Women Language 'Hidden Figure' Movie Script Written By Allison Shroeder and Theodore Melfi

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Abstract

Many factors can affect the way people communicate. One of them is gender. Compared to the men, women tend to use many language variations. Understanding the language variation used by women is important, so that its language function. In this research, the writers analyze the women's language features used by female characters in "Hidden Figures" movie script written by A. Schroeder and T. Melfi together with its functions. The method of this research is descriptive qualitative research. The research's results show that female characters in "Hidden Figures" movie use 28% lexical hedges (28 expressions), 2% tag question (2 expressions), 4% rising intonation on declaratives (4 expressions), 3% empty adjective (3 expressions), 36% intensifiers (35 expression), 1% hypercorrect grammar (1 expression), 17% superpolite forms (17 expressions), 4% avoidance of strong swear word (4 expressions), and 5% emphatic stress (5 expressions). Intensifier features is the most dominant in women language features realized in "Hidden Figures" movie script. Whereas the function of the language used by women here are referential functions, emotive functions and conative functions.

Keywords: sociolinguistic, women language, language function, Hidden Figures Movie

Introduction

Language is a tool of communication to enable messages delivered from speaker to the listener. This is due to language as means to express emotions, thoughts, opinion and so on that are related to interaction. Language can be learned in the study of linguistic science. According to Langacker (1973: 5), sociolinguistics is one branch of linguistic science.

Sociolinguistics is a field of study of language related to the use of

language itself in society. According to J.A Fishman (1972: 4), sosioliguistics is the study of the characteristics of language varieties, the characteristics of their functions, and the characteristics of their speakers as these three constantly interact, change one another within a speak community. It means that in sociolinguistics, the use of language is not only determined by linguistic factors but also influenced by several factors, such as situational factors and social factors. Who speaks, what language, where, when, to whom and about what are included in situational factors. Whereas in social factors there are social status, age, education, sex, gender, economy and so on are included in social factors.

In communication, gender is one among factors influencing the language used in community connections. It means that between women and men has a different way in using language for communication. We rarely notice that woman's language has its own style which is different to man.

The 'Hidden Figures' is movie adapted from Margot Shetterly's non-fiction book. The script was written by Allison Schroeder and Theodore Melfi. It is an American biographical drama movie about black female mathematicians who worked at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) during the Space Race. It tells about the efforts of three African-American women in searching for equality in human right and social life. They suffered discrimination since they are black-skinned. The story proves that a woman can also do the same thing as what man done and they are the heroines behind NASA's success on the astronaut flight for the first time.

The story of the movie is interesting, many researchers study this movie from feminism area, yet, studying the language used by the women in the movie is also important. The phenomenon of woman's language can be easily found in this movie because almost the whole scripts is spoken by women's characters. To understand the phenomenon of women language in the movie, the writers used sociolinguistics theory.

So far the research carried out on movies using this theory tends to identify the women language features. It only focuses on characteristics and the influence of communication situation on the women language. This research is not only identifying but also finding the meaning and function of the language used. To do

this, the writers use Lakoof theory for women language features and Roman Jakobson's theory to find the language function.

Literary Review

This study uses the sociolinguistic theory about woman language features and function.

Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is one of the disciplines of the linguistic branch. This sub-discipline learns about how language is used and functions in society. This is caused by the interaction activities in the form of verbal communication that will be intertwined between people if the message delivered in the form of sound (language) can be conveyed well. Nababan (1989: 187) explains sociolinguistics is the study of language in society. This can be explained that a community communication system consisting of sound symbols.

Pateda (1992: 3) provides a definition of sociolinguistics as a branch of linguistics that studies language and language use in a cultural context. Abdul Chaer and Leonie Agustina (1995: 3) states that sociolinguistics is an interdisciplinary field of science that studies languages in relation to the use of language in society. As an object in sociolinguistics, language is very closely related to community activities, such as religious ceremonies in the community, regular meetings between neighborhoods and at funeral services.

Based on the statement above it can be concluded that sociolinguistics is a multidisciplinary science that examines language in society from the field of social structure, functional, situational and from its cultural system. Language in sociolinguitical studies is seen as a communication system, a social system and is part of the culture of its user community.

