WOMEN'S LANGUAGE IN SOCIAL LIFE: INVESTIGATION OF LINGUISTIC FEATURES IN *GOSSIP GIRL* TV SERIES

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Abstract

This research concerned on the types of linguistic features of women's language used by Lily in *Gossip Girl* TV Series and how she used them in different situations. The objectives of the research were to identify the types of women's linguistic features used by Lily in *Gossip Girl* TV Series and to investigate how she used them in different situations. We can learn the characteristic of women's behavior and role in society; therefore, a study about women's language is important to be conducted. Furthermore, if other people understand why we talk and act as we do, it will prevent them of getting confused or missunderstood. Thus, this study is expected to give advantage for students and workers, either men or women, in using linguistic features in different situations. The researchers applied descriptive qualitative method and library research. The data were from the utterances which indicated linguistic features of women's language in form of words, phrases, and clauses. The result shows that from 6 types of linguistic features there are only 5 types of linguistic features used by Lily in *Gossip Girl* TV Series in different situations.

Key words: Different Situations, Linguistic Features, Women's Language.

INTRODUCTION

In some countries, women, compared with men (Al Falaq & Puspita, 2021), have some differences in using language (Rido & Sari, 2018), (Laila Ulsi Qodriani & Wijana, 2020), (Widianingsih & Gulö, 2016), (Mandasari & Agusty, n.d.), (Aminatun & Oktaviani, 2019). For instance, in Hunan Province, China, there are calligraphy used only by women, which men do not use or understand. It is refered to as "nüshu". Nüshu has been defined as a written language (Mandasari, n.d.), (Gulö, 2014b), (Muliyah et al., 2020), which contains more than 2,000 characters. Women formed their own written symbols to represent the words in their local dialect (Zaenal Abidin et al., 2021), (Z Abidin & Ahmad, 2021). Nüshu letters reflect women's joy and sorrow. Nüshu is often used to write letters. A large amount of nüshu work focuses on women's oppression and the suffering they experienced in feudal society. Women's language forms are associated with women's values and feminity. Women should have certain features to be shown in the society because women's language indicates the characteristic of women's behavior (Kuswanto et al., 2020). It means that we can learn the characteristic (Rido & Sari, 2018), (Gulö, 2014b) of women's

behavior and role in society; therefore, a study about women's language is important to be conducted (Laila U Qodriani & Wijana, 2020), (Rido, 2020).

This study used *Gossip Girl* TV Series as the object of the study. *Gossip Girl* (2007-2012) is an American teen drama television series created by Josh Schwartz and Stephanie Savage. Gossip Girl is a mysterious blogger who reveals the secrets. about teens in Upper East Side, New York. The story talks about social issue in Manhattan's Upper East Side. Based on IMDb (The Internet Movie Database) (2016), the show has received numerous award nominations, such as Top Television Series (2009), Favourite International Program (2011), Outstanding Contemporary Television Series (2009), Favorite Network TV Drama (2013), Favorite TV Drama (2011), and won 18 Teen Choice Awards. *Gossip Girl* was designated as the "Greatest Teen Drama of All Time" by *New York* magazine. It also has been proven that, the TV Series hit high rating in The CW's target of women. The *New York* magazine cited in Pressler (2008) wrote, "The show has resurrected the potential for scripted dramas to be effective social satire—to present a world more accurately than a "reality" program can". Gossip Girl has become American favorite drama television series because it presents daily issue in real life.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Language and Gender

Language (Gulö, 2014a), (Kuswoyo, n.d.), (Lestari & Wahyudin, 2020), (Suprayogi Suprayogi, 2021), (F. M. Sari, 2020) and gender study is a subfield of Sociolinguistics (Kardiansyah, 2017), which deals with linguistic gender differentiation reflected in pronunciation (S Suprayogi & Pranoto, 2020), (Ambarwati & Mandasari, 2020), (Rahmania & Mandasari, 2021), vocabulary (Simamora & Oktaviani, 2020), (S. N. Sari & Aminatun, 2021), (Agustin & Ayu, 2021) and grammar (Kuswoyo & Susardi, 2016), (Mandasari & Wahyudin, 2021), as well as w This means that language and gender is related to each other because linguistic features, as part of language, are categorized by speaker's gender omen's and men's speech interaction patterns. In Sociolinguistics, linguistic features are categorized by speakers' gender.

