

Language Features Used by Female Customers in Coffee Shops in Medan (*Fitur Bahasa yang Digunakan Pelanggan Wanita di Kedai Kopi Medan*)

Winaria Simanjuntak^{1*}, Hestika Ginting¹

¹Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Sekolah Tinggi Bahasa Asing Persahabatan Internasional Asia Medan Indonesia

*Penulis Korespondensi, Email: winaria1987@gmail.com, winariapegysimanjuntak@stbapia.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The presence of women in the trading area creates its own variation in the language used in transactions. Similarly, when most of the buyers are women, this adds to the diversity of language features found in the place where the language is used. This research is conducted to find the language features used by female customers at coffee shops in Medan and the reasons why they use them the way they do. The research was conducted in Medan. The researchers chose the field of observation randomly in four coffee shops in Medan: Starbucks Sun Plaza, Kome, Filosofi Kopi, Maxx Plaza Medan Fair. Furthermore, descriptive qualitative design was used to explain, analyze, and classify the data in this research. The differences in this research are characterized with: (1) The Expression of Uncertainty (2) Hedges (3) Question Tag (4) The Intensifiers. By using this theory as the base of data analysis, it was found out that all the four language features were used by female customer in their interaction with baristas and cashiers in coffee shops. The total utterances documented from the observations were 32 expressions with uncertainty, 40 utterances with Hedges *-lah*, 135 utterances with hedges with Terms of Address with *Bang, Kak, Mbak* and *Mas*, 23 utterances with question tags and 31 utterances with intensifiers.

Keywords: Female Language, Language Feature, Conversation

ABSTRAK

*Kehadiran wanita di area perdagangan menciptakan variasi tersendiri dalam bahasa yang digunakan dalam transaksi. Demikian pula, ketika sebagian besar pembeli adalah perempuan, hal ini menambah keragaman fitur bahasa yang ditemukan di tempat di mana bahasa tersebut digunakan. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk menemukan fitur-fitur bahasa yang digunakan oleh pelanggan wanita di kedai kopi di Medan. Penelitian ini dilakukan di Medan. Para peneliti memilih bidang pengamatan secara acak di empat kedai kopi di Medan: Starbucks Sun Plaza, Kome, Filosofi Kopi, Maxx Plaza Medan Fair. Selanjutnya, desain deskriptif kualitatif digunakan untuk menjelaskan, menganalisis, dan mengklasifikasikan data dalam penelitian ini. Dalam penelitian ini perbedaan tersebut ditandai dengan: (1) Ekspresi Ketidakpastian (2) Hedges (derajat keraguan) (3) Question tag (penanda Pertanyaan), (4) Intensifier (Penegasan makna). Dengan menggunakan teori ini sebagai dasar analisis data, hanya ditemukan bahwa keempat fitur bahasa tersebut digunakan oleh pelanggan wanita dalam interaksinya dengan barista dan kasir di kedai kopi, total ujaran yang didokumentasikan dari hasil pengamatan adalah : 32 ujaran dengan ketidakpastian. 40 ujaran dengan kata sandang *-lah*, 135 ujaran dengan kata sandang dengan kata sapaan yang meliputi kata sapaan *Bang, Kak, Mbak* dan *Mas*. 23 ujaran dengan question tag (penanda pertanyaan) dan 31 ujaran dengan penegas.*

Kata kunci: Bahasa Perempuan, Fitur Bahasa, Percakapan

INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

Women in many countries have equalized and emancipated themselves by working in positions that have a major impact on buying and selling activities in business-to-business matters. This phenomenon then affects the language choice of forms female speakers to be varied. Beside the word choice, the pronunciation and the formation of sentences are also highlighted.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992: 90), “women's language has been said to reflect their conservatism, prestige consciousness, upward mobility, insecurity, deference, nurturance, emotional expressivity, connectedness, sensitivity to others, solidarity while men's language is heard as evincing their toughness, lack of affect, competitiveness, independence, competence, hierarchy, control”.

On the other hand, a different point of view came from Lakoff, as noted in Wodak (1997), what is displayed is femininity as a kind of stylized powerlessness. Furthermore, according to Tannen (1994) what is displayed in the speech of both women and men is orientation to a particular set of values: for men the central one is status, for women it is connection or affiliation.

