

THE EXISTENCE OF WOMEN'S LANGUAGE FEATURES IN MEN AND WOMEN INTERACTION IN THE ELLEN SHOW

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Abstract

Well... has been considered as a linguistic hedging device and classified as “women’s language”. There are some phrases that are considered as “women’s language” but they are performed by men. This paper aims to investigate and examine the occurrences of women’s language feature in man and woman’s conversation in The Ellen Show. The data were gathered from the talk show video on YouTube uploaded by TheEllenShow Channel and the title of the video is “Snoop Dogg on Staying at Martha Stewart’s House and Teaching Ellen a New Word”. They were then collected, analyzed and categorized according to the features they show in the video. Findings indicate that women’s language features are performed not only by the woman but also by the man. The women’s language features that are performed by the man are mainly the lexical hedges. Meanwhile, the others that are performed by woman are the lexical hedges, tag question, intensifiers, and emphatic stress. This study hopes that the findings will give new insights about the woman’s language features existed in oral production or conversation between men and woman.

Keywords: women’s language features, talk show video, conversation

Introduction

In daily conversation, there is always found that both women and men tend to use specific and different languages. The languages that are used can be either formal or informal ones. Both casual and serious observations have been conducted to show that communication between the sexes is often confusing. One of the causes of that confusion is that both women and men might be using different language in their daily conversation (Jong, 1977; Reik, 1954). Either men or women produce specific utterances in term of topic, form, content, and use that are considered as sex associated. Even though some studies about the differences of women and men language show the fact that do not usually coincide, they both give the contribution about gender communication and sex roles.

There are many stereotypes which say if women actually tend to be more talkative than men and they have the tendency to like gossiping. The topics that are discussed can become interesting topics to be shared, for example women enjoy talking about make-up, cosmetic, travelling, cooking, or even shopping with their friends.

Women tend to be more powerless than men, and it makes the women have less confidence to convey something than men. Therefore, women are more careful about what they talk about by using the hedges to attract the addressee's attention. "Hedging devices explicitly signal lack of confidence, while boosting devices reflect the speaker's anticipation that the addressee may remain unconvinced and therefore supply extra reassurance". (Lakoff, 1975, cited in Holmes, 2001, p. 287). Moreover, in some occasions, it is expected that women actually should be more polite than men. The politeness that is should be had by women is in the way they speak or in the way they behave. Women are intended to use the good form of sentences while speaking and do anything politely. It is related to the ideas that women are not intended to show their temper or even anger (Lakoff, 1975).

Because of the stereotypes about women and their language that are shown above, this research tries to investigate women's language features that are produced by women and men since nowadays, in many situations, not only women are using *well...* but also men are using *well...* in their daily conversation. This study also intends to investigate possible reason of using women's language features.

Based on the background of the study, then, the researcher formulates research questions below:

1. What are the women's language features that exist in the man and woman's conversation in The Ellen Show?
2. What are the possible reasons of using women's language features in The Ellen Show?

This study explores deeply about two issues, namely the occurrences of women's language features and the possible reasons of the use of those features. The study was conducted by involving Ellen and Snoop Dogg's conversation in TheEllenShow as the main focus of the data. In identifying the women's language features, this study uses the theory from Robin Lakoff (1975) as the analysis tool.

Literature Review

Women's Language Features

As Lakoff says (1975), "women's language features are several aspects of language used by women to differentiate between women and men's language characteristics". The features that are stated include tag questions, lexical hedges, rising intonation on declaratives, precise color terms, empty adjectives, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, superpolite forms, emphatic stress, and avoidance of swear words (cited in Holmes, 2001).

First feature is lexical hedge or filler. Lexical hedges or filler are the sign of someone's lack especially the lack of confidence in conveying ideas or something. The use of lexical hedges aims to avoid the gap which occurs in the conversation. It is also used to start another topic with the coherence with the previous topic that is discussed. These lexical hedges are produced to make the conversation stay on the track. The example of fillers or lexical hedges are *well...*, *you know...* and *looks....*

The next is the tag question. Tag questions are usually used by women to assert their confidence. "A tag is midway between an outright statement and a yes-no question: it is assertive than the former but more confident than the latter" (Lakoff,

1973, p. 54). *Isn't it?, right?, aren't you?*, and so on that are produced by someone in the final statement of someone's talk are the examples of 'tag question' feature.

