WOMEN'S LANGUAGE IN *TANGLED* MOVIE: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The research aims to: (1) describe the employment of women's language features, (2) reveal the function of women's language, and (3) describe the modification of the use of women's language performed by Rapunzel, as the main character in *Tangled*, to support the movie's goal. The research uses descriptive qualitative supported by quantitative data analysis and focused on the utterances of Rapunzel's *Tangled*. The data were in the form of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences in the context of dialogues. This research reveals three findings. First, there are only eight features, from the total ten features suggested by Lakoff, found in Rapunzel's dialogues. They are lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonation, empty adjectives, intensifiers, superpolite form, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress. Second, all of the functions of women's language are found. They are to express uncertainty, to express feeling, to get response, to soften an utterance, and to emphasize an utterance. Third, the researcher found that Disney Picture, as the producer of the movie, modified the employment of women's language in the movie by dropping the employment of precise color term and hypercorrect grammar, and manipulating the frequency of occurrence of the features. The result suggests that the employment of women's language in this movie functions to boost the gender-neutral image of the movie.

Key words: women's language, *Tangled*, Rapunzel

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender and its stereotype, as one of social contexts, highly influence the way men and women behave and even use language. In fact, women tend to be more polite and use indirect strategies when they are speaking, while men are less polite and using more direct expressions. This kind of situation cannot be separated from the social judgments and stereotypes formed by the society. People of society build an expectation that women should behave in one way and men in another to be called as an ideal one. When men are expected to be stronger and have more power, women are seen as weak, less powered, and subordinate to man. The existence of those stereotypes, unconsciously, makes women employ certain characteristics that distinguish them from men. These special characteristics do not only exist in the level of behavior but also in the level of communication, specifically on the way they use language.

Women, because of their subordinate position, frequently use some features that show uncertainty and lack of confidence. It can be seen from the frequent use of hedges and tag question. They also have a tendency to soften their expression by using more polite form and avoiding strong swearwords in communication. Moreover, because of the social stereotype that place women less than men, it can be found that women tend to choose 'mere' topics such as family, friendship, feeling, shopping and so on as their conversation topics. This leads women to be more expressive in several ways than men in conversation. Women tend to use kinds of expression that openly shows their feelings. This certain way of using language by women is called as women's language.

One movie that reflects the phenomena of women's language is *Tangled*. *Tangled* is an animation movie from Disney Picture that adopts Germany fairy tale entitled *Rapunzel*. This movie tells about the adventure of a young girl and a most wanted thief. The girl is crowned with very long golden hair that has magical power. In order to keep her power unknown from other people, she is locked to stay in a tower by her mother. However, the girl is actually the lost princess of a kingdom who was kidnapped by her present mother. This movie was first released with the title *Rapunzel*, but when it is officially announced for final promotion, the title was changed into *Tangled* in order to sound more gender-neutral.

As a portrait of real life event, *Tangled* also carries some real life phenomena. Based on the fact that *Tangled* has a female character as its focus of the story, the researcher expects that this movie employs women's language. Thus, the researcher decides to use the movie as the subject of the research. The researcher aims to reveal the employment of women's language features, to describe the functions, and to describe the employment of women's language by main female character to support the goal of *Tangled* movie.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

As the effect of social stereotype built by the society, women are placed in a more inferior place than men. Unconsciously, it forces women to behave better than men. The need to be accepted and to fulfill the social expectations leads women to install certain characteristics that distinguish them from the opposite gender.

In the 1975, Robin Lakoff proposes an idea related to the topic of language and gender. She claims that after conducting a research, she found out that women have certain way of using language which is different from men. In her book, Lakoff argues that women have unequal position and are discriminated in the way they are being taught how to use language (Lakoff, 1975:6). It leads them toward discrimination which led them to employ certain characteristic in using language (Lakoff, 1975: 8). In nowadays moment, linguists called this language variation employed by women as women's language.

Lakoff claims that women tend to employ certain linguistics features when they use language to communicate (Lakoff via Holmes, 1992: 314). According to her, the linguistic features used by women indicate women's uncertainty and hesitancy (via Mesthrie et al, 2009: 226). It is also reflects women's lack of confidence (Lakoff in Holmes, 1992: 317).

