

## THE CHANGE OF GENDER INFLUENCE LANGUAGE FEATURES USED BY TRANSGENDER IN *THE DANISH GIRL* MOVIE

Ni Nyoman Putri Rahayu<sup>1\*</sup>, Made Detriasmita Saientisna<sup>2</sup>, dan Ni Luh Nyoman Seri Malini<sup>3</sup>

Universitas Udayana

<sup>\*)</sup> surel: [ninyomanputrirahayu@gmail.com](mailto:ninyomanputrirahayu@gmail.com)

doi: <https://doi.org/10.24843/STIL.2023.v02.i02.p10>

Artikel dikirim: 25 April 2022; diterima: 25 Mei 2022

### THE CHANGE OF GENDER INFLUENCE LANGUAGE FEATURES USED BY TRANSGENDER IN *THE DANISH GIRL* MOVIE

**Abstract.** This study was aimed to finding and discuss about the affection of the change of gender in terms of language features used by Einar Wegener with masculine gender and after changing gender into Lili Elbe with feminine gender. The frequency of use of each language feature reduced by 31 in Einar's data and 29 in Lili's data, according to a comparative analysis of the affection of men-to-women identity transformation. As a result, the language features of transgender woman, Lili Elbe, were found to dominantly use women's language features, despite the fact that three of the five features used men's language features. Hence, it was proven that Lili Elbe's transformation from a man to a woman had influence on her language features, which was followed by a change in gender from masculine to feminine due to the influence of an environment dominated by women and influenced by feminine topics of conversation.

*Keywords:* affects, men language features, transgender, women language features

### INTRODUCTION

Men and women are differentiate based on how they dressed, how they speak their language, and the topics they talk about. All of those are depends to the main key of gender which is masculine and feminine. Wardhaugh (2010) wrote that "the force of gender categories in society makes it impossible for us to move through our lives in a nongendered way". He is also states that gender is the main key of component identify in society.

Gender and society have a strong relation especially in terms of language and it is discussed in Sociolinguistics study named *Men's and Women's language*. Wibowo (2012) wrote that men and women are socially different because their society determine different social roles and society expect different pattern of behaviour. Men and women are different in any context, strongly in the gender to the sex which they are assigned since they were born. However, Coates (2003) represents a gender is an important division in a society where a man or woman is not a biological fact, but a

construction of society and culture. In terms of gender and sex, there are often got misunderstood of meaning in society.

Nugroho (2008) has stated about the differences of sex and gender. Gender has the difference roles about men and women in which are formed by the construction of social and cultural that categorized as masculine and feminine. On the other hand, sex is a biological distinction that is passed down from generation to generation and refers to the genital male and female. People who have gender or sex differences will sometimes express their identity in a way that is different from the appropriate behaviours and acts based on their biological sex, which is generally referred to as transgender.

Forsyth & Copes (2014) Transgender or transexual is a general term for people whose gender identity, gender expression, and/or behavior differs from their cultural connection to the sex in which they were assigned at birth. Bieschke (2007), transgender is a broad term that encompasses a wide range of gender differences in society, including transexual people. Transgender people who attempt to alter their sex, such as through surgery or hormone therapy, are referred to as transsexuals. According to Abrams (2019), both transsexual and transgender women can suffer from gender dysphoria, a disorder caused by a mismatch between their gender identity and the sex assigned to them at birth.

Many modern-day issues could be analyzed as actual examples of why someone chooses to be transgender. Despite the fact that they are still misunderstood, taboo, and cause controversy, some of them have been recognized for their achievements, ranging from entertainment to international beauty, art, and artists, as was the case with Lili Elbe, a transgender woman from Einar Wegener. Einar Wegener, who was physically a man but identified as a woman, performed the world's first transgender surgery many years ago. The movie *The Danish Girl* directed by Tom Hooper, was based on Einar's narrative and released in 2016.

Based on the phenomena and background above, this article was written to find and analyse about the language features are used by Einar Wegener as masculine and Lili Elbe as feminine to get a conclusion that does the change of gender affects the language features used by Lili Elbe with feminine gender. This analysis including of the differences of language features used before and after the change of gender from masculine into feminine.

