

## WOMEN'S LANGUAGE IN "WILD CHILD" MOVIE

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### *Abstrak*

*Tujuan utama dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi fitur bahasa yang digunakan oleh perempuan dan juga menemukan fungsi dari masing-masing fitur bahasa yang digunakan oleh perempuan tersebut.*

*Data diperoleh dari film 'Wild Child' dengan menggunakan metode dokumentasi. Data yang terkumpul kemudian dianalisis secara deskriptif berdasarkan desain kualitatif dengan menerapkan teori Lakoff (1975).*

*Hasil analisis data menunjukkan bahwa ditemukan enam fitur bahasa yang digunakan oleh perempuan, yakni: hedges or fillers, tag questions, empty adjective, intensifier, hypercorrect grammar, and emphatic stress.*

*Kata kunci: bahasa perempuan, fitur bahasa perempuan, dan fungsi fitur bahasa perempuan.*

### **1. Introduction**

Language is the system of communication in speaking or writing that is used by people in daily life. All of us have different styles of communication with other people. Our style depends on many things: where we are from, how and where we were brought up, our educational background, our age, social status, and our gender. Coates (1986:4) define that sociolinguistics is the study of language in social context. The different social contexts in society influenced the appearance of stylistic variation, where an individual talks in different ways in different social contexts. People with different social status, ages, sexes, ethnics, and group will also differ from each other in their speech, even in the same context.

Lakoff (1975) argued that women's language reflect the powerlessness of women. Women tende to speak politely since they are status-conscious. They also use standard speech forms since they believe that the way they speak signal or indicate their social status in society. This fact makes them aware of their speech, even though their real status background is not coming from the high-class society.

## **2. Problems of the Study**

Based on the background above, there are some problems that appear in this study, those are:

1. What language features are applied by the women in the movie *Wild Child*?
2. What are the functions of the language used by women in the movie *Wild Child*?

## **3. Aims of the Study**

The aims of this study are related to the problems proposed above. They are:

1. To identify the language features applied by women in the movie *Wild Child*.
2. To find out the functions of language used by women in the movie *Wild Child*.

## **4. Scope of Discussion**

Related to the problems which have been mentioned above, the scope of discussion in this study is focused on the language features and their functions that occur in conversations of female characters in the movie *Wild Child*. This study used the theory of women language features proposed by Lakoff (1975).

## **5. Research Method**

The research method in this study covers three points of discussion, they are:

### **5.1 Data Source**

The primary data used in this study were taken from an American/British teen drama film entitled "*Wild Child*" starring Emma Roberts. It was first published on 15 Augusts, 2008. The duration is 98 minutes. The reason for selecting this movie as the data because this movie showed conversations containing the women's language features. Moreover, the story of this movie is also interesting that tells about the lives of a group of women in boarding school, especially teenagers.

## 5.2 Method and Technique of Collecting Data

The data were collected through documentary method by conducting library research and direct observation to the movie. First, watching intensively and note taking the women's language such as the words, phrases, or sentences, which occurred in the conversation, used by women in the movie *Wild Child*. Then, transcripts, reading, and classifying the women language based on the characteristics of women's language suggested by Lakoff (1975).

## 5.3 Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

The collected data were analyzed through qualitatively method. Based on the method and technique of collecting data above, after classifying the data based on the characteristic of women's language, the data were analyzed descriptively to find out the language features applied by the women and analyzed their functions based on theory proposed by Lakoff (1975).

## 6. Analysis

After the data were collected, they were identified into some groups according to their features and functions of women's language. The data were in DVD form in the *Wild Child* movie. The data were analyzed using theory of Robin Lakoff (1975) in his book *Language and Woman's Place*.

### The Features of Women's Language and Their Functions

#### 1. Hedges or fillers

Hedge is one of the features that contain the words that can weaken the speaker's statement. The functions to mitigate the possible unfriendliness or unkindness of a statement used for the sake of politeness and to show speaker's uncertainty about what she is saying, or cannot vouch for the accuracy of the statement. For example:

Mrs. Kingsley : Oh, what can I do for you, Poppy?

Poppy : It's what I used to start it. It was an accident, and *I thought* I put it out. But *I guess* not. Obviously not.

In the conversation, Poppy handed a lighter to Mrs. Kingsley (headmistress). She told about the fire at the boarding school. The hedges *I thought* and *I guess* in her utterance expressed her uncertainty. First, she said "*I*

*thought* I put it out”, *I thought* here showed uncertainty whether she had turn off the fire or not, and second she said “but *I guess* not”, it showed that she was more uncertain about what she was saying, because actually she still hesitant with what had happened. It could be seen that the function of the hedge that she could not vouch for the accuracy her statement, because she could not corroborate her own statement. In addition, these hedges do have their uses when one really has legitimate need for protection, or for deference, but used to excess.

## 2. Tag questions

Tag question is a grammatical structure in which a declarative statement or an imperative is turned into a question by adding an interrogative fragment (the "tag") to request confirmation or disconfirmation of the statement from the addressee. The functions are to give the addressee leeway, not forcing him to go along with the speaker, make ‘small talk’, trying to elicit conversation from the addressee, ask one’s opinion in polite way in discussing personal feeling, avoid asserting herself in strong way, thereby to avoid coming in the conflict with the addressee. For example:

Kate : Hi, how do you do?

Poppy : I already have a sister. (Answer arrogantly)

Kate : It's just school lingo. I'll be your friend, a helping hand, that's all.

Poppy : Okay, but I choose my friends, and FYI, you don't make the cut.

Kate : I'm sure that comment would sting a lot more if I knew what FYI meant.