Adding to this, Bui (2021) also stated that in hierarchical surrounding, female speakers always have a weaker voice in comparison with men who are considered as more important, powerful and persuasive. Ladies should show their respects and politeness to men and people around them. This is the tradition known as “face-saving” culture in many Eastern countries.

In the research, Bui (2021) identified three points from the research of women language in advertising, namely, most women focus on the language and its features (e.g. accents, voices, intonations, etc.) more than men do, there are differences

in the attention to products (e.g. male customers are often interested in “masculine” products (e.g. cars, household, etc.) while ladies seem to be excited to talk about beauty care products or clothing), and linguistic patterns used to describe “neutral” items in everyday life were slightly distinguishable.

Looking into its definition, gender language is the language used by gender, namely by man and woman. The language man and woman use is different in terms of styles, and language features. These differences are the reflections of woman's and man's identities (Weatherall, Ann, 2007:186).

Women's speech tends to be more conservative than men's in the following ways: Men tend to be more to speak directly to the point and use new terms, utter slang expressions, and employ rude words. While women on the other hand, tend to be more shy of mentioning certain parts of natural functions of men's particular language, for instance the rude words.

Freeman & McElhinny in Bui (2021) highlighted three main categories which resulted in women's verbal behaviors: resource shortage, outside encouragement and social requirements. Besides, a list of Lakoff's main claims and ideas about female language was provided to clarify the deficiency in women's language power. Later, the male dominance in interaction and interruptions were mentioned as “a device for exercising power and control in conversation” (Zimmerman & West, 1975, p. 103).

Referring to Lakoff (1975), there are several linguistic characteristics used by women, namely color words, empty adjectives, question intonation/intonational

pattern, hedge, intensifier, hypercorrect grammar, super polite form, tag questions, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic words. It is intriguing to study the use of language by women as it is a way to show the status and power in the society.

Objective and Significance of the Study

This study aims to identify language features used by women in coffee shops in Medan. The results of this study shed light on the study of women, particularly from linguistic point of view.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Location

The research was conducted in Medan. The researchers chose the field of observation randomly, by this, collected the data from 4 coffee shops in Medan: Starbucks Sun Plaza, Kome, Filosofi Kopi and Maxx Plaza Medan Fair.

Research Method

This research was conducted by using a descriptive qualitative design. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1993), descriptive design is used to explain, analyze, and classify something through various techniques: survey, interview, and questionnaire.

The Methods which were used in this research are:

a) Observation

The researchers observed the interaction between female customers and the barista or the cashier in each coffee shop.

b) Documentation

The interactions (in a form of direct conversations) were recorded and then transcribed before beginning the analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Theoretically, female language is different. The differences are characterized with:

(1)The expression of uncertainty.

Female Customers expressed uncertainty by using words like: perhaps, possible, may, could, might, probably, not really.

2) A question tag or tag question

This language feature is expressed by adding an interrogative fragment. Female tend to use words like: don't you, won't you, aren't you, isn't it, to ask for confirmation.

3) Hedges

In communication, a verbal hedge is a word or phrase that makes a statement less forceful or assertive. Hedges are conversational implication which can give the implicit meaning of utterances when people talk to each other. Hedges can lessen the impact of utterances and avoid over-precise statement.

4)The Intensifiers

Intensifiers which are an adverb used to give force/emphasis. Women tend to use words like: really, very, so much, not really,so (Leaper& Robnett,2011).

By using the theory above, it was found out that there are four classifications of linguistic features of female language, they are : Uncertainty, hedges, question tag and intensifier.

The linguistic features used by female customers at coffee shops in Medan are as follows :

1. Uncertainty

Since unresolved uncertainties can result in communication failures, people collaborate to establish and maintain the mutual belief that their utterances have been understood well enough for current purposes (Clark & Schaefer, 1987, 1989).

The expressions of uncertainty are found as follows :

Data 1.

