

## WOMEN'S LANGUAGE FEATURES USED BY MAIN CHARACTER IN *JOY* MOVIE BY DAVID O. RUSSEL

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### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui fitur-fitur bahasa wanita yang digunakan oleh karakter utama dalam film *Joy* berdasarkan teori Lakoff. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif. Lebih spesifik, peneliti menggunakan teori Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2014) yang terdiri dari data condensation, data display, dan conclusion drawing/verification untuk menganalisa data dan mendeskripsikan hasil temuan. Sumber data dikumpulkan dari ujaran-ujaran karakter utama dalam film. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa ada sembilan dari sepuluh fitur bahasa wanita yang digunakan oleh karakter utama dalam film. Fitur-fitur tersebut adalah *lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjective, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, superpolite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, dan emphatic stress*. Sedangkan *precise color terms* tidak ditemukan dalam film.

**Kata kunci:** *Ujaran karakter utama, fitur bahasa wanita, film Joy (2015)*

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine women's language features used by the main character in the *Joy* movie based on Lakoff's theory. This study uses descriptive qualitative method. More specifically, the researcher used the theory of Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2014) which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification to analyze the data and describe the findings. Data sources were collected from the utterances of the main character from the movie. The findings show that there are nine out of ten women's language features used by the main character in the movie. They were *lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjective, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, superpolite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress*. While *precise color terms* are not found in the movie.

**Keywords:** *Main Character's utterances, women's language features, Joy (2015) movie*

### INTRODUCTION

In society, people frequently use languages differently when communicating with one another. One of the crucial components in society that influences how societies communicate and interact is gender, as stated by Wardhaugh & Fuller (2015). According to Talbot (2019), gender refers to the roles and responsibilities that are created for men and women in a certain society. The differences between men and women not only from physically or biologically but also from their daily features of speech.

The theory of women's language features proposed by Lakoff in her book entitled "Language and Woman's Place". Lakoff (2004) claims that there are ten features of women's language, including *lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonation on declaratives, empty adjectives, precise color terms, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, superpolite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress*. She also connected language features as women's characteristic which indicates powerlessness and tentativeness.

Nowadays, women are equal to men from all sides, such as in employment and leadership. The reality that women's position is changing nowadays invites the researcher to conduct the research about the use of women's language features.

The phenomenon of women's language can be seen in many sources, one of them is movie. Movie clearly depicts the reality of society and includes both sentences and utterances. In this study, the researcher analyzed the women's language features proposed by Lakoff that are used by the main character, Joy Mangano, in Joy movie. Joy is a 2015 American biographical comedy-drama movie directed by David O. Russell based on the true story of Joy Mangano who became a successful entrepreneur selling home appliances products.

The researcher chooses this movie because this movie is very inspiring which contains many life lessons and has many values that can be implemented in our life. The character of Joy Mangano who is independent, hardworking, brave, and never gives up becomes the researcher's consideration to find out whether her character can influence the way Joy Mangano utters women's language features.

This study is conducted to enrich the knowledge about women's language features proposed by Lakoff, which occurred in the movie entitled Joy and it is expected can give a beneficial contribution for readers, especially for the students of the English Department. Therefore, the researcher conducts research entitled "Women's Language Features Used by Main Character in Joy Movie by David O. Russell".

## **1. Sociolinguistic**

According to Holmes (2013), sociolinguistic is study about the relationship between language and society. It studies how language is used in a community, how people use language in a community and how language use reflects the social identity of its users.

## **2. Women's Language Features**

The term women's language features was first coined by Lakoff in 1975. Women's language features refer to the linguistic patterns that are more commonly used by women than men. Lakoff (2004) states that women's language shows the character or personal identity of women.

### **a. Lexical Hedges or Fillers**

Lakoff (2004) distinguishes four types of hedges. The first type is to express uncertainty such as well and kinda/kind of. The second type is a hedge used for the sake of politeness such as sorta/sort of. The next type is to express that the speaker is sure of the truth of a statement to attract the listener's attention, e.g. you know. The last type is used as a preface to a statement or question, e.g. I guess, I wonder, and I think. While fillers refers to some meaningless words that are always used by women, such as umm, uh, ah.

### **b. Tag Question**

Furthermore, Lakoff (2004) states that women make statements when they are confident in their knowledge and that their statements will be taken seriously. They are simply seeking confirmation of their beliefs. Sometimes, when they are unsure and seek clarification, they will use tag questions. In other cases, tag questions are used when the speaker makes a claim but is not entirely sure that the claim is true. Women like to use tag questions because it makes the tone less tense. example: "Karl is here, isn't he?" From the question, one possibility is that she already has a positive answer in mind. She just wants the other person to confirm her request.