Women's Language

Lakoff argued through his article "Language and Women's Place" in 1973 that women's way of speaking is different from men's. It means that languages between men and women have their own characteristics. Arliss (1991: 55) reveals that "Generally, women seem to employ an extended vocabulary in referencing color, in expressing their emotions verbally, and in evaluating the

world". The overall effect of women language is submerging their identity by rejecting the means of their strong expressions and expressing uncertainty (Murti, 2018: 14). The description that men's language is more assertive, rational and chooses the right vocabulary. Whereas women's, on the other hand, are not assertive, use a lot of figurative words, and say more subtle and tend to be polite.

In addition J. Holmes in his book An Introduction to Sociolinguistics (2012: 302) contains Lakoff's opinion which argues that women have their own characteristics in their language called Features of Woman's Language. The features are as follows:

a. Lexical Hedges

When someone uses hedges linguistically, they avoid saying things for certain and keeping their choices open (Coates, 1996: 152). The reason for using hedges is to give a signal / sign that the speaker is not responsible and doubtful about what he said. However, if it is associated with politeness, then this language feature serves to guard so that a speech does not seem direct or "rude" (Hidayati, 2015). There are several words that can be grouped into a hedge, for example *well, you know, kinda, sort of, like, I guess, I think, seems like, kind of* and so on.

b. Tag Question

The tag question is a statement where a woman is not sure of her own statement. Lakoff in Cameron (1990: 229), says that tag question, in its usefulness and its syntactic form in English, is between definite statements and yes or no questions. The tag question is usually used at the end of each speech and by increasing the intonation and decreasing it. Example: *It's good, isn't it?, it's so hot, isn't it? are they ?, isn't he ?, can't you?*

c. Rising Intonation on Declaratives

According to Brend in Wardaugh (2006: 321) states that the intonation patterns of men and women are different. Brend claims that women using certain rising patterns combined with surprise and politeness more often than men. According to Ayu Chandra Hamidah in her thesis entitled Analysis

of Language Features on Facebook Status: Study of Language and Gender (2016), Women often use ascending intonation on declarative sentences to show feelings, emotions, or empathy for something. Example: *What's your name dear? Marry smith?, When will dinner be ready?*

d. Empty Adjectives

Empty Adjectives are expressions that show the speaker's approval or admiration for something that only concerns an emotional reaction rather than the reaction of specific information. Some of the examples of empty adjective, such as *adorable, charming, sweet, lovely, divine, gorgeous, cute*. Example sentence: *What a terrific idea!*

e. Precise Color Terms

More detailed vocabulary which is considered trivial by men but not for a woman, namely in the mention of more detailed colors. Lakoff (1975: 9) states that women make more precise discrimination in naming color than men do. A woman in calling color is not only commonly used as red, purple, or green. But also mention more detailed parts such as *maroon* (dark reddish brown), *navy* (blackish blue) and others.

f. Intensifiers

Intensifiers are an adverb used to provide reinforcement or emphasis on adjectives, verbs, or other adverbs. According to lakoff in Holmes (2013: 304) intensifier express the speaker's anticipation that the addressee may remain unconvinced. Here, some examples of intensifier features, such us *so, very, totally, extremely* and so on.

g. Hypercorrect Grammar

Hypercorrect grammar is the use of language in accordance with the standard form of verbs. Women rarely use slang (unofficial language) which includes circumvention of abusive language, apologizing more often, and using the most polite forms as additional features. Lakoff attributed these features to each other because they all converged on the fact that women were not expected to speak harshly or less politely than men. (Norman, 2006 in Wahyuni, 2015).

According to Olsson (2000: 10), hypercorrect grammar means that slang and vulgar words or expressions are avoided. Hypercorrect grammar phenomenon is also referred to the way of women in reminding others about the correct form.Example: "*I would be very appreciative if you could show me the way*".

h. Superpolite Forms

According to Linda Olsson (2000: 9), women are often believed to be less self-confident than men are. Women often know what, when and with whom they speak. The use of superpolite forms is considered as something that should be done by a woman. To safeguard its social conventions, women tend to often use the expression please and thankyou.

i. Avoidance of Strong Swear Words

In cursing, swearing or cursing, men tend to use strong and rude words like damn, shit and others. While women tend to express in a way that is more subtle, polite and not painful. Examples: my goodness, my dear, oh dear. Example sentence: *Oh dear! You broke my plate again.*

j. Emphatic Stres

According to Lakoff, emphatic stress has a function to give emphasis to a speech when the speaker feels unsure about what he says, so the opponent he says will feel confident in what he said. For example, it was a brilliant performance. The word brilliant is emphatic stress which is used to emphasize the word performance.

