

WOMEN'S LANGUAGE IN *BLACK SWAN* MOVIE: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY

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Abstract

In communication, women and man have particular characteristics in the use of language. Women who have subordinate role want to achieve particular purposes as they have a certain role in society. Therefore, the researcher aims at describing the women's language features, explaining women's language functions used by the main female characters in *Black Swan* movie and finding out the social backgrounds that influence the use of women's language by the main female characters in *Black Swan* movie. The research uses descriptive qualitative and quantitative research focusing on the main female characters' utterances. The main data of this study are utterances in form of dialogues by the main female characters taken from the *Black Swan* movie full transcript. The research reveals of three findings. First, there are only seven women's language features out of total based on Lakoff's theory found in the main female characters' dialogue. It consists of lexical hedges and fillers, tag questions, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjective, intensifier, super polite form, and emphatic stress word. Meanwhile, five women's language functions found, which are used to express uncertainty, to get response, to soften utterance, to express feeling and to emphasize an utterance. Social community and social roles influence the use of women's language.

Keywords: women's language, women's language features and functions, the main female characters, *Black Swan* Movie.

Abstrak

*Dalam komunikasi, wanita dan pria mempunyai beberapa karakteristik dalam menggunakan bahasa. Wanita yang memiliki peranan lebih rendah ingin menggapai beberapa tujuan agar mereka mendapatkan peranan yang pasti dalam masyarakat. Oleh karena itu, peneliti bermaksud untuk menguraikan fitur bahasa wanita, menjelaskan fungsi dari bahasa wanita yang digunakan oleh pemeran wanita utama dalam film *Black Swan* dan menemukan latar belakang social yang berpengaruh pada penggunaan bahasa wanita dalam film *Black Swan*. Peneliti menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dan kuantitatif yang terfokus pada ungkapan yang digunakan oleh pemeran wanita utama. Data utama dalam penelitian ini adalah ungkapan-ungkapan dalam bentuk percakapan yang digunakan oleh pemeran wanita utama yang diambil dari film *Black Swan*. Peneliti menyajikan tiga penemuan. Yang pertama, terdapat tujuh fitur yang didasarkan dari teori Lakoff. Hal tersebut terdiri dari lexical hedges and fillers, tag questions, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjective, intensifier, super polite form, and emphatic stress word. Sementara itu, terdapat Lima fungsi dari bahasa wanita yang ditemukan, yaitu untuk menunjukkan ketidakpastian, untuk mendapatkan respon, untuk memperhalus ungkapan, untuk mengekspresikan perasaan, dan untuk menekankan sebuah ungkapan. Komunitas social dan peranan social berpengaruh terhadap penggunaan bahasa wanita.*

Keywords: bahasa wanita, fitur bahasa wanita dan fungsi dari bahasa wanita, pemeran wanita utama, film *Black Swan*

I. INTRODUCTION

Language takes an important role in the society. It has function to create social relationship which makes human easy to interact with the other to express their idea, feeling, or thought. Language is used differently in some aspects based on the participants, the functions and the social settings. In some cases, people speak in the same topic while they use different language.

In society, language and gender have close relationship in the ways of using particular languages and social roles of women and men. Gender changes in the way people think social identities (Mayerhoff, 2006:202). Gender relates to the social and culture where women and men take role. It impacts in the way of use language in society because women and men have different socialization practice, different jobs, and different produce of voice. Both men and women have particular characteristics in their speech. The characteristics of women's language are more prominent than men's language because women are more expressive in the use of language. They have their own language in communication. It can be clarified in the language features and

functions that they used. Women as a subordinate role in society commonly show an uncertainty and use lexical hedges like verbal fillers which are used to fill in silence. Women also have a special language that men do not. For example, women use the empty adjectives to show the approbation or admiration for something. Women also use more tag questions in their arguments than men, which show that women lack in confidence.

One of movies which portrays the real phenomenon of women's language is *Black Swan* which tells about ballerina life in New York. Nina as the main female character lives with full ambition to get the role as Swan Queen. It is not only in how great she is at dancing but also how great using or showing the whole emotion. She can use every movement of hand and foot with perfection and attraction but there is no soul and sense in every detail her swaying. The other main female character in *Black Swan* movie is Erica as Nina's mother who is overprotective with her daughter. In Ballerina company, it appears the competition and use anything way to get the role. It reveals the social situation in which women commonly use their feeling rather than their logic in social life.