### **c. Rising Intonation on Declarative**

Rising intonation is a linguistic sign of a question. It is typically used by those who anticipate continuing the conversation by asking for input or comments from others whenever they are unsure about something they are saying (Lubis & Bahri, 2020). Although the speaker may be the only person who has the necessary information, the impression is that of asking for confirmation.

**d. Empty Adjectives**

Lakoff (2004) states that women tend to use empty adjectives to express their emotional responses rather than certain common words. In terms of vocabulary, it is a group of adjectives that expresses the speaker's approval or admiration for something, such as gorgeous, fabulous, lovely, adorable, charming, sweet, divine, cute, wonderful, and etc.

**e. Precise Colors Terms**

According to Lakoff (2004), women have a wider lexical variety than men. A more specific example is terms related to colors. Women claim that the colors are frequently used, while men consider them unreal. Commonly used words in women's active vocabulary include beige, lavender, maroon, mauve, magenta, mustard, pink, tosca, navy, nude, and aquamarine.

**f. Intensifiers**

Holmes (2013) states that intensifiers aims to reinforce meaning and ensure that the interlocutor receives the message, e.g. really, so, such, quite, and very. Women use intensifiers to give more emphasis to their talk, impress their interlocutors, and increase the likelihood of being accepted and confirmed, as stated by Sardabi & Afghari (2015). For example, women will say "I like him very much" or "I like him so much" to clearly indicate that she is emotionally attracted to the person and she wants the other person to take her message seriously.

**g. Hypercorrect Grammar**

Xia (2013) states that women pay more attention to syntactical accuracy. When expressing her thoughts, she would clarify her speech by using proper grammar. Women also pay more attention to the use of standardized language than men, so they are more-strict with the rules of language use. They avoid using modified words like "am not" to "ain't" or "don't know" to "dunno" or dropping the g in verbs such as "goin" or "singin," because it will make their utterances sound rough for the recipients.

**h. Superpolite Forms**

According to Lakoff (2004), "women are believed to be experts of euphemism and know how the right things to say to other people." There is a concept that demonstrates how to ask for something politely so that it sounds more neutral. Superpolite form is not used to give an order to the addressee. The addressee still has a choice whether they want to do it or not. If they want to do it, they will do it without any forcing. Therefore, the addressee has the right to decide. A suggestion is more polite than an order. The content of particles in a sentence reinforces the idea as a demand rather than an order. It is more polite in a communication. For example, women tend to say "would you please close the door?" which shows 'superpolite' form rather than "would you close the door?" which shows usual polite form.

**i. Avoidance of Strong Swear Words**

According to Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (2003) in Amanda (2017), swear word is a form of interjection or exclamation to express anger in a particularly strong way. Strong swear words are typically avoided by women in order to maintain their politeness. They believe that these kinds of words will not only make others uncomfortable and give the impression of being "uncivilized", but also destroy the relationship between her and others. Therefore, women tend to avoid using strong swear words such as shit or damn and prefer weaker forms, such as oh dear, oh my goodness, and oh my God.

**j. Emphatic Stress**

According to Lakoff (2004), "emphatic stress is a typical of special stress that is given by the speaker to some word in a sentence. It occurs when women want to strenghten an assertion." e.g. It

was a brilliant performance. The word brilliant is one of the example of an emphatic stress. This word can be used to make the meaning of an utterance stronger.

### 3. Movie

Movie is a media that easily influences a person's thoughts, behavior, and the use of language because movies are very close to human life. Movie which is an audio-visual medium is expected to be used to recognize the types of language features produced from the utterances spoken by the characters in the film. People can learn about history, science, and human behavior from a movie (Maulani, 2022).

## RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher conducts this research by using descriptive qualitative method. Tombang *et al.* (2022) states that in general, qualitative research can be used for research on the history, social activities, behavior, people's lives, and more. In this research, what is more concerned rather than how or why something occurred (Nassaji, 2015). Therefore, qualitative research was the appropriate method to help the researcher conducts this research because the data collection in this research were taken from main character's utterances in Joy movie and generated to look for the types of women's language features.

### A. Technique of Data Collection

The researcher uses observation because the researcher observes the utterances that contain women's language features spoken by the main character in the Joy movie. In addition, this research uses some steps to collect the data

1. Watch the Joy movie, listen, and focused on main character's utterance.
2. Read and check the transcripts to make sure that the transcripts were congruent with main character's utterance.
3. Then, identify main character's utterance which contain women's language features.
4. Last, classify the data into each types of women's language features.

