

Women's Language Features Used by Female Main Character in Superhero Movie

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Abstract: *This study focused on analyzing women's linguistic features used by the female main character in "Captain Marvel" movie. The theory used in this study is proposed by Lakoff, in which there are ten linguistic features of women's speech. The data were collected by using observation and documentation methods. The descriptive qualitative approach is used to interpret the data and describe it in the form of words and sentences. The findings indicated that there were eight women linguistic features used by Carol Danvers as the female main character in the movie, such as rising intonation (10), lexical hedges or fillers (9), hypercorrect grammar (9), emphatic stress (7), tag questions (5), intensifiers (2), empty adjectives (1), and superpolite forms (1). Meanwhile, precise color terms and avoidance of strong swear words were not found in the utterances. The finding shows that the most dominant feature was rising intonations, while the least frequently emerged features were super polite forms and empty adjectives. The dominant use of rising intonation in the movie reflects the character's personality. Therefore, it can be concluded that Carol Danvers used rising intonation because she is a bold character who is assertive, especially when stating her opinion.*

INTRODUCTION

The usage of a language cannot be separated from the interaction of men and women in a society. Gender is different from sex. Sex is anatomical differences between male and female, whereas gender is a social construction and cultural differences between man and woman's role in a society. Language and gender studies have seen significant expansion to encompass sexual orientation, ethnicity and multilingualism, and, to some extent, class, involving analyses of spoken, written, and signed gendered identities (Talbot, 2010). Talbot also stated that language patterns are manifestations of the patriarchal society. Moreover, in this theory it is also stated that women and men grow up in different sub cultures with different social organizations. Men and women are brought up differently, therefore the way how they interpret and perform language is different.

According to Lakoff (1975) men and women have difference in the speech function. The

theory claimed that maintains that women are forced to learn a weak, trivial and differential style as a reflection of their powerlessness and men's power of them as cited in Labotka (2009). For example, women are allowed to fuss and complain but only man can bellow in rage. In the literary works, main character is a reference to the idea of a main (primary) character in a work of fiction that the story centres around. The main character, also referred to as the hero or protagonist, is usually the most important character in the story. In most of the superheroes movie, the heroes are usually portrayed by male characters, and they save women who are in trouble or victims.

Nevertheless, lately there are many movies which the female characters are portrayed as powerful women, assertive and not submissive to their circumstance. Based on this phenomenon, the theory of women language is important to be studied to understand how the character used the language. Related to this phenomenon, there are three purpose of this study. The first purpose is to identify kinds of women linguistic features used by the female main character in superheroes movie. The second is to define the most dominant women language used by the female main character. The third purpose is to find out each function of the women language that found in the movie.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Women's language is a popular phenomenon in Sociolinguistic study. It studies the way women are used a language in the interaction with others. The researcher uses Lakoff's theory (1975) because the theory is able to cover women's language phenomena in relation with the way women speak in their society completely and specifically. Lakoff theory provides complete and specific definition of women speech features.

1. Lexical hedges or fillers. Hedges has a function as the words that help the speaker to convey the unconfidently or that cannot guarantee the accuracy of their statement. It has a meaningful purpose than fillers. The word like 'kind of' or 'sort of' can be considered as hedges. Meanwhile, fillers are more depicted as meaningless sentences and only used to fill the pause in people's speech. The words such as 'you see' 'well,' and 'um' can be considered as fillers.
2. Tag questions. Tag question is an inquiry included at the end of the sentences. It is used to ensure the truth of their statement or confirm something or some agreement. Lakoff's state tag question signifies the lack of confidence in an explicit way (Holmes, 1992). e.g. she's very nice, isn't she?
3. Rising intonation on declaratives. According to Lakoff, the raising intonation used by women to show that they are reluctant to be assertive when they stated their opinions. e.g. it's really good?
4. Empty adjectives. Lakoff stated that words such as, 'adorable', 'sweet', 'cute', 'lovely' and 'charming' could be considered as empty adjectives. Those words can be used to indicate women's admiration for something.
5. Precise colour terms. In terms of colors, women have a different interpretation of men. They can refer to a clearer separation of color. e.g. magenta, aquamarine.
6. Intensifiers. According to Lakoff, women tend to utilize these words to convince their recipients to pay attention. Women often use intensifier such as just and so, e.g. I like him so much.
7. Hypercorrect grammar. Lakoff states that women tend to use the standard grammatical form because they generally low status in society. Also, society usually expects women as a role model for everyone by their behaviour. How they should behave and talk nicely can affect their image in society (Holmes, 1992). e.g. consistent use of standard verb forms.
8. Superpolite forms. Women are usually having less assertive in their statement or making an