Lakoff's concept for language and women's space is sometimes described as a study of women's language that also includes an examination of men language (Lakoff, 2004:11). Gender linguistic norms, according to Lakoff's account of men's language, served as a manner of demonstrating a relationship with men's power. She

is interested in men from all walks of life, as well as men who detach their political or professional identities from male standards. According to Lakoff (2004)'s theory of women's language, women prefer to communicate in terms of politeness, interpersonal goal, lack of self-confidence, and expressing their sentiments directly. As a result, she also classified women's speech as weak and unassuming, with subjects related to fashion, lifestyle, food, and so on. Lakoff's work anticipated a growing focus on men and masculinity in language, gender, and sexuality studies, explained the linguistic features used by males, and opted to challenge mainstream masculinity. Men's language traits have been described as having opened the way to consideration of men who may choose to oppose normative masculinity. As a result, Lakoff's linguistic features of women take into account both men and women's language concerns in order to fully cover both men and women's perspectives, providing for a comparison of male and female languages. Therefore, this study analyzed the types of language features used by Einar as masculine and Lili as feminine, as well as to prove that the change of gender influences the way of language features used by Lili as a transgender woman. In collecting the data, documentation and note-taking technique were applied. Mix method (qualitative and quantitative) and reducing technique were applied in analyzing the data.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In result and discussions, there are divided into 8 points in terms of the types of language features based on theory written by Lakoff (2004) which are lexical hedge, tag question, rising intonation, empty adjective, intensifier, hypercorrect grammar, super polite form, and swearing and taboo words.

### 1. Lexical Hedge

**Table 1.** The frequency of the use of lexical hedge feature in Einar's and Lili utterances.

Language Features	Man's language (Einar's data)	Total	Woman's language (Lili's data)	Total
Lexical Hedge	Well, I mean, you know.	4	Well	1

According to Lakoff (2004:79), pragmatic particles such as kind of, I believe, you know, I guess, kind of, etc. are used as lexical hedges. Hedges are used to convey the speaker's hesitation about what they're saying. When men

and women are unsure about their statements, they adopt the same lexical hedges. The employment of lexical hedge, on the other hand, is more common in women's language features.

The use of lexical hedges was more frequent in Einar's utterance, based on the statistics above. The total number of lexical hedges used in Einar's utterance was 4, although Lili's utterance had only one, which has a comparable context in indicating the statement's doubt. Lili's use of lexical hedging has not increased as compared to before she changed her gender. Hence, the change of gender from masculine to feminine do not affect the lexical hedge features in terms of the number change in using lexical hedge features used by Lili as feminine.

## 2. Tag Question

**Table 2.** The frequency of the use of tag question feature in Einar's and Lili's utterances.

Language Features	Man's Language (Einar's data)	Total	Woman's language (Lili's data)	Total
Tag Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is there something you'd like to know?</li> <li>- What do you think?</li> <li>- Can't a man watch his wife get undressed?</li> <li>- How was it?</li> <li>- Do you think I am insane?</li> </ul>	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You won't leave me, will you?</li> <li>- You don't mad, do you?</li> <li>- I don't think he noticed, do you?</li> </ul>	3

According to Lakoff (2004:48), men and women ask questions in different ways. Men are more likely to ask questions directly to obtain more information they need, whereas women are more likely to ask questions indirectly to obtain confirmation. That is why women frequently include tags in their inquiries. The reason for implementing a tag question is to convey the speaker's utterances' uncertainty.

The data above, showed that Einar's utterance in asking a question was directly strict to the point, avoid a small talk and did not use tag questions which that categorized as men's language feature. Therefore, the change of gender influences the way of language features used by Lili in terms of tag question. Lili tends to asking questions indirectly and using tag in the end of her questions which categorized as women's language feature. Before Einar as masculine changer his gender into Lili as feminine, he used the right way to ask question which using men language feature of tag question meanwhile, as Lili she also used the right way in asking questions with a tag in her question

### 3. Rising Intonation

**Table 3.** The frequency of the use of rising intonation feature in Einar's and Lili's utterances.

Language Features	Man's language (Einar's data)	Total	Woman's language (Lili's data)	Total
Rising Intonation	- Really? ↗ - What? ↗ - Do you want to resist me? ↗ - Is there something you'd like to know? ↗	5	- Really? ↗	1

According to Lakoff (2004:50), men and women use the same rising intonation feature, however at different levels of intonation. Men sound yelling in rising intonation, whereas women sound more excited. Since the speaker is unsure whether the addressee agrees with their opinion, rising intonation in declaratives is employed to show that the speaker leaves the decision to the addressee in a non-confrontational approach.

The data above shows Einar and Lili use the same type of rising intonation, but at different levels of intonation. In Einar's utterance "What? No" sounds like he's yelling because he's blindsided by Gerda's statement, "Did I do this to you?" in which she blames herself for Einar's circumstances. Because it sounds like yelling with a powerful tone, Einar's utterances are classified as

men's language. In Lili's utterance, she says "Really?" in a non-aggressive tone and seems excited since Henrik says "I am a romantic." Lili's utterance was classified as a feature of women's language. As a matter of fact, Lili's rising intonation feature changed from men's to women's language as her gender changed from masculine to feminine. After she change her gender, the use of rising intonation feature showed her femineity as a woman by softening her intonation and sounds more excited compared to before she changes her gender.

