

LANGUAGE OF MARGARET THATCHER “A WOMAN LEADER”

IN *THE IRON LADY*: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY

Ni Putu Santi Ashari Rahayu

Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Sastra dan Budaya, Universitas Udayana

Abstrak

Dilihat dari segi gender, perempuan dan kepemimpinan adalah dua hal yang berbeda. Dimana perempuan mengacu pada kefeminisan sedangkan laki-laki lebih mengacu pada kemaskulinan. Saat ini banyak pemimpin perempuan yang mulai menunjukkan kemampuan mereka dalam bidang kepemimpinan. Karya ilmiah ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis fitur dan fungsi bahasa dari bahasa perempuan khususnya Margaret Thatcher dalam film “The Iron Lady” serta untuk menganalisis konteks situasi dimana Margaret Thatcher menggunakan bahasa untuk menunjukkan gaya kepemimpinannya dalam film “The Iron Lady”.

Terdapat tiga teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Diantaranya teori tentang fitur dan fungsi bahasa perempuan oleh Lakoff (1975) yang digunakan untuk menjawab rumusan masalah pertama dari karya ilmiah ini serta teori tentang bahasa kepemimpinan perempuan oleh Baxter (2010) dan teori konteks situasi oleh Halliday (1985) untuk menganalisis rumusan masalah kedua dari karya ilmiah ini.

Berdasarkan hasil analisis, diantara 10 fitur bahasa perempuan yang disampaikan Lakoff (1975) hanya 9 diantaranya yang dipakai oleh Margaret Thatcher dalam ujarannya di film “The Iron Lady”. Disamping itu dalam ujarannya Margaret Thatcher lebih sering membicarakan tentang politik bersama suami dan rekan politiknya. Bahasa yang digunakan oleh Margaret Thatcher adalah bahasa formal. Berdasarkan penemuan tersebut dapat disimpulkan bahwa meskipun sebagai seorang pemimpin Negara yang hebat, Margaret Thatcher masih menggunakan bahasa perempuan dengan kerabat dengan maupun rekan terdekatnya di dunia politik.

Kata Kunci: bahasa perempuan, kepemimpinan perempuan, konteks situasi.

(1) Background of The Study

Women and leadership are two different things in terms of gender. In which women refer to feminism while leadership refers to masculinity. According to Holmes (2008) in the society women have a very small opportunity in doing leadership because of their inferior status: if they “do power” women leaders are regarded as unfeminine; if they “do femininity” they are regarded as unfit to lead. Forbes, the largest worldwide economical, business, and leadership magazine reported chart consists of 100 powerful leaders in this planet every year. In 2014 Angela Merkel

(The Honorable Leader of Germany) and Melinda Gates (Co-CEO of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) are in the top 10 chart of most powerful woman leader in this planet, this fact reflected that women are no longer stay in the traditional gender role stereotype.

Woman leader tend to do different roles when they manage something. They used different language from men in leading. The fact that women are very talkative makes them have to be aware on language they used in communication. That opinion also supported by Lakoff (1975:98) who said that women are use more polite language because their status inferior to men and its affects their language. According to Baxter (2010), men and women use language to do leadership effectively in similar ways, and that both men and women use transactional as well as relational styles of leadership to accomplish their goals.

Margaret Hilda Roberts or widely known as Margaret Thatcher is the longest-serving British Prime Minister of the 20th century and currently the only woman to have held the office. She is one of the most phenomenal woman leaders in the world. In 2011, the film entitled *The Iron Lady* was released based on her biography. This undergraduate study analyzes the language of Margaret Thatcher as a woman leader in *The Iron Lady* movie.

(2) Problems of the Study

The problems of the study can be formulated into the following questions:

- 2.1 What are linguistic features and the functions of women's language found in Margaret Thatcher utterances in "The Iron Lady" movie?
- 2.2 In what context of situation did Margaret Thatcher use the language to show her leadership style in "The Iron Lady"?

(3) Aims of the Study

There are two aims related to this study based on the problems formulated above. They are:

- 3.1 To identify and analyze the linguistic features and the functions of women's language found in Margaret Thatcher utterances in "The Iron Lady" movie.
- 3.2 To analyze the context of situation in which Margaret Thatcher used the language to show her leadership style in "The Iron Lady" movie.

(4) Research Method

The data used in this study were taken from a movie entitled *The Iron Lady*. This movie was chosen because it is a movie based on Margaret Thatcher's biography which contains information about her life and also her career as one of the most powerful women leaders in history. Her long career in leadership makes her language become interesting to be analyzed especially how she used language to do leadership. In order to support the analysis, the data of this study were taken from the movie script by using documentation method. The first step was watching the movie and then reading the movie script and the second step was selecting the data by doing note-taking.

