

WOMEN'S SPEECH FEATURES USED BY CHARACTER MARGARET IN *THE IRON LADY* MOVIE

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Abstrak

Margaret Thatcher adalah Perdana Menteri wanita di Inggris yang terlama yang dijuluki sebagai *the iron lady* (wanita bertangan besi). Di dalam beberapa percakapan yang diucapkan, ia menggunakan fitur-fitur bahasa yang biasa dipakai oleh wanita. Selain menjadi seorang Perdana Menteri yang harus memiliki sifat tegas dan berwibawa di setiap ucapannya, dia juga masih memiliki sifat feminim yang ditunjukkan dengan penggunaan fitur-fitur bahasa wanita ketika dia melakukan tugas-tugasnya di rumah sebagai seorang ibu. Seperti terlihat dalam skrip film *The Iron Lady*, sebuah film biografi tentang dirinya, dapat dilihat fitur-fitur bahasa wanita yang digunakan berdasarkan teori Lakoff tentang fitur bahasa wanita. Ditemukan ada Sembilan fitur bahasa yang digunakan oleh Margaret, yaitu *lexical hedges or fillers*, *tag question*, *declaratives*, *empty adjectives*, *intensifiers*, *superpolite form*, *avoidance of strong swear words*, *hypercorrect grammar*, dan *emphatic stress*.

Kata kunci: fitur bahasa wanita, bahasa wanita, ucapan

Abstract

Margaret Thatcher is the longest woman Prime Minister in Britain who called as the iron lady. She is able to use women's speech features in some of her conversations. In spite of becoming Prime Minister who has to have power and authority in each of her speeches, she also has femininity side as shown in her using of women's speech features when she is in house doing her duties as a mother. As seen in the script of *The Iron Lady* movie, a biographical movie of her, it can be seen her speech features based on Lakoff's theory of women's speech features. It is found that there are nine speech features that she uses, they are *lexical hedges or fillers*, *tag question*, *declaratives*, *empty adjectives*, *intensifiers*, *superpolite form*, *avoidance of strong swear words*, *hypercorrect grammar*, and *emphatic stress*.

Keywords: woman's speech features, women's language, utterances

BACKGROUND STUDY

Women have complicated place in using a language. As Lakoff said that sometimes women language shows their powerlessness and weakness. Women have to use a certain language in order to be accepted by their society. They tend to use certain language in order to show their femininity rather than masculinity. Women sometimes use certain features of speech as their language choices. Lakoff analyzed that there are ten types of speech features that commonly used by women than men that based on her intuition and observation. Those speech features are *lexical hedges fillers*, *tag question*, *rising intonation on declaratives*, *'empty' adjectives*, *specialized vocabularies* (precise colors terms), *intensifiers*, *'hypercorrect' grammar*, *'super polite' form*, *avoidance of strong words*, and *emphatic stress*. Those speech features are commonly used by women in their communication. Each of those features has different functions, for example to show

femininity, to strengthen the meaning of a sentence, to show uncertainty, etc.

One of the ways to study about women language in their communication is by looking at the movie. Movie is the reflection of the real condition in a society, because in making a movie the directors always draw the real condition in a society. It will analyze women speech features that are used by Margaret Thatcher, the central character of *The Iron Lady* Movie. This is an interesting movie because this is a British biographical film based on the life of Margaret Thatcher, the longest serving Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of the 20th century.

In spite of becoming an iron lady who has power and authority when she becomes The Prime Minister, she also sometimes uses women's speech features when she talks with her husband and children. It can be seen from the utterances that she uses which have different functions in the way she uses those features.

This movie is very interesting to be taken as the object of this research. Lakoff's theory of women's language shows that women tend to use language that shows their powerlessness and weakness but this research is going to analyze the language of a figure of woman leader who is being respected by many British people at that time. Margaret as a British woman prime minister during four times sometimes has many problems that she should overcome it and deliver her speech in front of the public as seen in some scenes in this movie. The writer will analyze how or even in what condition an iron lady and figure of women leader like Margaret uses ten types of women speech features. The result of this research will show whether an iron lady uses the speech features which shows her aversive, powerless, weakness or even not.

WOMEN'S LANGUAGE

Women's language indicates the characteristic of women's behavior. Because someone's language shows their role in the society, women should have certain speech features to be shown in their society. Lakoff said that women experience linguistic discrimination in the way they are taught to use language, and in the way general language treats them. Both of them are related with the function or the role of women in their society. So women have to choose their best language when they interact with other people. Women have to talk like a lady, if they refuse it they are ridiculed and subjected to criticism as unfeminine (Lakoff 1975:6).

