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Women's Language Used in 'Birds of Prey and the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn' movie

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to analyse the major features of women's language used by the female characters in "Birds of Prey and the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn" movie. This study investigates the types of women speech features found in the movie. A qualitative approach employing a content analysis method was used in this study. The data were taken from female characters' utterances. The data were then identified and analysed based on the classifications of women's speech features proposed by Lakoff. Findings of this study indicate that six of the features are used by the female characters: lexical hedges/fillers, empty adjectives, tag questions, super polite forms, avoiding strong words, and emphatic stress. Rising intonation, precise colour terms, intensifiers, and hypercorrect grammar have not been found in the current research data.

Keywords: Language and gender; women's language; women's speech features.

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INTRODUCTION

Many people still believe in stereotypes about the difference in speech between female and male that are always related to power and status (Holmes, 2013; Holmes & Wilson, 2001; Kafi & Motallebzadeh, 2016). Montgomery (1995) however, suggests that even though there are some variations in speech differences between males and females, 'the differences of speech are not clear-cut and that a series of universal differences does not exist.' Early studies that regard power as a main factor in speech differences between different genders can be attributed to Lakoff's (2004, 2017). Although relying heavily on personal observations, and later Lakoff's definition of 'women's language' was criticized for feminist bias and a lack of

empirical research, women's language based on the definition of Lakoff is used to describe women and the language they use (Bell & Gibson, 2011; Pourkalhor & Esfandiari, 2017; Swann & Deumert, 2018). Gender differences in language are often just one aspect of more persuasive linguistic differences in the society reflecting social status or power differences, if a community is very hierarchical, for instance, and within each level of the hierarchy men are more powerful than women, then linguistic differences between the speech of women and men may be just one dimension of more extensive differences reflecting the social hierarchy as a whole (Campbell-Kibler, 2010; Holmes, 2013; Jinyu, 2014). For example, men always try to take control in every conversation, sort out the topic, and interrupt

when they are talking. While women are more careful in choosing the language they use, they don't have power to interrupt conversation, and also because the status of women is lower than men (Fishman, 2019; Sandberg, 2015).

This present research aims to find out the types of women's speech feature found in two movies: "Birds of Prey and the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn". In these movies, the female characters are depicted as strong characters which had super powers and not the type of women who are just purely obedient to men. This movie is interesting to analyse because the female characters sometimes show their power towards the male characters, attracting us to further investigate the women's language used by the female characters.

This research seeks the answer types of women's speech features found in "Birds of Prey and the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn" movie". The researchers use Lakoff's (1975) theory about the types of women's language features.

A language that signifies the characteristics of a woman's speaking style can be seen, for example, from relying more on an adjustment that conveys uncertainty and avoids bold and direct speech. A woman will question themselves if they feel unsure of their own beliefs, this can happen if they are unsure about a problem, that's why many problems faced by women appear with question marks (Chalupnik et al., 2017; Garcés-Conejos Blitvich & Sifianou, 2017). When women use more standard forms than men, it can be seen as women's linguistic behaviour (Holmes, 2001). In many speech communities, when women use more of a linguistic form than men, it is generally the standard form which overtly prestigious form that women favour. Holmes also adds that the reasons women use more standard form because of the social class that is related to their status which is wrongly regarded as a subordinate group and their role in society relating to the function of speech expressing masculinity. As women are serving as models for children's speech, the society expects that women use standard form commonly associated with more formal and

less personal interactions. The role of modelling correct behaviour in the community is usually designated for women.

Women may use different linguistic forms such as word-shape (morphology), for example, brunch or travelogue, pronunciation which women tend to pronounce more clearly, and different affixes due to the fact that women and men speak differently. Women also use more formal variant in the pronoun system, for example the use of the pronoun I do we, and they use vocabulary items differently (Holmes, 2001).

Lakoff (1975) has proposed that there are linguistic differences between men and women. He strengthens that there are ten linguistic features which characterize women's speech: lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonation on declaratives, 'empty' adjectives, precise colour terms, intensifiers such as just and so, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress.

Holmes (2001) asserts that there is a distinction between 'fillers' and 'hedges', with sort of classified as a hedge, while 'well' and 'you see' are described as 'meaningless particles' and assigned to the same category as 'pause fillers' such as uh, um, and ah. Women tend to use this feature more than the men do. They use this feature to keep their femininity and as a protection when they are making a certain statement but they are not sure about their statement.