indirect request. Some of them using hypercorrect grammar or using a euphemism, the sentence such as, 'would you please give me that paper, if you don't mind?' is one example of speech where women are requesting indirectly.

9. Avoidance of strong swear words. Women are softer in expressing their strong expression. Words like 'shit' or 'damn' are common in men, but women usually use the words 'oh, Dear' or 'my goodness' in expressing the strong emotion.
10. Emphatic stress. Emphatic stress is intended to emphasize words by stressing the voice when the speaker says it. e.g. it was a BRILLIANT performance.

The use of women's language feature is not purposeless. Women's language features are used by women to convey something which means it has a function and not purposeless. There are five women's language functions proposed by Judy Pearson (1985) that is necessary for communication to occur, these functions are:

1. to express uncertainty,
2. to get response,
3. to soften an utterance,
4. to start a discussion,
5. and to express feelings or opinions.

TECHNIQUE METHOD

The data source of this study is taken from the transcription of "Captain Marvel" movie. Captain Marvel (2019) is a superhero film, based on the Marvel Comics superheroine of the same name. This movie is chosen because of the female character here who named Carol Danvers has a bold character. She was a pilot of United States Air Force before she absorbs the energy of the Tesseract that transform herself becomes powerful. The researcher intended to find out women language features that applied to female hero in "Captain Marvel" movie using Lakoff theory. The data is collected by observation and documentation. The researcher collected the data from the movie and analyze it using a narrative or verbal method, such as document analysis.

The descriptive qualitative approach is used to interpret the data found in the movie and describe it in the form of words and sentences. The data were analyzed using Lakoff theory of women language features (1975). There are four steps in collecting the data, such as listening to the conversation of the character in movie to find out the word's pronunciation, also the stress and intonations of the utterance; classifying and describing the data of women language used in "Captain Marvel" movie; then interpreting the data findings and develop a conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis shows the language functions used by the female main character in "Captain Marvel" movie. It can be seen that there are 8 women's language features used by Carol Danvers in her utterances.

Tabel 1. The distribution of each type of women's language features According to the table above, the eight features found are rising intonation, lexical hedges or fillers, hypercorrect grammar, emphatic stress, tag question, intensifier, empty adjective, and superpolite form.

There is no precise colour terms and avoidance of strong swear words features found in Carol Danvers' utterances.

No.	Classification of Women's Language Features	Number of Women's Language Features	Percentage
1	Rising intonation non declaratives	10	23%
2	Lexical hedges or fillers	9	21%
3	Hypercorrect grammar	9	20%
4	Emphatic stress	7	16%
5	Tag questions	5	11%
6	Intensifiers	2	5%
7	Empty adjectives	1	2%
8	Superpolite forms	1	2%
Grand Total		44	100%

The total of women's language features found in the movie is 44 utterances. The further analysis will be presented in detail for each feature.

1. Rising intonation on declaratives
 - a. Rising intonation is the most dominant feature that used by Carol Danvers who is the female main character in the movie. The data show that there are 10 utterances that contains this feature, the data were shown below.
 - b. I don't remember my past!
 - c. You supposed to take the form of who I most admire... but I don't even remember who this person to me?
 - d. What did you do to me?
 - e. Shapeshifter. They can transform into any life-form down to the DNA.
 - f. Lawson's plan for the light speed engine. I wonder why they terminate the project?
 - g. No, it's not. Because I remember. I was here.
 - h. You called them in?
 - i. What? What do I understand now?
 - j. I don't even know who I am!
 - k. You're talking about destroying them because they won't submit to your rule? and Neither will I.