According to Holmes, women's linguistic behavior can be seen mostly when women used more standard forms than men. In many speech communities, when women use more of a linguistic form than men, it is generally the standard form which overtly prestigious form that women favour (Holmes 1995 : 170). Holmes adds that women used more standard form because of four reasons, they are appeals to social class and its related status, refers to women's role in society, relates to women's status as a subordinate group, and relates with the function of speech expressing masculinity.

Women have role as guardian of social's values. The fact that women use more standard forms than men points to the way society tend to expect better behavior from women than from men (Holmes 1995 : 172). Standard forms are commonly associated with more formal and less personal interactions so the society expects women to use them because women are serving as models for children's speech. Women are also designated the role of modeling correct behavior in the community. Women's language forms are associated with female values and femininity. In the other hand, women don't use vernacular forms because they don't want the society looks their masculinity than their femininity.

TEN TYPES OF WOMEN'S SPEECH FEATURES

Robin Lakoff suggested based on her intuitions and observations that women's speech was characterized by linguistic features such as the following: lexical hedges or fillers, tag question, rising intonation on declaratives, 'empty' adjectives, specialized vocabularies (precise colors terms), intensifiers, 'hypercorrect' grammar, 'super polite' form, avoidance of strong words, and emphatic stress.

Lakoff also divided those features into two groups. First, there are linguistic devices which may be used for hedging or reducing the force of an utterance. Hedging devices are lexical hedges, tag questions, question intonation, super polite forms, and euphemism. Secondly there are features which may boost or intensify a proposition's force. They are intensifiers and emphatic stress. Lakoff claimed that hedging devices explicitly signal lack of confidence, while boosting devices reflect the speaker's that the addressee may remain unconvinced and therefore supply extra reassurance. So, women use hedging devices to express uncertainty, and they use boosting devices to persuade their addressee to take them seriously.

RESEARCH METHOD

In analyzing women's speech features that used by character Margaret in The Iron Lady movie, descriptive qualitative method is used by the researcher since the data are in forms of the words and descriptively based on Lakoff's theory of ten types of women's speech features. Uwe flick, et al. Said in the book *A Companion to Qualitative Research* that Qualitative research claims to describe life worlds 'from the inside out', from the point of view of the people who participate. By so doing it seeks to contribute to a better understanding of social realities and to draw attention to processes, meaning patterns and structural features (Uwe Flick, et al 2004:3). In qualitative research, the data is gotten from the form of words or sentences then describing the phenomenon that found in the data. Qualitative method helps the researcher to study things in natural setting, and then interpret the phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. The use of qualitative research also involves the study used in variety of material and case study in people's live such as their personal experiences. This research analyzed the conversation that used by Margaret in The Iron Lady movie as the data source. The data are from the words, phrases, clauses, or sentences that found in the dialogues of Margaret in her conversation in all scenes in this movie. The source of data is taken from the dialogues in The Iron Lady movie then it is subscribed into the original

script written by Abi Morgan. The data which is used by the researcher is taken from the conversations or dialogues of character Margaret where it can be found the use of ten types of women's speech features based on Lakoff's theory.

DISCUSSION

The first features that used by Margaret is avoidance of strong swear words. It is found in the movie that Margaret is a good woman who never speaks roughly when she is talking with the people around her. Even she feels a little bit angry to someone, she never uses bad words or swear words that will damage her reputation. The data are found below:

Datum (1)

JUNE spies the newspaper, sees the photos of twisted carnage on the front page.

DENIS :Don't let her take my paper away.

JUNE reaches one hand out to scoop it up in passing-

MARGARET :Oh, I haven't had a chance to look at that yet, dear.

JUNE :Sorry.

JUNE hesitates, leaves the newspaper resting on the bed as she heads off with the suit on hanger.

The utterance "Oh, I haven't had a chance to look at that yet, dear" is said by Margaret to June who wants to take her newspaper. She avoids June to take her newspaper away. Actually she wants to shout at her but she uses more polite form which used *oh... dear*. This utterance reflects Lakoff's theory of women's speech features which can be classified as avoidance of strong swear words. 'Oh... dear' is a meningless particle which classified into women's language. The first data above is said by Margaret when she is in her house communicating with her family. She avoids using swear words even when she was in an emotional condition. It is showed that Margaret is a good woman in her house. She always keeps her attitude to her hearers near to her and also make a good example to her children. She realizes her position in her house as a mother and a woman, so she does not use the strong swear words that can damage her position as a women. The use of the particle *Oh... dear* inspite of shit or damn provides that Margaret is a good woman in her house who keeps her femininity as a woman.