Language Function

Language plays an important role in the creation of the world that we know today. Language becomes the driving force for humans to understand and live their lives. According to Roman Jakobson in his book entitled "Style in Language" was conducted in 1960 page 353, there are several language functions as follow:

a. Referential

The function of this language is used by someone to discuss a problem with a particular topic or in other words provide an information.

Referential function is information communication. The basis of this function is the context.

b. Emotive

Language used in expressing or expressing one's feelings (self-expression). According to Jakobson the purpose of this expression function is to express the speaker's attitude directly to what he is talking about. It tends to produce the impression of a certain emotion whether right or pretending.

c. Poetic

The use of this function is to convey a certain advice or message because the function of the poetic function lies in the messages. With language we can learn and even inherit the language obtained from previous people such us advice or appeal. For example when a child makes a mistake and the parent gives an appeal or advice so that the child does not repeat again.

d. Conative

Conative functions in influencing, giving direction (guidance) or motivating and efforts to condition the mind and behavior of the partner. This means the language used for the purpose of causing or preventing the actions of the said partner. Often this function is found in a command or request. The goal of using conative functions is to get responses or interaction in the form of actions or speech.

e. Phatic

Function Phatic language is used by someone to hold a language contact even if only to say hello to maintain social relationships or unite community members. The function of this language is often found in someone who is often uneasy in expressing something if the partner tends to be easily offended, so the speaker often uses opening sentences or stale bases to maintain his social relations or to make it easier for someone to become part of a society.

f. Metalingual

Metalingual is the language used in talking about language or the

communication code itself. This is a language function about language. The purpose of the metalingual function is to deliver a code analysis where the code is misunderstood and needs to be corrected or clarified.

Research Methodology

The type of this research is descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive qualitative research does not use calculations but description. The written or oral data is descriptively analyzed. The data source of this research is the script of 3 main characters from "Hidden Figures" movie namely Katherine G Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson. The technique of obtaining the data is reading the script and identifying the data by labelling them. The identified data are then categorized and analyzed.

Discussion and Finding

Men and women have their own characteristics in communication. Arliss (1991: 55) reveals that "Generally, women seem to employ an extended vocabulary in referencing color, in expressing their emotions verbally, and in evaluating the world". The overall effect of women language is submerging their identity by rejecting the means of their strong expressions and expressing uncertainty (Murti, 2018: 14). The description that men's language is more assertive, rational and chooses the right vocabulary. Whereas women's, on the other hand, are not assertive, use a lot of figurative words, and say more subtle and tend to be polite.

The types of women language features are based on Lakoff theory. There are 10 types of women language features i.e lexical hedges, tag question, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjectives, intensifier, hypercorrect grammar, superpolite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, precise color terms and emphatic stress. However, in this research, the writer only found nine types of women language features except precise color terms. The total amount of expressions analysis in this study are 99 expressions of women language features.

a. Lexical Hedges

Lexical hedges can simply be interpreted as a barrier or fence to the spoken language. Lexical hedges are considered expressions that usually indicate a lack of confidence in what they say that reflects women's insecurity. For example, *I think, maybe, probably, well, you know*, and so on.

b. Tag Question

Tag question is a statement where a woman is not sure of her own statement. Tag questions are marked with a yes / no question and is used at the end of a sentence by increasing or decreasing intonation in certain situations. It means that tag question shows someone's doubt on something. For example, *You want the job, right?* (Schroeder and Melfi, 2015: 33)

c. Rising Intonation on Declaratives

Rising intonation on declaratives is used when the speaker seeks confirmation of her statement or even at the same time the speaker may be the one who has the only information. Women make declarative statements in the form of questions by raising certain intonation patterns when making statements expressing uncertainty. For example, *I've been complaining?* [Schroeder and Melfi, 2015: 53].