In this movie, Carol Danvers as the female main character tends to use rising intonation rather than other features. According to the women's language function theory proposed by Judi Pearson (1985), in this movie rising intonation that used by Carol Danvers has two distinct functions.

The first function is to get immediate response from the addressee. For example, the sentence 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 are using rising intonation so that she can get a confirmation or answers from the person she spoken to. The second function is to express feelings or opinions. It can

be seen at the sentences number 1, 4, 6, 9, 10 are using rising intonation to indicate that she is not reluctant to be assertive yet she insists to stick with her opinion.

2. Lexical hedges or fillers

In the movie, Carol Danvers use more fillers rather than hedges in her utterance. The data finding are represented as bellow:

- a. The machine that they used, I think it's how they extracted Soh-Larr's code.
- b. Umm yeah, I think she went that way.
- c. Well, it's still early.
- d. Uhh hmm... Okay
- e. Yeah, well, give him time.
- f. Well, I won't tell your boss.
- g. Well, I already destroyed it
- h. Well, I could use a co-pilot.
- i. Well ... Since we are on the same team

The lexical hedges that found in the data above is shown by the word 'I think', such as in number 1 and 2. Meanwhile, in the data above it can be seen that Carol Danvers often uses fillers such as, umm, hmm, yeah and well. For example, in the sentence number 3 – 9, almost each of her utterance started with well. In the movie, lexical hedges are used by Carol Danvers when she wants to state and express an opinion about something.

The use of lexical hedges can indicate that Carol is a bit unconfident about the accuracy of her statement. Moreover, the fillers are often used by Carol Danvers in the beginning of her utterances. This indicates that fillers in this movie has a function to start a discussion.

3. Hypercorrect grammar

There are 9 utterances found in the movie which representing the standard grammar form.

- a. Has anyone ever seen what the Supreme Intelligence really looks like?
- b. Maybe if you were more attractive, then it would be less disturbing.
- c. You don't have to go with me. I'll go alone.
- d. Do you understand me? Is my universal translation working?
- e. Are you in charge of security for this district?
- f. Where can I find a communication equipment?
- g. Where was this photograph taken?
- h. Does announcing your identity on clothing help with the covert part of your job?
- i. He lied to me. Everything that I knew was a lie

The sentences above are grammatically correct, and Carol Danvers uses a consistent standard verb form as well. In some example such as in number 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, this hypercorrect grammar is used when Carol talks to the cops, the authorities, or any other formal institution. Talking in a grammatical correct way to the people will indicate that the speaker has a respect to the hearer. Therefore, Carol use this feature, so that she can get immediate response from the hearer/addressee.

Furthermore, the sentence number 2 is actually a sarcastic utterance, in the sentence like this a grammatical correct form is used to soften an utterance so that it sounds more polite to the hearer. Moreover, the sentence number 3 and 9 has a function to express feelings, she uses grammatical correct form because she is in anger. It gives a hint to the hearer/addressee because of different style of Carol's language, which becomes more formal when she is angry.

4. Emphatic stress

- a. Yonn-Rog: Anything new? Carol: *NO!*
- b. What is the point of giving me *THESE*, if you don't want me to use them?
- c. Enough of your mind game. What *DO YOU WANT?*
- d. You *DON'T KNOW* me. You have no idea who I am.
- e. Your mom is lucky. When they were handing out kids, they gave her the
- f. *TOUGHEST* one. Lieutenant Trouble.
- g. You stole me from my home, *MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS*
- h. Supreme Intelligent: On Hala you're reborn, Vers. Carol: My name is *CAROL*.

