WOMEN'S LANGUAGE FEATURES ON BRIDGERTON CAST YOUTUBE INTERVIEW BY NETFLIX

Ni Made Ayu Sri Undari Dewi[*], I Made Rajeg, I Nengah Sudipa

English Department, Udayana University, Denpasar, Indonesia

ayuundari9b@gmail.com[*]

ABSTRACT

In sociolinguistics, study about language and gender exists which relates to the relationship between the language of male and female. The most popular study about the related topic is the study of women's language features by Robin Lakoff. The way women and men in delivering content in a conversation have different characteristics and it is interesting to be studied hence we acknowledge how language is used by different genders, especially for women as the most frequent role to be appeared in the data source. This study aimed at identifying the types of women's language and describing the functions of each feature applied by the female casts of Bridgerton in an interview video. The data in this study were taken from a YouTube video held by Netflix entitled "TUDUM: Extended Talent Panel". The method used in collecting the data was the observation method along with the note-taking technique. The theory used to analyze the data was the theory of women's language proposed by Lakoff (1995). The result of this study shows that there are seven women's language features found in the Youtube interview video of Bridgerton cast such as lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjectives, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, and avoidance of strong words. However, some women's language features are absent in the video such as precise color terms, super-polite form, and emphatic stress. The most dominant feature used is the lexical hedges with a total of 3 types used by the female cast. This feature is used to indicate that the speaker is uncertain about their statements, to give preparation time before the statement, and to decrease the strength of the statement.

Keywords: Bridgerton, Interview, Netflix, Women's Language, Youtube Video

I. Introduction

Language is an essential tool used by humans when carrying out interactions with others (Wardhaugh, 2006). It means that using language is a natural way for humans to convey or express thoughts, opinions, feelings, emotions, attitudes, needs, and even social identities. It is also both a system of communication between individuals and a social phenomenon (Hickey,

2010). The most remarkable difference between human beings is gender thus people of different genders either from physiology or psychology will also have their own characteristics when it comes to the use of language and this difference leads to gender differences in language (Dong, 2014). In sociolinguistics, there is a study about language and gender. The most popular study about the differences between women and men in using language is the study on women's language features by Robin Lakoff in her study *Language and Women's Place* (1975).

Women's language is the term for the style used by women while they are speaking with other individuals. The way women and men in delivering content in a conversation or discussion have differences and it reflects their social status in society. Lakoff's study focuses on the 'linguistic discrimination' experienced by women in society. This discrimination is divided into two types such as 'the way women are taught to use language' and 'the way general language use treats women', in which both functions degrade women to a submissive position in society (Lakoff, 1975). Lakoff also proposed ten features of women's language such as lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonations on declarative, empty adjectives, precise color terms, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super-polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, end emphatic stress.

There are some related studies of women's language features that have been performed. Pamekasih (2017) in her study analyzed the use of women's language features and the difference in language use between Ellen Degeneres and Oprah Winfrey when interviewing Michelle Obama. The findings show that five women's language features can be discovered in Ellen Degeneres's and Oprah Winfrey's interviews with Michelle Obama in which Ellen employed more women's language features than Oprah. In addition, Ellen used less hypercorrect grammar than Oprah implying that she spoke more casually with Michelle Obama. (Yunita, 2018) with the same theory, discovered that 7 features of women's language used by a group of women while 4 features of women's language used by a group of men. Intensifier and lexical hedges are the most frequent features to be used by women and men. Using the same theory by Lakoff, (Prayudha, 2019) in his study found 6 female language features used by female judges in America's Got Talent and 3 male language features used by male judges. This study gives a different perspective with those previous studies in which this study only focuses on identifying the linguistic features of women in order to get the knowledge on how women use language around other women.

