The Analysis of Women's and Men's Language Features in Disney Movies

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Abstract

In everyday life, humans interact and communicate using language. The use of language varies depending on gender, which is influenced by the different roles each gender plays in society. The different use of language then referred to language features that it uses are also reflected in movies. This study aims to analyze the women's and men's language features used by the main character in Disney Movies. The data were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative method with a theory proposed by Lakoff (1975) and Coates (2004). It was found out that the main character of the Turning Red Movie (2022) used eight forms out of ten women language features proposed by Lakoff; meanwhile, the main character in the Ron's Gone Wrong Movie (2021) used all of the men's language features proposed by Coates. This result shows that women and men have their characteristics in using language as a form of influence from their social environment.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a way for humans to exchange and express their thought toward each other. The communication system between two people or more in speech employs the things called a code in some cases. This code then is called a language (Wardhaugh, 2006). While Wardaugh referred to a language as a code, Rabiah (2018) referred a language as a symbol system used by people or humans to communicate and express their ideas and thoughts to each other.

In communicating using a language as a bridge, humans, though talking with the same language, may have some distinctive characteristics in communicating and using a language.

According to Suciati et al. (2022) more than one factor influences people in communicating using a language, such as a geography, age, social status, gender, and many others. (Suciati et al. (2022) also added that gender is a factor that can create a language variation and thus cause the emergence of the term language features. This caused people to have different language features depending on their gender.

There is a reason why the term *gender* was used rather than *sex*. That is because *sex* refers to categorization distinguished by biological traits in which resulted with the term *gender* was utilized in place of *sex*. *Gender* is also considered more helpful in identifying

persons based on their sociocultural behavior, such as speech (Holmes, 2013). In line with Holmes, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) also note that *gender* is the social elaboration of biological sex and that *sex* is a biological classification based on the capability for reproduction.

Gender is divided into two, men and women in which they have different ways of using language to express themselves to the people they interact with, even though both genders speak with the same language. For instance, women may use polite language and use more variety of adjectives than men. Women tend to be more cautious while socializing, more conscious of their social standing, and more perceptive of how others perceive them, all of which are reflected in some way in the language that they use, which is the opposite of men who tend to be strong, though, and independent Yule (2006).

The differences between the genders can also be apparent in their speech patterns. Women's speech patterns focus on values, affiliation, and connection, whereas men's speech patterns reflect their concern with status (Weatherall, 2005). In addition, the characteristic of a woman's language is caused by social, cultural, and historical reasons, such as the woman's social status improvement and movement of the woman (Zhu, 2019). The differences in language characteristics between genders are then referred to as language features in gender.

Lakoff (1975) explained that the differences in gender communication are influenced by the different roles each gender plays in society. Following the statement proposed by Lakoff, Wardhaugh (2006) also said that the distinction use of the language of each gender is because of the difference in roles in which men tend to have more power than women. One example of how men show their power in conversation is by doing interruption. According to Tannen (1996), Evidence of power or dominance is interpreting interruption, assuming that interruption is a type of single-handed speech act in which one speaker is done to another. According to the research conducted by Li (2014), men is more talkative than women in some occasions and tend to take the turn floor a longer time when having a conversation with women.

Other media also reflect the differences in the use of language between men and women in society, for example, movies. According to Oxford Learner's Dictionary, a movie defines as a motion pictures group sequence that tells a story recorded with a sound and shown on television, a cinema, or other devices. The characters of different gender in a movie are prone to use different language styles to communicate and interact with other people, mainly affected by their role of gender. Although in the movie's form, the existence of the use of different language features in gender is still applied. Similar to the influences of language features that differ from each gender in society, the language features in each gender of the movie characters are also influenced by the social environment in which these characters grow. Thus, following the study's background, the purpose of this study is to discover the language features used by each of the main characters of different gender (women and men) from two different movies produced by Walt Disney Studio with two different theories proposed by Lakoff (1975) and Coates (2004) in order to deeper the understanding of the language features used by each gender from movies media through their characters.

