Features of Women's Language Used by Female Characters in Anne with an E Series

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the women's language features used by the female characters in Anne with An E series. The data source was taken from a series entitled Anne with An E. The data were obtained from the dialogue of the female characters. The qualitative research method was used to analyze the data in this research. Women's language features proposed by Lakoff (1975) were applied in the analysis. The results show all the women's language features are used by the female characters in Anne with An E series. They were lexical hedges, tag questions, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjectives, precise colour terms, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress. The results of this research have proven Lakoff's (1975) theory.

Keywords: Women's language features, female characters

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menginvestigasi fitur bahasa perempuan yang digunakan oleh karakter perempuan dalam seri Anne with An E. Sumber data diambil dari seri berjudul Anne with An E. Data diperoleh dari dialog para karakter perempuan. Metode penelitian kualitatif digunakan untuk menganalisis data dalam penelitian ini. Fitur bahasa perempuan yang diusulkan oleh Lakoff (1975) diterapkan dalam analisis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa semua fitur bahasa perempuan digunakan oleh karakter perempuan dalam seri Anne with An E. Mereka termasuk hedging leksikal, pertanyaan tag, intonasi naik pada kalimat deklaratif, kata sifat kosong, istilah warna yang tepat, penguat, tata bahasa hiper-korektif, bentuk sangat sopan, menghindari kata-kata kasar yang kuat, dan penekanan vokal. Hasil penelitian ini telah membuktikan teori Lakoff (1975).

Kata kunci: Fitur bahasa perempuan, karakter perempuan

1. Introduction

People need language to communicate, hence language serves as an intermediary for people to communicate with one another. Everyone uses language to communicate and express their ideas, feelings, and thoughts. Gender is additionally connected with language. The study of language and gender in sociolinguistics is one of the studies that focus on gender differences in language use. Wardhaugh (2006:324) stated men tend to talk about sports and aggression with their friends, nevertheless, women tend to talk about parenthood, feelings, and opinions with their friends. Women generally speak more gently than males, which is connected to Lakoff's statement that women usually communicate by utilizing tag and filler questions to soften their speech because they wish to avoid a

direct and harsh tone while interacting with others (Lakoff, 1975:77)

Linguists have examined gender differences since the 1970s, when feminism developed, and many academics have attempted to discover the distinctive characteristics of women's language (Lakoff, 1975:123). Establishing the contextually relevant social component of gender explains how men and women interact. "Gender is how society creates, patterns, and rewards our understandings of femininity and masculinity" (Shaw & Lee, 2012:105). Men and women communicate in various ways. They converse using various words, vocabularies, and varied grammatical use (Lakoff, 1975:43). Language communicates feelings, ideas, emotions, desires, and beliefs, according to Nordquist (2019). Gender differences influence one other's behaviour; how each gender expresses what is in their hearts to be delivered are also different.

Lakoff (1975) mentioned ten characteristics of women's language. These are lexical hedges, tag questions, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjectives, precise colour terms, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress. Each aspect of women's language has a certain purpose. According to Holmes (2013:167), there are three reasons why women use women's language features when communicating. Firstly, it seeks an explanation through social class along with status. Second, it refers to women's function as guardians in society, and lastly, it refers to women's status as a subordinate group.

Most women in this modern era choose to talk rudely, which has been influenced by environmental and social factors (Zhu, 2019:168). They choose harsh phrases to appropriately communicate their emotions. However, not all women use harsh words when communicating. The factor of the environment drives women to use polite language instead of harsh language. Women also want to have strong personal branding so that they are not undervalued by society and are seen as high-status women (Zhu, 2019:170). People may sometimes tell a woman's social standing by the way she speaks and the words she chooses.