When a woman attempts to describe a book for her friend, for example, she doubts that the book is a kind of book that is either interesting to read or boring for some people because she is unsure what kind of book is preferred by her friend. For this reason, a hedge is used to mitigate the meaning, as in the following examples.

- (a) The book is kind of *well* to read.
- (b) *You know*, this novel is good.

The examples illustrate the speaker's uncertainty about what is being uttered. She is

using a lexical hedge to weaken the strength of an assertion that may cause offense.

Furthermore, women also use tag question to express uncertainty (Lakoff, 1975). Holmes (2001) says that “*tag may also express affective meaning. They may function as facilitative or positive politeness devices, providing an addressee with an easy entrée into a conversation*”. For women, using tag question helps them overcome their uncertainty on a subject when they were trying to start a conversation (a). In this case, they demand a confirmation of their statement from others. However, in some cases, it is just a tool to start a small conversation that emphasizes a reality (b).

- (a) She's very wonderful, *isn't she?*
(b) Today is very hot, *isn't it?*

Lakoff (1975) also argues that there is a special use of syntactic rules in female intonation patterns. They tend to use over-the-top expression because they anticipate to not being taken seriously by their counterparts, e.g., it's really *good?* When women have to give a definite answer on a question, they will say it in a declarative tone by raising their intonation.

- (a) Who will you marry?
(b) Uhm ... my bias, *Yoon Dowoon ...?*

The example shows lack of specific answer to the question and uncertainty thus reflects on doubt of the character hence why women words are not treated seriously. In addition, women incline to use empty adjective. It is an adjective only used by women as opposed to that natural adjective commonly used by men. It is used to express a remarkable state of circumstances (Hall & Bucholtz, 2012). For example, men will say 'great' for something they think is really good, but women will say 'adorable' instead. There is, for instance, a group of adjectives that do not only have specific and literal meaning, but also have another use that indicating the speaker's admiration for something. Some of these adjectives are neutral to both men and women, but another set seems to be confined

to women's speech. Representative lists of both types are below:

Neutral	women only
Great	adorable
Terrific	charming
Cool	sweet
Neat	lovely

Men barely used some words listed in the right column because they believe it will damage their reputation, while women are free to use both. In expressing colour, women have more colour vocabulary than men because women's words are related to their interests. Women have a special term for colours like baby blue, maroon, navy etc (Romaine, 2003, 2017). (Blommaert, 2015) said that such a discrimination is absent from that of most men. As an example of precise colour terms, a woman may say: 'The door is *navy*' instead of *blue*. Women make the distinction of colour terms to indicate the level of importance whereas men use it to imitate women in a sarcastic way.

Women also use intensifier when they want to express and emphasize what they want to say. Intensifier is a word that can emphasize a statement in order to make the listener surer of what the speaker is saying. When a woman use intensifier, it means she wants to express her opinion with a felling and to convey the emotional message as opposed to accurately phrasing a cognitive statement (Carli & Bukatko, 2012; Edwards & Hamilton, 2004). For example:

- (a) I feel so unhappy
(b) That movie made me so sick

Furthermore, women do not speak harshly and use hypercorrect grammar. They use subtle speech with standard verb to sound more polite (Lakoff, 1975). The standard verb form is used to avoid words or sentences that are not good and to reinforce politeness, e.g. *I would be very thankful if you can show the way*. The reason on why women use more correct grammar in their speech is that they tend to be more status conscious. Women adhere to social norms because they're afraid to be judged when they speak so they aspire to exhibit "better" social behaviour than men. For

example, women use more *-ing* pronunciations and fewer *-in* pronunciations than men, e.g. women usually use singing rather than singin' (Garimella et al., 2019; Wolfson, 2014).

To avoid an unpleasing situation, women use super polite form or speak indirectly so that to the audience do not feel offended or embarrassed by what they are saying and to sound more polite, e.g., *she passed away (she died)* (Lorenzo-Dus & Bou-Franch, 2003). Svendsen (2019) also argues that women tend to avoid offensive expressions because they are believed to be the experts of euphemism. Women also required to use particular polite forms such as "please" and "thank you". Here is an example:

- (a) Come here.
- (b) Will you *please* come here?