METHOD AND THEORY

The data source for this study is two movies produced by Walt Disney

Studios. The first movie is *Turning Red* (2022), and the second movie is *Ron's Gone Wrong* (2021). Both movies are chosen because they cover more interaction and communication between the main character with other characters where they tend to use the language features that represent their gender, for example, the interaction between friends, family members or other people. They were also chosen because they were related to the focus of this study. These movies were downloaded from the internet. *Turning Red* is an animated movie released on 11 March 2022 with a thirteen-year-old girl named Mei Lee as the main character. This movie tells a story about how Mei Lee can turn herself into a Red Panda as it is a power inherited from her mother's family and can only inherit through women. This movie gives a lot of moral values related to relationships in a family, friendships, and life lessons, especially to teenagers.

Meanwhile, *Ron's Gone Wrong* Movie is also an animated movie released on 22 October 2021, and the story revolves around a boy named Barney and his robot. The B-bot, which Barney named Ron, acts very differently from how another B-bot is supposed to be. The movie's moral value is mainly related to friendship and the importance of the existence of a friend. Both movies were chosen because the movies cover more interaction and communication between the main characters and other characters. They were also chosen because they were related to this study's subject. *Turning Red* Movie was focused on women's language features as the main character is a woman, and *Ron's Gone Wrong* Movie was focused on men's language features as the main character in this movie is a man. The data in this study is also limited to only the main character's utterances in each movie only.

In collecting the data, a documentation method was used to gather the data in this study. The downloaded movies were watched repeatedly to observe the conversation and interaction of the main character of each movie. Important information was noted, and the data were divided into two categories to distinguish between elements of men's and women's language during data collection. The gathered data were then analyzed using the descriptive qualitative method by applying the theories in this study.

According to the theory proposed by Lakoff (1975), women's speech is distinguished by linguistic traits such as (1) lexical hedges or fillers; a period of silence in the form of phrases, words, or filler that could indicate a sense of uncertainty, lack of confidence, or not sure about something, (2) tag questions; a question that followed by declarative sentences and considered as more confident than the lexical hedges or fillers, but still expresses uncertainty about the statement that has been said, (3) rising intonation on declarative; the rise of intonation at the endpoint of the word which happened in declarative sentences in which made the declarative sentence become a question, (4) empty adjectives, the term that merely refers to feelings instead of precise information, (5) precise color terms; It is said that women, color naming, have far more detailed than men, (6) intensifiers; a term or word that can reinforce a statement about what the speaker said, in order to make the listeners are sure about the speaker. (7) hyper-correct grammar, consistent use of standard verb forms, where it includes avoiding the use of vulgarity or vulgar phrases, (8) super polite forms; women tend to be more polite than men, (9) avoidance of strong swear words; women tend to avoid the use of strong swear word, in contrast with men, (10) emphatic stress; women

tend to use strict emphasis by increasing their intonations to anticipate that other people do not take them seriously.

According to the theory proposed by Coates (2004), there are six language features used by men. Those are (1) minimal response; men do use minimal responses (which are often delayed) in a tactic to undermine the current speaker and reinforce male dominance, (2) command and directives; men tend to use explicit commands, and a directive in which is a speech act that tries to get someone to do something, (3) swearing and taboo language; men tend to use more swear words than women. (4) compliments; men tend to compliments each other based on skill and possessions and avoid compliment something that related to appearance as not to send out the wrong signals which seen as gay, (5) theme; men's conversation between themselves tend to revolve about current affairs, travel, or sport, (6) question; men are most likely to ask the question directly to gain information.

The final result of this study was presented using a descriptive qualitative method. The data were presented in two sections, the women's language features for the first section, and the men's language features for the second section. The data were presented in the form of a list along with their analysis in each related section.

Several studies have been done related to this topic. One of those is the study conducted by Sari et al. (2016) entitled *Analysis of Women's and Men's Language in Costumer's Conversation at Warung Santai*. This study analyzes the customer's conversation, especially Men's and Women's language features used at *Warung Santai*. It was found that when both genders talked to their friends or partner, both men and women were almost the same. There are six kinds of women's language features used by women, while there are three kinds of

men's language features used by men. Another result from this study is that one of the women's language features, that is, the hedge form, was also used by men. This study gives new insight and a deeper understanding regarding the language features used by both gender and how they use them in direct conversation. This study took a new field of source data which became a plus point where the study of women's and men's language features are observed directly from the conversation of people in real life. While another study mainly observes the use of language features through a movie or written media, this study conducts the research by being directly involved in the conversation of the people that happened in real time. The weakness of this study is that it did not explain the based theories it used in analyzing the data, for example, what Lakoff (1975) and Coates (2003) proposed related to language features.