d. Empty Adjective

Empty adjective is usually used by women to convey emotional reactions rather than conveying more specific information. For example when women feel amazed or fond of something they use empty adjective to convey their admiration. *Pretty, excellent, lovely,* and *adorable* are included in empty adjective.

e. Intensifier

Women tend to use words with a slight persuasive emphasis and narrative to make the other person feel confident in their words. This is because women's speech has its own emotional side which makes it considered a characteristic of a woman's speech. For example, *so, absolutely, very, really*, and so on are included in intensifier.

f. Hyprcorrect Grammar

Basically a woman's speech is not expected to speak rudely or less politely than a man. Therefore, hypercorrect grammar avoid terms that are considered vulgar or rude by replacing the use of proper pronunciation. In other words, hypercorrect grammar can refer to the use of English in accordance with the rules of standard language. for example, *Mr. Johnson, it may be best if you quit talking right now.* (Schroeder and Melfi, 2015: 41)

g. Superpolite Forms

Another feature relating to the politeness is not only *hypercorrect grammar* but also *superpolite forms.* The use of very polite speech is considered as something that should be done by a woman. Superpolite forms show that as women, they must guard their words in front of the person they are talking to and the people around them. This is also because women always want to maintain their image. A word that is often spoken by women is *please* and *thank you.* However, superpolite forms can also be in the form of indirect requests, to praise other people or just avoid expressing a haughty impression. For example from an indirect request "It's cold in here, isn't it?" instead of the speaker wanting the window to close.

h. Avoidance of Strong Swear Words

Avoidance of strong swear words is a word used to give an emphasis on speech and is a way to insult something or someone but in a manner that seems polite. Swear words are also seen as a strong language that is not suitable when used by women and children. In general, women use softer forms of curse like "my goodness" or "my dear", while men use stronger curses like "damn" or "shit".

i. Emphatic Stress

Emphatic stress is typical of the special emphasis given by speakers for several words in a sentence, usually to choose, compare, correct or clarify things. Women tend to like to use words that are used to emphasize speech or reinforce the meaning of speech. This is

because the speaker uses emphatic stress to convince the listener of what she is talking about. For example "It was an amazing performance!". The word *amazing* here is one of the examples of emphatic stress. *Amazing* is used to strengthen the word "performance". It means that the performance given is very amazing.
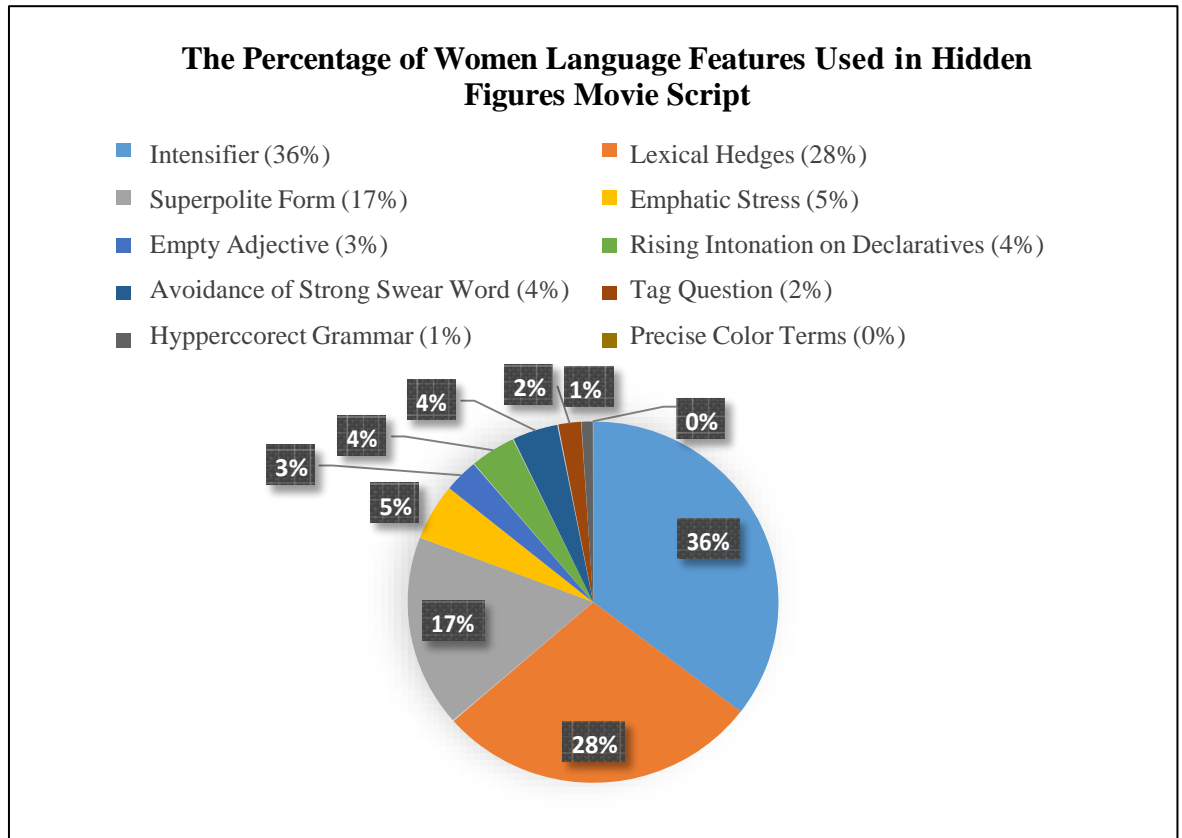

