

Women's Language Features Viewed from the Two Perspectives: Sociolinguistic and pragmatic Ones

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ABSTRACT

This research discusses features of women's language viewed from the two points of view, sociolinguistic and pragmatic ones. From the sociolinguistic perspective, this research aims to identify the features of women's language, and from the pragmatic one, this research aims to identify the types of speech acts used by women. The data source used in this research is taken from a movie entitled *Confessions of a Shopaholic* by P.J. Hogan. The method used in this research is a descriptive one, through which the data are described, categorized and analyzed. The results of this research indicate that 1) there are eight features of women's language used in the movie as the data source. The eight features cover: lexical hedges, empty adjective, intensifier, rising intonation on declarative, emphatic stress, super polite form, avoidance of strong swear word and tag question; 2) the types of speech acts used by the women characters in the movie include literal direct speech acts, non-literal direct speech acts and literal indirect speech acts.

Keywords: *features of women's language, speech act, direct speech act, indirect speech act.*

INTRODUCTION

The two given genders elaborated in this paper, women, and men, refer to the differences between men and women characteristics based on their status, position and their role in society. In sociolinguistics, language and gender have a close relationship. According to Wardhaugh (1992: 315), the differences between men's and women's speech act can be seen from the structures, vocabularies, and the social roles of the men and women who speak these languages. In line with this, Holmes (2013: 167), in terms of language used, also states there are some differences between the language used by men and women. Women tend to be more standard compared to men. At least there are four different

explanations related to these differences. The first appeals to social class and its related status for an explanation, the second refers to women's role in society, the third to women's status as a subordinate group and the forth to the function of speech act in expressing gender identity, and especially masculinity.

Lakoff (1975) said that women experience language discrimination in two ways: firstly, how they are taught to speak: secondly, in terms of how language generally treats women. The fact that women experience language discrimination made women have their own features of language that can differentiate them from men. Women have their own features of language that can differentiate them from men.

Further, Lakoff (1975) explained that women have ten features of language, those features namely, *lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonations on declarative, "hypercorrect" grammar, "super polite" forms, avoidance of strong swear words, "empty" adjectives, precise color terms, intensifiers, and emphatic stress.*

Besides, the differences between women and men are also found in their speech act. Austin (1962) said that speech acts are an utterance that contains not only information but also actions in communicating. Basically, when someone says something, he or she does something too. The differentiation between women and men's social status also give an impact to their speech act.

From that phenomenon, this study intends to investigate women's language features, particularly in a movie. The movie used as the source of the data in this research is *Confessions of a Shopaholic* by P. J. Hogan. The movie was chosen because the theme is about women, so women's language features can be found easily in the movie. *A confession of a shopaholic* is a movie about a woman named Rebecca Bloomwood who has an addiction of shopping.

Besides the features of women's language, the differences between women and men also can be found in their speech act. Speech act based on how they were delivered is divided into two types namely, direct speech acts and indirect speech acts. Based on delivery techniques, speech acts can be classified into direct speech acts and indirect speech acts. Based on the interaction of meaning, speech acts can be classified into literal speech acts and nonliteral speech acts.

Direct speech act is spoken directly and easily understood by the hearer because of the utterances spoken by speaker directly in accordance with the intent of the speaker. So the statement will be conveyed by a declarative sentence, the question will be conveyed by interrogative sentence, instruction will be conveyed by instruction sentence. According to Searle in Cutting (2002:19), "*a speaker using direct speech acts want to communicate the literal meaning that the words conventionally express; there is a direct relationship between the form and the function*". Direct speech act consists of two types, namely literal direct speech acts and

non-literal direct speech act. The first type of direct speech act is literal direct speech act; it means that utterances spoken by speaker directly in accordance with the intent of the speaker and it conveys the same meaning with the meaning of the words are arranged. The second type is non-literal direct speech act; it is a speech act that utterance spoken by speaker directly in accordance with the intent of speaker but it does not convey the same meaning with the meaning of the words is arranged.

Indirect speech act related to the principle of politeness in the conversation. Imperative sentences can be expressed through an interrogative sentence or declarative sentence that people who are commanded do not feel commanded. Indirect speech act is a speech act that is not in accordance with the function of the sentence. According to Kroeger (2005:197), "*indirect speech acts are those in which there is a mismatch between the sentence type and the intended force*". Verschuren in Griffiths (1999:194) also states that "*when a sentence type is used in performative of speech acts different from their default kind; we have what is called indirect speech acts*". Like indirect speech acts, indirect speech acts also consist of two types, namely literal indirect speech acts and non-literal indirect speech acts.

The first type is literal indirect speech acts, and according to Wijana (1996: 34), this kind of speech acts does not have the same function as the type of sentence but it conveys the same meaning as the words do. The second type is non-literal indirect speech acts which do not function as the type of sentence and do not convey the same meaning as the words do.

METHOD

The method used in this research is a descriptive method, through which the data are described, categorized and analyzed. Related to this kind of method, Maxwell (1996:78) explained that this method begins with an overview of qualitative analysis and then discuss some specific issues in making decisions about analytic methods. The

analytic options fall into three main groups: memos, categorizing strategies (such as coding and thematic analysis), and contextualizing strategies. In this research, the steps taken to obtain and analyze data are to select and formulate the issues to be studied. Then determine the purpose of the research to be done and provide restrictions from the area or the extent to which descriptive research will be carried out after that search and classify data from the movie *Confessions of a Shopaholic* and then analyze the existing data in accordance with the specified restrictions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research revealed that there are eight features, namely, *lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonations on declarative, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, empty adjectives, intensifiers, and emphatic stress*. The data analyzed that are able to represent the total data in the research (68 data) are eight data and they are classified based on the types of women's language feature. The eight classifications cover: 1) lexical hedges, 2) empty adjective, 3) intensifier, 3) rising intonation on declarative, 4) emphatic stress, 5) super polite form, 6) avoidance of strong 7) swear word and 8) tag question.