Through Holmes (1992: 314), Lakoff suggests that women use linguistic features such as:

a) Lexical Hedges

Lexical hedges or fillers are expressions such as "well", "you know", "kinda", "I think", "hmm", "umm" etc. that carry lexical content. The concept of hedges is first introduced by G. Lakoff in 1972. He refers it as the words that "make things fuzzier or less fuzzy" (Riekkinnen, 2009: 5).

b) Tag Question

Tag question is a grammatical structure in which a declarative statement or an imperative is turned into a question by adding an interrogative fragment called the tag. It is used as a midway between an absolute statement and yes-no question, it is less forceful from the former but more confident than the later (Lakoff, 1975: 15).

c) Rising Intonation

Rising intonation usually used by them who wish to continue speaking, seek for feedback or response, or feel uncertain about their own statement. Brend in Wardaugh (2006: 321) states that the intonation patterns of men and women are different. Brend claims that women using certain rising patterns combined with surprise and politeness more often than men.

d) 'Empty' Adjective

'Empty' adjectives are a specific category of adjectives that besides their specific and literal meaning, they also indicate the speaker's admiration to something (Lakoff, 1975: 11-2).

e) Precise Color Terms

Lakoff (1975: 9) states that women make more precise discrimination in naming color than men do. According to her, women tend to use more various color names such as *lavender*, *mauve*, *aquamarine*, *beige*, and so on. These precise color terms exist in women's vocabulary but absent in men's.

f) Intensifier

Intensifier is elements that are used with other expressions to indicate an attempt to intensify the meaning of the expression they modify. Intensifier can be happen as amplifiers, emphasizers, downtoners, etc. (Bussmann et al, 2006: 576).

g) 'Hypercorrect' Grammar

According to Olsson (2000: 10), hypercorrect grammar means that slang and vulgar words or expressions are avoided. Hypercorrect grammar phenomenon is also referred to the way of women in reminding others about the correct form.

h) 'Superpolite' Form

According to Linda Olsson (2000: 9), women are often believed to be less self-confident than men are. The lack of confidence stimulates women to use over-exaggerated politeness when they use language. It is in line with Lakoff's theories which state that language used by women generally contains more

super-polite forms (Lakoff in Olsson, 2000: 9).

i) Avoidance of Strong Swear Word

In an article entitled *Women in the Mirror of Indian Language*, Devi (2003: par. 5) remarks that women tend to avoid using strong swear words and replace it with weak expletive such as *oh dear*, *my goodness*, and so on. In daily life, it is normal for men to utter strong expletive such as *shit*, *damn*, and so on. In the other hand, if women use those kinds of words they will be accused as being unmannered and violating the norms.

j) Emphatic Stress

Emphatic stress is stress that used to signal emphasis on certain part of the expression or utterance. Women generally have a tendency to emphasize certain part of their utterances to help them conveying specific meaning of their utterances.

According to Lakoff, women's language has several functions on its employment. They are to show uncertainty, to intensify / emphasize an utterance, to get response, and to express feeling (Lakoff in Holmes 1992: 316-7).Furthermore, Pearson in Merchant (2012: 18) states that generally women use women's language to soften certain expression or utterance in order to avoid force or offence towards the addressee.

III. METHOD OF RESEARCH

The research was conducted by using descriptive qualitative supported by quantitativemethod. According to Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009: 07), quantitative uses numeric as its data, while qualitative research is interested with data which are in the form of narrative rather than numeric ones. It gives researchers a chance to gain in-depth understanding into the meanings and functions of event (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009: 164).