#### 4. Empty Adjective

**Table 4.** The frequency of the use of empty adjective feature in Einar's and Lili's utterances.

Language Features	Man's language (Einar's data)	Total	Woman's Language (Lili's data)	Total
Empty Adjective	- Wonderful	1	- Great - Perfect	2

According to Lakoff (2004:45), empty adjective feature is one of the lexicon elements that differentiates men and women language. It concerned about feelings and emotions towards certain things or information. The speaker expresses his or her admiration for something with a group of adjectives. Men are more likely to use neutral adjectives (great, cool, terrific, neat, etc.) whereas women are more likely to use women only adjectives (perfect, charming, sweet, adorable, wonderful, lovely, etc.).

The data above shown that the use of empty adjective feature by Einar was categorized as women-only adjective, meanwhile empty adjective feature used by Lili was categorized as the mix of neutral adjective and women-only adjective. Hence, the change of gender does not affect the use of empty adjective feature both for Einar as masculine nor Lili as feminine. Furthermore, the data found that Einar as masculine use the women-only adjective which categorized as women's language feature. The use of women-only adjective by Einar with masculine gender caused of he has a feminine side that has been buried inside of him so then he sometimes using the adjective that categorized as women-only adjective unconsciously. After the change of gender into feminine, Lili used mix adjectives which is neutral and women-only adjective.

## 5. Intensifier

**Table 5.** The frequency of the use of intensifier feature in Einar's and Lili's utterances.

Language Features	Man's Language (Einar's data)	Total	Woman's Language (Lili's data)	Total
Intensifier	Pretty, so, perfect, hardly	7	Pretty, so, perfect, very, beautiful	8

According to Lakoff (2004:48&79), both men and women use the same kind of intensifiers to accentuate their points, although women use them more frequently. Assertion amplifiers, emphasizees are all examples of intensifiers. Women use intensifiers in their speech to convince their listeners to actually listen to them and to emphasize the meaning. Furthermore, the speaker's use of intensifiers as strengthening words, such as so, really, very, pretty, and so on, reveals the speaker's belief that the addressee will remain unconvinced.

The data above shown that there aren't many differences between Einar and Lili when it comes to applying the lexical hedge feature. Einar used 7 times of intensifier, while Lili used 8 times of intensifier. From the data above, concluded that the change of gender just affects a little of using intensifier feature particularly in terms of statistic use. The use of lexical hedge is becoming more frequent after the change of gender from masculine to feminine although it is just increase one number. It is influenced the environment, which is dominated by women and promoted by more feminine conversation subjects.

## 6. Hypercorrect Grammar

**Table 3.6** The comparison of the use of hypercorrect grammar feature in Einar's and Lili's utterances.

Language Features	Man's Language (Einar's data)	Total	Woman's Language (Lili's data)	Total

Hypercorrect	Tryin', goin', workin',	7	Goin', gettin'	3
Grammar	killin', nothin', waitin'			

According to Lakoff (2004:80), when it comes to hypercorrect grammar, women apply to the normal English form more precisely than men. Women use more -ing pronunciations and fewer -in pronunciations in terms like "playing" and "going." Men, on the other hand, tend to pronounce words with more -in, such as "playing" becoming "playin" and "going" becoming "goin." Furthermore, men are more likely than women to use non-standard words and simplify their sentences, such as saying "ain't." The word "ain't" is a contraction meaning am not, is not, are not, has not, and have not in the common English language vernacular.

The data above mainly concentrated on the standard form of English grammar in terms of pronunciation. In Einar's utterance, he said "trying," and Lili said "going," and both of them pronounce it with -in pronunciation, indicating that it is a men's language feature. However, Einar's and Lili's use of ungrammatical forms was 7 and 3, respectively, and has decreased. As a result, it can be concluded that changing gender has an influence on the hypercorrect grammar feature, as the use of non-standard form English words in terms of pronunciation. It is because Lili is more surrounded by women and is supported by feminine topics, thus Lili tries to display her feminine side by using proper grammar.

## 7. Super Polite Form

**Table 7.** The comparison of the use of super polite form feature in Einar's and Lili's utterances.

Language Features	Man's Language (Einar's data)	Total	Woman's Language (Lili's data)	Total
Super Polite Form	- Anything - I am so sorry I haven't been to see you before.	2	- Please go before they come over. - I am so sorry that Einar couldn't be here.	9