Based on the explanation above, women's language is interesting and necessary to be studied since it has a relation to gender difference which is the main parameter in the language use of humans. Men and women may both place themselves well to avoid misunderstandings when speaking. Furthermore, the concept of gender allows for the description of masculine and feminine actions on a scale rather than in absolute terms. Hence, we might think of the characteristics associated with women's and men's speech as linguistic tools for framing

ourselves as relatively masculine or relatively feminine (Holmes, 2013). The purpose of this study is to identify the types and analyze the function of women's language features employed by the female cast in the Bridgerton Youtube interview video entitled *TUDUM: Extended Talent Panel*. This video was chosen because the participants consist of 3 women and 1 man hence there must be the use of women's language features in the conversation. Besides, the participants use the kind of language that reflects everyday conversation. Netflix held the interview where the cast ask each other some questions with topic related to the serials they are playing.

II. Methods

The data for this study was obtained from a YouTube interview video of the Bridgerton casts held by Netflix. The title of the video is *TUDUM: Extended Talent Panel* and the cast of Bridgerton who were interviewed are Nicola Coughlan, Charithra Chandran, Simone Ashley, and Jonathan Bailey. This video was chosen as the data source because Bridgerton is one of the most popular serials on Netflix—a popular movie streaming service. The cast of Bridgerton in this video are mostly women so several women's language features must be found during the conversation.

In collecting the data, this study employed the observation method which involves collecting data through one's senses, especially looking and listening in a systematic and meaningful way (McKechnie, 2008). Besides the observation method, the note-taking technique was also used. The process of collecting the data was done through some steps. First, observing the data source by watching the Youtube video and writing down the dialogue from the subtitles. Second, reading the dialogues and taking notes of the utterances that are assumed to have women's language features. After all the data were already collected, they were analyzed using the theory about women's language by Lakoff (1975). The collected data were classified depending on the types of women's language features and each feature's function was explained and described descriptively using words based on the theory by Lakoff (1975) in order to give a clear explanation.

III. Findings and Discussion

In this section, the utterances chosen were presented as the data in this study. The utterances analyzed were spoken by some female casts from the second season of the Bridgerton series on Netflix. The analysis focused on the linguistic features used by the female cast and their function in the interview video. The utterance of the female cast in this interview was analyzed based on the theory proposed by Lakoff (1975) about ten language features of women.

Lexical hedges or fillers

According to Lakoff (1975), hedges is one of women's linguistic features that convey the sense that speaker is uncertain about what they are saying, or cannot ensure for the accuracy of the statement. Example of hedges include *well'*, *'you know'*, *'you see'*, and *'so forth'*. Moreover, there is another form such as the use of *'I guess'* and *'I think'* before a declaration, or *'I wonder'* before a question, which are hedges on the speech-acts of saying and asking. These hedges give the appearance that the speaker lacks authority or is unfamiliar with the subject.

Data 1

Simone　　　　: How did you feel?

Charithra　　　: **Well, I think** that… I never thought it would happen. Because my mum and I, we… We love Jane Austen novels and the Regency period, and my mum is obsessed with Colin Firth's Pride and Prejudice, and Gwyneth Paltrow in Emma, and I just never ever thought it would happen. You know what I mean? I never ever imagined that someone who looked like me would be in those outfits in a show like that. And for it to happen, I just couldn't believe it. And even now, sometimes I don't quite realize what show I'm in, and then you like catch yourself on the monitor or you see photos.

In data 1, the new cast of Bridgerton was asked about how they feel about joining the Bridgerton world. Charithra Chandran is one of the new cast and there are two types of lexical hedges in her answer to the question. The lexical hedges in her utterance reflected on the pragmatic articles **I think** and **well**. The function of the use of the pragmatic article **I think** is to show the speaker's opinion in which she thought it would never happen in her life to play a character in a period drama such as Bridgerton. The use of **I think** also means that the speaker was trying to think and search for the right words for her next utterance. Moreover, the use of the article **well** conveys that the speaker needs time to start her statement on the topic. It also conveys that the speaker wanted to invite the hearer to pay attention to her statement.

Data 2

Charithra　　　: So, juicy question coming up. What's easier? Dating now or in the Regency era?