Women's Language

Women's language indicates the characteristic of women's behavior. Women's language forms are associated with women's values and feminity. Because someone's language shows their role in society (Wahyudin, 2015), (Laila Ulsi Qodriani, n.d.), (F. M. Sari, 2015), (Ayu & Pratiwi, 2021), (Pustika, n.d.), women should have certain features to be shown in the society. Adds that women have role as guardian of social's values. For instance, the fact that women use more standard forms and being more polite point to the way society tend to expect better behavior from women. Society expects women to use them because women are serving as models for children.

Linguistic Features of Women's Language

Woman's language is used to describe women and language typically used by woman. Lakoff explains a constitutive relationship between women and the language she describes. Sex of the speakers is one of the factors which influence the variation in using language in which the linguistic features are often employed consciously or unconsciously in order to identify themselves and others, and thus serve to mark and maintain various social categories and division. Below shows the theory of linguistic features of women's language (adapted from Lakoff: 1975)
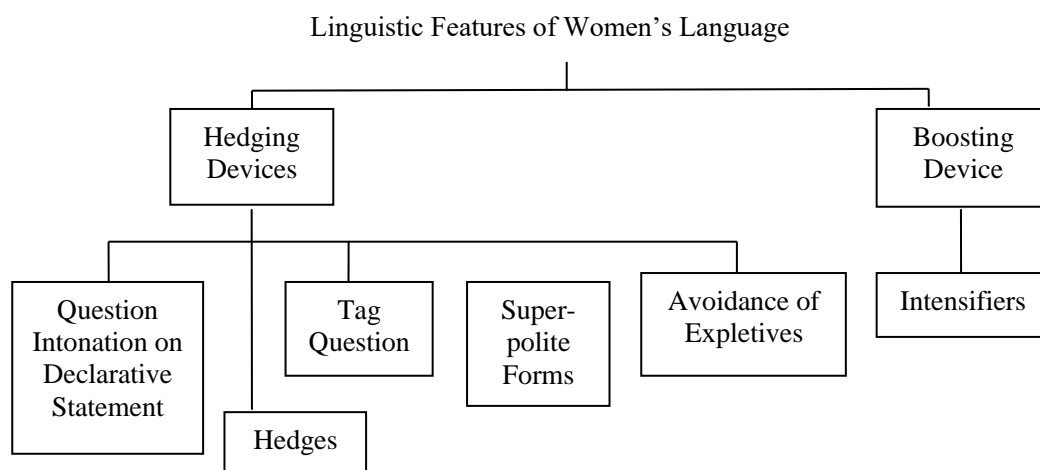
Figure 1. Theory of Linguistic Features of Women's Language

Lakoff divides linguistic features of women's language into two groups. First, there are linguistic features which may be used for reducing the strength of the utterance. They are hedges, tag questions, question intonation on declarative statement, super-polite

forms, and avoidance of expletives. Secondly, linguistic feature which may intensify the strength of the utterance is intensifiers.

Boosting Device

Lakoff claims that boosting device reflects the speaker's anticipation that the addressee may remain unconvinced and therefore supply extra reassurance. Women use boosting device to persuade their addressee to take them seriously. Linguistic feature which may intensify the strength of the utterance is intensifiers. Women were found to use intensifiers more than men. Keeping in mind their less powerful status in social interactions, women might resort to using intensifiers to give more emphasis to their talk, impress their interlocutors and enhance the likelihood of being accepted and confirmed. The example of intensifiers is intonational emphasis equal to underlining words, such as so, very, and quite.

Hedging Devices

Lakoff claims that hedging devices explicitly signal lack of confidence. Women use hedging devices to express uncertainty. Linguistic features which may be used for reducing the strength of the utterance are hedges, tag questions, question intonation on declarative statement, super polite forms, and avoidance of expletives.