From the example above, (a) shows a less polite than a request "*will you please come here?*" because the addressee is not being forced to respond a command. Using an order as a question by suggesting the addressee seems more polite than an overt order. Additionally, unlike men, women avoid using swear words as they do not want to be seen as rude and disrespectful (Holmes, 2001). They prefer to use the word "*oh dear*" rather than "*shit*". For the example:

- (a) *oh goodness* you take those things in wrong way again!
- (b) *Damn it* you take those things in wrong way again!

The expression in (a) uses weaker swear word while expression (b) uses strong swear word. Because women tend to speak in more polite way, people will expect that expression (a) is spoken by a woman and expression (b) is spoken by a man. However, women use strong swear words more and more nowadays, but women's language is not adopted by men. The differences between expression (a) and (b) are in how strong those words evoke the negative feeling on the addressee.

In addition, women typically use a greater range of pitch than those used by men.

For example, "what a *beautiful* dress!" and "it was *brilliant* performance". When the speaker says those sentences, the speaker verbally highlights the words beautiful and brilliant by using pitch (usually higher), elongation (making the vowels last longer) or variation in dynamic volume (loudness). The speaker uses emphatics stress to emphasize the most important word in a sentence.

METHOD

The present study qualitatively analysed and examined the types of women's women speech features found in the Birds of Prey and the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn movie. The subject of this research was the Harley Quinn's Birds of Prey film, whereas the object of the research was the women's languages used in the movie.

The data were gathered from the female characters' utterances. They include words, phrases, and sentences that contain types of female speech features related to the topic. In the present study, the researchers used Miles et al. (2014) framework for data collection and analysis, which are commonly known as data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusion/ verification.

There are nine steps of data reductions introduced by Miles and Huberman (2014), but the researchers only used two steps; sorting out the data and coding. The first step was used to collect the data and the second was used to analyse the data. Three steps of data collection were involved in the present study; The first has to do with identifying the conversations carried out by all the female characters in the movie. In the next step, we compare the transcript-data with subtitles. At the final stage, we organize the speech, particularly all utterances collected from the female characters. This made it easier for the researchers to analyse the language used by the female characters in the film. We also eliminated similar data that were considered redundant, so there is no repetition of data. The researchers selected the main points, and only focused on the important points while simplifying the data.

Finally, the data were analysed based on the classifications of women's speech features originally proposed by Lakoff's (2004) and re-introduced by Holmes (2013): namely lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonation on declaratives, 'empty' adjectives, precise colour terms, intensifiers such as just and so, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress.

The researchers used an observation checklist to record utterances containing particular language features currently being investigated. During this stage, the researchers underline and change the colours of the selected utterances based on Lakoff's (2004) theory of women's language. The researchers also used different letter symbols to distinguish each character to help with the analysis process.

Techniques of Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the researchers analysed the data using content analysis techniques. First of all, the types of previously mentioned women's speech features used by the female characters were identified. To ease the data analysis process, the following initials were used for each character; Haley Quinn as (HQ), Huntress as (H), Black Canary as (BC), Rene Montoya as (RM) and Casandra Cain as (CC). These were used in the observation checklist, as seen in the following table.

Table 1. The observation checklist

Features	HQ	H	BC	RM	CC
Lexical Hedges/Filler					
Tag Questions					
'Empty' Adjectives					
Precise Color Terms					
Intensifiers					
Hypercorrect'					
Grammar					
Super polite' Forms					
Avoidance of Swear					
Words					
Emphatic Stress					

Secondly, the researchers determined which data were considered the dominant types and the dominant patterns of the women's language for each character. Afterwards, each of women's speech features was investigated in order to find its functions.

The results were analysed pragmatically based on the speaker's meaning that is related to the context. At this stage, we provide an explanation of how the characters in the movie used women's language in their speech. The researchers then discussed the use of women's language by the characters based on social conditions. The final step is drawing conclusions, where the researchers use data display technique proposed by Miles et. al. (2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researchers used Lakoff's (2004) theory to determine the types of women's speech features found in *Birds of Prey* and *The Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn* movie. This theory was used as the reference in analysing the findings in which each classification was classified in the observation checklist. After carefully evaluating the movie conversations and its transcripts, the speech features used by women characters in the movie can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. Women's Speech Features in the Movie