Simone　　　　: In the Regency era. **You know**, you don't have social media, you don't have… It's almost… It's simplified, **you know**?

Nicola　　　　: Yeah. I think I always say this, but a thing I think they should bring back is like, in Regency, when they went to a ball and you **kind of** danced with somebody, the next day, they'd come to your house with a gift. My thought is that's incredible.

In data 2, the new casts of Bridgerton were asked about which one is easier for them between dating in today's era or in the Regency era. There are two lexical hedges used by two female casts while answering the question. In Simone Ashley's utterance, the lexical hedges used is the pragmatic article **you know**. The use of lexical hedges **you know** by Simone here indicates that the speaker wants to convey certainty in her statement. The lexical hedge here is not to show her hesitancy but the confidence of her statement that dating in the Regency era is simplified which she considers a good thing. It means that her sentence can be heard by audiences as things that must be believed.

Moreover, Nicola Coughlan also used lexical hedges in her utterances which is the pragmatic article **kind of**. The hedge **kind of** in her utterance is commonly used to show the uncertainty of the speaker. Here, she wants to decrease the strength of her statement about the ball dance culture in the Regency era that should be brought back. The use of the lexical hedges of **kind of** means the speaker doubt and not totally confident with her statement.

Data 3

Nicola   : Final question. Kanthony is the most anticipated couple of the entire book series, except for Penelope and Colin. It's exactly what's written here, so I have to say it. What are the fans in store for?

Simone   : A lot of arguing.

Jonathan   : Volatility.

Simone   : Yeah, they challenge each other.

Jonathan   : It's very passionate.

Nicola   : Yeah. It's great seeing someone like Kate being able to stand up to Anthony and him not knowing how to **sort of** deal with that. He's met someone who's really his match.

In data 3, the actors who play Kate Sharma and Anthony Bridgerton on the show Bridgerton were asked about what will happen between the two characters as a couple in season two of the series. Nicola Coughlan who asked the question to the actors also gave her comment about the two characters as a couple after the actors responded. There is a use of lexical hedge in her utterance which is reflected in the pragmatic article **sort of**. The speaker here used lexical hedges **sort of** which indicates that she is uncertain and lacks confidence in her statement that Anthony Bridgerton is a person who does not know to deal with a strong-willed person like Kate Sharma. This hedge also functions to decrease the strength of her statement.

Tag question

Tag question is a grammatical structure in which a declarative statement or an imperative is transformed into a question by the addition of an interrogative fragment (the tag) to request

confirmation or disconfirmation of the statement. According to Lakoff (1975), women are perceived as expressing themselves in a more tentative way than men. Tag questions, on the other hand, may be considered appropriate in specific settings, such as making "small talk" or addressing personal sentiments or beliefs. As a result, women may use tag questions not just to demonstrate their hesitation and lack of confidence, but also to keep the conversation going.

Data 4

Simone   : When did you know the show was a global phenomenon? What was your response to learning it was a top-ten series in almost every country?"

Nicola   : Bonkers**, wasn't it?**

In data 4, the cast of Bridgerton were asked about how they feel that the show became a global phenomenon and even a top ten series in almost every country. Nicola as one of the female cast answered the question with a short answer and there is a women's language feature found namely tag question. The speaker used the tag question **wasn't it** which indicates that she wants to make sure that everyone else also felt the same way as her when knowing the show became a global phenomenon and even a top ten series in almost every country. She was uncertain about her statement that it was a crazy phenomenon when the show became famous thus she need to know that others would think the same as her.

Rising intonation on declarative

Rising intonation is when someone speaks or asks something in a higher voice at the end of a sentence to convey doubt. According to Lakoff (1975), rising intonation on declarative is used when the speaker is offering confirmation to someone while sounding hesitant, as if the speaker may be the one who has the necessary information.

Data 5

Charithra   : What was fan consensus on the sideburns? Were they popular or not?

Simone   : **Lamb chops, they were *called*?**

Nicola   : Mutton chops. Not lamb chops.