There are seven emphatic stress uttered by Carol Danvers in the movie. This feature has two functions, the first is to express feeling or opinions, second is to getresponse from the hearer/addressee. For example, sentence number 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7, have function to express feeling or opinion. Carol Danvers intends to emphasize words by stressing the voice when she says it. It is a sign that she is assertive to state her opinion. The second function is to get a response, she uses emphatic stress so that the addressee/the hearer/listener will answer her question immediately. The example of this function is presented by number 2 and 3.

5. Tag questions

- a. It's me you see, isn't it?
- b. You guys wouldn't happen to know how these things come off, would you?
- c. Oh boys! You guys don't have any clue, do you?
- d. You're really working overtime to sell this one, aren't you, Talos?
- e. The cat? This isn't what you afraid of, is it?

In this movie, there are five utterance found which represents tag questions. This feature has several functions. In the sentence 1 and 5, this feature has a function to express opinion. In the sentence 1, she is trying to express her opinion about what the addressee sees as their supreme intelligent form, she wants to express that it must be her that this person sees. Whereas, in number 5, she already knows that this person is afraid of cat, so she uses tag question to express her opinion.

In the scene where Carol Danvers uttered sentence number 2, 3, 4 are mostly when Carol in a dangerous situation or in a fight with enemy. She uses this tag question to express uncertainty. At first, she is still afraid and unconfident that she might unable to tackle the challenges. By saying these sentences, she gains her power again to resist and tackle the problem. She tries to convince her mind that the enemy is not equal to her, the tag questions used by Carol such as in the number 2, 3, 4 are kind of representing a mockery.

6. Intensifiers

- a. Agent Furry: I got to watch an alien autopsy. Typical nine-to-five. Carol: So, you saw one?
- b. If I could just piece together what happened that morning ... Maybe it'll all make sense.

In the movie, there are only two utterances that contain intensifiers. The first sentence has a function to express uncertainty. Carol Danvers wants the addressee to pay attention to her question. She is unsure whether this person already know about the alien, especially when he mentioned about the autopsy. The intensifier 'so' used by Carol has a function to express uncertainty. In the second sentence, the word 'just' is an intensifier because in this scene Carol is kind of emotional. She is feeling unwell and confused about everything that happened to her life. The intensifier in this sentence is used to express feelings.

7. Empty adjectives

- a. Agent Furry: Is this normal, like, space turbulence? Carol: Pretty much.

Empty adjectives feature that found in the movie is only one. The word 'pretty' here is categorized as an empty adjective because it is not related with the question. Pretty here has nothing to do with beauty. In this context of sentence, this empty adjective has a function to express uncertainty. Agent Fury asked her about the space turbulent, and she said 'pretty much'. This indicates uncertainty of her answer because she does not give an exact answer to the addressee.

8. Superpolite forms

a. Excuse me, I'm looking for Maria Rambeau.

There is only one sentence that contains superpolite form that uttered by Carol Danvers in the movie. In the scene, Carol visited Maria's house for the first time and she was looking for Maria. This indicates that she used superpolite form to soften an utterance. This is also a signal of a politeness that develop by society to reduce friction in personal interaction.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion above, there are eight features found in the movie such as: rising intonation (10); lexical hedges or fillers (9); hypercorrect grammar (9); emphatic stress (7); tag questions (5); intensifiers (2); empty adjective (1); and superpolite form (1). The finding shows that the most dominant feature was rising intonations. Rising intonation has two functions: to get immediate response and to express feelings or opinions. Lexical hedges are used to state an opinion about something, uncertain about the accuracy of the statement, and to start a discussion. The use of hypercorrect grammar has functions to get immediate response from the hearer/addressee, to soften an utterance so that it sounds polite to the hearer, to express feelings. Emphatic stress has functions such as to express feeling or opinions, and to get response from the hearer. Tag question has a function to express opinion, as well as to express uncertainty. Meanwhile, intensifier that found in the data has function such as to express uncertainty and to express feelings. In the movie, empty adjectives feature is used to express uncertainty, whereas superpolite form has function to soften an utterance.

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