To convey their emotion, women also use empty adjectives. Empty adjective is the feature that is used by women to show their emotional reaction rather than give specific information. "It is a group of adjective in terms of vocabulary and it is indicating speaker's approbation or admiration for something, such as gorgeous, fabulous, lovely, and etc." (Lakoff, 1973). Then, women tend to talk like a lady that is shown in their choice of lexical items by making the specific name for color and it is called precise color terms, for example magenta, violet, maroon, and so on.

There is another feature that is used to emphasize and strengthen the meaning of the next words, and it is called as intensifiers (Hornby, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 1989). The example of intensifiers can be seen in the following examples: very, totally, so, and awful. Hypercorrect grammar features is also used by women in order to deal with politeness and the use of standard verb forms, example sounding the final "g" in words such as "going" instead of more casual "goin".

Deal with politeness and the use of standard verb forms, hypercorrect grammar features are also used by women, such as sounding the final g in words such as "going" instead of the more casual "goin". As proposed by Holmes (2001), "women are subordinate to men, so they must avoid offending them and should speak with standard forms". 'hypercorrect' grammar is not the only feature that is related to women's politeness, there is another feature that is related to the politeness which is superpolite form. It is described by Lakoff (1973) as "leaving a decision opens, not imposing your mind, or views, or claims, on anyone else". Women can protect her image while speaking with addressee's face by performing the standard form of speech.

The following feature is the avoidance of swear words feature. Eckert (2003) suggests that "swearing is kind of interjection that can express extreme statements". He also states that "swearing as an expression of very strong emotion" (Eckert, 2003, cited in Permatasari, 2010, p. 25).

The last feature is emphatic stress feature. "Emphatic stress features occurs when women want to strengthen an assertion" (Lakoff, 1973). The empathic stress that is used by women can be seen in form of italic, bold, repeated, colored, and even capitalized words. Those signs are used to strengthen the assertion conveyed by women. Emphatic stress can be used to emphasize the most important word in a speakers' statement.

Talk Show

Talk show is the kind of television show which discusses various topics and invites audiences to participate in the discussion. Talk show is different to other TV genre and it can be performed in other media such as podcast, *YouTube*, or even

radio. Talk show requires the medium which primarily tells the reality outside the medium itself.

Methodology

This study is a case study which used qualitative approach and descriptive analysis, and case study focuses on a phenomenon in its real-life context. Thus, this study was conducted in order to investigate the existence of women's language features found in man and women conversation in The Ellen Show and the possible reasons of using those language features. It describes the features that are considered as women's language feature but also used by the man. The data were collected from the transcript of the video conversation performed by Ellen and Snoop Dogg in TheEllenShow. They were then collected, analyzed and categorized according to the features they show in the video. The video was purposively chosen considering the needs in trying to find the conversation related to the present study.

Findings and Discussions

The Existence of Women's Language Feature in TheEllenShow Conversation

Table 1. Types of Code Switching in the Selected Captions

No	Features	Ellen (F)	Snoop Dogg (M)	Total	Percentage
	Lexical Hedges	3	4	7	26,9%
1	Tag Question	10	1	11	42,3%
2	Empty Adjective	0	0	0	0%
3	Precise Color Terms	0	0	0	0%
4	Intensifiers	2	0	2	7,9%
5	Hypercorrect Grammar	0	0	0	0%
6	Rising Intonation	0	1	1	3,8%
7	Superpolite Form	0	1	1	3,8%
8	Avoidance of Swear Word	0	0	0	0%
9	Emphatic Stress	4	0	4	15,3%
	TOTAL	19	7	26	100%

Based on the data from the table 1., there are 6 features that are performed by the man and the woman in TheEllenShow conversation. Those features are lexical hedges (26,9%), tag question (42,3%), intensifiers (7,9%), rising intonation (3,8%), superpolite form (3,8%), and emphatic stress (15,3%). Moreover, the women's language feature that is frequently used by the man is the lexical hedges with 4 occurrences, and the one that is often produced by the woman is the tag question with 10 occurrences. The women's language feature that is frequently used during the conversation is the tag question with 42,3% occurrences.

