WOMEN’S LANGUAGE FEATURES FOUND IN FEMALE CHARACTER’S UTTERANCES IN THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA MOVIE

Tika Oktapiani, M. Natsir, Ririn Setyowati
English Department, Faculty of Cultural Studies
Mulawarman University
Email: tikaoktapiani64@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The research entitled women’s language features found in female character’s utterances in The Devil Wears Prada Movie, aims to identify the women’s language features based on Lakoff’s theory and also to identify language functions served by women’s language features found in The Devil Wears Prada movie based on Jakobsen’s theory. This research was conducted by using descriptive qualitative method, while for collecting the data were watching the movie several times, reading script movie and underlining female character’s utterances containing the women’s language features. From ten features of women’s language, the researcher found nine features used by the female character in The Devil Wears Prada Movie. They are lexical hedges or fillers (7), tag question (3), rising intonation on declarative (2), empty adjectives (3), precious color term (1), intensifiers (10), super polite form (4), hypercorrect grammar (0), avoidance of strong swear words (3) and emphatic stress (3). Intensifiers are the most frequent women’s language features used by female characters in The Devil Wears Prada movie because they want to emphasize or strengthen their utterances deeply to attract addressee’s attention using intensifiers. Meanwhile, hypercorrect grammar did not occur in this research because the female characters mostly used informal language in their dialogue to shorten the gap among the characters. Then, there are language functions served by women’s language found in female character’s utterances in The Devil Wears Prada movie. They are expressive function, directive function and metalinguistic function.

Key words: women’s language, women’s language features, The Devil Wears Prada

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi fitur-fitur bahasa wanita berdasarkan teori Lakoff dan juga untuk mengidentifikasi fungsi bahasa yang disajikan oleh fitur bahasa wanita yang terdapat dalam film The Devil Wears Prada berdasarkan teori Jakobsen. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, sedangkan untuk mengumpulkan data adalah menonton film, membaca naskah film dan menggari bawahi ucapan karakter perempuan yang mengandung fitur-fitur bahasa wanita. Dari sepuluh fitur bahasa wanita, peneliti menemukan sembilan fitur yang
digunakan oleh karakter wanita dalam The Devil Wears Prada Movie, lexical hedges atau filler (7), tag question (3), rising intonation on declarative (2), empty adjectives (3), precise color term (1), intensifiers (10), super polite form (4), hypercorrect grammar (0), avoidance of strong swear word (3) dan emphatic stress (3). Intensifiers adalah fitur bahasa wanita yang paling sering digunakan oleh karakter wanita dalam film The Devil Wears Prada karena mereka ingin menekankan atau memperkuat ucapan mereka secara mendalam untuk menarik perhatian penerima dengan menggunakan intensifiers. Sementara itu, tata bahasa hypercorrect tidak terjadi dalam penelitian ini karena karakter wanita kebanyakan menggunakan bahasa informal dalam dialog mereka untuk memperpendek jarak antar karakter. Kemudian, ada fungsi bahasa yang disajikan oleh bahasa wanita yang ditemukan dalam ujaran karakter wanita dalam film The Devil Wears Prada. Mereka adalah fungsi ekspresif, fungsi direktif dan fungsi metalinguistik.

Kata kunci: bahasa wanita, fitur-fitur bahasa wanita, The Devil Wears Prada

A. INTRODUCTION

In sociolinguistics, study about language and gender emphasizes the focus on the effect of gender on the use of language. The relationship between language and gender is the relationship between language and the notion of men and women. Lakoff (as cited in Eckert and Ginet, 2013) states in her work Language and Women’s Place that women are forced to learn a weak, trivial and deferential style as part of their socialization, which is essentially training how to be subordinate. In other words, she regards women’s style as a reflection of their powerlessness and men’s power of them. Lakoff provides a list of ten women’s language features. These ten types of women’s language features are lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonations on declarative, empty adjectives, precise color term, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, superpolite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress.