But, for the moment, let's just pretend it's had the desired effect, *shall we?*

In the conversation, Poppy met Kate (Poppy’s friend) for the first time and they became acquainted in boarding school in England, where Kate went to school. In Kate’s utterance, she used tag question *shall we* since she was pretty certain that his statement will be accepted. It can be seen that the function of tag *shall we* is to avoid asserting herself in a strong way, thereby to avoid coming in the conflict with the addressee, and not forcing him to go along with the speaker, because Kate did not want to force Poppy to be her friend but she asked Poppy to pretend to do so. In addition, to avoid conflict, she did not need confirmation from Poppy.

### 3. Empty Adjectives

Empty adjective is used to express approbation in terms of one's own personal reaction, rather than by gauging the likely general reaction. The function is to show the speaker's approbation or admiration for something in her own way. For example:

Kate : This is a charity shop. The money goes to charity.

Poppy : Oh, I just had a heart palpitation. You guys are so *adorable*, but we need to look really hot for the social. So let's go hit Oxford Street.

The conversation occurred between Kate (Poppy's friend) and Poppy, when they wanted shopping in the Charity Shop. She used empty adjective *adorable* which functions to show her admiration to what Kate did. In addition, the word *adorable* terms that denote approval of the trivial, the personal; that express approbation in terms of one's own personal emotional reaction, rather than by gauging the likely general reaction. *Adorable* was only an amusement for the speaker (Poppy) herself.

### 4. Intensifier

Intensifier is the emphasis on the words spoken by the speaker. The function is to strengthen an assertion which shown women's feeling about something as they do not know how strong the feeling is. For example:

Poppy : Hey, you promise we'll talk every day? Swear on your life?

Ruby : Dude, who loves ya? Everything's going to suck without you.

Poppy : Ruby, you're my best friend. I'm going to miss you *so* much.

The Poppy's conversation was addressed to Ruby before Poppy left California. Poppy used the intensive *so* in her utterance to express her feeling to Ruby. She did not know what would happen when she missed Ruby if she lived in England one day, because Ruby was her best friend. Intensifier *so* has the same meaning as *very*, but in this conversation she preferred using the word *so* rather than *very*. In this intensifier *so* functions to emphasize strong emotion or to make assertion for Ruby.

## 5. Hypercorrect Grammar

Hypercorrect grammar is standard grammar used by the speaker while they are speaking. The function is that they are supposed to be polite as they are considered having sub-ordinate status in society. For example:

Harriet : It is with great regret and sadness that we call the Honour Court to session. *It will henceforth be* our job to objectively and dispassionately ascertain what happened that fateful night *that will* hence to forth long blight the memory of this proud institution. It is your duty to understand the dark forces that drove a seemingly...

Mrs. Kingsley : Harriet? *May I remind you* that the Honour Court is no place for your personal grandstanding, and that Poppy has a right to speak in her own defense before the Court as a whole passes judgment?

Poppy : Thank you, Mrs. Kingsley.  
I won't insult everybody by trying to defend myself or my actions. So, I think it's safe to say that *I've really messed up*. And I apologize profusely. But I'm also so grateful to you all. *I tried* really hard to get out of this school, and only now do I realize just how much I want to stay. *I've learnt* so much being here, being with all of you. And in some ways being with my mom, who I found out was actually a student here. *I've had* a hole in my heart for five years, and somehow being here, it slowly started to heal. I know *I may have looked* like a California girl, but in my heart *I've discovered* that I really am an Abbey Mount girl.

In the conversation, they spoke in front of the all members of the school in honour court. There were some grammar that used in their utterance, they are: *It will be* and *that will* in Harriet's utterances were considered future tense and the rule is: S+ will+ be/ S+ will, the sentence *May I remind you* in Mrs. Kingsley's utterance was considered modal auxiliaries, the sentence *I tried* in Poppy's utterance was considered past tense and the rule is: S+ VII, and the sentence *I've really messed up, I've learnt, I may have looked, I've had, I've discovered* in their utterance were considered present perfect tense and the rule is: S+ have/has+ VIII. *I've* means *I have*. Example: *I've discovered* is similar to *I have discovered*. They

used the standard English as they wanted to speak politely. Therefore, their utterance above was in the correct form. Hypercorrect grammar serves as to show politeness and at the same time creates a distance between the speaker and addressee as they are considered having sub-ordinate status in society.

## 6. Emphatic Stress

Women usually strengthen an utterance to describe their judgment about something. The function is to emphasize one's judgment on something. Women who is concerned more on feeling and affective functions use emphatic stress to show the positive politeness to the addressee. For example:

Poppy : Where do I go?

Freddie : Out the door, turn left, and down the stairs.

Poppy : Run towards the bright orange flickery thing. Right?

Freddie : Oh, and try not to get caught.

Poppy : *Excellent point*, sir.

In the conversation, Poppy met Freddie when she runs away from a fire drill night. She asked the way to Freddie, and then he gave idea to Poppy. Therefore, she used the emphatic stress *excellent* which functions to show or express her judgment to Freddie's idea. She judged that the idea of Freddie is a very good point so that she could run away from a fire drill night. She stressed her judgment of Freddie idea using *excellent*, which indicated her good impression to Freddie.

## Conclusion

There were six language features with their functions found in the movie, there are: (1) feature hedges in the words *I thought* and *I guess* which showed uncertainty by women in her speaking, (2) feature tag question in the word *shall we* as asking one's opinion in polite way and not forcing the addressee to go along with the speaker, (3) empty adjective in the word *adorable* as admiration for something, (4) intensifier in the word *so* as emphasizing her feeling, (5) hypercorrect grammar to show standard English in her speaking, and (6) emphatic stress in the word *excellent* as judgment for something.

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