

Women's Language in "The Nanny Diaries" Movie

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Abstract

This undergraduate thesis examines the types of women's linguistic feature found in the movie and script entitled "The Nanny Diaries" and analyzes the function of each type of women language features. This paper is inspired by the differentiation of the use of women and men language. It is known that women have their own way to choose their language. The main theory applied in this study is proposed by Lakoff (1973), who divided the linguistic features into two parts – lexical feature and syntactical feature. This theory is also used in analyzing the function of the features supported by the context of situation theory proposed by Halliday (1989). This study used an American comedy drama movie as data source. The movie is chosen as the data due to its richness in women's linguistic features. The finding of the analysis showed that the women's linguistic features found in the movie include the lexical feature (color-term, particles and evaluative adjective) and syntactical feature (tag-question, raising intonation in declarative and politeness in request and order). In general, the finding of the analysis of function of women's linguistic feature is aimed to show politeness and avoid strong expressions.

Key words: women's language, women's linguistic features.

Abstrak

Tesis sarjana ini meneliti jenis fitur linguistik wanita yang terdapat dalam film dan naskah berjudul "The Nanny Diaries" dan menganalisis fungsi setiap jenis fitur dalam bahasa wanita. Makalah ini terinspirasi oleh perbedaan penggunaan bahasa wanita dan pria. Diketahui bahwa wanita memiliki cara sendiri untuk memilih bahasa mereka. Teori utama yang diterapkan dalam penelitian ini diusulkan oleh Lakoff (1973), yang membagi fitur linguistik menjadi dua bagian - fitur leksikal dan fitur sintaksis. Teori ini juga digunakan dalam menganalisis fungsi fitur yang didukung oleh teori konteks situasi yang diusulkan oleh Halliday (1989). Penelitian ini menggunakan film drama komedi Amerika sebagai sumber data. Film ini dipilih sebagai sumber data karena kekayaannya dengan fitur linguistik wanita. Temuan analisis menunjukkan bahwa ciri linguistik wanita yang terdapat dalam film mencakup fitur leksikal (istilah warna, partikel dan kata sifat evaluatif) dan fitur sintaksis (tag-question, peningkatan intonasi dalam deklaratif dan kesopanan dalam permintaan dan ketertiban). Secara umum, temuan analisis fungsi fitur linguistik perempuan bertujuan untuk menunjukkan kesopanan dan menghindari ekspresi kuat.

Kata kunci: bahasa wanita, fitur linguistik wanita.

1. Background of the Study

In linguistics study, language takes an important role in communication. Human being is categorized as a social community, which needs language to express thought or idea to others.

Language itself is also a tool to make a relationship in the social life. There is no human who can survive in the social world without communication using language, since language is used for social interaction itself. The use of

language in the society is discussed in the study called sociolinguistics. The syntactic differentiations between men and women deal with directive speech. Men often use directive phrases such as “do this now” while women will be more indirect saying something like “why don’t we do this for awhile?” (Lakoff, 1973:1). Displaying the linguistic features of women as the reflection of women powerlessness. “The marginality and powerlessness of women is reflected in both the ways women are expected to speak, and the ways in which women are spoken of”.

In sociolinguistics itself, the relationship between language and the context used in the communication is discussed by focusing on the knowledge of how people speak differently in different social context. The social function of language is being identified to convey the social meaning (Holmes, 1992:1). It also discusses different languages used by the gender.

Gender in language is differentiated by two kinds of languages; men’s and women’s language. Women tend to use more standard forms of English. At an early age, girls tend to have one or two girlfriends with whom they play regularly. They are more likely to discuss feelings and the impact of events upon themselves.

In some ways the female presence has been excluded through man-linked words and generic pronouns, which have “inherent masculine meaning” and do not equally represent both sexes. Women try to be equal with men in every aspect of daily life including their attitude towards language. Women constitute a very unusual social group, and it has taken the development of social sciences and the growth of the women’s movement to focus attention on women as a group in their own right. Women are defined narrowly, meaning that women are more

often discussed in terms of their appearance and their family relationship. Women’s attitude towards language when they work in field – which is mostly occupied by men – is an interesting event to be studied and discussed, and as an example of the event, movie about working woman is used as the object of the discussion. Meanwhile, the study focuses on the study of women language in the movie “*The Nanny Diaries*”, which tells the story of a working woman.