Hedges

Hedges can show both uncertainity and certainity about the topic that is being discused, and can also be used to to mitigate the force of what is being said. She observes some verbs and syntactic constructions convey. Hedged performatives, that is, hedges can also be used to tone down the illocutionary force of entire speech acts as in the following, "*I suppose* that he is leaving on the next train." The introductory *I suppose* that can be taken to reduce the force of the assertion. In this particular case, however, it also seems that the hedge simultaneously comments on the validity of the following proposition in that it emphasizes that what is said may not be absolutely true. In this sense, the hedge can both be interpreted to insert an air of imprecision and fuzziness into the utterances. A hedge is used when the speaker is stating a claim, lacks full confidence in the truth of that claim and therefore tries to avoid a strong statement. Phrases like "sort of", "kind of"or "it seems like" demonstrate the speaker's insecurity, powerlessness and unwillingness to espress her opinion or avoid making explicit statements. Lakoff argues that women are generally lacking status in society because they are more subordinate than men. Therefore, women

are more aware of the way they talk by hedging their utterance to attract the addressee's attention

METHOD

In this research, the researchers applied descriptive qualitative method. It means that the researchers relied on understanding and described the results of the analysis in a form of words. These descriptions are in line with the objectives of this study which aimed to identify the types of women's linguistic features used by a woman and how the speaker used them in different situations in which the results were described in word. It can be seen that qualitative research method is conducted by making a description systematically, knowing the characteristics, and relationship among phenomena investigated. This is in line with this research where the utterances of a woman that indicated women's linguistic features in a form of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences were firstly analyzed. Then the results described the types of women's linguistic features and how the speaker used them in different situations. Further, the researchers also applied library research to find information from books and internet sites for the need of the analysis. The data source of this research was *Gossip Girl* TV Series season 1 which consists of 13 episodes. The data were from the utterances which indicated women's linguistic features in form of words, phrases, and clauses. Lily is the women character that was analyzed in this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Boosting Device

Boosting device reflects the speaker's anticipation that the addressee may remain unconvinced and therefore supply extra reassurance. Because women are often denied access to power in the society, they use different linguistic features to assert and protect their social position, the use of intensifiers being one of them.

Data Sample

Season 1 episode 8 (00:25:40)

[Scene: Blair's room]

Serena   : He raised Chuck. That scares me.

Lily   : Oh, Serena, as usual you're being **overly** dramatic. I'm not

                              marrying Bart. This is **very** casual. And regardless, I'm

not asking your permission.

[Lily leaves, Serena and Eric look at each other]

The situation of the conversation above was Lily told Serena and Eric, her children, that she was dating a man named Bart Bass. The topic discussion was the man whom Lily dated with. Knowing that their mother was dating with Bart Bass, neither Serena nor Eric gave a good response. They did not allow her to do that instead. As the response, Lily was not bothered by it anyway and was still okay by answering, *Oh, Serena, as usual you're being overly dramatic.* From the informal conversation above, intensifiers were used by Lily in interacting with family to strengthen her statement. The sentence *Oh, Serena, as usual you're being overly dramatic* contains intensifier which is *overly*. The word *overly* is an adverb of degree which modifies *dramatic* as the adjective. The quality of *dramatic* is increased through the addition of intensifier *overly*. It seems that Lily told Serena that her reaction was too much. Furher, Lily's statement *This is very casual* also contains intensifier which is *very*. The word *very* is an adverb of degree which modifies *casual* as the adjective. The intensifier scale upwards the assumed norm of what is defined as casual. Lily was saying that dating a man. after divorcing was an usual thing which did not happen only to her. From the conversation above, the intensifiers were used by Lily when she wanted to strengthen her statement.

Hedging Devices

Hedging devices explicitly signal lack of confidence. Women use hedging devices to express uncertainty. Linguistic features which may be used for reducing the strength of the utterance are hedges, tag questions, question intonation on declarative statement, super polite forms, and avoidance of expletives. In informal conversation, the linguistic features that appeared as hedging devices were tag questions, hedges, and avoidance of expletives.