There have been several sources of data that were analyzed based on women's language features focusing on language and gender (Apridaningrum, 2018), (Nadia, 2022), (Paramitha, 2022), (Pebrianti, 2013), (Setyadi and Ekawati, 2021), and (Sevim, 2021). The sources of the data from those studies were the features of women's spoken language as in talk shows and movies, as well as written languages as in novels and texts. The findings of the studies show that those writers' consent to Lakoff's theory of women's language.

Zhu (2019) has found that recently, more women have chosen to talk rudely, as the result of the influence of environmental and social factors, and the findings show the contrasts with what Lakoff found over the past four decades that women tend to communicate by utilizing tag and filler questions in order to soften their speech because they wish to avoid a direct and harsh tone while interacting with others. The different uses of women's language have become the background to analyze the female's language in *Anne with An E.* It is a series that looks at issues of race, class, gender, and ethnicity. The plot centers around Anne, an orphan child who is accidentally adopted by a farmer's brother and sister. Anne possessed a variety of representations such as intelligence, competitiveness, and empathy. This study identifies how the language features in this series

characterized their talk since it brings to the forefront concerns like human rights, social justice, and even gender parity. The

2. Methods

This research uses qualitative methods. The data of this study were taken from a series entitled *Anne with An E*. The writer uses the documentation method in collecting the data. The collected data were organized categorically according to the features of women's language. The data were processed by analyzing the language features used by female characters based on Lakoff's women's language features (1975) as the former and fundamental approach in analyzing the women's language features. The explanations and analyses of the data's functions were described descriptively in sentences.

3. Results and Discussions

There are 10 women's language features usage found as utterances from the female characters, mainly from Anne. The 10 types of women's language features are lexical hedges, tag questions, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjectives, precise colour terms, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress. The analyses are divided into 10 sub-sections based on the type found. The source of the data is provided underneath each data (E: episode, S: season, 25:06: timeframe). The following are analysis of each type of women's language features.

a) Lexical Hedges

Lexical hedges generally show a lack of confidence in what the speakers are saying, reflecting women's insecurity. The kinds of lexical hedges are based on the language features, such as fillers and lexical verbs.

Sample 1

results will shed light on how women use the language in the 21st century, taking *Anne with An E* series as the study case.

Ruby: "**I…** What if I'm pregnant?! My mother said if I so much as go near a boy, I might get pregnant and if a boy touches me, then I'll certainly get pregnant! So, I must be. You all could be!"
Anne: "How could this be?"
E5/S3 (25:06).

The conversation happened between Ruby and her gang during a dance practice break in school. She was told that she could get pregnant if a boy touched her. When Ruby attempts to express herself, she appears to be filled with doubts and begins the utterances with "I…". The words uttered by Ruby can be identified as fillers because she expresses uncertainty about the idea that she wants to convey. In this case, Ruby uses this feature to fill the breath gap to think before she continues to speak.

b) Tag Questions

A tag question is one in which a woman feels uncertain about her own statement. In particular situations, tag questions can be identified with a yes/no question. A tag question is followed by an interrogative tag such as *isn't it? do you? don't she?*

Sample 2

Anne: "Oh! How wonderful!"
Miss Barry: "I can't take credit for Gertrude's idea. This was her night. I couldn't bring myself to have this party last year… without her. Well, time marches on, **doesn't it?**"

E7/S2 (10:36).

This scene happened when Miss Barry held a party inviting Anne, Diana, and Cole to her house in the town. At that time, Anne was mesmerized by how amazing the party set was. All the plans for celebrating the party were Gertrude's idea. Miss Barry

felt she could not run the party without her best friend, considering that she was still holding on to Gertrude's death. Miss Barry's words, *doesn't it?* identified as a tag question feature. She showed that she wanted to get confirmation on whether Gertrude was still there or not, life must go on. She wanted to ensure that her statement was true. In other words, Miss Barry also wanted to persuade Anne in the hope that she also agreed with Miss Barry's words.

c) Rising Intonation on Declarative

Rising intonation on declarative tends to be used when the speaker requires confirmation while also being the only one with the information needed. When a declarative response is delivered in a high-rising tone, it becomes a question.

