



The Analysis of Woman Language Feature and Function Used by Women Character in the Romantic Movie “6 Years”

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ABSTRACT: This article, is entitled The Analysis of Women’s Language Features and Functions Used by Women Characters in the Romantic Movie “6 Years”. It examines the types of women’s language features found in the movie and script entitled “6 Years”, as well as the functions that occur in women's language features. The main theory applied in this study is Lakoff's theory of women's language features, along with Pearson's theory of language function. The method used in this article is documentation and observation for collecting and analyzing data using the theories by Lakoff and Pearson. The analysis showed that the women's linguistic features found in the movie include lexical hedges, rising intonation on declaratives, “empty” adjectives, intensifiers, super polite forms, and avoidance of strong words, and their functions include expressing uncertain feelings, expressing feelings or opinions, and softening an utterance. The women's linguistic features uttered by women are not frequently shown in the movie because women could also use non-women’s language features.

KEYWORDS: Language functions, Romantic movie, Women’s language features

INTRODUCTION

Bucholtz (2014) argues that language plays a significant role in constructing and reinforcing gender norms and expectations. These norms can lead to the marginalization of individuals who do not conform to traditional gender roles. Women's language use is often judged against male norms, resulting in women being perceived as less competent and authoritative. However, researchers in language, gender, and sexuality are advocating for more inclusive and equitable language practices that recognize and validate diverse gender identities and expressions.

According to Lakoff (2004), the concept of “women's language” refers to specific linguistic patterns and features observed in some women's speech. These patterns are thought to reflect social and cultural norms surrounding gender and communication. Such features include the use of tag questions, hedges, and intensifiers, as well as a preference for more polite and indirect language. Importantly, it is essential to note that the term “women's language” does not imply that all women speak the same way or that there is a uniform style of speech unique to women. Rather, it acknowledges the influence of societal expectations on language use.

Numerous activists and researchers continue to express apprehension regarding gender-related matters. Studies have been carried out in various domains such as household matters, work environments, political incidents, and language use. In particular, language usage has emerged as a significant concern in relation to gender issues, as men and women are perceived to use language differently when interacting in social settings. The way in which women and men converse is dissimilar, with women's manner of speaking often being viewed as inferior and indicative of powerlessness. According to Aghayeva (2010), the language used by women reflects their social status and place in society. Women's language is often characterized by features such as tag questions, hedging, and empty adjectives, which are used to express politeness and uncertainty. These language features are reflective of the traditional roles and expectations placed on women in society. In certain circumstances, women are expected to speak politely and conform to standard language norms as they are perceived as protectors of society (Holmes, 2008).

Lakoff (1990) explains that women's language use is shaped by their socialization and experiences. Women are often socialized to be more cooperative and nurturing, and this is reflected in their language use. They may use language to establish and maintain social connections, express empathy and understanding, and create a sense of community. These language patterns can be seen as a reflection of gender roles and a means of reinforcing them, as women's language is often evaluated against feminine standards and seen as less authoritative or competent than men's language. Therefore, the movie “6 Years” was analyzed to identify the language features and functions of women characters' language use in the romantic movie. Understanding women's language features and functions can



provide insights into gender stereotypes and power dynamics in communication, and can help promote more inclusive and equitable communication practices. It can also be useful in language teaching and learning, especially in promoting cross-cultural understanding and intercultural communication.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This qualitative research collected primary data from the romantic movie “6 Years”, which portrays the six-year-long love story between Dan and Melanie. The couple is facing emotional struggles that are turning their relationship toxic. The movie was chosen for its modern-era setting and its reflection of real-life situations.

This research utilized documentation and observation methods to collect accurate and detailed data. First, the video was downloaded from the website, and then it was carefully watched and transcribed. The qualitative method was employed to analyze the data, focusing on the language features and functions used by female characters in their conversations in the movie “6 Years”. Lakoff’s theory (1973) was applied to identify the language features, while Pearson’s theory (1985) was used to determine the language functions used by the female characters. The analyzed data were presented descriptively, describing the language features found in the movie “6 Years” and providing a detailed explanation of their functions.