Based on the main female characters (Nina and Erica) in social situation that portrays in the movie, the researcher is interested to analyze women's language used by the main female characters in *Black Swan* movie. Thus, the researcher decides to use the movie as the subject of the research. The researcher aims to describe the employment of women's language features, to describe the functions, and to find out the social background that influence the use of women's language by the main female characters in *Black Swan* movie.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Lakoff is one of the first serious linguists to look into the social implications of the differences in men and women's use of speech. He analyzes the links between language, gender and power in journal article "Language and women's place", where questions are who holds the power and how they use it. He argues that language is fundamental to gender inequality and it can contribute to the lack of women's power in two areas, language used about women and language used by women. He claims that there are certain features of women's language that give the impression women are weaker and less certain than men are.

Lakoff suggests that women's speech is characterized by linguistic features such as the following.

a. Lexical Hedges

Lexical hedges is one of the characteristic of women's speech features. Women use hedging devices to make them look more polite such as "you know", "I think", "I guess", "well", "Yeahh", "mmmhhh", "Oh" and etc. Holmes (1992:317) says that some researchers reported that women used up to three times of hedges than men, while in others there are no differences between the sexes.

b. Tag Question

Lakoff (1973:55) states that tag-question is a kind of polite statement, in that it does not force agreement or belief on the addressee. 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.

c. Rising Intonation on Declaratives

In communication women usually use particular intonation. Lakoff (1973:55) states that there is a peculiar sentence intonation-pattern found in English only among women, which has the form of a declarative answer to a

question, and is used as such, but has the rising inflection typical of a yes-no question, as well as being especially hesitant.

d. Empty adjective

Empty adjective in communication indicates the special and literal meaning. Empty adjectives has the same work as normal adjective which describes the noun. In this case, empty adjective only exists in women's vocabulary. The examples of empty adjective include "divine", "charming", "cute", "big", "small", "fast", "lovely, and "fantastic".

e. Precise Color Term

Women have their own vocabulary to call the color. Haas (1979: 621) states that women describe items in term of pattern and color more than man. As an example of describing the color of same wall, man will imagine that the wall is blue but women will say that the wall is soft ocean, electric blue or dusty blue. Women's language has the level of vocabulary to describing the color.

f. Intensifier

Intensifier is elements that are used with other expressions to indicate an attempt to intensify the meaning of the expression they modify. The intensifiers such as really, totally, truly, clearly,

extremely are more frequently used by women rather than men. It means that what women say are truly mean. Intensifiers include "very", "just", "so", "really", "extremely".

g. Hypercorrect Grammar

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 like 'going' instead of the more casual 'goin'.

h. Super polite Form

Super polite forms are used in women's language to make their language be more polite. Lakoff (1975:53) states that super polite forms are usually in the form of indirect request and euphemisms.

i. Avoidance Strong Swear Word

According to Lakoff (1973:50) the difference between using 'shit' (or 'damn', or one of many others) as opposed to 'oh dear', or 'goodness', or 'oh fudge' lies in how forcefully one says how one feels - perhaps, one might say, choice of particle is a function of how strongly one allows oneself to feel about

something, so that the strength of an emotion conveyed in a sentence corresponds to the strength of the particle

j. Emphatic Stress

Emphatic is also used in women's language which show to emphasize in say something. The stress is used when women want to signal instead of in the way of the speech.

Women use language in order to deliver indirect meaning. According to Pearson (1985:187) there are six functions of women languages which explain about what the women meant in the speech. The functions of women's language are to express uncertainty, to get responds, to soften utterance, to get respon, to start discussion, to express feeling and to emphasize the utterance.

III.METHOD OF RESEARCH

This study was categorized as descriptive qualitative and quantitative research (mixed method). Anggouri (2010:33) stated mixed method was defined as the class of research where mixed or combined qualitative and quantitative elements. Qualitative method was concerned with structure and patterns and how the phenomena was and quantitative focused on

how much or how many there was/were of particular characteristics or items , while quantitative method enabled to compare relatively large numbers of things/data by using a comparatively easy index.

The main data of this study were utterances in the form of dialogue by the main female characters taken from the full transcript of *Black Swan* movie. The main instrument of the research are the researcher and helped by dictionary and data sheet. Several procedures such as collecting, classifying, analyzing and interpreting the data are employed to achieve the final result.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSIONS

The researcher finds that there are only seven features of women's language, out of ten features that Lakoff suggested. Three features of women's language such as precise color term, hypercorrect grammar and avoidance strong swear words does not occur in the main female characters' utterances.