Sample 3

Miss Barry: "But I know nothing of children or their illnesses."
Anne: "Mrs. Hammond had twins three times, so I know quite a lot about it."
Miss Barry: "**You were in service?**" ↗
Anne: "My whole life before Green Gables."
E6/S1 (04:25).

This scene happened when Diana's sister got unwell in the middle of the night. Diana's parents were away for a movie premiere in town, leaving them alone with their aunt, Miss Barry. Anne rushed over to Diana's house to assist Diana's sister. Everyone in the house could not understand or perceive health concerns. Fortunately, Anne was familiar with children with illnesses when she was a maid. Miss Barry asked with utterance "You were in service?" which can be identified as rising intonation on declarative features. When a declarative response is delivered in a high-rising tone, it becomes a question. In this case, Miss Barry was wondering about the statement uttered by Anne, and she needed

confirmation from her concerning the accuracy of the information.

d) Empty Adjectives

Women typically use empty adjectives to describe emotional reactions. For example, when women are amazed or pleased with something, they use an empty adjective to express their feelings.

Sample 4

Jossie: "Oh, Lord have mercy. You don't even know that coloured woman."
Anne: "Mary is a smart, **lovely** woman, but you'd know that if you ever said two words to her."
E3/S3 (09:08).

The utterances happened when Josie was being racist to Mary which made Anne stand up for Mary because she knew her better. In the dialogue, it found a word indicating an empty adjective feature, *lovely*. Adjectives were neutral, native speakers of any gender may use them. However, there are several adjectives that appear to be reserved for female use on their own. Therefore, the adjective *lovely* is used by Anne to show her expression and opinion about Mary.

e) Precise Colour Terms

According to Lakoff (1975), women are considerably more exact in identifying terms when expressing details about colour than men. There is only one precise colour term utterance of women's language.

Sample 5

Anne: "But surely you don't mind puff sleeves? All the girls are wearing them. Puff sleeves are divine."
Marilla: "Waste of fabric."
Anne: "Well I'm sure if it's a lovely **azure blue** or **willow green**, I'm sure I won't mind if it's… plain."

E1/S1 (35:05).

Taken from the first episode, precise colour terms also occurred. From the conversation, Anne had an argument with Marilla about what colour should be the new dress made. She stated vocabulary to show colours such as *azure blue* and *willow green*. Azure blue is primarily a bright colour from the blue colour type. Willow green is a soft, light colour from the green colour type. Vocabulary about these colours is often well-identified by women.

f) Intensifiers

To make the other person feel confident in their statements, women prefer to utilize words with a little persuasive emphasis and narrative. This is due to the fact that women's communication has its own emotional aspect, which is considered a characteristic of their speech.

Sample 6

Anne: "I'm **so** thrilled you took the exams."
Diana: "I probably didn't pass."
Anne: "Well, if you didn't, there's something wrong with the tests."
E8/S3 (43:12).

Based on the utterances above, Anne used intensifier features. The data happened during the university enrollment examinations when Diana was not supposed to take the exam due to her parents. But she still pushed through to take the exam at the university she wanted. Anne was relieved Diana took the college entrance exam. She expressed herself by uttering *so* thrilled, meaning that she was happy they could go to college together. She used **so** to strengthen the desired meaning. The utterance is still coherent although she did not add *so*.

g) Hypercorrect Grammar

A woman's speech is not intended to be rude or less polite than a man's. Therefore, hypercorrect grammar avoids using terms that might be considered harsh or offensive. In addition, hypercorrect grammar is related to applying English in line with standard grammar ideas.

Sample 7

Anne: "A cold in the head at the start of summer vacation is an immoral thing."
Marilla: "As are chatty distractions when a red ribbon is on the line."
Anne: "But nothing short of absolute pneumonia could quench my interest in culinary matters this morning. **I am** determined to do Mary proud at the fair tomorrow."
E6/S3 (01:54).