Features	HQ	H	BC	RM	C
Lexical Hedges/Filler	3	1		2	1
Tag Questions	5			1	1
Rising Intonation on Declarative					
'Empty' Adjectives	3			2	
Precise Color Terms					
Intensifiers					
Hypercorrect					
Grammar					
Super polite Forms	3	2	1		2
Avoidance of Swear Words	2		1		1
Emphatic Stress	1	3			3
Total Features	17	6	2	11	2

From the data, we can see that there are eleven features spoken by Harley Quinn. She uses three lexical hedges/fillers ('kinda hard',

'kinda nice', 'you know'), five tag questions (*aren't you*), three empty adjectives ('nice baby', 'sentimental value', 'pretty great'), three super polite form ('gone'), two avoidance swear words ('oh god', 'Jesus Christ') and one emphatic stress ('whatever').

Hunter uses six utterances of women's speech features. She uses one filler ('mhm'), two super polite forms ('I need your help', 'gone'), three emphatic stresses ('it is not', 'a fucking', and 'I don't have').

Black Canary uses one super polite from ('lady'), and one avoidance swear word ('thank God'). Rene Montoya uses 11 utterances of women's speech features. She uses two lexical hedges/fillers ('hmm', 'well you know'), one tag questions, ('isn't it'), two empty adjectives ('sweetheart' 'amazing'), two super polite forms ('loss', 'gone'), one avoidance swear word ('Jesus'), and three emphatic stresses when she verbally highlights the words 'spot', 'relationship' and on 'herself'. Cassandra Cain only uses one filler which ('mhm') and one tag question ('aren't they').

Lexical hedges/filler

Hedges/filler is an expression that is used as a protection to the lack of confidence about the speaker's statement. There are seven hedges/fillers found in the movie:

HQ: "... like out of a plane without a parachute, right in your fucking dumb face *kinda hard*."

HQ: "It was *kinda nice* having the kid around."

Harley utters the word "kinda" two times in different ways. The first one is when she talks about how she feels when she falls in love with Mr. J. She describes her emotions by saying that falling in love with Mr. J is like falling from a plane without a parachute. The second statement shows that Harley is not sure about her feelings for the kid. She is not sure whether the kid is really nice or bad. In both utterances, she uses "kinda" to express her uncertainty about her statement. To cover it up, she uses the word as protection.

RM: "Well you know, the DA office is building a case against him too."

The use of hedges in Rene's utterance is a form of uncertainty about her statement. When Rene talks with her boss, she uses the phrase "well you know" as a meaningless particle. She uses it to cover up her uncertainty about the DA's office, who built a case against Sionis. She is not sure about her statement, but she still wants her boss to believe that the DA's office would build a case against Sionis.

H: "Mhmm... I really like how you were able to kick so high in those tight pants."

RM: "Yes he is *uhmm*.. I *uhmm* he no longer there but-."

CC: "*Uhhh* thanks for the car."

Hunter, Rene, and Cassandra use fillers in their speech when they are uncertain about their statement. All of them use the fillers "Mhmm" and "Uhhh". When Hunter uses filler in her utterance, she is not sure if she could praise Black Canary or not. She says her compliments after using the filler, so she will feel more protected because of the pause filler. The same is applied to Rene and Cassandra's utterances. They both use pause filler to cover up their lack of confidence when talking to someone who has a higher position than they do. Rene uses the filler when she is not sure if her partner is still in the Sionis' army or not.

For Cassandra's utterance, the use of pause filler is also as a protection for her lack of confidence. When the toy car that Hunter lent her is able to relieve her fear, she was very grateful. Cassandra is shy to say "thank you" to Hunter, so she uses the filler "Uhhh" before it to cover up her uncertainty.

Tag Questions

When they're uncertain about something, women use tag questions to make the addressee agree with their statement. Here are the examples of tag question used in the movie:

RM: "Isn't Ms Yee?"

HQ: "You are not gonna run, *aren't you?*"

CC: "They are all here for me, *aren't they?*"

Rene, Cassandra and Harley use tag questions for confirmation. Rene uses the word "*isn't*" because she wants an agreement from Ms. Yee. She also wants Ms. Yee to support her statement. Rene uses "*isn't*" because she is not sure if the spy is still in the building or not. She also wants Ms. Yee to help her convince their boss about her statement.