The subject of this research was *Tangled* movie from Disney Picture. The data were in the form of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences found in the utterances of Rapunzel, as the main character, which are taken from the movie and its transcript. The primary instrument of this research is the researcher herself with data sheet as the supporting instrument. Several procedures such as collecting, classifying, analyzing and interpreting the data are employed to achieve the final result.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher found out that there are only eight features, out of ten features suggested by Lakoff, found in the movie. Two features of women's language, precise color term and hypercorrect grammar, have no occurrence in Rapunzel's dialogues, which means they

No.	Features	Functions					Total Frequency	Percentage
		UC	RE	EM	EF	SF		
1	LH	28	0	0	6	2	36	51.4
2	TQ	1	1	0	0	0	2	2.9
3	RI	5	1	0	0	0	6	8.6
4	EA	0	0	1	3	0	4	5.7
5	PC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	IN	0	0	8	2	0	10	14.3
7	HG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	SP	0	0	0	0	3	3	4.3
9	AS	0	0	0	1	0	1	1.4
10	ES	0	0	7	1	0	8	11.4
Total Frequency		34	2	16	13	5	70	100
Percentage		48.6	2.8	22.9	18.6	7.1		

are not employed by Rapunzel in this movie. This condition indicates that the Disney, as the producer of Tangled, wants to reduce feminine effect of the movie.

The findings shows that lexical hedges or fillers feature hold the highest score in features occurrences. It occurs 36 times or takes 51.4% out of the total data. It is drastically different from the features that hold the lowest place. From the 36 times of occurrence for lexical hedges

feature, it is significantly decreased to zero occurrences for precise color term feature and hypercorrect grammar feature.

Moreover, there are five functions of women's language are employed in Tangled. The most frequent function of women's language employed by Rapunzel in Tangled is to express uncertainty function. It has 34 times occurrence from the total data or 48.6%. In the other hand, the function to get response holds the lowest place in frequency of the occurrence. It occurs twice in total.

1. Women's Language Features in *Tangled*

In this movie, there are only eight features of women's language employed by Rapunzel. Two features that are not employed in this movie are precise color term and hypercorrect grammar feature. For better explanation, the researcher presents the discussion of the eight features of women's language found in this movie in the following parts.

a. Lexical Hedges or Fillers

Based on the findings of the research, Rapunzel uses lexical hedges or fillers 36 times or 51.4% out of the total data. The example of lexical hedges employment is "*Ha!...**Hmm.Well**, **I guess** Pascal's not hiding out here*".

In the example above, Rapunzel and her pet, Pascal, play hide and seek in the tower. As a chameleon, Pascal has an ability to change its skin color like the surroundings. Pascal uses this ability to disguise when its turn to hide comes. That was Rapunzel's turn and she tries to find Pascal. Actually, she is very close to where Pascal hides itself. However, Rapunzel hesitates and feels unsure. Thus, she uses fillers by employing the expressions 'hmm' and 'well' to fill the blank before her statement. Since she is uncertain, she also tends to reduce the absolute effect of her statement by using the expression 'I guess' in her utterance. By employing expression 'I guess', the effect of absolute statement is reduced and creating an effect that the statement is unreliable.

b.   Tag Questions

In this movie, Rapunzel uses tag question twice. Each of the employment has its own purpose and function. The example of its employment is in the expression "*Nobody appreciates you, **do they?**'*.

The dialogue in the datum above is taken when Rapunzel and Maximus involve in a conversation about all the efforts Maximus has done to capture Flynn. Rapunzel guesses that there is nobody who gives him an appreciation and Maximus gives an agreement gesture. Rapunzel wants to entertain Maximus by uttering a statement which shows that she is in his side and understands how he feels. However, because Rapunzel is less sure about the validity of her statement about Maximus, she tends to use the tag question 'do they' in her utterance.

c.   Rising Intonations

In this movie, there are six occurrences of rising intonation feature employed by Rapunzel. It takes 8.6 % from the total percentage. The example is "*That's okay! I mean, **what she doesn't know won't kill her, right?**"*.

In example above, the dialogue represents Rapunzel's self war. It takes a place when she is outside the tower for the very first time in her life. She feels thrilled to be outside of the tower, but in the same time she is afraid of her own action. She is afraid that her decision for leaving the tower will hurt Mother Gothel. Rapunzel's self war creates hesitancies inside her heart. She employs rising intonation in certain part of her utterance. The tendency to use rising intonation in the marked part

of Rapunzel's utterance indicates that Rapunzel is hesitant.

d. Empty Adjectives

In this movie, Rapunzel employs empty adjective feature four times in her conversation. Expression '*I'm so glad I left my tower. Like all you **lovely** folks, I've got a dream"* is the example.