Women’s language can be observed in literary works, for example in movie because movie reflects the real situation of society and movie contains of sentences and utterance, for example in The Devil Wears Prada movie. The Devil Wears Prada movie tells about the story of a woman named Andrea Sachs called Andy a fresh graduate who dreams of becoming a journalist. She works as second assistant to Miranda Priestly, a Chief redactor or Editor-in-Chief of the famous fashion magazine, Runway. Though not interested in fashion, Andy believes working at Runway would open up her career as a professional journalist.

The Devil Wears Prada movie and Lakoff’s theory of women’s language features were chosen because of two reasons. First, the movie contains many life lessons about women. From the character, personality, and the title seem this movie is the story about women’s live. Second, there are age differences, experiences, and attitudes that affect the way they speak, thus making the researcher interested in analyzing women’s language features by Lakoff’s theory. The researcher used Lakoff’s theory because Lakoff is a founder of the idea of women’s language features and also the Lakoff’s theory is clear, easy to understand, and suitable to investigate deeply the character. There are seven female characters to be analyzed by the researcher, namely Andreas Sach, Miranda Priestly, Emily Charlton, Lily, Jacqueline Follet, Serena, and Jocelyn.

The objectives of this research were to identify the features of women’s language used by them from the difference and also to identify language functions served by
women’s language features found in The Devil Wears Prada movie. It was expected that this research can inspire another researcher to analyze a movie through linguistics point of view especially about women’s language features. Hopefully, this research can be a reference for future researcher.

B. RELATED LITERATURE

1. Language and gender

Eckert (2003) in her book entitled Language and Gender describes that gender as differences in function and social roles and responsibilities of men and women who are regulated by the community. Gender refers to the process conditions how should men and women play a role and act in accordance with the values of structured, social and cultural provision where they are.

2. Women’s language Features

Lakoff (1975) mention that women and men in the language have differences style. Male language more assertive, mature and men like to talk openly with the right vocabulary. Instead, the language used by women does not assertive, does not openly (to use the words figuratively), and be careful when presented something, and often using words that are gentle and politely or through gestures. In addition, Lakoff (as cited in Mu’minin, 2013) also said that if woman feel less convinced about something, she would blame herself indicating that she had no confidence in herself. Lakoff tried to describe the language of women who called Middle America, she did not state that it is an overview all of women everywhere. Its features are as follows:

a. Lexical hedges or Fillers

Lexical hedges are used to weaken the strength of an assertion. Hedges are linguistic forms such as I think, I’m sure, you know, sort of and perhaps. In addition, there are many different ways of reducing the pressure illocutionary speech, and hedges done using a number of linguistic features. Hedges as one example of the characteristics of women's language including could, might, may, would, should.

Fillers refer to some meaningless words that women always use, such as umm, uh, ah. Holmes (as cited in Pebrianti, 2013) explains about ‘Hedge’ and ‘filler’ in Introduction to sociolinguistics, “Another study, for instance, made a distinction between ‘fillers’ and ‘hedges’, with sort of classified as a hedge, while well and you see were describe as meaningless particle, and assigned to the same category as “pause fillers’ such as uh, um, and ah”. In another study, make a distinction between a filler and hedges, such as well and you see are considered as ‘meaningless particles’ and put in the same category as the pause fillers such as uh, um, ah.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that hedge and fillers are pause-shaped phrases contained in the conversation to fill the breath gap, information is not entirely accurate, lack of self-confidence, uncertainty, and doubt and confusion are interpreted as “meaningless particle”.

b. Tag Question

Lakoff (as cited in Cameron, 1990), states that the tag question, the usefulness and syntax form, in English, is among a definite statement and yes or no question. Lakoff argues that asking a question is the best example of insecurity and doubt women. Women use questions to one another when they are talking. Women make a statement when she believes with her knowledge and believes that her statement would be
trusted. Someone will ask a question when she was lack of knowledge in some way and has reason to believe that estrangement can and will be corrected by the other party answers.

c. Rising Intonation on Declarative

Lakoff (1975) states that Related to the use of syntactic rule, she found a widespread difference perceptible in women’s intonation patterns. There is a peculiar sentence intonation pattern found in English only among women which has the form of declarative answer to a question, and is used as such, but has the rising inflection typical of yes no question, as well as being especially hesitant. The effect is as though one were seeking confirmation, though at the same time the speaker may be the only one who has the requisite information (p.17).