The word "*aren't you*" is used in Harley's utterance when she talks with Cassandra in a shopping mall. "You're not gonna run, *aren't you?*" the tag question "*aren't you*" is used because she is not sure about what she is saying. She knows Cassandra prefers to be with her, but she is not really sure about it. She pauses for a moment after saying, "you are not gonna run," after she realizes that she is not sure about what she is saying. She uses the tag question as a form of confirmation from Cassandra because she is not confident with her words.

Cassandra also uses tag question to make sure that the addressee agrees with her statement. "They are all here for me, *aren't they?*" when she is saying that, she knows for sure that Sionis's army is there to catch her because of the diamond in his stomach. She is not questioning the situation, but more of a confirmation from others.

Empty adjectives

The use of empty adjectives in women's language indicates that the speaker wants to show the relationship of her emotional expression with her addressee. In this movie, the female characters use five words of empty adjective.

HQ: "Hello *nice baby*."

HQ: "but still, that felt *pretty great*."

HQ: "Oh no no not that one, *sentimental value*."

When Harley uses the words "*nice baby*", "*sentimental value*", and "*pretty great*", she wants the addressee to know about her feelings. She uses the word "*nice baby*" when she gives her pet a treat and talks with her. She uses the word "*nice baby*" as a form of admiration towards her pet. Harley knows her pet is not a baby, but calls it as such because she wants the pet to know that she loves her very much even though her pet does not understand what she is saying.

Harley also uses two empty adjectives in her speech, "*Oh no*" and "*pretty great*". She uses the phrase "*sentimental value*" when Rene wants to use her baseball bat. She wants the addressee to know that the baseball bat meant a lot to her, which is why she uses an empty adjective to convey her feelings to the addressee. The phrase "*pretty great*" is used to express her feelings, that she feels pretty good despite the unexpected bad luck.

RM: "Woahh.. I hate to be the one to break your heart *sweetheart*, but you are not done."

RM: "I mean we are *amazing* there."

She is calling Hunter "*sweetheart*" so that Hunter knows that she feels sorry for Hunter. The word "*sweetheart*" is usually used to address children, but Rene calls Hunter "*sweetheart*" in her utterance because she wants to. Hunter knows that Rene loves her and that she is not alone in dealing with Sionis. The word "*amazing*" is used when Rene reveals her admiration to themselves when they are able to beat a dozen of men.

Super polite forms

Women use the super polite form or speak indirectly so that people they are talking to do not feel offended and to sound more polite. Thus, women also use tag orders, tag questions, and other requests to state polite commands.

HQ: "You heard the cop said, Sionis is *gone*."

H: "He's *gone*,"

RM: "Sionis is *gone* "

When they finally beat Sionis, Harley, Hunter, and Rene express their joy by saying "he's *gone*?" and "Sionis is *gone*". Instead of using the word 'death', they use "*gone*" because they do not want to sound harsh on Sionis deaths.

H: "*I need your help* locating someone."

When Hunter meets Sir Kebab for the first time, she asks him for help to find someone. She says, "*I need your help*." because she is trying to look polite and does not want the addressee to feel like he is being given orders.

BC: "Yeah, I do not know who you think I am *lady*, but I'm not her."

Black Canary and Harley both use the word "*lady*" in their speech. "*Lady*" is a term used to refer to a woman who has a high social status. They use the word "*lady*" to honour the woman they are talking to. Canary uses it because she respects Harley even though Harley has broken up with Joker. Harley uses it to honour every girl she met. She uses "*lady*" to make the addressee feel less offended.

RM: "I'm sorry for your *loss*."

Rene uses super polite form when she talks to Black Canary to express her condolences even though it is too late. Rene still says it so that the addressee does not feel offended by what Rene says earlier about Black Canary's mother. Rene does not want Black Canary to think that she does not care about her mother's death. She expresses her condolence so that Black Canary would not feel offended and to reduce her embarrassment for not being able to help Black Canary's mother.

Avoidance of Strong Swear Words

HQ: "*Oh god*, stop."

HQ: "*oh Jesus Christ*."

Harley prefers to use the words "*oh god*" and "*Jesus Christ*" instead of swearing when talking to Sionis. Harley usually prefers to swear rather than avoid using swear words,

but when dealing with Sionis under threat, she prefers to use the words "*Oh God*" and "*Jesus Christ*".

According to Allan & Burrige (2006), the use of swear words is closely related to one's emotions because using swear words can diverge someone's feelings effectively. Even though Harley is threatened and upset, she chooses to avoid using swear words because she does not want Sionis to feel that he does not respect him.