On the example above, Rapunzel tells the thugs in Snugly Duckling about her dream. Surprisingly, the thugs respond her by telling that even though they look like criminals, they also have dreams. She feels excited and grateful because she finds out that there is somebody who shares the same feeling about having a dream with her. She expresses her gratefulness by employing the word 'lovely' in addressing the thugs. By employing that word, she can please her addressees. The word 'lovely' is categorized as empty adjective since its employment is not really significant to the main information of the conversation and employed only to make the utterance sound good.

e. Intensifiers

In this research, the researcher finds that intensifier feature is employed ten times or 14.3 % from the total data. The example is *"This is it. This is a **very** big*

day, Pascal. Hmm-mm. I'm finally gonna do it. I'm gonna ask her.".

Rapunzel is with Pascal when suddenly she heard Mother Gothel's voice. She prepares herself to tell Mother Gothel about her desire. She uses intensifier feature by employing the word 'very'. Actually, the word 'very' can be omitted without violating the main meaning of the statement. However, Rapunzel tries to give a stronger effect to the statement she is going to share by emphasizing the information with the intensifier 'very'.

f. Super polite Forms

The researcher finds out that there are three occurrences of superpolite form feature in *Tangled*, for example *"Oh. Well, **I was hoping you would** take me to see the floating lights."*

In the example above, Rapunzel tries to ask Mother Gothel to take her to see the floating light. In order to give less offensive and forceful effect, Rapunzel uses superpolite form feature by exaggerating politeness in her utterance. She uses 'I was hoping you would' when she can employs simpler expression such as 'I want you to'.

g. Avoidance of Strong Swearwords

In *Tangled*, this feature only has one occurrence.It occurs in the expression *"**Oh my gosh,** this would kill her."*.

In the datum above, Rapunzel is in the forest near the tower when she feels self-war inside her heart. Inone hand, she is excited being out of her tower. On the other hand, she feels guilty for leaving the tower. She wants to express her guilty by swearing. However, she avoids to use strong swear words, so it will not sound rude, by employing the expression 'oh my gosh'.

h.   Emphatic Stress

Emphatic stress is stress used to signal emphasis on certain part of the expressions or utterances. In *Tangled*, Rapunzel uses the feature eight times in a whole movie or 11.4 % of the total percentage. The example is *"That's the thing. I've charted stars and they're always constant–**but these**–they appear every year on my birthday, mother–**only** on my birthday. And I can't help but feel like they're… they're meant for me. I need to see them, mother, and not just from my window. **In person**. I have to know what they are."*.

Rapunzel has a conversation with Mother Gothel. Mother Gothel says that the lights Rapunzel refers to are stars. In her response, Rapunzel explains to Mother Gothel that the lights she refers to are not stars. The lights are specials because they only appear on her birthday. To emphasize the information she wants to tell, Rapunzel uses emphatic stress in this utterances. She puts some stress on parts 'only', 'but these', and 'in person' to mark the importance of the information.

2.   Women's Language Functions in *Tangled*

There are five functions of women's language found in *Tangled*. The explanation is stated in the following section.

a.   To Express Uncertainty

There are 34 expressions employed by Rapunzel or 48.6 % of the total data that indicate her uncertainty. Based on the findings of the research, Rapunzel as the main female character of *Tangled* employs this function through three features. They are lexical hedges feature, tag question feature, and rising intonation on declarative feature. To make it clearer, the researcher presents some examples and its explanation. The example is *"**I think** he's telling the truth, too."*

The dialogue above happens in satum 22 when Rapunzel and Pascal meet Flynn Ryder for the first time. Rapunzel and

Pascal discuss about whether Flynn Ryder is good person or the bad one just like what Mother Gothel said. Pascal thinks that they should not trust Flynn, but Rapunzel thinks the opposite. However, similar to the previous example, because Rapunzel is less sure about the validity of her own information, she tends to use lexical hedges in her utterance. She uses lexical hedges by employing the expression 'I think' in her utterance. The employment of the expression 'I think' reduces the credibility of the statement and indicates that Rapunzel is hesitant.