d. Empty Adjectives

There are group of adjectives, in terms of vocabulary, which has a specific meaning and literal and also indicate approval or admiration speakers to something. Adjectives such as these are called empty adjectives which mean that it only concerns the word emotional reactions of the specific information. Some of these adjectives were neutral, native speakers of any gender, men and women may use it. But there are adjectives that seem to give the impression restricted for use by women. Some adjectives that neutral are great, neat and just for women only (adorable, charming, sweet, lovely, divine, gorgeous, and cute).

e. Precise Color Term

Women give details of color are much more precise in naming term than do men. Men assume talk about the precise colors term is ridiculous because they think like questions are trivial and irrelevant to the real world. Words such as beige, lavender, and maroon are examples of words that are normal in women’s active vocabulary, but the term was not there for men. When man say the name of color that usually used by women, one might will conclude he was imitating a woman sarcastically or as a homosexual or an interior decorator.

f. Intensifiers

The kinds of intensifiers that indicate more characteristic of women’s language are so, just, very, and quite. Lakoff (1975) argues that intensive “so” is more frequent in women’s than men’s language, although men can also use it. We have an attempt to hedge on one’s strong feelings, as though to say: I feel strongly about this but I dare not make it clear how strong. Substituting an intensifier like so for absolute superlative (like, very, really, utterly) seems to be way of backing out of committing oneself strongly to an opinion.

g. Hypercorrect grammar

Lakoff (as cited in Holmes, 1995) state that hypercorrect grammar is the consistent use of standard verb forms. Lakoff said that hypercorrect grammar involves an avoidance of terms considered vulgar or coarse, such as ‘ain’t’, and the use of precise pronunciation, such as sounding the final ‘g’ in words such as ‘going’ instead of the more casual ‘goin’.

h. Super polite Form

Lakoff (1975) states that a request may be in the same sense a polite command, in that it does not overtly require obedience, but rather suggests something be done as a favor to the speaker. Women prefer to use polite language than men. There are some examples of statement that contains women’s language features and indentifies as super polite feature.
i. Avoidance of Strong Swear Words

Eckert (2003) Swearword is a kind of interjection or exclamation to express anger with extreme and has been considered a powerful expression (p, 181). This is seen as a powerful language and sometimes really can achieve impressive effects. It is also considered not suitable for use by women and children. The use of a swear word often associated with men than women because men are more often used in his speech. In other words, swearing or cursing is a pure male habit so that the use of a swear word synonymous with the typical male language.

j. Emphatic Stress

Emphatic Stress is a typical of special stress that is given by the speaker to some word in a sentence, usually to single out, compare, correct or clarify things. Women like to use words which are used to emphasize the utterance or strengthen the meaning of an utterance. Women like to use emphatic stress to strengthen the strength of an assertion, for example “He is really handsome!” and “It was a brilliant performance.” The word brilliant is one of the examples of an emphatic stress. This word can be used to strengthen the meaning of the utterance.

3. Language Functions

According to Jakobson (1960), there are six types of language function. They are expressive function, directive function, referential function, metalinguistic function.

a. Expressive Function

Expressive function means express the speaker’s feelings. This focuses on addressee; it means that a speaker addresses a message. The aim of an expression of the speaker’s attitude toward what he is speaking about. It tends to produce an impression of a certain emotion whether true or feigned.

b. Directive Function

Directive function means attempt to get someone to do something. It means that language used for the purpose of causing (or preventing) overt action. This function is most commonly found in commands and requests. Directive function focuses on the addressee; it means that the speaker needs the reaction from the hearer or to make someone perform a particular action.

c. Referential Function

Referential function means provide information. Essentially, referential function is the communication of information. This function affirms or denies propositions, as in science or the statement of fact.

d. Metalinguistic Function

Metalinguistic function means comment on the language itself. This function is the use of language to discuss or describe itself. It focuses attention upon the code itself, to clarify it or negotiate it. This is the function of language about language. The aim of metalinguistic function is to convey the code analysis where the code is misunderstood and needs correction or clarification.

e. Poetic Function

Poetic function means focus on aesthetic feature of language. It is in which the particular form chosen is the essence of the message. Messages convey more than just the content.
f. Phatic Function

Phatic function means express solidarity and empathy with others. The phatic function helps to establish contact and refers to the channel of communication. It opens the channel or checking that it is working, either for social reason.