Tag questions

Data Sample

Season 1 episode 1 (00:04:37)
[Scene: Party at Blair's house]
Serena   : So, where is he?
Lily does not answer
Serena   : What? They haven't let him out yet?
Lily   : Let's not discuss this right now, **okay**? I thought you
                                 might want to see some of your friends.

This conversation showed a situation between Lily and her daughter, Serena, when she met her daughter after came back from boarding school for a while. It is determined as informal conversation which discussed Eric, who was the son of Lily, and the brother of Serena. When Serena asked about his brother, Lily did not respond Serena's question at first, but because Serena kept asking her, she decided to response her eventually. By saying, *Let's not discuss this right now, okay?*, it seemed that Lily did not want to talk about his brother at that time. She continued her respond by changing the topic of conversation then. The sentence *Let's not discuss this right now, okay?* consists of main clause and tag question. The main clause is *Let's not discuss this right now* meanwhile the tag question is *okay*. The form of the main clause does not affect the form of the tag question at all. The invariant tag question is attached to positive main clause and do not have subject or verb that could affect their form. Its form stays the same, regardless of the form of the main clause to which they are attached. The main clause contains proposition, and if the idea of the main clause was presented in the form of a question such as, *Can we discuss this later?*, it would be easier to reject it. Therefore, the speaker used tag question to make the listener agree with her.

Hedges

Data Sample

Season 1 episode 3 (00:10:27)

[Scene: Palace Hotel-Serena's room. Serena is searching through boxes]

Serena : Mom, did you borrow my Michelle Parise? Uh, I can't find anything in here!

Lily : It **might** help if you unpacked. Look, you're home now, it's your life, you should start living it.

The situation of the conversation was Serena, the daughter of Lily, looked for her shoes among the boxes in her room at Palace hotel. The topic discussion was Serena's stuff. Serena was getting confused in finding her shoes so she asked Lily if she borrowed it or not. As the response of Serena's question she answered, *It might help if you unpacked.* It can be seen that Lily used hedge in informal conversation in interacting with family to give a suggestion to the listener. The sentence *It might help if you unpacked* contains hedge which is *might*. Lily expressed her idea by using the word *might* which is categorized as modal auxiliary verb. Lily suggested her daughter if she unpacked her stuff – not putting her stuff in boxes since there were many boxes in her room – she could have found her

stuff easier. Thus, the hedge in the sentence *It might help if you unpacked* was used as a mean by the speaker to present a proposition or sugggestion to the listener.

Avoiding of Expletives

Data Sample

Season 1 episode 11 (00:23:46)

[Scene: Palace Hotel, dinner room]

Lily   : This doesn't make any sense, because that would mean...

         that Eric is... And he's not. He's just not.

[Eric looks down]

Lily   : Are you?

[Eric tries to speak]

Lily   : **Oh God**.

[Eric runs off to his bedroom to call Chuck]

The situation of the conversation above was informal in which Lily, Serena (her daughter), Eric (her son), and Georgina (a friend of Serena's), were having lunch together. The conversation started when Georgina told about Eric's boyfriend. Lily had no idea about what Georgina talked about. When Lily asked Eric for the clarification, he did not deny it. Lily then expressed her shock by saying, *Oh God.* It appears that avoiding of expletives in informal conversation was used by Lily in interacting with acquaintance as the expression of shock. The expression *Oh God* shows her strong emotion. Lily's expression showed the avoidance of using expletive in order to soften her expression of shock. The choice of the speaker's expression showed how strongly the speaker allowed herself to feel about something which indicates the relationship between herself and her listener, and between herself and what she was talking about.

CONCLUSION

The result shows that the linguistic feature which did not appear was super-polite forms. From the analysis the researchers drew a conclusion that the speaker did not show the use of super-polite forms in making a request. The findings show that the difference of linguistic features used by Lily in *Gossip Girl* TV Series are based on context and function in different situations. Boosting device appeared both in informal and formal conversation. In informal conversation, intensifiers were used to emphasize or strengthen statement, for

agreement and decrease the degree of quality. Meanwhile in formal conversation intensifiers were used only to emphasize or strengthen statement.

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