2. Problems of the Study

- a. What linguistic features are found in women speech in the movie entitled “*The Nanny Diaries*”?
- b. What functions of women’s linguistic features are found in the movie entitled “*The Nanny Diaries*”?

3. Aims of the Study

The aims of the study are:

- a. Identifying the linguistic features of women speech found in the movie entitled “*The Nanny Diaries*”.
- b. Analyzing the functions of women’s language features found in the movie entitled “*The Nanny Diaries*”.

4. Research Method

4.1 Data Source

The primary data of this undergraduate thesis were taken from a movie entitled “*The Nanny Diaries*”. The reason for selecting this movie as the data was that this movie showed conversations containing the women’s language features. Moreover, the story of this movie is also interesting. The supporting data used in this study taken from “*The Nanny Diaries*” movie script.

4.2 Method and Technique of Collecting Data

The method used in collecting the data was documentation method. Documentation method involves the study of existing documents in the form of electronic documents. The data were collected in order to find out the linguistic features in women's language and its functions in the movie entitled "*The Nanny Diaries*". The data were collected by watching the movie, then reading the movie script to make a comparison between the script and the dialogue in the movie to find out the sentences considered as female linguistic features. There were several techniques used in collecting the data, which include observing the utterances; reading the movie script carefully; note-taking; and image-cropping. The last step in collecting the data was selecting and noting the relevant data considered as linguistic features of women's language.

4.3 Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

This study used descriptive-qualitative method in analyzing the data, which means that the data are analyzed by describing the specific situation in the movie in order to get better understanding of some aspects of women's language. The collected data were analyzed based on the theories related to the undergraduate thesis. The data collected were organized into categories of women's language features and then descriptively analyzed based on the theory proposed by Lakoff (1973) to find out the women's language features and its function.

5. Result and Discussion

5.1 Women's Linguistic Features and Function

This subchapter analyzes the types of women's linguistic features and its

functions of each type of women's linguistic features found in the movie and script entitled "*The Nanny Diaries*". According to Lakoff theory, there are two main types of women's linguistic features; lexical and syntactical features. In analyzing types of women's linguistic features, each feature is divided into two category based on the gender of participant. The data in the form of dialogue between characters alongside of the picture cropped from the movie are presented below. There are also some reasons and purpose why women use certain lexical and syntactical features. In order to identify purpose or aim of each feature, the theory of context of situation is needed to support the analysis.

5.1.1 Lexical Features

From the data, all three types of lexical features were found in the movie and the script entitled "*The Nanny Diaries*". The features are: color terms, particles and evaluative adjective.

5.1.1.1 Color Term

According to Lakoff (1973), women have more vocabularies on naming something that they see or know. They tend to have some extended vocabularies than men to describe something. It means that rather than using a simple language like men, women will use extended vocabularies to describe something specifically, example of the color term could be seen in the following dialogue in data [3-2], where the main character, Annie, was talking with her close friend, Lynette. These women were talking about a boy in a bar.

[3-2] Lynette : "*Harvard Hottie?*"

Annie : "*Mmm.*"

Lynette : "*Which one? Which one, where?*"

Annie : "*Yankees cap, cobalt-blue shirt, blue blood.*"

In data[3-2], Lynette was asking which one was the man named Harvard Hottie. The answer uttered by Annie was “Yankees cap, cobalt-blue shirt, blue blood.”, which means that Annie was giving explanation of the clothes that the man wears. Lakoff stated that women tend to make far more detailed explanation about something, especially in naming the color. The vocabularies used by women are absent from most of the man. In this case, Annie uttered the color of cobalt-blue, which means the blue color is lighter than the normal blue. In men’s vocabulary, any kind of blue will be uttered as a blue itself, except the men is categorized as an art student or gay.