D. RESEARCH METHOD

1. Research Design

Miles and Huberman (1994) state “qualitative data is usually in the forms of words rather than numbers” (p.1). The researcher used qualitative data because the data are the utterances of the characters within the movie that take of words and sentences rather than numbers. According to Nazir (1988), descriptive research aims at describing facts, characteristic, and relationship among the phenomena being observed, systematically, factually, and accurately. This research used descriptive qualitative research to describe women’s language used in The Devil Wears Prada movie by David Frankle and to describe language functions served by women’s language used by the female characters in The Devil Wears Prada movie.

2. Data and Source of Data

The data is a collection of facts, such as values or measurements. It can be numbers, words, measurements, observations or even just description of things. The data of this research were from the utterances by all female characters in The Devil Wears Prada movie containing women’s language features, those are: lexical hedges or fillers, tag question, rising intonations on declaratives, empty adjectives, precious color term, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words and emphatic stress. The researcher used primary and secondary data sources. Primary data sources were the script of movie The Devil Wears Prada movie while secondary data sources got from book and internet that support this research.

3. Research Instrument

Research instrument is important to obtain the data of this study for it is a set of method which is used to collect the data (Annum, 2015, p.1). The research instrument in collecting the data was the researcher herself. The researcher focused on observing women’s language features as the main data of the research.

4. Data Collection Technique

Talbot (1995) states “data collection begins with the researcher deciding from where and from whom data will be collected” (p.472). The data about the utterances of the characters were collected through documentation following some steps. The first step was watching the movie to understand the content. The second was reading the movie script and it is printed out to comprehend the utterance. The third was underlining utterances which contain the woman’s language features.

5. Data Analysis Technique

Miles and Huberman (1994) state the analysis technique is divided into three parts consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusions drawing.
Data reduction is the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying abstracting and transforming the data that appear in written up fields’ notes or transcription. In this process, the researcher selected and focused the female utterances which clarify to the women’s language features found in *The Devil Wears Prada* movie.

After the data were reduced, then the next step was to display the data. Data display is an organized and compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion, drawing and action. In this process, the researcher elaborated the utterance by the female characters in *The Devil Wears Prada* movie using Lakoff’s theory of ten women’s language features, such as lexical hedges or fillers, tag question, rising intonations on declaratives, empty adjectives, precise color term, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words and emphatic stress.

In conclusion process, the researcher found the result of the research through the analysis. The researcher elaborated the finding descriptively and concluded the whole part of the analysis that related to the research questions there are features of women’s language found in female character’s utterances in the *The Devil Wears Prada* movie and identify language functions served by women’s language found in the female character’s utterances in *The Devil Wears Prada* movie.

**D. FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

1. **Lexical Hedges or Fillers**

   Lakoff (1975), claims that hedging devices explicitly signal lack of confidence. So, she claimed women use hedging devices to express uncertainty, and they use intensifying devices to persuade their addressee to take them seriously. Based on the definition of lexical hedges or fillers features, the researcher found 7 utterances of women’s language features that includes in lexical hedges or fillers features. There are some examples of statement that contains women’s language features and identified as lexical hedges or fillers.

   (1) **Miranda**: And what are you doing here?
   **Andrea**: Well, I think I could do a good job as your assistant

   *(00:08:17 - 00:08:22)*
The first data found in dialogue by Andrea. She said “Well, I think I could do a good job as your assistant”. Andrea used lexical hedges or fillers by combining the word well and I think which are characteristic of women’s language features. Andrea used particle well to reflect her insecurity about the condition around her. She also used I think because she is nervous and she feels really unsure about what she is saying. She felt uncomfortable with the situation while she was interviewed by Miranda. Miranda is perfectionist, arrogant, and cruel.

From explanation, it is shown that lexical hedges or fillers included the expressive function because this feature expresses a lack of confidence and reflects of women’s insecurity. Statement in Datum 1 is an expressed by Andrea to Miranda that she felt insecure and nervous during the interview because she does not understand about fashion.