Lakoff (2004) proposed that women’s speech patterns differ from men's and identified ten features of women's language, which include lexical hedges or fillers (e.g., “you know”, “sort of”, “well”, “you see”), tag questions (e.g., “she's very nice, isn't she?”), rising intonation on declaratives (e.g., “it is really good”), ‘empty’ adjectives (e.g., “divine”, “charming”, “cute”), precise color terms (e.g., "magenta," "aquamarine"), intensifiers such as "just" and "so" (e.g., "I like him so much"), 'hypercorrect' grammar (e.g., consistent use of standard verb forms), ‘superpolite’ forms (e.g., indirect requests, euphemisms), avoidance of strong swear words (e.g., “fudge”, “my goodness”), and emphatic stress (e.g., “it was a BRILLIANT performance”). As a result of these features of women's language, there are some language functions, as Pearson (1985) states that the functions of language are divided into five types: to express uncertainty, to get a response, to soften an utterance, to start a discussion, and to express feelings or opinions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Intensifier and to express feelings or opinion

The first data below shows the women’s the language feature as intensifier and language function to express feelings or opinion in the conversation between Jessica and Melanie outside the party. Jessica want to ask for a ride to home, but Melanie wants to go to Dan’s house and that is bothering Melanie because she must go twice.

(03.50 – 04.08)	<p>Jessica: Can you give me a ride home? I didn't drive here.</p> <p>Melanie: I'm going to Dan's now.</p> <p>Jessica: That's okay, you can just drop me off on the way.</p> <p>Melanie: No, you're not on the way to Dan's. You're on the way to my place.</p> <p>Jessica: Yes, I am. Please.</p> <p>Melanie: I mean, it would be <u>so much</u> easier if I just lived with Dan.</p>
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Figure 1.

Melanie utilized an intensifier, she said, “It would be so much easier if I just lived with Dan,” which is a language feature commonly used to add emphasis. By using the phrase “so much,” Melanie wanted to emphasize giving Jessica a ride would be much easier if she lived with Dan because she can just go in one way. Melanie used an intensifier to strengthen her statement about the easier way to give Jessica a ride home if she lived with Dan. The function of women language that appear in this data is to express feelings or opinion as shown above the use of intensifiers express how her opinion and feeling when she said “so much easier”.



Empty adjectives and to express feelings or opinion

The second data below shows the women’s the language feature as empty adjectives and language function to express feelings or opinion in the conversation between Ms. Anders and Melanie in the elementary school. They discussed about the kids’ creativity and how much love teaching them.

(11.15 - 11.18)	<p>Ms. Anders: Do you want to do elementary education?</p> <p>Melanie: I think so, I really do, I just love the kids and I love how open their minds are at this age</p> <p>Ms. Anders: Yeah, there's this <u>flowing creativity</u> all the time.</p> <p>Melanie: Exactly, and they just say things.</p>
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Figure 2.

Ms. Anders used an utterance that demonstrates one of the linguistic traits of women, namely the use of empty adjectives to express emotions or feelings in a sentence. In this case, Ms. Anderson said the phrase “flowing creativity”, “flowing” is an adjective that describes movement, but it does not provide any concrete information about what Ms. Anders is trying to convey about the children’s creativity. The phrase could be seen as a vague, abstract description that lacks specificity. The function of women’s language that appears in this data is to express feelings or opinion as shown above the use of empty adjective express how their opinion, feeling, excitement to the kids.

Rising intonation on declarative statements and to express feelings or opinion

The third data below shows the women’s the language feature as rising intonation on declarative statements and language function to express feelings or opinion in the conversation between Ms. Anders and Melanie in the elementary school. They discussed about kids and how creative they are and how love them to teach the kids.

(11.15 – 11.29)	<p>Ms. Anders: Do you want to do elementary education?</p> <p>Melanie: I think so, I really do. I just love the kids and I love how open their minds are at this age, <u>you know?</u></p> <p>Ms. Anders: Yeah, there's this flowing creativity all the time.</p> <p>Melanie: Exactly, and they just say things.</p> <p>Ms. Anders: You were great with them. You were really good today.</p>
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Figure 3.

The phrase “you know?” used by Melanie show one of the language features commonly used by women, which is rising intonation on declarative statements. Statements were made using the intonation typically used for questions, with the tone of the speaker rising at the end of the statement. In this case, Melanie used rising intonation on declarative statements while discussing how she love kids because how open their minds are at this age. The function of women’s language that appears in this data is to express feelings or opinion as shown above the use of rising intonation on declarative express how their opinion, feeling, excitement to the kids.

Lexical hedges or fillers and to express uncertainty

The fourth data below shows the women’s the language feature as lexical hedges-fillers and language function to express uncertainty. The conversation took a swimming pool where Amanda ask personal question to Dan, and she unsure if Dan would answered her question.



(26.23 –26.24)	Amanda: Wait, <u>umm</u> , can I ask you a personal question?
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Figure 4.