Taken from episode 6 of season 3, the hypercorrect grammar was found. Anne insisted that she must join the cake competition at the fair, despite the fact that she had a cold. She needed to make Mary proud for using her recipe to win the contest. Anne preferred using *I am* instead of *I'm* to clarify that she needed to do it even if a disaster would occur.

h) Super Polite Forms

Super polite forms show how women must protect their words in front of the person to whom they are speaking and the people around them. This is partly due to women's desire to maintain their representation. Super polite forms might take the shape of hidden requests, praising others, or just avoiding an ignorant image.

Sample 8

Marilla: "Did you have a nice ride? Anne took Matthew's horse today. Apparently, Miss Stacy is keeping them too busy for walking."
Anne: "Yes, I did enjoy it, yes, I… Mrs. Lynde, may I speak to you for a moment? Privately? In the parlour? **Pardon the interruption**, Marilla. This won't take long."
E4/S3 (10:34).

Another feature was found in data 14. Marilla asked Anne about her feelings after riding a horse. Anne then distracted the conversation to talk to Mrs. Lynde. She used super polite form as in *pardon the interruption* for permission, as a request or polite command, rather than directly breaking off the conversation. It made the sentence super polite.

i) Avoidance of Strong Swear Words

Avoidance of strong swear words is a term used to emphasize communication and is an excuse for degrading something or someone while being polite. Swearing is a powerful emotional statement.

Sample 9

Miss Barry: "**For heaven's sake**, Rollings, these are my guests! Come in. come in. come in from the cold. I was beginning to think you weren't coming. Oh, my dear Anne, it's very good to see you. Ah… **Dear me!** Whatever has happened to you? Rollings, take poor, um…"
Anne: "Uh, Jerry."
Miss Barry: "...Jerry, here, downstairs. We'll get you cleaned up and snorted."
E7/S1 (27:22).

The data, extracted from episode 7 of the first season, involves an unfortunate incident experienced by Anne and Jerry on their way to Miss Barry's house. In response to her maid's failure to recognize them, Miss Barry, feeling frustrated, used the expression "for heaven's sake" to refrain from swearing. The house owner, surprised to see a child with bruises, opted to express her confusion with "dear me!" instead of uttering a swear word, demonstrating a choice to avoid such language in that particular situation.

j) Emphatic Stress

The particular emphasis supplied by speakers for multiple words in a statement, generally to pick, compare, correct, persuade, or explain something, is known as emphatic stress. Women like to employ words that highlight or reinforce the significance of their communication.

Sample 10

Anne: "Does needlepoint provide much scope of imagination?"
Diana: "I don't think imagination is my strong suit."
Anne: "**Really?** I don't know what I'd do without mine."
E1/S1 (1:18:07).

The conversation occurred when Anne and Diana met for the first time. Anne's interest in literature led her to have a vivid imagination. Diana, on the other hand, was not as imaginative as Anne. She was a royal adolescent who must learn needlepoint on a daily basis. The sentence uttered by Diana responded with Anne using the word *really* belongs to the emphatic stress feature. She applied this feature to clarify things. Anne wanted to clarify whether it was true that imagination was not Diana's thing. The use of emphatic stress also expresses Anne's uncertainty.

4. Conclusion

Based on the series *Anne with an E,* there are 10 features of women's language found; they are lexical hedges, tag questions, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjectives, precise colour terms, intensifier, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress. The female characters in this series demonstrated all the above features of women's language. The findings of this research prove Lakoff's (1975) theory. However, recent discoveries by Zhu (2019) about impolite women's language were not seen in this study's data. It indicates that the context of social change and environment make impacts on women's language usage.

This study enhances language studies by focusing on women's language features

used by female characters in the series. Therefore, it is hoped that this study will serve as a resource for linguistics students interested in learning more about women's language features especially when it is influenced by environmental and social changes.

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