Cashier : “ Gula dan es-nya normal, Kak?”
(*Do you prefer a normal measure of sugar and ice cube?*)

Customer : “ Boleh.” (*Could be*)

Data 2 :

“ Itu sirup caramelnya bisa ditambahi kali ya?” (*Can I probably get extra caramel syrup?*)

Data 3 :

“ Saya pesan yang *gak terlalu manis* tapi *sedikit gurih* gitu ada gak ya?”
(*May I have a less sweet coffee with a bit tasty taste?*)

2. Hedges

1. Utterances using *-lah*

According to KBBI (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia), (2007), *lah* is used to mitigate the utterances

Data 1 : “ Kasih *brown sugar-lah*, Bang.”
(Can I get brown sugar, Sir?)

Data 2 : “ Aku pesan inilah (pointing a menu), *hmm.. yang ada choco-lah.*”
(*I would like to order this, hmmm with choco-lah*)

Data 3 : “ Tolong ambilkan *tissue-lah* Kak.”
(*Ms, please give me some tissue-lah*)

2. Terms of addressee

They are used to reflect the social relationship between the interlocutors. It functions as to show close relationship between the interlocutors.

Data 1 : “ Kasih *brown sugar-lah*, Bang.”

Data 2 : “ Saya kasih Cappucinno satu ya *Mas.*”

Data 3 : “ Tolong ambilkan *tissue-lah* Kak.”

3. Question tag

They are used in spoken language, especially when we want to check something is true, or invite people to agree with us. Question tags are syntactically optional as they are appended to utterances for different pragmatic functions: speakers use question tags to elicit a confirmation from the interlocutors, to integrate other participants into the conversation, or to emphasize their statements. (Kimps: 2018).

Data 1 : “ Kalau *essential* itu pakai *double shot*, *ya kan* Kak? ”

(*Essential is double shot, isn't?*)

Data 2 : “ Tidak ada yang *small*, *kan?*.”

(*There is no small size, is it?*)

Data 3 : “ Masih berlaku beli satu gratis satunya *kan* Bang?.”

(*Buy one get one free is still applicable, isn't it?*)

4. Intensifier

Cambridge dictionary defines intensifiers are adverbs or adverbial phrases that strengthen the meaning of other expressions and show emphasis.

Data 1 : “ Jangan kasih es batu terlalu banyak ya.”

(*Don't put so much ice cubes, please*)

Data 2 : “ Gulanya manis kali ini kalo pesan yang *Dolce.*” (*sugar in Dolce is really sweet*)

Data 3 : “Tolong yang take away dikasih cup yang besar ya Kak. Soalnya cup yang ukuran regular itu parah kali kecilnya.”

(Please give me bigger cup for a take away, the regular size cup is *extremely* small.)

Female language in many fields the performance of language features might be different. However, in this research the differences are characterized with : (1) The Expression of Uncertainty (2) Hedges (3) Question Tag (4) The Intensifiers. By using this theory as the base of data analysis, it was found that all the four language features are used by female customers in their interaction with baristas and cashiers in coffee shops.

The total utterances documented from the observations are :

(1) Expressions with uncertainty : 32 utterances.

(2) Hedges

Hedges with lah : 40 utterances

Hedges with Terms of Address : 135 utterances, covering the hedges with *Bang, Kak, Mbak* and *Mas*.

(3) Question tags : 23 utterances

(4) Intensifier : 31 utterances

As female language is characterized emotional expressivity, solidarity, and indirect, the utterances above can represent all the qualities of female language.

Conclusions and Suggestion

Despite their power in the interaction and status, female customers use all the language features : uncertainty, hedges, question tags and intensifiers. As stated by the theories in the previous section, females are less direct, compare to male in the conversation. Females tend to pay attention to their language features as well, as the use of language features show how polite their utterances are. The example of language politeness can be seen in the use of hedges with terms of address (a) *bang* (b) *kak* (c) *Mbak* and *Mas*.

This research is limited to study the language features female customers. In fact, practically, interactions always take two parties, they are a speaker and a listener. it is suggested that the language features of used in the interaction of customers and sellers in different fields can be compared with the result of this current research. Furthermore, similar research is suggested to be conducted to analyze gender language in the field of education, law and politics.

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