The data were analyzed qualitatively and presented descriptively. In the first step, the utterances uttered by Margaret Thatcher were identified and selected in the movie entitled *The Iron Lady*. The second step, the features of women's language such as: lexical hedges or fillers, tag question, rising intonation on declaratives, empty adjectives, precise color terms, intensifier, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong words, and emphatic stress found in Margaret Thatcher utterances in *The Iron Lady* movie script was analyzed based on the theory proposed by Lakoff (1975). The last step is that how Thatcher used the language in her leadership style based on the context of situation in *The Iron Lady* Movie were analyzed based on theory proposed by Halliday (1985) and Baxter (2010).

(5) Result and Discussion

a. Lexical Hedges or Fillers

“Well, I don't like coalitions, I never have”

The analysis:

The datum shows that Margaret is not sure about her own statement. Her statement was weakened by herself when she said that she does not like coalition when she had never been in the coalition. She used this utterance to anticipate condition like refusal or unconvinced thought from the other member of the Conservative Party. She used the hedges “*well*” to persuade the other member of the conservative party to believe her. That analysis also supported by Lakoff (1975) who said that hedges like, *you know, short*

of, well, you see in the utterances reflect women's lack of confidence. Even though her utterance reflects that she seemed very strong but the use of the hedges "*well*" in women language aims to show women's lack of confidence.

b. Tag Question

"They grow up so fast, don't they?"

The analysis:

In this utterance, Thatcher asked her husband about their twin children's physical condition, since she spoke to her family, her intonation mostly more intimate as she discussed about her personal feeling. . Thatcher used the tag question "*don't they?*" as a leeway to make an easy entrance for them to start the conversation. That was very important for her to make the leeway since her relationship with her husband was a bit awkward because she had been really busy with her political carrier.

c. Rising Intonation on Declarative

"No, no, no please don't try to hide your opinions. Goodness me, I'd much rather you were open and straight forward about them instead of continuously and damagingly leaking them to the press".

The analysis:

Rising intonation on declaratives on that utterance was used to show politeness. Margaret Thatcher used rising intonation in her utterances above to seek confirmation from the member of the cabinet which can be considered more polite rather than used command.

d. Empty Adjective

"I said I didn't want any big fuss but they insisted, lovely little article in the telegraph".

The analysis:

According to Lakoff (1975), women tend to use empty adjective to show their approbation or admiration about something in their own vocabulary. This utterance reflects her special feeling that she was really happy and honored by the writing that exposed in that telegraph. The word "*Lovely*" emphasized her happiness about her

success on improving the national income of the country and make the country out from the economic recession.

e. Intensifiers such as *just* and *so*

“There are so much to stand”.

The analysis:

Intensifier *so* found in that utterance used by Margaret Thatcher to substitute her strong feeling, which in this case *so* substitute the word *very* (Lakoff:1975). The use of intensifier *so*, in her utterance shows that she had a very strong feeling in the situation however in the same time, she was uncomfortable to use the word *very*.

f. Hypercorrectness in grammar.

“The trade union movement was founded to protect workers. Now it prosecutes them. It stops them from working. It is killing jobs and it is bringing this country to its knees. I say enough. It is time to get up the “great” back into Great Britain!”

The Analysis:

Women use the hypercorrect grammar which signified by standard form to show that they are educated enough. By that utterance she showed that she was an educated woman leader who also maintained literacy for the good of her country.

g. Superpolite forms

“We congratulate the men and women of our armed forces for their skill, bravery, and loyalty to this country. We were faced with an act of unprovoked aggression and we responded in time past with unity, strength, and courage, sure in the knowledge that though enough much is sacrificed”.

The analysis:

Women usually use the form of superpolite form while uttering description or trying to persuade others. It is related to politeness. Women are supposed to be careful in saying ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ and to approve the other social convention. In the utterance above Thatcher showed her indirect request to the British Nation to stay loyal to the country.

h. Avoidance of strong swear words

“Goodness me!”

The analysis:

The utterance *“Goodness me!”* to avoid swear word in the middle of formal Cabinet’s meeting. As a woman leader, she uses more polite word to express her feeling in that worst situation rather than using swear words.

i. Emphatic stress

“You saved the day once again Crawfie. You are an angel”.

