *did* spoken by her. Indirectly, she wants to say that she is proud of what he has done, that is, Noah builds and realizes their dream house. Meanwhile, old Allison includes *really* in her long opinion 'But what he *really* should have done is just told those parents to go to hell'. If taking a look from the sentence, she seems to disagree with the act of man in the story told by old Noah. The use of intensifier shows that she wants to stress her own suggestion to make the story more interesting.

7. 'Hypercorrect' Grammar

In the whole movie, Allison applies 'hypercorrect' grammar while talking with people around her, such as Noah, her friends, her mother, her father and so on. This happens because it is told that Allison was born into a wealthy family who had a very good manners both in communication and behave. However, there are a few non-standard English words used by her, namely forms such as *ya*, *gonna*, and *kinda*. Young Allison utters 12 sentences containing slang words that mentioned above, whereas there is only one sentence with *gonna* spoken by old Allison. The explanation will be described below:

| Conversation | |
|---|--|
| Young Allison | Old Allison |
| 13:27 Allie : Noah, what are you doing? Noah : Just come on. Allie : You're gonna get run over. | 01:53:47 Allie : I was afraid you were never coming back. Noah : I'll always come back. Allie : What's gonna happen when I can't remember anything any more? |

Young Allison is quite often converting going to into its non-standard form, *gonna*. There are 6 sentences

containing that word found in the whole movie. The utterance 'You're *gonna* get run over' is spoken by her in a stress-free situation, i.e. when she is dating with Noah. In addition to *gonna*, there is also *kinda*, the slang word of kind of, which is found in 4 sentences and two samples containing ya (you) are expressed by young Allison.

As found in young Allison's speech, there is only one question asked by old Allison to Noah in which it does not present 'hypercorrect' grammar feature: 'What's *gonna* happen when I can't remember anything any more?'. Indeed, for an Alzheimer's patient, this is quite long sentence that can be stated by her. This occurs because it is narrated in the story that she can remember everything all of a sudden, not only her past but also the way she communicates. This may be one cause in which she can easily apply the slang word in her question. Moreover, in the home care, the caregivers always speak with correct grammar so that they may communicate well with the patients. For that reason, there is no many utterances of old Allison which break Lakoff's theory.

8. 'Superpolite' Forms

Politeness in speech is one of characteristics attaching to the attitude shown by women. For this feature, Allison states six statements of apologizing and other seven instances in which 'superpolite' forms can be observed in the whole movie. She has the same purpose while applying this feature in her speech before and after she is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. She wants to show value and respect to the listener or interlocutor. The sample will be found below:

| Conversation | |
|---|--|
| Young Allison | Old Allison |
| 18:55 Allie : I'm sorry , I didn't mean to interrupt. Mr. Calhoun : Well, don't apologize, come on up here, darling. | 01:46:44 Allie : Will you tell them I love them? Noah : Of course I will. Allie : And that I'm sorry . Noah : I'll tell them, sweetheart. |

The utterance 'I'm sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt' is said by young Allison when she is coming to Noah's house without prior notice. At that time, Noah is reading a poetry for his father in the porch. Because she feels she has been disturbing the father-and-son time, she apologizes to Mr. Calhoun. Moreover, it is the first time she meets Noah's father so that she wants to show her good manners to him. Meanwhile, old Allison expresses her regret when she remembers her past all of sudden and asks about her children to Noah. She considers herself as bad mother since she does not recognize the kids who visited her at the afternoon. That is why she says an apology which is told to her husband, but addressed to her children, that is 'And that *I'm sorry*'.

9. Avoidance of Strong Swear Words

Other feature of women's language found in the movie is avoidance of strong swear words. This is used once by young Allison because she wants to show her politeness to the interlocutor. With this feature, she may control her emotional reaction even if the situation is not good. The sample is elucidated below:

50:45
Lon : If you marry me... then you will have lost a lifelong battle of defiance against them.
Allie : **Oh my goodness**, what are we going to do?
Lon : I do not know.

In her question, she adds '*Oh my goodness, ...*' which is known as 'meaningless' word representing women's language. It aims to reflect her feeling of shock towards Lon's statement. The word is said by young Allison when Lon says that she will never fight her parents anymore after marrying him. Although Lon's opinion is hard to believe, she does not use swear word while showing her hesitation in order to keep her attitude in front of her fiancé.