Features	Functions					Total	Percentage
	EU	GR	SU	EF	EM		
LH	5	0	4	6	5	20	35.1
TQ	0	0	0	0	1	1	1.7
EA	0	0	0	9	0	9	15.8
RI	0	0	0	0	1	1	1.7

IN	2	1	0	4	8	15	26.3
SF	0	0	1	0	0	1	1.7
ES	0	0	0	2	8	10	17.5
Total	7	1	5	2	2	57	100
Percentage	12.3	1.7	8.8	36.8	40.3		

The findings table shows that lexical hedges or fillers feature presents the highest score in features occurrences. It occurs 20 data or takes 35,1% out of the total data and followed by intensifier which occurs 15 data or takes 26,3% out of the total data. The third is emphatic stress words feature which occurs 10 data or takes 17,5 %. Then the fourth is empty adjective feature which occur 9 datum or take 15,8 %. The score of four features above are drastically different from the highest and the lowest score, and the fifth lowest features scores are tag question, rising intonation on declarative and super polite form.

Moreover, the researcher finds five functions occurrence in the main female characters' utterance. Five functions that appear in the main female characters' utterances are to express uncertainty, to get respond, to soften utterance, to express feeling and to emphasize the utterance. The highest score of women's language function is to emphasize an utterance which occurs

23 data or 40,3% out of total women's language function. It shows that the main female characters in *Black Swan* movie commonly use their utterances for certain effects such as to give more attention to addressee and clarify what they said.

1. Women's Language Features and Functions in Black Swan movie

a. Lexical hedges or filler

Based on the findings, the researcher finds 20 data or 35,3% out of the total features of the main female characters' utterance. It is the most dominant features employed by the main female characters. There is also employment of the use lexical hedges or fillers in the form of vocal fluencies such as **um, mm-hmm, shhh, oh, etc.** One example occurs "*Mm-hmm*" when Erica ask about her condition as follows. Nina uses *lexical hedges feature* "mm-hmm" which shows that she answers yes for her mother's question. This feature includes vocal fluencies as uncodified sound. It is used to softening her utterance which shows she answers yes to Erica's question. It refers the positive feedback to Erica's Question. Her mother is over protective to her who always wants to know all about Nina.

b. Tag question

Tag question are used to express uncertainty, this is because women are full

of hesitant in their conversation. Therefore they use the tag question feature to make their utterance convinced by someone. In this research, the researcher finds 1 datum of tag question used by Erica. It takes 1,7% out of the total data. The example of tag question is "*It's the role, isn't it? All this pressure... I was worried it'd be too much.*" It can be seen that the tag question is used when Erica asks Nina regarding to the important role in the company. She is over protective to Nina's condition. In that case, her mother sees the back side of her body, there is an injury and make her panic. Erica yanks her out of the room. She pulls out nail clippers and cuts Nina's nails down to their base. Each click makes Nina twitch Even though Nina is entreat to her mother that she is in good condition. She uses tag question "isn't it?" to emphasize her utterance that it is about the important role. She does not want her condition to be bad, so she must do that.

c. Empty Adjective

In this research, the researcher finds 9 data or 15,8% out the total of data. The empty adjective feature that the researcher finds are "craziest", "pretty", "sweet" which shows their feeling in their conversation. The example is "*It looks yummy*". It is the last example of empty adjective feature

occurs in Nina's utterance. Erica lifts the slice onto a plate to celebrate her success as the Swan Queen in the company and she says that the cake so delicious. Nina uses the word "yummy" which belongs to *empty adjective feature*. It only exists in women's vocabulary. It shows her emotional reaction that she admires the cake. It is used to express her feeling about the cake that it so delicious.

d. Rising Intonation on declarative

In this research, the researcher finds 1 datum or 1,7% out the total of data. The example is "*Just fine?*". Nina enters the apartment and locks the deadbolt and chain-lock behind her. She turns and is startled to see Erica standing right there. Nina looks at her confused and helps take off her coat. Erica tries to clarify what happens Nina is. Her mother asks her that she is surely fine with rising intonation. The words "Just fine?" belong to *rising intonation on declarative feature*. When she produces this feature, she raises her intonation showing a typical of yes-no question this datum is functioned to clarifies that Nina is really fine. The clarification refers to emphasize her utterance.