The analysis:

Emphatic stress in women’s linguistic features is another way to express uncertainty about what women have asserted (Lakoff 1975:56). The use of emphatic stress is to emphasize one’s judgment on something. In that utterance, Thatcher showed her admiration that she was so glad to have a reliable assistant like Crawfie because she helps her to fix the button of her dress.

j. The context of situation

“Now, as the test draws near, I ask your help. That together we can shake off the shackles of socialism and restore to greatness this country that we love. And the only way is for The Conservative Party to win. I should just like to say, that I take very seriously the trust placed in me by The British people today and I will work hard everyday to live up to that responsibility”

The analysis:

Field

In the utterance above the field is politics. The utterance above is the part of speech that is presented by Margaret Thatcher during her campaign for the British Prime Minister’s election. The utterances that emphasized it is, *“And the only way is for The Conservative Party to win. I should just like to say, that I take very seriously the trust placed in me by The British people today and I will work hard everyday to live up to that responsibility”*, by this utterances Margaret Thatcher tried to convince British people to vote for her. That is very crucial in politics to make people sure in every statement uttered by the candidates.

In order to convince her voter, Thatcher also promise to British people that she will work hard everyday to accomplish her goals when she was elected. That analysis emphasize by this utterance, *“I will work hard everyday to live up to that responsibility”*. According to Baxter (2010) women tend to use transactional and relational style of leadership to accomplish their goals.

Tenor

There are participants involved here, they are Margaret Thatcher as the speaker of the speech and the one who being the candidate of the election, her official for the national campaign who supported her during her campaign, her husband Denis who support her as the representative of her family and the British people who are the supporters for the Conservative Party and especially who believe and would vote for Margaret Thatcher. Their presence in this situation is very meaningful.

Mode

Mode refers to what part of the language is playing, what are the participants are expecting the language to do for them in that situation. The mode of the utterance above is in a formal mode. In the utterance above Margaret Thatcher was in the condition in which she has to persuade the whole nation to vote for her. In the utterance, *“I ask your help. That together we can shake off the shackles of socialism and restore to greatness this country that we love. And the only way is for The Conservative Party to win.* Thatcher tried to convince politely British people to vote her to be next British Prime Minister. Therefore she used formal language to show her leadership, affection as well as her dignity through the language she uttered.

(6) Conclusion

There were only nine women linguistic features and functions such as lexical hedges, tag question, rising intonation on declaratives, empty adjective, intensifiers such as just and so, hypercorrect grammar, superpolite form, avoidance of strong swear words and emphatic stress that can be found in this study. Among those features precise colour terms could not found in Margaret Thatcher utterances in *The Iron Lady* movie. Because of precise colour terms mostly use by women when they are in a light, private and friendly conversation.

The topic of most of her utterances is in politics since spent most of her life as politicians and public service. The participant mostly Margaret, Margaret husband Denis, her children, her board cabinet member, and her colleagues in politics. The language used mostly in form of formal language because she grew in the politician family since her father is politician therefore she used formal language since she was young. Based on that finding can be concluded that even as a powerful woman leader, Margaret Thatcher was occasionally used the woman language to speak to her close relatives or close colleagues.

(7) Bibliography

- Arikunto, Suharsimi. 2010. *Prosedur Penelitian; Suatu Pendekatan Praktik*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta
- Astarini, Ni Nyoman Dwi. 2006 “Linguistics Features and Strategies in the Movie”. Denpasar: Udayana University.
- Bakarbesy, Anny. 2011 “The Comparison of Men’s and Women’s Language in Top Four Hosts of America Tv Talk Show in Twitter. Denpasar: Udayana University.
- Baxter, Judith. (2010) *The Language of Female Leadership*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Githens, Susan (2014) *Gender Styles in Computer Mediated Communication*. Available at: <http://www.georgetown.edu/bassr/githens>. (Downloaded on: August 11th 2014)
- Halliday, M.A.K. and Rugaiya Hasan. 1985. *Language, Context, and Text: Aspect of Language in a Social Semiotic Perspective*. Victoria: Deakin University.
- Hartini, Made Ayu Budi. 2011 “The Women Language used in The Movie Script The Devil Wears Prada”. Denpasar: Udayana University.
- Holmes, Janet. 1992. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. London: Longman.
- Lakoff, Robin. 1975. *Language and Women’s Place*. New York: Harper&Row.
- Holmes, Janet. 2008. *Gender and Leadership: Some Socio-Pragmatic Considerations*. *GALE Journal*, 1 (1). Available at: <http://jlo.sagepub.com>. (Downloaded on: August 11th 2014)
- Utami, Gek Wulan Novi. 2013 “Women’s Language in The Novel entitled Mansfield Park by Jane Austen. Denpasar: Udayana University.
- Tannen, Deborah. 1996. *Gender & Discourse: Featuring a new essay on talk at work*. OUP: Oxford.
- Lloyd, Phyllida. 2011. *The Iron Lady*. Available at: <http://www.ganool.com>. (Downloaded on: July 28th 2014)
- Script of *The Iron Lady* movie. Available at: <http://www.imsdb.com>. (Downloaded on: July 28th 2014)