As a woman, character Margaret also tends to use intensifiers in some of her utterances. Intensifiers according to Lakoff tend to use by women because they want to show her strong feeling about something which they are talking to their hearers. In some cases, intensifiers also use to make the addressee take seriously about what is said by the speaker. Look at the data below:

Datum (2)

DENIS just visible, perched on the bed, looks up from doing the crossword in the newspaper-

CAROL :No one is saying that.

MARGARET :If I can't go out to buy a pint of milk then what is the world Coming to. *Really Carol*, please don't fuss about it. You've always been like this, fuss fuss fuss. You must find something better to do with your time. It's most unattractive in a woman. When I was your age the last thing I wanted to do was fuss around my mother.

In her utterance "*Really Carol, please don't fuss about it.*" Margaret asks Carol to not fuss about something. The word *really* shows women's character than men. It can be considered as an intensifier. The use of intensifiers can be used to make the addressee knows the strong feeling of the speaker.

As a woman prime minister, character Margaret also uses lexical hedges or fillers as her special features. The hedges as like you *know, well, etc* are used by her to check whether her hearers are following her sentences or not and sometimes show the uncertainty of her sentences . The data are found below:

Datum (4)

The MURMUR of dinner party conversation-

MARGARET :Well I don't like coalitions, never have...

MARGARET's POV of her fingers absently grazing a confusing array of cutlery laid out in place setting in front of her. Her confused face.

DENIS VO :Start on the outside...

The utterance "*Well, I don't like coalitions, never have...*" means that Margaret does not like the coalitions and she says it to Denis as her hearer. She used particle *well* to reflect her insecurity about the condition around her. The particle like *well* can be categorized as lexical hedges or fillers because it is used to hedge the speaker's sentence. Hedging is one of characteristic of women's language that can express a lack of confidence and reflect of women's insecurity about the society around them. Hedge is variety of means by which one can say something a little short of indicating that something categorally is, or is not, the case. Lakoff also said that the use of lexical hedges or fillers by the speakers especially women also indicates that women is not sure about the accuracy of what she is saying. So when Margaret said that she doesn't like the coalition, there is still uncertainty of what she is saying. The data above is taken from the conversation between Margaret and her husband, Denis when they are talking in an informal situation. So in some of informal situation Margaret as a woman sometimes also feels unsure about what she is saying. In that way, Margaret prefers to use special hedges or fillers as like *well* as found in the data above.

Emphatic stress is the other speech feature based on Lakoff theory that uses by character Margaret in this movie. Emphatic stress is a typical of special stress that is given by the speaker to some word in a sentence, usually to single out, compare, correct, or clarify things. Look at the complete explanation below:

Datum (5)

She sounds very plummy, like a Conservative party wife from the shires, and she wears a hat.

MARGARET ON TELEVISION: We in Great Britain and in Europe are formed mainly by our history.

They on

the other hand are formed by their philosophy. Not by what has been, but by what can be. Oh, we have a great deal that we can learn from them, yes. Oh yes!

The setting of that conversation is when Margaret is being interviewed on the television when she has become the secretary of education in the parliament. In that utterance, she realized that her sentences will be heard by many people, so she used emphatic stress *great* to strengthen her meaning about the deal between The Great Britain and United States. Margaret wanted the people take seriously about what she is saying so she added the emphatic stress in her sentences.

The next feature that is used by character Margaret is rising intonation or declaratives. The use of this feature is to provide the conformation from her hearers about what she is saying. The explanation is described below:

Datum (6)

NEAVE : You've got it in you to go the whole distance.

REECE : Absolutely.

MARGARET : Prime Minister?! Oh no. Oh no no no. In Britain? There will be no female Prime Minister here, not in my lifetime. No. And I told Airey, I don't expect to win the leadership, but I am going to run. Just to shake up the party.

The utterance *Prime Minister?! Oh no. Oh no no no. In Britain? There will be no female Prime Minister here, not in my lifetime* is one example of declarative or rising intonation which said by Margaret when she argued her opinion with her other relations in the parliament. By using that words, she still can keep her emotion for the hearer and not shout a strong words that can make her looks bad in front of the people around her. Women's declaratives statement can also be a fact that women's speech sound is more polite than men's.

Superpolite form is one of important features that always say by women rather than by men. Superpolite form shows that as women, they have to keep their utterances in front of people around them. Look at the data below:

Datum (7)

MARGARET hesitates. She sits in silence until-

MARGARET : Really it's becoming quite tiresome.