b.   To Get Response

In *Tangled*, the researcher finds that the lead female character uses women's language for this purpose twice in total. According to the findings, Rapunzel uses two features of women's language as a way to get response from her addressee. They are tag question and rising intonation on declarative feature. Here is the example *"I am the lost princess, **aren't I**? Did I mumble, Mother? Or should I even call you that?"*

In this datum, Rapunzel feels infuriated after she finds out that she is actually the lost princess who is kidnapped by Mother Gothel when she was a baby. She tries to get some clarification from Mother Gothel. After emphasizing her statement about the fact that she already knows the truth by employing some emphatic stress in her utterance, she uses an expression which employs tag question feature. The employment of this feature has a purpose to get a clarification response from Mother Gothel.

c.   To Emphasize an Utterance

In this movie, Rapunzel uses three features of women's language to make her utterance stronger. They are intensifier, empty adjectives, and emphatic stress. Based on the findings, there are 16 datum of expression or 22.9 % out of total data which contains this function. For example, *"Hmm, he-he-he. Alright, so, mother, as you know, tomorrow is a **very** big day–"*.

The datum above is taken when Rapunzel has a conversation with Mother Gothel. Rapunzel wants to change the topic of the conversation, so she would be able to tell Mother Gothel about her birthday that will happen tomorrow. The employment of the word 'very' in this datum shows that Rapunzel tries to get the attention on the information she wants to share. She puts the intensifier 'very' in her utterance so it could mark her information and emphasize the important part of her statement.

d. To Express Feelings

In this research, the researcher finds that there are nine occurrences of expression which is functioned to express the speaker's feelings. Rapunzel uses lexical hedges, intensifier, and empty adjective features to express her feelings, for example *"**Oh**, it's nothing"*.

Mother Gothel just arrives in the tower and she praises Rapunzel for her works. Rapunzel, who does not expect that sudden praise from Mother Gothel, is unprepared to respond Mother Gothel's praise. Rapunzel uses filler 'oh' in her response. The filler is used to buy her a moment before she could decide how to response the praise. It also helps her in expressing her surprise and excitement feeling related to the sudden praise she got from Mother Gothel.

e. To Soften an Utterance

In this movie, Rapunzel employs two features of women's language which indicate her actions to soften her utterance. They are lexical hedges and 'superpolite' form features. Rapunzel softens her utterance five times in whole or 7.1 % from the total data. The example is *"Hmm, he-he-he. **Alright**, so, mother,*

as you know, tomorrow is a very big day– ".

Mother Gothel teases Rapunzel about being so late. In this datum, Rapunzel uses lexical hedge/filler by using word 'alright' in her response. The word 'alright' does not mean the literal meaning of the word 'alright'. It is employed to fill the time gap before the statement. Rapunzel tries to change the topic of the conversation, but she feels that it will be rude if she cuts the conversation and changes the topic in a sudden. Thus, in order not to be so sudden, she uses the filler 'alright'. The employment of the filler makes the action of changing the topic in the middle of the conversation sound less offensive.

3. Women's Language Employment in *Tangled* to Support the Movie Goal

As a movie adopted from that fairytale, *Tangled* which is entitled *Rapunzel* in the first place, is also expected to have 'girly' plot with classical princess tale-story type. However, Disney successfully breaks those stereotypes. Not only did it change the title from *Rapunzel* to *Tangled*, but as the producer of the

movie, it also creates a twist for the story. The team creates a most wanted thief named Flynn Ryder as the protagonist male character, who has egoistic character and dark past life when he was young, instead of a typical chosen prince with all of his bravery. The actions, changing the title and creating new male character, are intentionally done by Disney to give the audience a new image for the tale of *Rapunzel*.

Besides, Disney also sets the whole dialogues in *Tangled* in a more casual form of language. It is different from the classical version of *Rapunzel* tale that tends to use more standardized form of language which is usually used to represent the cultural setting of a story with a kingdom or royal family as its background setting. All of those actions are done in order to make the movie have a more gender-neutral image.