2. Tag Questions

Lakoff (1975) states that the tag question, the usefulness and syntax form, in English, is an among definite statement and question yes or no. Lakoff argues that asking a question is the best example of insecurity and doubt women. Based on the definition of tag question feature, the researcher found 3 utterances of women’s language features that included in tag question feature. There are some examples of statement that contain women’s language features and identified as tag question feature.

(2) Andrea : You want the unpublished manuscript?
Miranda : We know everyone in publishing. It shouldn't be a problem, should it? And you can do anything, right?

(00:49:30-00:49:39)

The data found in the conversation happened between Miranda and Andrea in Miranda’s office. The situation happened when Miranda says that she wants the unpublished manuscript of new Harry Potter book for her twins. The statement, it shouldn’t be a problem, should it? Used by Miranda in her dialogue because she believes with her knowledge and believes that her statement would be trusted. It’s mean that she believes that Andrea can do anything counted discover unpublished manuscript the new Harry potter book. From the explanation, it is showed that tag question feature included the directive function. Conversation in Datum 1 showed that Miranda wants the unpublished manuscript for her daughters and she command to Andrea to get the script.

3. Rising Intonation on Declarative

Rising intonation on declarative is used when the speaker is seeking for confirmation though at the same time the speaker may be the only one who has the requisite information. Based on the definition of rising intonation on declarative feature, the researcher found 2 utterances of women’s language features that includes in rising intonation on declarative.
The data found in Miranda’s utterance. She said “There you are Emily. How many times do I have to scream your name?” The situation happened in Miranda’s office. Miranda’s always called her new second assistant as the New Emily. So, when Miranda called Andrea, she screamed out Andrea’s name as Emily and she called in several time but Andrea never showed up. So Miranda used rising intonation on declarative because she is seeking for confirmation why Andrea did not notice that Miranda was calling for her. From explanation, it is showed that rising intonation feature included the directive function. Conversation in datum 1 showed that Miranda call her new assistant, Andrea, many times but she did not respond to commands from Miranda.

4. Empty Adjectives

The researcher found 3 utterances of women’s language features that includes in empty adjective feature. There are some examples of conversation and statement that contain women’s language features and identified as empty adjective.

(4) Andrea : She hates me, Nigel.
Nigel : And that’s my problem because- Oh, wait. No, it's not my problem.
Andrea : I don't know what else I can do because if I do something right, it's unacknowledged. She doesn't even say thank you. But if I do something wrong, she is vicious.

(00:32:14-00:32:25)

In the dialogue, it found word indicated empty adjective feature, vicious. Lakoff (1975) explained that some of these adjectives were neutral, native speakers of any gender, men and women may use it. But there are adjectives that seem to give the impression restricted for use by women. So, word vicious used by Andrea to impression her felling of Miranda’s attitude. From explanation of data, it is showed that empty adjective feature included the expressive function because this feature only concerns the word emotional reactions of the specific information. The statement is an expressed by Andrea to Miranda that she was upset because Miranda did not appreciate her efforts.

5. Precise Color Term

Lakoff (1975) states that women give details of color are much more precise in naming term than do men. The researcher only found 1 utterance of women’s language feature that include in precise color term feature.
The Conversation happened between Miranda and Andrea. From the conversation, there are words can indicated precise color term; turquoise, lapis, and cerulean. **Turquoise** is sometimes described as a mixture of pale blue and green. **Lapis** is a deeper mid-tone blue with an intense amount of purple, creating the rich color favored by Cleopatra. **Cerulean** is a range of colors from deep blue, sky-blue, bright blue, or azure to deep cyan.

From the explanation above, in this feature include *metalinguistic function*. The aim of *metalinguistic function* is to convey the code analysis where the code is misunderstood and needs correction or clarification. So, from the conversation Miranda explain the color of Andrea’s sweater is not blue. But it is cerulean. Cerulean, lapis, and turquoise are name of colors from the blue.

6. **Intensifiers**

The researcher found 10 utterances of women’s language features that include in intensifiers features. There are some examples of statement that contains women’s language features and indentifies as intensifiers features.

(6) Miranda : I don't understand why it's so difficult to confirm an appointment.