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Will you excuse me?</li> <li>- Let me help, please.</li> <li>- Shall we go back to Denmark then, Gerda?</li> <li>- Gerda, will you come with me?</li> <li>- Will you ccome?</li> <li>- Can we go outside Gerda? Please.</li> <li>- How have I deserved such love.</li> </ul>	
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According to Lakoff (2004:50&80), the highly polite form is used in a courteous conversation, such as making a request or politely reacting to another's statement. Men have a tendency to say whatever they're thinking and act impolitely depending on who they're talking to. Furthermore, because their masculinity automatically seeks to dominate, they rarely use polite orders such as would you mind, may I, and so on because it is perceived as demanding. Women, on the other hand, are more likely to make a compound request, which is referred to as the "very polite" version. In order to project a polite, compassionate, and feminine image, women are required to behave and speak politely and attentively. Furthermore, assumptions that women should have a nice manner have an impact on their speaking manners. Women are more likely to feel and speak only the most appropriate phrases in order to avoid harming others. They show their use of super polite form in their conversation by being less assertive, making an indirect request, using euphemisms, and using hypercorrect grammar, among other things.

The data above shown that Einar and Lili have such a change in using super polite form feature. According to Einar's findings, he responds to other people's requests by saying "anything," which indicates he would do anything that Gerda asks him to do in a polite manner. Hence, it can be classified as a

feature of women's language. Einar's other statements can also be classified as polite because he uses the word *sorry*, which is a feature of men's language. Meanwhile, in Lili's utterance, she applied several terms from men's language, such as the words *please* and *can we*. She also uses terms of women's language features in other utterances, such as *shall we*, and the statement "how have I merited such love" sounds quite sweet and feminine. Einar uses two super polite form features, whereas Lili uses nine super polite form features. As from the data above, it can conclude that the change of gender from masculine into feminine influence the use of super polite form feature because the use of polite form by Lili sounds more feminine and more frequent than before she changes her gender. Lili's implementation of super polite form as feminine is inspired by her surroundings, which is dominated by women, and it demonstrates her femininity as a woman by her ability to behave and communicate politely.

## 8. Swearing and Taboo Words

**Table 8.** The comparison of the use of swearing and taboo word feature in Einar's and

Lili's utterances.

Language Features	Man's Language (Einar's data)	Total	Woman's Language (Lili's data)	Total
Swearing and taboo word	-	0	- My goodness, you're soaked. - For goodness sakes, Gerda. Einar is dead.	2

According to Lakoff (2004:44). The swear word is a strong statement that is used to express great anger or shock. Men and women have different methods for expressing their emotions. Women are more likely to use weaker expletives like *oh dear*, *goodness*, *oh fudge*, and so on to avoid swearing. Men, on the other hand, used more swear words and forbidden expressions, as well as stronger expletives such as *dammit*, *crap*, *hell*, and so on, than women.

As shown in the data above, Einar has not used any swear or taboo words, however Lili has used two swear words. The first one expresses her surprise when Gerda returned home wet, while the second one expresses her

anger. Despite, Lili's use of swearing and taboo phrases is characterized as a weak expletive and a women's language feature. As a result, the change in gender from masculine to feminine affects Lili's swearing and taboo words feature since she communicated her shock and anger with a weaker expletive by using the word "goodness." Despite the fact that, as a man, he avoids swearing and using taboo terms in his utterance. Even though, as a masculine he is not using any swear and taboo words in his utterances. It is influenced based on the feminine side that buried inside of Einar. Besides, he is also a kind hearted man.

## CONCLUSION

The finding showed that Lili Elbe's language features associated with feminine gender are influenced by her gender change. The data show that five of the eight features had changed meanwhile, three of those having no impact on the features used by Lili. As a result, the change of gender has a great influence on Lili's uses of feminine gender language features. It can be seen from the current analysis that the frequency, politeness of the utterances, word choice, and intonation of her voice sounds feminine compared to when she was Einar Wegener with masculine gender.

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## AUTHOR PROFILE

**Ni Nyoman Putri Rahayu** is a student of English Literature Program at University of Udayana batch 2018. In 2018, she participated in many committees, work on PKM twice that organized by faculties and study programs.

**Made Detriasmitta Saientisna, SS, M.Hum** is a lecturer at the English Department, Faculty of Humanities Udayana University. She was graduated from Udayana University for bachelor degree and graduate degree. She was the Head of English

Laboratory in Economy Faculty from 2006-2015 and the lecturer in Economy Faculty from 2006-2020 before she is a lecture in English Department.

**Dr. Ni Luh Nyoman Seri Malini, SS, M.Hum** is a lecturer at English Department Faculty of Humanities Udayana University. She finished her doctoral at Udayana University with dissertation discussed about Balinese Diaspora in Migrants Area. She continues her interest on Sociolinguistics and Applied Linguistics. She works on migrant communities around Indonesia and teaching learning process. She learnt Teaching Methodology and Assessment when she joined E-Teacher Program conducted by Oregon University (2012, 2017). Currently she is TEFLIN Board as Regional Coordinator for Bali and East Indonesia.