In data 5, the casts of Bridgerton discuss the moment when Jonathan Bailey grew sideburns hair for season two of the show. However, Simone Ashley seems to forget the name of the sideburns hence she used the rising intonation on declarative features in the end of her statement such as "**Lamb chops they were *called*?**". This feature is used in order to check the validity of her statement and whether her guess on the name of the sideburns is correct or not.

Empty adjectives

According to Lakoff (1975), empty adjectives are affective adjectives that indicate feelings with no significant meaning and express approval of something in terms of one's own personal emotional reaction. Examples of empty adjectives include *sweet, divine, charming, cute, lovely, great,* etc.

Data 6

Charithra   : They very much feel like outsiders. The Bridgertons and Featheringtons are the core ton, and the Sharmas they feel like almost if the audience who watched season one were kind of put in. They are new. They don't really know what's happening. They have their ideas. So, I feel like the Sharmas kind of represent the audience in a way. You guys have a **gorgeous** dynamic. It is a really sisterly dynamic. It's **lovely** to watch.

       In data 6, the cast who plays Kate Sharma and Edwina Sharma were asked about how is the Sharma family dynamics since the Bridgerton and the Featherington families have a very unique dynamic. Charitra Chandran who plays Edwina Sharma gave her opinion and there are two words that can be identified as the use of empty adjectives in her utterance. The empty adjectives found in the data are **gorgeous** and **lovely**. The speaker used these words to reveal her emotional reaction in which she emphasized that she felt admiration and positive emotion towards the topic she was talking about.

Intensifier adverb

As stated by Lakoff (1975), intensifier refers to emphasizing certain words while we are speaking. Women use adverbs more often than men. Intensifier can be used to support or strengthen a statement. It is also can be used to hinder one's feelings and to express strong emotions. Example of intensifier adverb includes *'just', 'so', 'very',* and *'really'.*

Data 7

Nicola   : And they were screaming, and like it was wild. They were **so** supportive, even before they'd seen a single thing from the show. They were like **so** behind it. It was amazing. It was bonkers.

       In data 7, the cast of Bridgerton was asked about how they feel that the show became a global phenomenon and even a top ten series in almost every country. Nicola as one of the female casts in Bridgerton gave an answer in which there is an intensifier adverb found such as the word **so**. The adverb **so** is used in order to strengthen her statement, to show strong emotions, and to attract the addressee's attention to her statement about how she feels regarding the fans' behavior towards the cast of Bridgerton after the show became famous.

Data 8

Nicola   : Okay, so for our new cast. How do you feel about joining the Bridgerton world?

Simone   : **Just really** excited. Um, **really** proud. Um, you know, we've spoken about how amazing the show is and the storyline and how inclusive it is, but **just** as a cast and crew, it's a bunch of really genuinely kind, lovely, down-to-earth people who are all **so** supportive of one another. It can be quite scary coming into a show that's been established and it's season two. It's like going to the school canteen. "Where am I gonna sit?" But I **just** felt **very** welcomed.

In data 8, the new cast of Bridgerton were asked about how they felt when they are joining the Bridgerton world. Simone Ashley as one of the new casts in Bridgerton gave her answer in which there are three intensifier adverbs found such as the words **just**, **really**, and **very**. She used those intensifier words in order to strengthen her statement, to express her feeling about the situation, and to show her certainty about her statement that she felt many positive emotions when she joined as the new casts of the Bridgerton.

Hypercorrect Grammar

Lakoff (1975) states that women tend to talk more politely than men, and they also talk more grammatically to others. They are not permitted to speak harshly. Hypercorrect grammar can be employed to demonstrate politeness while also creating distance between the speaker and the addressee. Women assert their status through more formal speech forms. Women and high social positions are often related to standard speech forms.

Data 9

Jonathan   : It was a re-shoot, wasn't it?

Nicola   : A re-shoot in July. **They had filmed** a different ending.