Amanda used a language feature called lexical hedges or fillers, such as the word “umm”. She used this to express uncertainty unsure if Dan would answered her question, because it is a personal question. The function of women’s language that appears in this data is to express uncertainty, as demonstrated by the use of lexical hedges or fillers such as ‘umm’. Furthermore, this uncertainty is particularly evident in the context of making up after a fight.

Avoidance of strong swear words and to soften the utterance

The fifth data below shows the women’s the language feature as avoidance of strong swear words and language function to soften the utterance the conversation between Melanie and Jessica in Melanie’s room. Melanie feels anxious about Dan because he doesn’t give her any sign and Jessica suggest to take it easy and go to the party together.

(43.13 – 43.15)	Melanie: Guys, why isn't he texting me back already? This is so fucking stupid. Jessica: <u>Oh, my gosh</u> , Mel. Come on, come out with us tonight. It'll be fun to just forget about Dan and just let loose a little bit
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Figure 5.

Jessica employed a language feature commonly observed in women’s speech, which is the avoidance of strong swear words. In many cultures, the use of swear words is considered inappropriate or offensive, particularly for women. As a result, women often resort to other forms of language to express their frustration or anger, such as euphemisms or indirect speech. She utilized this feature to convey a strong emotion that she felt in response to a particular situation that she either liked or disliked. Rather than using a harsh phrase like “Oh my God”, Jessica chose to use a softer expression like “Oh my gosh” as women are not expected to use coarse language. Jessica expressed her emotional feelings towards Melanie, who seemed restless about Dan, and suggested that she come to the party with her. The function of women's language that is evident in this data is to soften the utterance, as demonstrated by the avoidance of strong swear words. The speaker opted for a more polite phrase, such as “oh my gosh”, instead of using a harsher term like “oh my god”. The use of such language is a feature commonly observed in women's speech, as it is perceived as more polite and refined.

Lexical Hedges-fillers and to express uncertainty

The sixth data below shows the women’s the language feature as lexical hedges-fillers and language function to express uncertainty in the conversation Melanie on the phone, leaving the message to Dan. She missed and want to talk with him, but Dan doesn’t take the phone then she just leave the message.

(44.00 - 44.20)	[ring] [ring] [ring] The phone: Hey, it's Dan. You know what to do. Melanie: Hey, <u>umm</u> , it's Mel. <u>Umm</u> ...I, <u>umm</u> ...I miss you. Call me back. Bye.
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Figure 6.

Melanie used a language feature commonly used by women called lexical hedges or fillers, such as the word “umm”. She used this to express uncertainty about what to say or to leave a message for Dan, given the context that they had been fighting and she wants to make up with him. The function of the language used by women in this data is to express uncertainty, as demonstrated by the use of lexical hedges or fillers such as ‘umm’. Furthermore, this uncertainty is particularly evident in the context of making up after a fight.



Superpolite forms and to soften the utterance

The seventh data below shows the women’s the language feature as super polite forms and language function to soften the utterance. The conversation took a place in a bar where Dan and Amanda were drinking for the party. Amanda apologize to Dan for sending an inappropriate message to him last time, and she realized that it was wrong.

(44.41 – 44.39)	Amanda: So. Um, I just wanted to <u>apologize</u> about that text I sent you the other day. I was really drunk and I know you have a girlfriend and I do not want to be the person who use you.
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Figure 7.

Amanda utilized a super polite form in her utterance when she apologized to Dan at a bar. The use of “superpolite forms” involves taking politeness to an extreme level, as it implies that the speaker is requesting a favor from the listener. Amanda was aware of the need to use polite forms in her speech, and hence, she used the word “apologize” instead of the more casual term “sorry.” Moreover, Amanda explained her mistake thoroughly and made it clear that she didn’t want to cause any disturbance. The function of women’s language that appears in this data is to soften the utterance, as demonstrated by the use of a super polite form. Instead of using the word “sorry,” the speaker employed the term “apologize” to convey her apology in a more polite manner.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, it can be concluded that there are seven data of women language features found in this movie, including two lexical hedges, rising intonation on declaratives, ‘empty’ adjectives, intensifiers, ‘superpolite’ forms, and the avoidance of strong words. Furthermore, the functions of women’s language found in the movie can be categorized into three types: expressing uncertain feelings, conveying opinions or emotions, and softening an utterance. It’s important to note that not all women’s language features and functions that are commonly associated with women’s speech are present in the movie. This is because the female characters in the movie behave similarly to men, reflecting the modern era of women. Therefore, the absence of certain language features and functions is a deliberate reflection of this shift in behavior and speech patterns.

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