Another previous study on this topic was done by Putra and Prayudha (2019)entitled *The Analysis of Women and Men Language Features on America's Got Talent*. The purpose of this study is to find out the female language features of female judges and the male language features of male judges in *America's Got Talent 2018*. The result of the analysis is that those female judges used six female language features: lexical hedges, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjectives, intensifiers, super polite forms, and emphatic stress. There are also three male language features used by male judges in America's Got Talent: direct forms, interrupts, and swear words. This study provides a clear explanation of gender language features and gives a more profound understanding of this topic. The weakness of this study is only in the description of the result and analysis. It lacks explanation and needs further

elaboration to strengthen the analysis result.

The third reviewed article, *Language and Gender in Teen Short-Stories* by Indarti (2018), is related to analyzing language features. This study investigates the differences in language use between two short stories published in two teen magazines that represent gender. *HAI* Magazines are considered male teen magazines, and *KAWANKU* magazines that considered female magazines. The result of this study is that men tend to use a report style that aims to communicate factual information; meanwhile, women often use a rapport style which is more concerned with building and maintaining the relationship. This study also found that the two short stories in *HAI* and *KAWANKU* reflect the issue of gender construction in society through written discourse in which shows that the differences between the male and female way of speech can also be found in written texts. Using a table to present the differences between two different data in Result and Discussion makes it easy for the reader to understand the differences. The language analysis between the two genders is also detailed and supported by the evidence. However, this study did not provide any literature review or theoretical framework. The research method also needed to be stated clearly.

The fourth article related to this study is *The Language Features of Male and Female Beauty Influencers in Youtube Videos* by Karjo and Wijaya (2020). This study aimed to identify language features, distinguish characteristics between men and women beauty influencers, and variations in audience feedback. This study showed that men and women beauty influencers had different attributes and linguistic traits. Men's beauty influencers frequently employ plain and straightforward language, while language used by female beauty influencers is

more courteous and personal. This study provides considerable knowledge about women's and men's language features and the only weakness of this study is that the lack of example to support its analysis.

The fifth study reviewed is *Language Features of Men and Women in Tekotok Animated Videos* by Hidayati (2022). This study aims to describe the use of men's and women's language features in animated videos uploaded by *Tekotok* Youtube Channel and how the videos describe the interaction between both genders. This study discovered that not all of Lakoff's traits of women language are employed by the women characters in the videos. Women have power in social interactions, as seen in the interactions between men and women in the videos. They are not just inferior individuals who sometimes become more dominant than men. In this study, each case or video is followed along with a thorough analysis and an explanation of the circumstance based on Lakoff's proposed theories which are very helpful in understanding more about this theory. However, the weakness of this study is that this study only took three examples of video.

The following article to be reviewed is the study entitled *Women's Language Features on Utterances of Charlie's Angels Movie* by Nuringtyas and Navila (2022). This study examines the women's language features used by the three main women characters in Charlie's Angel movies and the reasons for their use based on the theory proposed by Lakoff (1975). The analysis shows that out of ten features, only nine features are found in the movie with intensifiers, which is the most dominant attribute utilized among the three women's characters, and the tag question became the least to be utilized. This study provided a detailed explanation related to women's language features proposed by Lakoff (1975),

along with the reasoning behind why the characters in the movie used that features. It also gives accurate results by providing a table and percentage of the use of each feature. This study also deduces the most and the least dominant women's language features utilized by the characters. Overall, it is very helpful in providing an excellent understanding of women's language features in the study. However, the weakness of this study is that this study is limited to women's language features with the scope to one movie only, which resulted in the lack of data in the study.

A study of *Language Features Used by Male and Female in #SaveJohnnyDepp on Instagram and Twitter* by Ginarti *et al.* (2022) was reviewed. Unlike the previous study reviewed, this study attempts to identify the language features utilized by men and women on Twitter and Instagram. It was found that both women and men used language features according to their gender with different frequencies. Men's language aligns with the theory by Jennifer Coates (2004), whereas women's language is provided by Lakoff's (1975) theory. Women also tend to upload more posts than men. This study provided a more profound understanding of language features used by women and men in social media. The explanation is also very detailed from each theory proposed by Lakoff (1975) and Jennifer Coates (2004). However, the only weakness of this study is that it needed to provide the method of how the writer did the research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The discussion is divided into two parts. The discussion of women's language features in *Turning Red Movie* (2022) is placed in the first part, while the discussion of men's language features in *Ron's Gone Wrong Movie* (2021) is placed in the second part.