In this research, the researcher is interested to analyze how the linguistic aspect of the movie, specifically the employment of women's language by Rapunzel, supports the goal of the movie in making a more gender-neutral image. Based on the findings, the researcher discovers that there are only eight from the total ten features of women's language

suggested by Lakoff are employed in the movie. They are lexical hedges, tag question, rising intonation, 'empty' adjective, intensifier, 'superpolite' form, avoidance of strong swear word, and emphatic stress. Precise color term feature and hypercorrect grammar feature are not employed by Rapunzel in this movie.

The unemployment of those two features indicates that Disney tries to make Rapunzel not to have too 'girly' image like other typical princess characters. Hypercorrect grammar and precise color term features are considered as very feminine features in women's language besides empty adjective feature. If a man employs expressions from those features, naturally he will be considered unmanly by the society. Thus, by dropping the employment of those features, the movie maker gives less feminine image to Rapunzel as the main character. By making the main character less feminine than the usual image of female characters in fairytale-based movie, the movie strengthens its gender-neutral image.

Meanwhile, the quantity of the rest of women's language features employed in this movie also plays a big role in supporting the movie goal. Based on the findings, only lexical hedges feature occurs

more than 30 times, 36 times exactly. Intensifier feature occurs 11 times, and the rest occurs less than ten times.

From the findings' percentage, the scriptwriter seems to distribute the employment of women's language features in a striking way. Lexical hedges feature, the highest feature that occurs in the movie, holds 51.4 % of the total data, while it is drastically decreased to 14.3 % for intensifier which is in the next place. Furthermore, the rest of the features, mostly, has occurrence less than 10 % of the total data.

Lexical hedges, intensifier, and emphatic stress are the closest features to be considered as the gender-neutral expressions since sometimes men can easily use them. It is different from the rest five features. Men will be considered as unmanly, if they employ those features in their utterances. Thus, to boost the gender-neutral image of the movie, the scriptwriter reduces the quantity of certain women's language features employments that have more feminine effect such as tag question, empty adjective, superpolite form, rising intonation on declarative, and avoidance of strong swear word.

As the result of those strategies done by Disney Pictures, the movie successfully gains its goal in getting a more gender-neutral image. It is proved from the high number of audiences and various achievements it gains, including the title of becoming the top ten animated movie in 2010 that grossed more than $200 million.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions are drawn based on the findings and discussion above.

1. Based on the findings and discussion in the previous chapter, there are ten features of women's language. In *Tangled*, two features have zero occurrences which mean that their employments are dropped from the dialogues uttered by Rapunzel. Two features that are not used are precise color term and hypercorrect grammar features. The researcher also found out that there is striking difference on the frequency of occurrence. When the features with the lowest score in utterance have zero point for their occurrences, lexical hedges or fillers feature hold 51.4% of the total data. It is employed by Rapunzel 36 times in total.

2. The findings show that there are five functions of women's language employed in *Tangled*. The most

frequent function of women's language employed by Rapunzel in *Tangled* is to express uncertainty function which is expressed through three features that are lexical hedges, tag question, and rising intonation on declarative features. It has 34 times occurrence or 48.6 % of total data. The lowest two are the function to soften an utterance, which is expressed through lexical hedges and 'superpolite' form features, and to get response function that uses tag question and rising intonation on declarative feature. The first one occurs 5 times or 7.1 % of the total data, while the later occurs 2 times or 2.8 % out of the total.

3. In order to make a more gender-neutral image for the movie, Disney Picture has done several attempts such as using more casual form of language in the movie's dialogues and creating a most wanted thief as a new protagonist male character. In the linguistic aspect, the employment of women's language by Rapunzel in this movie plays its role in supporting the movie's goal. Based on the findings, Rapunzel uses only eight features of women's language from the total ten, which suggested by Lakoff. There also exists striking difference in the number of certain features employment. Some features that sound more gender-neutral, such as lexical hedges, intensifier, and emphatic stress hold high number in occurrences, while the rest five features occur less than 10% of the total data. Those tendencies show that the employment of women's language in this movie is designed to support the movie goal, to have more gender-neutral image.

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