In this conversation, Nicola Coughlan who plays Penelope in Bridgerton was asked about what was her response to Penelope being Lady Whistledown which is a kind of plot twist in the show. After she gave her answer, Jonathan Bailey asked Nicola Coughlan whether is it correct or not that the reveal scene of Penelope being Lady Whistledown was a re-shoot. She confirmed it as in the utterance above and there is some consistency of standard English verb form found in her utterance such as **They had filmed** a different ending. She used the grammar past perfect tense which has the rule such as *S + had + past participle*. The grammar that the speaker used was perfectly correct. The speaker used hypercorrect grammar which indicates that she wants to show politeness since it is an interview so they also have to be a little bit formal. It also gives a sense to claim her identity that she is a well-educated person.

Data 10

Simone : We don't have a dad in our family. **We've got** Mary, played by Shelley, who we love, and she's my stepmom, and then Edwina, who's Kate's stepsister, but regardless of that, we're really, really close. They're a little bit different from the Featheringtons and Bridgertons in the sense **they've come** to London. It's a different culture, different vibe, different rules. And t**hey've had** to adapt a lot, I think, but they never lose their true selves.

 In data 10, the context in the utterance is the cast who plays Kate Sharma and Edwina Sharma were asked about the Sharma family dynamics since The Bridgerton and Featherington families have a very unique dynamic. Simone Ashley who plays Kate Sharma gave her opinion in which there are some consistency of standard English verb form found in her utterances. She used the grammar past perfect tense which has the rule such as *S + have/had + past participle*. The grammar she used was perfectly correct. The use of hypercorrect grammar in her statements indicates that she wants to show politeness and also give a sense that she is a well-educated person.

Avoidance of strong swear words

Swearing is frequently perceived as an expression of strong emotion. The distinction between using "fuck" and "fudge" or "goodness" is in how aggressively the speaker expresses their feelings. According to Lakoff (1975), avoidance of strong swear words reflects women's tendency to show emotion in a low temper since they are taught to be polite.

Data 11

Charithra : Penelope is Lady Whistledown. It was a shock to me when I found out. So I was like, "**Oh my <u>God</u>**!" And then, you re-watch it, and you're like, "They put in spoilers and Easter eggs from the first scene."

 In data 11, the context of the utterance is the cast of Bridgerton discussed about their reaction to Penelope being Lady Whistledown which is a plot twist in the show. Charithra Chandran as one of the female casts in Bridgerton also gave an opinion to describe her reaction in which there is an avoidance of strong swear words discovered such as the usage of the word "**Oh my God**". Here, the strong swear word **God** indicates that the speaker wants to express the amazement and aggravation in responding to how she feels when turns out Penelope is Lady Whistledown in season two of the series.

IV. Conclusion

 Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the features of women's language in female cast of Bridgerton were found in 11 data. From the 10 language features of

women in this study, there are 7 features that can be identified. Those features are lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjectives, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, avoidance of strong swear words. The other 3 types of women's language feature that are absent are precise color terms, super-polite forms, and emphatic stress. This is because there is no conversation with the topic relating to color, relating to situations where politeness is obliged, and there are no situations where statements need to be emphasized. Moreover, the most dominant features used is the lexical hedges with a total of 5 times amount of used by the female cast. This feature used to give a sense that the speaker is uncertain of their statement, to give preparation time before uttering the statement, and to decrease the strength of the statement.

In terms of the function of other women's linguistic features found in this interview video, tag question is used to make sure that everyone also feels the same way as the speaker about their opinion or statement since the speaker feels uncertain. Rising intonation is used in order to check the validity of the speaker's statement and whether it is correct or not. Empty adjectives in this interview video have a function to reveal the speaker's emotional reaction to their opinion of the topic in which they give and also emphasize whether it is a positive or negative emotion. Intensifier adverbs are used to strengthen the speaker's statement, to express their feeling, and to show certainty about their statement. Hypercorrect grammar is used in order to show politeness and to claim the identity that the speaker is a well-educated person. The avoidance of strong swear words is used to show that the speaker wants to express amazement and aggravation.

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