Women's Language Features

In the 2022 movie Turning Red, the lead character uses several languages features exclusive to women, including:

1. Lexical Hedges

"Hmm. ***Kinda*** look like Devon." (Turning Red, 2022, 00:11:11)

This utterance by the main character happens when Mei Lee studies in her room while drawing something in her book. When drawing a figure, she somehow felt that her drawing looks like someone she knows. In this statement, Mei Lee uses women's language features, Lexical Hedges. Using the word *'kinda'* shows that Mei Lee is still doubting or unsure if the figure she draws looks like the person she just mentioned.

2. Tag Question

"I'm not going to regret this, ***am I***?" (Turning Red, 2022, 01:26:25)

The use of the tag question *'Am I?'* in the declarative sentence shows that she is still uncertain if her decision is the best for her condition. Therefore, she asked Sun Yee if it was okay for her to choose it.

3. Rising Intonations on Declarative

"***Maybe***?" (Turning Red, 2022, 00:17:16)

Mei Lee utters this statement when she changes into Red Panda for the first time. Her mother, who still does not know about that fact, asks her a few questions. When her mother asks the last question, Mai Lee answers it with "Maybe" with rising her tone at the end of her statement. The rising tone at the end of her statement changes her declarative statement into a question. It

indicates that, at first, she wants to confirm that what her mother asks her is true. However, at the same time, she also still feels doubtful about her confirmation, thus making her statement *'Maybe'* become a question instead by raising the intonation at the end.

4. Empty Adjective

"So *cute*!" (Turning Red, 2022, 00:37:03)

The main character says this empty adjective when her parents try to test her by giving her kittens. Mai Lee says *'So cute'* in this situation to describe her emotional reaction to the kittens. The adjective *'cute'* is considered an empty adjective as it only relates to emotional reaction and does not give information about things. This adjective is also mainly used by women.

5. Intensifiers

"I'm *just really* excited about math." (Turning Red, 2022, 00:22:19)

The words *'just'* and *'really'* in Mei Lee's statement can be considered intensifiers. She wants to reinforce her statement that she is excited about math when her friend asks her if she is okay at school right before math class begins.

6. Super Polite Forms

"Move, *please*!" (Turning Red, 2022, 00:03:20)

In the movie, when school ends, Mei Lee and her friends try to go out of school faster. She tells the crowd to move and make some way for her to go out. The main character then added the word *'please'* in her statement. The addition of the word *'please'* made her request sounds polite and thus indicates that Mei Lee uses the Super Polite form.

7. Avoidance of Strong Swear Words

"*You good-for-nothing hosers*!" (Turning Red, 2022, 00:08:27)

The main character seems to avoid using strong swear words and instead says this statement to express her anger. This scene happens when cleaning up the temple with her Mom, and suddenly, they spot some people trying to foul the temple walls. Thus, Mei Lee and her Mom rush to chase them away, and in the middle of it, Mei Lee utters this statement which is not considered a strong swear word. It shows that Mei Lee avoids using a strong swear word.

8. Emphatic Stress

"*Totally*. Siu-Jyu is so two-faced." (Turning Red, 2022, 00:09:59)

When she and her mother watch Chinese drama on television, she mentions one character who has a deceitful personality (two faces) in the drama. In her statement, Mei Lee emphasizes the phrase *'totally.'* She emphasizes it to convince the listener of her opinion regarding that character.