e. Intensifier

Intensifier such as "so", "just", "very", "really" and "quiet" reflect another

characteristic of women's language. In the movie, the researcher finds intensifier features 15 data or 26,3 % out the total of data. The example is "*Look how pink. So pretty*". It is conversation between Erica and Nina. Nina walks into the kitchen and her mother gives an orange. When she sees the orange at that time, she says that the orange so pretty and she is smiling. The word "so" belongs to *intensifier feature*. Nina produces intensifier feature "so" which is strengthening the after word. It seems to be a way backing out committing oneself strongly to an opinion. Nina truly means what she said. It strengthen about her opinion on how pretty the orange is. Those datum is the employments of women's language features which are functioned *to express feeling* uttered by Nina because she express how her feeling to the orange which she looks like the orange. It shows her emotional reaction.

f. Super Polite form

In black swan movie, there is only 1 datum or 1,7 % out total of data which used by the main female characters. The researcher provides the example of super polite form that finds in *Black Swan* movie "*Could you please turn lights back on.*". Nina is exercising in the company. She works hard for the show because she is the

swan queen who have to play as white swan and black swan. She resumes dancing without music but suddenly the lights are tuned off. Nina makes indirect request to turn on the lights. In this datum, Nina uses the rules of polite conversation in request. it refers as *super polite form* because it look more polite rather than uses "please turn light back on" or "could you turn light back on" which it just looks polite not super polite.

g. Emphatic Stress

In Black Swan Movie, the researcher finds 10 data or 117,5 % out of the total data. Stress is used when women try to signal emphasis on what they say. The example is "I'm **twenty eight**". It is the conversation between Erica and Nina. Erica as her mother is a protective mother who always care about her daughter. Therefore, Nina gives emphatic stress in the words "twenty eight" as her age because she thinks, she is not like a girl or a child anymore.

2. The social background that influence the use of women's language in *Black Swan* movie.

a. Social Community

Black swan movie takes place in the world of a ballerina life. It shows that the head of the company has power for the

company, therefore he sovereign for the company. The female characters as ballerina in the movie, they depend on the head of the company. It shows that women are powerless in the society. The female character are consequently regarded as insecure, powerless and weak as well.

b. Social Roles and Norm

The female attitude was rather focused on subjects and feelings. Based on the function of women's language that in the use of language features show that expressing feelings. Erica is one of the main female character who has role as mother which responsible for the development of her daughter. She commonly call her daughter with "sweet" which show her love to her daughter.

To get the position as the main role in the company, the main female character also use emphatic stress word which refers she emphasizes in some words.

V. CONCLUSION

Conclusions are drawn based on the findings and discussion above.

1. There are seven language features with their functions find in the movie. Lexical hedges and filler occurrence 20 datum or 35,3 % which is the dominant feature used by the main female characters

because in their utterance full of uncertainty.

The features that employed consist of (1) feature hedges in the words I think, I guess which showed uncertainty by women in her speaking and filler such as mmmhhh, em, hhh which full fill silence space in their conversation (2) feature tag question in Erica's utterance "It's the role, **isn't it?** Which Erica try to emphasize the utterance (3) empty adjective in the word sweet, beautiful, yummy as admiration for something, it is to express feeling (4) intensifier in the word so as emphasizing her feeling and just" as uncertainty for something (5) superpolite form in Nina's utterance "could you please turn lights back on", (6) rising intonation on declarative "just fine" which refers yes-no question, And the last emphatic stress in the word perfect as judgment for something.

2. The findings show that there are five functions of women's language employed in *Black Swan* Movie. The most frequent function of women's language employed by the main female characters in *Black Swan* Movie is to emphasize the utterance. It occurrences 23 data or 40,3%. This function expressed through lexical hedges or

fillers, tag question, intensifiers and emphatic stress. The lowest two are the function to get response that used in emphatic stress feature and softening utterance in lexical hedges or filler feature and super polite form. To get response function takes 1 datum or 1,7% of the total data, while to soften utterance takes 5 data or 8,8% out of total data.

3. The use of women's language is implied in Black Swan Movie which set out in Ballerina life. Social community as Ballerina life influence in the use of women's language. The powerless indeed in their daily life. Meanwhile social roles and norm gives emphasize in women's attitude which focus on standardize and feeling in using their language.

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