Table. 1. The Percentage of Women Language Features Used in Hidden Figures Movie Script

The intent and purpose of the speaker is also one of the important things because language is one of the communication tools that creates interaction between speakers and listeners. There are six (6) language functions according to Roman Jakobson (1960: 353) namely referential, emotive, positive, conative, phatic and metalingual functions. The language features spoken by female characters in "Hidden Figures" have three functions.

a. Referential Function

Referential function is used to convey messages that is to inform somebody of some information. The basis of this function is the context.

There are 42 expressions is using this function. Here is one of the examples is use referential function. *So, yes..they let women do some things over at NASA, Mr. Johnson* (Schroeder and Melfi, 2015: 41). Based on the statement, Katherine wants to convey information to Mr. Johnson that NASA promotes gender equality by giving the same task both to male and female workers.

b. Emotive Function

The function of this language is to express the feeling that the focus is the speaker (addresser / sender). The purpose of this function is to simply relieve all emotional pressures from the condition of her heart to be channeled. Such as the feelings happyness, sadness, amazement, disappointment, etc. The women language features found in the script which have this kind as function are lexical hedges, empty adjective, intensifier, superpolite form, avoidance of strong swear word, and emphatic stress with the total amount are 27 expressions of emotive function. The example of emotive function found in the script where the women statement often using empty adjectives. Such as *lovely, thoughtful, pretty, excellent* and *love.*

c. Conative Function

The function of conative is an attempt to influence the behavior of others and it is a social control activity. The basis of this function is the opposite of speech. The goal of using conative functions is to get responses or interactions in the form of actions or speech. This function is owned by almost all the women language features in the script except empty adjective feature with the total amount are 29 expression of conative function. For the example, *Mr. Johnson, it may be best if you quit talking right now* (Schroeder and Melfi, 2015: 41). The data is a form of female language hypercorrect grammar features which are included in the conative language function because the speaker urges her interlocutors to be quiet. This makes a response from the speaker through speech.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the movie script presents the woman language phenomenon such as lexical hedges, tag question, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjectives, intensifier, hypercorrect grammar, superpolite form, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress. Those language features are then has three function; referential function, emotive function and conative function. Based on this, language usage can depict the speakers' gender. Women use more features of language if compared to the men. This is due to men's language is more assertive, rational so they choose the right vocabulary. Whereas women, on the other hand, are not assertive, use a lot of figurative words, and say more subtle and tend to be polite. It reflected the social character owned by women and men. In social, women are believed to be soft creature which is tend to be more polite and sensitive, meanwhile men is on the opposite. This is clear that the biological differences between women and men affects their characteristic in social through language as means of communication.

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