Lexical Hedges or Fillers

If paid attention to the bold type of the conversation below, then it can be seen that it has lexical hedges.

Alette: *"You'll take pieces from your own wardrobe, like this for example"*

(Showing the shoes)

Graham: *"They're swell"*

Alette: *"This season I believe"*

Rebecca: *"**Um, well,** they're Louboutin, **so,** I mean, well they're not affordable fashion"*

Rebecca's utterance uses some lexical hedges or fillers like *um, well and so*. Lexical hedges or fillers that contained in the utterances can show Rebecca's doubts about her utterance. In her utterance, Rebecca shows her doubts to response Alette's utterance that said Louboutin is an affordable fashion because she thinks it is not an affordable fashion for everyone.

The conversation above if viewed from the pragmatic viewpoint – the speech act, Rebecca's utterance is classified as literal direct speech acts. Rebecca conveys the same meaning with the meaning of the words is arranged. She has no other meanings in her speech. She just wants to say that she thinks Louboutin is not an affordable fashion for everyone.

Tag Question

The bold type of the conversation below shows that it has tag question.

Suze: *"You didn't throw anything, **did you?**"*

Rebecca: *"I'm sorry"*

Suze uses tag question because she wants to confirm to Rebecca that Rebecca did not throw away anything she should have thrown away and Suze gets the confirmation because after saying that Rebecca response her with "I'm sorry" that means she indirectly acknowledged what Suze said is a truth.

The speech act in Rebecca's utterance is a literal direct speech act. Suze has no other purpose; she just wanted to confirm to Rebecca that Rebecca had not thrown away all the things she should have thrown away.

Rising Intonation on Declarative

If paid attention to the intonation symbol of the conversation below, then it can be seen that it has rising intonation on declarative.

Suze: *"**But I guess it would be nice if my maid of honor could afford her***

 *own dress"*

Rebecca: *"**He asked**"*

Rebecca uses a declarative sentence that has a function to declare something, but the rising intonation used by Rebecca at the end of her sentence can indicate that Rebecca was unsure of her utterance.

Rebecca uses literal indirect speech act in her utterance. Rebecca uses a declarative sentence that has a function to express something, but Suze uses the utterance more likely to confirm implicitly to Suze about her statement which concludes that Tarquin has proposed Suze.

Empty Adjective

The conversation below has a certain adjective that tends to be over in meaning for something usual.

Rebecca: “*Do you like it?*”

Suze: “*You're fabulous!*”

The word fabulous is an adjective that commonly used by women more often than men. Suze uses the word fabulous to show her admiration for what Rebecca writes.

Suze's utterance is speech a literal direct speech act. Suze sincerely wanted to show her admiration for the article Rebecca did.

Intensifier

If paid attention to the bold type of the conversation below, then it can be seen that it has intensifier.

Rebecca: “*Suze... that I can **absolutely** explain!*”

Suze: “*ok. Explain.*”

Rebecca uses the word absolutely to affirm that she has a good reason why someone can use the dress that she has to wear. The speech act in Rebecca utterance is a literal direct speech act.

Rebecca uses a declarative sentence to declare that she could explain to Suze what had happened.

Super Polite Form

If paid attention to the bold type of the utterance in the conversation below, then it can be seen that it is categorized into super polite form.

Hayle: “*Oh, uh, Luke. Sorry, um. **May I take a long lunch?***”

Luke: “*sure. What are you doing?*”

Although Hayley's age is older than Luke, she still uses super polite form and formal word that rarely being used in daily life.

Hayle uses literal direct speech act in her utterance, she uses a question sentence to ask Luke if she can take a long lunch.

Avoidance Strong Swear Word

If paid attention to the bold type of the expression in the conversation below, then it can be seen that it is included into a swear word...

Luke: “*That's interesting. Why Finnish?*”

Rebecca: “*what's behind you?*”

“***Oh my God...** oh... it's a naked man. I'm sorry*”

The word *oh my God* is one of the swear words that women often use compared to men because that word is one of the less swear words example. Rebecca uses the word *oh my God* in her utterance to show her surprise to the picture behind Luke.

The speech act in Rebecca utterance is non-literal direct speech act. Beside to show her express, Rebecca has other propose in her utterance. Rebecca uses that utterance to distract Luke's attention when he asked Rebecca what is the reason that makes her interested in Finnish because the truth is she cannot speak Finnish.

Emphatic Stress

If paid attention to the way to write the negative imperative in the conversation below, then it can be seen that it is classified into emphatic stress...

Suze: “*Oh my God, Bex there has to be a bag somewhere in this room.*”

Rebecca: “*Suze, **DO NOT OPEN** that closet!*”

Rebecca uses emphatic stress that has the function to emphasize or affirm a sentence. The utterance DO NOT OPEN indicates that Rebecca wants to affirm to Suze not to open her wardrobe.

The speech act in Rebecca utterance is a literal direct speech act. Rebecca uses an imperative sentence to tell Suze not to open her closet. It is in accordance with the function of the imperative sentence to command or ask something.

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CONCLUSION

The results of this research indicate that: 1) from the sociolinguistic perspective, there are eight features of women's language used in the movie *Confessions of a Shopaholic*: lexical hedges (20%), empty adjective (17%), intensifier (14%), rising intonation on declarative (14%), emphatic stress (11%), super polite form (9%), avoidance of strong swear word (9%) and tag question; 2) from the pragmatic perspective, there are three types of speech acts used by the women characters in the movie: literal direct speech acts (66%), non-literal direct speech acts (20%) and literal indirect speech acts (14%).

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