10. Emphatic Stress

Emphatic stress feature is numerous in *The Notebook* movie. There are total of 101 sentences which have emphatic stress in certain words. Of all sentences, 76 are uttered by young Allison and old Allison utters only 25 sentences. Both of them give stress in two kinds of word: content words (adjective, adverb, verb or noun) and function words (auxiliary verbs, preposition, pronoun, determiner, and so on). Here is one of the samples while Allison is applying this feature:

| Conversation | |
|--|--|
| Young Allison | Old Allison |
| 28:39 Allie : This place is gigantic . Noah : Yeah, a gigantic piece of crap. | 01:41:18 Allie : I've never seen anything so beautiful . Noah : Neither have I. |

Both young and old Allison employs this feature with aim to express their admiration for something to the interlocutor. In her utterance '*This place is gigantic*', young Allison emphasizes the adjective to strengthen her compliment for the house they are visiting. Precisely, she wants to explain to the hearer that the house is very large and big for a home size in a countryside. For the same reason, old Allison also adds the emphatic stress in her sentence, when she sees a beautiful sunset view from Noah's room. The statement '*I've never seen anything so beautiful*' implicitly affirms that the sunset is a worth-to-see scenery that Noah must have a look at too. However, if reanalyzing the sentence, it can be understood that old Allison wants to confirm that it is the first time she sees

that beautiful sunset. This is not entirely true because, in fact, she actually forgets that she has lived in the house with Noah for many years. The Alzheimer's disease makes several memories of her past disappear over time.

DISCUSSION

The present investigation identifies the women's language features used by Allison in her speech before and after suffering from Alzheimer's disease. Lakoff (1973) has listed ten linguistic features which characterize women's speech (as cited in Holmes, 1992:286), wherein the list becomes the criteria to analyze the data. However, this study fails to find sample of all features that are used by both young and old Allison in *The Notebook* movie. *Precise color terms* feature cannot be found in Allison's speech in the whole story, whereas there are two features that are only used by young Allison: *'empty' adjective* and *avoidance of strong swear words*.

In the conversation, each features has different role when it is applied by Allison in her utterance. As stated by Holmes (1992), five of women's language features are divided into two groups of linguistic devices. Lexical fillers, tag questions and rising intonation on declaratives belong to the first group which are used to avoid making any strong statement, usually known as hedging devices. The second group serves as boosting devices which are typically employed to emphasize the intention of an utterance, such as emphatic stress and intensifiers. Meanwhile, the other five characteristics, which are not mentioned above, work as main criteria to show feminine side in speech, since they are restricted to women's used. The items are 'empty' adjectives, precise color terms, 'hypercorrect' grammar, 'superpolite' forms and avoidance of strong swear words.

Discussing lexical fillers and tag questions, it has been stated above that those speech strategies are believed to make a statement less forceful. In *The Notebook*, there are four kinds of hedges applied by young and old Allison, i.e. *well*, *kind of*, *I think* and *you know*. Both of them apply this feature to reflect a lack of confidence towards their own statement. If it is viewed from the frequent of use, young Allison prefers to say *well* which appear in 10 out of 20 sentences, whereas *I think* is the lexical filler commonly mentioned by old Allison in her utterances. However, young Allison also uses this feature to value her interlocutor several times. It can be observed in the scenes when she is talking with Mr. Calhoun about Noah's speech disorder and has conversation with Lon about their marriage's proposal. As stated by Coates (1986), women use hedges to respect

their partner's speech because they often talk about highly sensitive and impersonal (p. 112).

For the next feature, both young and old Allison say two types of tag question in their speech. They are single form tag question, such as *'..., okay?'*, *'..., huh?'* and *'..., right?'* and standard English tag question which is made up of an auxiliary verb and a pronoun, such as *'..., don't you?'*, *'..., are ya?'*, *'..., was it?'*, etc. Referring to Weatherall's (2002) claim, both of them add tag questions at the end of their statement in order to ask for confirmation because they are not sure about their utterance. This is also supported by Downing (2006) who states that tag questions are linguistic forms which need a response and are highly interactive. However, the difference in terms of use of both features before and after Allison is suffering from Alzheimer's disease can also be seen from the situation or setting.

In addition, the main woman character also utters declarative statement in rising intonation to turn the function into a question which implicitly shows her doubt. Todd and Hancock (1986) mention this matter as a declarative question. In the movie, it can be found that young and old Allison rise their intonation not only on sentence, but also on single word or phrase. There are lots of positive sentence spoken by young Allison as interrogative to her interlocutor, but old Allison mostly says a single word in rising intonation. This happens because old Allison may lose her ability to arrange many words to be said in her speech. As it is known, Alzheimer's patient has difficulty in the use of words in speaking or writing (Alzheimer's Association, 2012).. According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003), this feature is appropriate to weaken Allison's statement, moreover, when she does not know what she is talking about, or to suggest that she is open to continue the topic.