### B. Technique of Data Analysis

According to Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2014), there are three processes in analyzing the data in this research. They were data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

#### 1. Data condensation

Data condensation refers to the process of selecting, focusing, and simplifying on important data and eliminating unnecessary data, which is related to the features of women's language used by the main character in the movie.

#### 2. Data display

The researcher analyzes the types of women's language features using Lakoff's theory. To display the data, the researcher will use data sheets.

#### 3. Conclusion drawing/verification

In the final step, the researcher uses the entire data set discussed in the previous section to draw conclusions based on the research question.

## DISCUSSION

After analyzing the utterances containing women's language features from the main character in the movie Joy, the researcher found that there were 169 utterances from the main character that used nine types of women's language features based on Lakoff's theory, namely lexical hedges or fillers 44 times, tag questions 5 times, rising intonation on declarative 7 times, empty adjective 1 time, intensifiers 63 times, hypercorrect grammar 9 times, superpolite forms 18 times, avoidance of strong

swear words 3 times, and emphatic stress 19 times. Therefore, it can be seen that intensifiers are the most used features by the main character. While other feature such as precise color terms are not found in the movie.

#### Data 1

Trudy: *Morris worked 50 years to earn his fortune, Joy. Before he passed on to the next world he made me promise on his deathbed that I would never be neglectful with one dollar of the money that he so carefully earned. Therefore you have to answer Morris's four questions of financial worthiness. Are you ready?*

Joy: ***I think** so, yes. (39:56-40:21)*

In the dialogue above, Trudy asks Joy to answer four financial worthiness questions before investing in her mop business to see how serious she is about the business. By using the phrase *i think*, Joy actually sounds hesitant and unsure. The phrase *I think* shows that Joy feels unsure about her statement that whether she can really answer Trudy's question.

#### Data 2

Christy: *Lauren Wells said you're a cleaning lady and sell used mops.*

Joy: *Lauren Wells said that?*

Christy: *Yeah, and it really hurt my feelings.*

Joy: *First of all, even if I was a cleaning lady, so what? There's no shame in hard work. And second of all, **you know**, I'm... I'm trying to sell a new mop, not used mops. And third of all, don't take any guff from anybody. **You know**, don't let it in. (52:23-52:57)*

From Joy's utterance in the dialog above, the researcher found that Joy used the phrase *you know* not to express uncertainty. However, it is used to increase the strength of the utterance. It indicated that the speaker was confident to state a statement to the interlocutor.

In this research, the researcher focuses on the women's language features used by the main character in the movie *Joy*. Among the ten features of women's language proposed by Lakoff, nine features were found in the main character's utterances. They were lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjective, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, superpolite forms, avoidance strong swear words, and emphatic stress.

The most frequently used feature is intensifiers. Related research from Pebrianti (2013) and Nuringtyas & Navila (2022) also shows that intensifiers are the most frequently used features by main character. Based on the explanation of the findings and explanations related to intensifiers that the researcher described earlier, it can be seen that intensifiers function to emphasize the utterance and assert its meaning, to attract the interlocutor's attention, to increase the likelihood of being accepted and confirmed by the interlocutor, as well as being an attempt to express the speaker's strong feelings and attitudes towards different topics, as stated by Sardabi & Afghari (2015).

While the features that are not used is precise color terms. Related research from Amanda (2017), Apridaningrum & Angelina (2019), and Rubbyanti (2017) also shows that precise color terms are features that are not found in the object of research. Joy's character does not show that she is fashionable. There is no scene in the movie that shows the main character using words or describing a precise color. Thus, the precise color terms is not found in the movie.

However, this research did not conform to the hypothesis. This is because the results show that although the main character in the movie has an independent, hardworking, and brave character, she still has women's language features in her speech, which Lakoff argues as a form of powerlessness. In addition, it should be noted that the use of these features can also vary depending on the social context and the purpose and intent of the speaker.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous chapter, the researcher concluded that there were 169 utterances from the main character that used nine types of women's language features based on Lakoff's theory, namely lexical hedges or fillers 44 times, tag questions 5 times, rising intonation on declarative 7 times, empty adjective 1 time, intensifiers 63 times, hypercorrect grammar 9 times, superpolite forms 18 times, avoidance of strong swear words 3 times, and emphatic stress 19 times. Therefore, it can be seen that intensifiers are the most used features by the main character. While other features such as precise color terms are not found in the movie. The researcher hopes that by reading this research, readers can understand the features of women's language, especially those contained in the movie Joy.

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