Men's Language Features

The main character in *Ron's Gone Wrong Movie* (2021) uses some men's language features, those are:

1. Minimal Response

Barney's Grandma	: "Barney?"
Barney	: "*Ya?*"
Barney's Grandma	: "You have safety vest?"
Barney	: "*Uh-huh*"
Barney's Grandma	: "and snack?"
Barney	: "*Yeah*, Gran"

(Ron's Gone Wrong, 2021, 00:04:59)

The conversation between Barney, the main character, with his grandmother shows that Barney uses the minimal

response to answer his grandmother's questions. His short answer includes, *'Ya,' 'Uh-huh,'* and *'Yeah.'*

2. Command and Directives

"***You, come with me***!" (Ron's Gone Wrong, 2021, 00:24:27)

After Barney listens to his grandmother's advice, he brings his B-bot outside. He then utters this statement as a directive speech. The purpose of this statement is to order his B-bot to do something he said, which is to follow him.

3. Swearing and Taboo Language

"It's my birthday, you ***dumb*** goat!" (Ron's Gone Wrong, 2021, 00:10:24)

Barney uses the word *'dumb'* to express his annoyance when his grandmother's goat tries to eat his bag. *'Dumb'* is also equal to the word *'stupid',* which is considered a swear word and a taboo language.

4. Compliments

"***That was awesome***, okay. But terrible, ***but awesome***! I mean you can't hit people. Especially Rich Belcher. But oh, man! You hit Rich Belcher!" (Ron's Gone Wrong, 2021, 00:29:06)

In the movie, Barney uses compliments form to his friend, a B-bot named Ron. His compliment is based on what his B-bot did, which is hitting his friend who tried to bully him. Thus he expresses his feeling by complimenting Ron on what it has done. He said *'awesome'* as a means to compliment what his B-bot did.

5. Theme

Friend 1   : "Mmm. Is all your Gran's food this good?"

Barney   : "Come… Come over sometime. Hang out. I know you're dying to see my rock collection."

Friend 1   : "Will she set us on fire again?"

Friend 2   : "Hope so"

(Ron's Gone Wrong, 2021, 01:39:35)

The theme of men's talk usually revolved around current affairs or something they liked. In the movie, Barney and his friend talk about a particular topic. The theme of the conversation below is shifting from Barney's Grandmother's food to his Grandmother's. This topic of the talk circled something that happened in the past. It is different from women's talk, which mainly talks about relationships or feeling.

6. Question

B-Bot : "Removing Mr. Bunky's head required a breaking point of 7.6 newt-"

Barney : "***Stop! What is wrong with you?!*** Gran."

(Ron's Gone Wrong, 2021, 00:22:59)

In the conversation above, the B-bot tried to explain what it had done to the doll (Mr. Bunky) to Barney. However, Barney cuts it and directly asks what is wrong with him. It shows that Barney wants a direct answer right away and to know what is happening to his B-bot. The way Barney cut the B-bot answer also shows that men tend to interrupt the talk in a conversation.

Based on the analysis that has been done, there are many differences in language features used by both women and men. These language features are mainly influenced by the environment in which they grow up, their circle of friends, and their family.

In the *Turning Red* (2022) movie, Mei Lee's character shows that women tend to use more refined and polite language than Barney's character in *Ron's Gone Wrong* (2021) movie. They also pay more attention to choosing words to say to others. Meanwhile, from how Barney talks and interacts with people, it can be seen that men tend to be more assertive and dominate in a conversation. They are also more unrestrained in their choice of words than women.

CONCLUSION

Concluding the data analysis and supporting the presented ideas, the main characters in both movies utilized gender language traits. It was discovered that Mei Lee, the main character in the movie *Turning Red* (2022), only employed eight of the ten women's language traits suggested by Lakoff (1975). Those language features are lexical hedges, tag questions, rising intonations on declarative, empty adjectives, intensifiers, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress. In contrast, an analysis of the six men's language traits identified by Coates (2004:97) in the main character Barney in the movie *Ron's Gone Wrong* (2021) revealed that Barney employs all six. These features include minimal responses, commands and directives, swearing and taboo language, compliments, theme, and questions.

Language features of each gender are different and strongly influenced by the environmental factors in which they live and grow. Women and men have their characteristics in using language as a form of influence from their social environment. These resulted in women tending to be more gentle and polite in using language to keep their refined figure as women in society. In contrast, men tend to be more assertive and unrestrained in choosing words when speaking to somehow assert their dominance in a conversation.

This study is limited to only two movies produced by Walt Disney Studios. It is suggested that for further research, the scope of the data can be expanded, and research on language features on gender can focus on another subject, such as intonation or pronunciation.

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