DENIS : What is?

MARGARET : You. (beat)

I was on my own for twenty four years before I met you and I can manage perfectly well without you now. So will you please go away and stop bothering me.

Margaret asks Denis to go away by using Superpolite Form that she said "*So will you please go away, . . .*". Lakoff argued that in some case, women's request has sense as a polite command, it doesn't need obedience overtly, but suggest something to be done as a favor to the speaker. Margaret used polite form by combining the word *please* and *will you*. *Please* indicating that to accede will do something for the speaker, and *will you* suggesting that the addressee has the final decision. So, in that condition, Margaret asks her husband not to bother her at that time by using superpolite forms, in order that her husband doesn't have any optional except do what has requested by her.

Another feature that commonly used by character Margaret is the using of tag question which shows that they cannot predict the accuracy of their sentences. The complete explanation are described below:

Datum (8)

GILMOUR : The point is, Prime Minister, that we must moderate the pace-

HESELTINE : if we're even to have a hope of winning the next election-

PYM : Quite right.

MARGARET : Ah. Worried about our careers, are we?

They make noises - to the effect that nothing could be further from the truth.

But MARGARET has their measure.

MARGARET : Gentlemen, if we don't cut spending

we will be bankrupt. Yes the medicine is harsh but the patient requires it in order to live. Shall we withhold the medicine? No! We are not wrong.

We did not seek election and win in order to manage the decline of a great nation.

The utterance that used by Margaret above is implied as a tag question. "*Ah, worried about our careers, are we?*" means that she wants to confirm whether her friends are worried or not about their careers in the parliament. Tag question, according to Lakoff is one of women's speech features which reflects uncertainty related to something unknown by speaker which encourages them to ask. Tag question contains of an inverted auxiliary form, determined by the auxiliary in the main clause and pronoun that agrees with the subject of

the main clause. It is found on the data that Margaret claims Gilmour, Heseltine, and Pym that they are worried about their career in the parliament but she lacks full confidence in the truth of that claim, so she uses the form of, *are we?* to check whether she is wrong or not. In addition, tag question is also a polite statement, by softening the sentence, in that it does not force agreement or belief on the addressee.

Hypercorrect grammar is the last feature which uses by character Margaret. Hypercorrect grammar always uses by Margaret because she has to keep her attitude in front of many people around her. Her sentences have to be polite and will not damage her reputation.

Datum (9)

MARGARET :What - did you say?

GILMOUR makes a gesture.

GILMOUR :Nothing. Nothing, Prime Minister.

MARGARET is furious.

MARGARET :*Don't try to hide you opinions. Goodness me, I'd much rather you were honest and straightforward about them - instead of continuously and damagingly leaking them to the press. Well?*

That utterance is said by Margaret as the example of hypercorrect grammar. As Lakoff's said that women tend to use the hypercorrect grammar, because in that society, they don't be allowed to talk rough. Margaret as a woman who has high reputation in her society never speaks roughly that will damage her reputation. She uses the utterance which correct grammatically or even hypercorrect grammar as the example above. She uses the right and polite form so that the society will recognize her as a good woman with her high reputation.

CONCLUSION

Character Margaret in *The Iron Lady* movie uses many types of *women's speech features* that can reflect her personality as seen in this movie. It is found in the movie that each of features that she uses reflects her own figure as a woman in some positions of her life, like a mother, a wife, and a prime minister. It is also found that in different settings, Margaret uses different speech features as she needs to complete her utterances. She can manage her utterances well wherever she were (in each of the setting in this movie). So that it can be concluded that she can behave well as a woman leader and a good mother as it observed from her utterances

There are nine speech features that are used by Margaret, they are *lexical hedges or fillers*, *tag question*, *rising intonation on declaratives*, *'empty' adjectives*, *intensifiers*, *'hypercorrect' grammar*, *'super polite' form*, *avoidance of strong words*, and *emphatic stress*. But,

there is one speech feature which is not used by Margaret, that is specialized vocabulary (precise colors term).

Furthermore, Lakoff's theory of women's speech features is suitable to be used for this research because the researcher can analyze the character of women especially Margaret Thatcher, The British's First Prime Minister who has represented in this movie. Even many people call her as a strong woman like Iron Lady, she still has feminine side as common women, especially when she was in her house talking with her family. All of Margaret's sentences are polite language. She never speaks roughly that will damage her reputation in front of many people around her. This research also proves the good personality and attitude of Margaret as observed on her speech features.

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