The Reason of Using Women's Language Feature

1. Tag Question

From 26 occurrences of the women's language feature in TheEllenShow conversation, the most frequent type of women's language feature used by both Ellen and Snoop Dogg is the tag question (42,3%). The examples of this type can be seen from the dialogue taken from the TheEllenShow conversation below:

- a. **Ellen:** And you've done that in so many different avenues. *Now you're acting, aren't you?*
Snoop Dogg: Oh, yeah.
- b. **Ellen:** Yeah. Well, because that's what y'all had in common. *You both enjoy that, don't you?*
Snoop Dogg: No.
- c. **Ellen:** *Right?*
Snoop Dogg: So can I bake this with some of that infused [CLEARS THROAT]??
Ellen: Yes.Yeah. True that, *all right?* (Tag question)
Snoop Dogg: Will do.
Ellen: All right.Mmmm.

Ellen used the tag questions to emphasize and make sure what the speaker or his guest is doing (in point a. and point b.). Then, she used tag questions to make the any one more believe and to make the saying seem to be more confident (in point c.). Thus, those dialogues are classified to be having tag questions feature.

2. Lexical Hedges

From 26 occurrences of the women's language feature in TheEllenShow conversation, the second type of women's language feature used by both Ellen and Snoop Dogg is the lexical hedges (26,9%). The examples of this type can be seen from the dialogue taken from the TheEllenShow conversation below:

- a. **Ellen:** *Well*, you also-- I mean, *well...*, Martha. You and Martha are fantastic together.
Snoop Dogg: I love me some Martha Stewart.
- b. **Ellen:** How did the Snoop Dogg meet the Martha?
Snoop Dogg: *Well....*, we had a relationship based off me coming on her show once upon a time, and I was cooking some brownies around Christmas. And then that spawned to us doing something for Justin Bieber, his roast. And when we did his roast, she happened to sit right next to me. She got a secondhand smoke contact. And from that contact, we started *you know...* connecting, and connecting, and *you know....*we started talking and chopping it up. And before you know it, we was on screen together.
Ellen : Yeah. *Well....*, because that's what y'all had in common. You both enjoy that, don't you?

In the dialogues above, both Ellen and Snoop Dogg used one of women's language features which was the lexical hedge. The lexical hedges that were shown were *well....*and *you know....*. Ellen and Snoop Dogg intended to express the lack of their confidence of conveying something in their conversation. Moreover, the use of the words *well...*and *you know...* could become fillers in their conversation.

3. Emphatic Stress

From 26 occurrences of the women's language feature in TheEllenShow conversation, the third type of women's language feature used in TheEllenShow conversation is the occurrence of the emphatic stress. The examples of this type can be seen from the dialogue taken from the TheEllenShow conversation below:

- a. **Ellen:** Oh my god. I have.. I have your cooking book now. *That's fantastic.*
Thank you so much.
Snoop Dogg: You're welcome.
Ellen: Now, is there pot involved in all of these things?
- b. **Snoop Dogg:** I love me some Martha Stewart.
Ellen: *That is such a great idea.*
Snoop Dogg: I love me some Martha.
Ellen: How that came about and how I didn't think of it-- I'm mad.

In the dialogues above, only Ellen (female), who used the emphatic stress in the conversation. The use of emphatic stress performed by Ellen was to emphasize the most important word in a speakers' statement and it was used to strengthen an assertion (in point a. and b.).

Conclusion

From the study, it can be seen that women's language features that exist in man and woman's conversation in The Ellen Show are the lexical hedges, tag questions, emphatic stress, intensifiers, rising intonation, and superpolite form. The features that are frequently used are tag questions, lexical hedges, and emphatic stress. The uses of those three features are to emphasize what speaker's doing or speaking about, to express the lack of confidence in saying something, and to emphasize the most important word and assertion. Moreover, Ellen and Snoop Dogg's conversation, not only Ellen, who performed the women's language features but also Snoop Dogg, who performed the features. Therefore, women's language features are not only produced and performed by women, they are also produced and performed by men.

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