blue	slate	sky	navy
indigo	cobalt	teal	ocean
peacock	azure	cerulean	lapis
spruce	stone	aegean	berry
denim	admiral	sapphire	arctic

Picture 2: The cropped-scene of a man wearing a cobalt-blue shirt in the movie “The Nanny Diaries” (left) and the picture of the difference between the blue colors, taken from <http://www.ufunk.net/design/color-thesaurus/>

a. The field of discourse

This conversation happened in a bar when Annie spotted a guy whom she knew and Lynette wanted to know the guy. They were in the bar at night when Annie wanted to tell the story of herself who worked as nanny. Accidentally, she spotted the guy who lived in the same apartment where she worked.

b. The tenor of discourse

The utterance happened between Lynette, the supportive character who acts as Annie’s bestfriend and Annie, the main character. Lynette acted an important role in the dialogue, because she is the one who drove Annie to say the color-term of a lexical feature in women’s language.

c. The mode of discourse

The color-term of cobalt-blue shirt is used to clearly differentiate the blue color. This made the theory of Lakoff (1973), which she wrote about why women use the precise color term because it is related to their specific interest.

5.1.2 Syntectical Features

There are three syntactical features found in “The Nanny Diaries” movie and script. The features are tag-questions, raising intonation in declarative and politeness in requests and orders. The types of syntactical features are determined by the meaning of the utterance itself.

5.1.2.1 Tag Questions

Tag-question is a midway between an outright statement and a yes-no question; it is less assertive than the statement, but more confident than a question. In addition, tag question is added to the end of a statement, which does not change the statement, although they do seek agreement.

[3-12] Annie : “*Maybe I’m... maybe I’m not CFO material, ya know?*”

Judy : “*Don’t be negative like your father.*”

Annie, as the main character in the movie, uttered the dialogue above when she was in the conversation between her mother, Judy. Annie uttered the sentence

above because she was complaining on joining the job-interview for becoming a bussiness woman. Annie in this case tried to find justification from her mother whether it is fine or not to let go to the job interview.

a. The field of discourse

This conversation happened in the restaurant where Annie and Judy were talking about Annie's future after being a fresh graduated person. Judy wanted Annie to become a bussiness woman, which Annie hated. In this situation, Annie uttered her tag-question about not becoming a CFO to Judy.

b. The tenor of discourse

The conversation included two participants. Annie as the main character in the movie and Judy as the supportiing character in the movie, who acted as Annie's mother. In this conversation, Judy was the reason why Annie said the tag-question for Judy.

c. The mode of discourse

The meaning of the tag-question said by Annie is to express hesistantion of Annie who does not want to become a bussiness woman. However, she is not brave enough to reject her mother's request, which is why she prefers to use the tag-question to seek for an answer from Judy.

6. Conclusions

There are six types from the six types of women's language feature found in the movie and script entitled "The Nanny Diaries", the lexical feature , The result of the analysis of the study indicates that Lakoff's theory can mostly be applied in the data. For instance, Lakoff explained that women tend to use weaker particles or avoid strong words or expletives in the utterance like in the lexical feature of women's language. It

also goes to the syntactical feature which is in accordance with Lakoff's theory. However, there is one data uttered by the woman character in the movie that does not go in accordance with Lakoff's theory. There is one data in the movie, uttered by the woman character saying *could you quickly unpack my luggage and just put everything in the laundry?* as the syntectical feature does not go according to Lakoff theory. In this case, Lakoff theory cannot be applied in one datum in the syntactical feature – politeness in request and order as how the analysis shows that women are not always using syntactical feature in giving order.

There are some functions of women's linguistic features found in the data. Functions of each type of the features are closely related to the context in which it is used. Each type of women's linguistic features found in the movie displays different functions and reasons. For example, different functions can be found in the syntactical feature – tag – questions as in datum using *is it not?* with the datum using *were you?* Both can be categorized as tag-questions but has different functions. The first one is aimed to tell the addressee to have the same preception as the speaker while the second one is seeking for confirmation from the addressee. However, there is one similarity found among women's linguistic features. In general, women's utterance which reflects women's linguistic features display politeness and avoidance of strong expressions.

7. Bibliography

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