Emily : I know. I'm so sorry, Miranda. I actually did confirm last night.

Based on the statement, Miranda used intensifiers features. It was clear because in statement above there is word *so* can indicate intensifiers features. Lakoff argues that intensifier *so* is more frequent in women’s than men’s language, although men can also use it because men had trouble to used the word *so* when the condition of them are not being emotional. While, women used word *so* to express her felling. From explanation of two data above, it is shown that intensifiers features included the *expressive function* because this feature has a function to intensify the word after it to make people more certain of its meaning. From the conversation showed that Miranda and Emily used the word *so* to strongly their statement.

7. **Super polite Form**

Lakoff (1975) states that a request may be in the same sense a polite command, in that it does not overtly require obedience, but rather suggests something be done as a favor to the speaker. Women prefer to use polite language
than men. There are some examples of statement that contains women’s language features and identifies as super polite feature.

(7) (phone ring)
[Line Clicks, Dial Tone Hums]

(00:15:05-00:15:23)

The data found in the dialogue by Andrea with someone on the phone. She told with her/him that Miranda is not available, so Andrea offer assistance and requested that the client can specify identity when leaving a message. Andrea used sentences Can I please take a message? And can you please spell Gabbana? as a form of request or polite command. It can be assumed that Andrea used super polite form for her request which reflect women’s language features. So, this feature includes directive function.

8. Avoidance of Strong Swear Word

The researcher found 3 utterances of women’s language features that include in avoidance strong of swear word features. There are some examples of statement that contains women’s language features and indentified as avoidance strong of swear word features.

(8) Nigel : She’s not supposed to be here until 9:00.
Emily : Her driver just text messaged and her racialists ruptured a disk. God, these people!

(00:04:41-00:04:58)

The data found in the dialogue by Emily when she get a text message from driver of Miranda that 10 minutes Miranda will arrive at the office. The brief message makes everyone so hurry. Emily used swear word God, these people! To expressed the feelings. She feels upset because the driver confirms it very suddenly. From the explanation it is seem that avoidance of strong swear word included expressive function.

9. Emphatic Stress

Emphatic Stress is a typical of special stress that is given by the speaker to some word in a sentence, usually to single out, compare, correct or clarify things. The researcher found 3 utterances of women’s language features that include in avoidance emphatic stress features. There are some examples of statement that contains women’s language features and indentifies as Emphatic stress features

(9) Jacquelin : Surprise.
Miranda : Quelle surprise. Oh, wonderful. We're so happy you were able to come to our little gathering.

(01:02:58 – 01:03:05)
Miranda said to Jacqueline **Oh, wonderful.** We’re so happy you were able to come to our little gathering. From Miranda’s utterance, the word **wonderful** is a kind of Emphatic stress indicated features of women’s language. According to Lakoff, women tend to use the words that give emphasis on speech to strengthen the meaning of a greeting itself. So, Miranda used an adjective **Wonderful** to express her gratitude for Jacqueline attendance.

**E. CONCLUSION**

There are two research questions in this research. They are the use of women’s language features in *The Devil Wears Prada* Movie and the Function of Language served by women’s language features in movie. These questions were analyzed based on Lakoff’s theory about women’s language features and also Jakobsen’s theory about the Function of language.

From ten features of women’s language, only nine features can be found in this research. They are lexical hedges or fillers (7), tag question (3), rising intonations on declaratives (2), empty adjectives (3), precious color term (1), intensifiers (10), super polite forms (4), Hypercorrect Grammar (0), avoidance of strong swear words (3) and emphatic stress (3). **Intensifiers** feature most frequently by female characters in *The Devil Wears Prada* movie because they want to emphasize or strengthen their utterances deeply to attract addressee’s attention using intensifiers. Meanwhile, **Hypercorrect’ grammar** did not occur in this research because the female characters mostly used informal language in their dialogue to shorten the gap among the characters.

According to Jakobson (1960), there are six function of language, they are expressive function, directive function, referential function, metalinguistic function, poetic function, and phatic function. From six function of women’s language features based on the purpose of using the language function by Jakobson, there are three language functions are found in this research, they are expressive function, metalinguistic function, and directive function.

**References**