Continuing to the booster category, young and old Allison applies intensifiers and emphatic stress features to strengthen the force of what they are saying. There are four words considered as intensifiers that can be found in the movie, they are *really*, *so*, *very*, *too* and *totally*. If it is seen from the frequent of use, young Allison mostly inserts *really* in her statements, whereas old Allison prefers to say *so* which aim is to point up her opinion. In this case, although old Allison is suffering from Alzheimer's disease in early-stage, this feature still appears in her speech. The reason is she was accustomed to mentioning *so* in her younger age. Relating to women's language, Lakoff's (1973) point of view supports this claim in which women, indeed, applies intensive *so* frequently than men to emphasize expressions they uttered. Moreover, this word tends to be easy to remember since it is a very short word form, only made of two characters.

Emphatic stress is the most commonly found characteristic of women's language in *The Notebook*. There are several ways performed by both young and old Allison in applying this features. Not only emphasizing the stress in content words (adjective, noun, adverb and verb), they also stress exclamation, intensifier and function words. Roadman and Hyams (2009) suggest that six word classes belong to function words, i.e. prepositions, pronoun, determiner, conjunction, auxiliary verb and particle. Actually, this feature has several different roles in their speech. As stated by Lakoff (1973), while stressing the adjective, they aim to emphasize their strong feeling about something (p. 72). Both of them also use this feature to highlight or amplify one or more words (except adjective) in their speech which is considered important. The purpose is to single out, compare, correct or clarify things. Even, when they are angry, emphatic stress in exclamation is very useful to affirm their intention. Nevertheless, in terms of use, there is no significant dissimilarity which can distinguish old Allison, as an Alzheimer's patient, and young Allison.

Despite the Lakoff's claim that women generally use 'hypercorrect grammar' in their speech, the result of the analysis shows that some non-standard language are applied by the main woman character as well, such as *gonna*, *ya* and *kinda*. However, *gonna* is the one and only slang word found in both young and old Allison's speech. The reason is most of all statements uttered by old Allison are in line with Lakoff's theory. As it is known, old Allison was born into a rich family who always keeps the politeness in communication and behave. Moreover, she is suffering from Alzheimer's disease and living in a home care for a long time. The way of the caregivers communicating with her in which they always use correct grammar is influencing Allison's manner of speech indirectly. This is confirmed by Alzheimer's Association (2012) which elucidates that patients with Alzheimer's disease are potentially having difficulties while following or joining a conversation. That is why caregivers always says easy-to-understand words. Otherwise, young Allison even breaks Lakoff's idea by saying two questions with ungrammatical form to her interlocutor. In her interrogative sentence, she eliminates auxiliary verbs that should be placed before the subject to show that the sentence is grammatically a question.

In terms of 'superpolite' forms, the analysis focuses on apologizing and other actions considered as polite. The scenes tell that both young and old Allison ever apologizes to their partner's speech, yet have different addressee. If young Allison directly says sorry to her interlocutor, the apology uttered by old Allison is addressed to the third person, i.e. her children whom she

is talking to Noah. Other polite form is the use of *I'd love to* instead of *I want to*. For young Allison, this phrase has function to be polite her interlocutor who she has just met. Similarly, old Allison also want to respect Noah because she feels unfamiliar with him. She forgets Noah as her husband due to Alzheimer's disease she is suffering from. Alzheimer's Association (2012) explains that patients with Alzheimer will lose their memory over time. Additionally, young Allison says three other polite actions, i.e. the use of *please* and *excuse me* and the way she gets acquainted with older people. This cases are convincing that women are easy to express their politeness through speech. As stated by Lakoff (1973), women's speech is much more polite than men (p. 56).

The next two features are only used by young Allison. For 'empty' adjective feature, she says the word 'lovely' which represents women's language while giving compliment to Noah. Based on Lakoff (1973), men will damage their reputation if they state women's word (p. 51-52). Continuing to the last feature, there are two statements of young Allison that may describe 'avoidance of strong swear words'. The first one is '*Oh my goodness, ...*', a meaningless phrase that she uses to express her feeling of shocked towards Lon's statement. Slightly different, the second statement even shows swear word '*Oh hell, ...*' spoken by her. It happens because she cannot control her own emotion when she is angry. Although the feature has function to control her emotional reaction, this case proves that Lakoff's claim about women's language characteristic is not always applicable.

Over and above, the difference of function in the use of features of women's language is mostly noticeable while young and old Allison applying hedging devices. After analyzing the conversation of Allison and her interlocutors, the results are:

| No | Features of Women's Language | Function | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| | | Young Allison | Old Allison |
| Lexical Fillers or Hedges | | | |
| 1 | The use of <i>well</i> | as an opener to reflect her anxiety over her opinion | to show a sense of shock over what is done by Noah |
| 2 | The use of <i>kind of</i> | as a filler to make the statement less forceful | as a pointer to describe the word 'story' as a particular thing she loved |
| 3 | The use of <i>I think</i> | to tell her opinion that she does not really agree with Lon's belief | to reflect her doubt whether she knows Walt Whitman or not |
| Tag Questions | | | |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| 4 | Tag question in a single word | to make sure that Lon will agree with her plan | to ask for permission to leave the conversation |
| 5 | Tag question in standard English form | to make sure whether her opinion about Noah is correct or not | to ask assurance of her statement about Noah and Allie's relationship |
| Rising Intonation on Declaratives | | | |
| 6 | Rising intonation on single word | to show her astonishment over Mr. Calhoun's invitation | to confirm the correctness of name just mentioned in the story |
| 7 | Rising intonation on phrase | to impose her will to Noah implicitly | to ask for confirmation relating to the Nurse's claim about her habit |
| 8 | Rising intonation on complete sentence | to show surprise and uncertainty over what is told by Noah | to change her statement to be a question |

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

Ten features that characterize women's language proposed by Lakoff (1973) have been analyzed in Allison's speech before and after she is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. Although this work fails to obtain the instances for all features, there are 7 of 10 characteristics applied by both young and old Allison found in *The Notebook*, whereas the other two features ('empty' adjective and avoidance of strong swear words) are only found in young Allison's speech. However, there is no single utterances which presents *precise color terms* feature. From the result of analysis, it can be seen that several features are used with different purpose by young Allison and old Allison, the one who represents Alzheimer's patient. The dissimilarities in how to apply Lakoff's theory are mostly visible in three features which are known as hedging devices, intensifiers and 'hypercorrect' grammar. The obvious reason is because old Allison tends to be an insecure character who forgets her past and, even, does not recognize people around her, especially the closest one, her husband.

While applying hedges and tag questions, young Allison has aim to make her statement less forceful, whereas old Allison employs the features to signal uncertainty about situation or event she is forgetting. The other feature belonging to hedging devices is rising intonation on declarative in which the difference can be

seen from the way of use. Young Allison utters a lot of positive sentences as interrogative to her interlocutor, otherwise old Allison mostly turns the function of a single word into question. This happens because old Allison may lose her ability to arrange many words to be said in her speech due to Alzheimer's disease she is suffering from.

Meanwhile, the most frequently used intensifier by young Allison is *really*, but old Allison prefers to say *so* which aim is to point up her opinion. As explained by Lakoff (1973), women uses intensive *so* frequently than men to emphasize expressions they uttered. That is why this feature still appears in her speech, although old Allison is suffering from Alzheimer's disease in early-stage. Besides this word tends to be easy to remember for Alzheimer's patient, since it is a very short word form, only made of two characters. Then, the last characteristic which has difference in terms of use is 'hypercorrect grammar'. Born into a rich family, it influences how old Allison speaks to her interlocutor. If young Allison says more non-standard language or ungrammatical sentence, there is only a single slang word found in the movie which is spoken by old Allison. Indirectly, this is caused by the way of the caregivers communicating with her in which they always use correct grammar and say easy-to-understand words. It is performed because patients with Alzheimer's disease are potentially having difficulties while following or joining a conversation (Alzheimer's Association, 2012).

Suggestion

The main aim of this research is to differentiate the speech of the main woman character before and after she is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. This case is related to the theory of ten features of women's language proposed by Lakoff (1973). In relation to Alzheimer's disease, since the subject of the study appears in the fiction movie, the next researcher may try to find and observe the real Alzheimer's patient in moderate stage relating to communication difficulty. By employing this subject, the researcher may obtain complex results because the patient is claimed to experience more problems in communication. Besides it is also recommended that the next researcher compares the speech of men and women who suffers from Alzheimer's disease based on Lakoff's (1973) work about the characteristics of women's language which purpose is to find out whether the features are used by men or not..

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