BC: "Oh *Thank god*, don't worry I'm gonna get you outta here."

Black Canary avoids using swear words when she finds Cassandra tied up in the toilet of an abandoned building. She feels grateful that Cassandra is still alive. The difference between using swear words and avoiding using swear words can be seen from the speaker's feelings. When she find Cassandra, Black Canary feel more grateful than angry, and that is why she is saying "*thank God*" instead of swearing.

RM: "*Jesus* who the fuck is this?"

When Rene gets multiple phone calls, she is annoyed because the calls interfere with her meeting with her boss. She says "*Jesus*" after saying "who the fuck is this" to relieve her annoyance because she still wants to sound polite even though she cursed afterward.

Emphatic Stress

Women typically use a greater range of pitch than those used by men.

HQ: "I could do *whatever* I want."

Harley uses empathic stress in her utterances to emphasize words he thinks are important. She adds the word "*whatever*" to emphasize that she really can do whatever she wants. In this context, the use elongation is obvious so that the listener focuses on the word she is emphasizing.

H: "*It's not*, a *fucking*, bow and arrow."

Hunter convinces the addressee that the weapon she is using was not a bow and arrow

but a crossbow by emphasizing the words "*it is not*" and "*a fucking*". Hunter uses pitch when saying "*it is not*" and makes the vowels last longer when saying "*a fucking*". She does not want the addressee to take her words as a joke.

H: "*I don't have, rage issue!*"

When she is talking with hunter about the crossbow, Black Canary teases hunter by saying that she has rage issues. Hunter does not accept that and says, "*I don't have a range issue.*" She emphasizes the word "*I don't*" to make black canary stop teasing her and take her words seriously.

RM: "This was their *spot*. She just publicly updated her *relationship* status. Harley Quinn just called open season on *herself*."

Just like Harley and Hunter, Rene emphasizes a few words in her speech so that the addressee does not take her words lightly. Rene emphasizes the word "*spot*", "*relationship status*", and "*herself*" as she explains why Harley blow up a building and throw away the necklace he used to wear. Rene pauses between each word at the end of her sentence to further clarify her statement.

Based on the findings, out of Lakoff's (2004) ten linguistic features which characterize women's speech, the researchers only found six in the movie; lexical hedges/filler, tag question, empty adjective, super polite form, avoidance of swear words, and emphatic stress.

Super polite form is a feature that is mostly used by the female characters. There are eight super polite forms used by all female characters except Cassandra. The female characters do not use rising intonation, precise colour terms, intensifiers, and hypercorrect grammar. In contrast to the current findings, Leaper & Robnett (2011) only found one utterance related to super polite form. The most used feature in her study is lexical hedges/fillers, which are found in 19 utterances. Similar to Amanda (2017), she found that lexical hedges/fillers were the most used form (41.54%) by Hillary Clinton in her Presidential Debates.

The use of female language by female characters also varies. Harley uses the most women's speech features in the movie. She uses 15 words for each different feature. Her use of female language is as a form of lack of confidence and friendliness when talking to others. This can be seen from the many uses of question tags, super polite forms, lexical hedges/fillers, and empty adjectives in her speech. Despite being a female criminal, Harley is a character who uses the most female language in the movie. She often uses women's language due to her past as a psychiatrist where she was required to speak politely and gently to her patients. The inharmonious environment and her untrustworthy relationship with the surrounding community are one of the reasons she uses women's language a lot in her speeches. The use of women's language in Harley's speech is a form of femininity and also covers her lack of confidence.

Hunter and Rene also use women's language features as a form of respect to the addressee and lack of confidence. They use emphatic stress in their speech so the addressee does not take their words lightly and to emphasise the serious tone of the situation. It is used to intensify the speaker's utterances and emotional message (Bylund & Makoul, 2002; Palczewski et al., 2023).

Black Canary tend to avoid swear words because she doesn't want to be considered rude by the addressee. She used this feature when talking to Cassandra who is much younger than her (Lakoff, 2004) notes that women tend to avoid using swear words because they will consider as unladylike.

The linguistic devices that deeply distinguish women's language from that of men are lexical hedges or fillers. It is an utterance constructed with one or more words that expresses uncertainty from a lack of confidence (Purnata et al., 2021). Cassandra Cain used lexical hedge/filler and tag question to expresses her uncertainty and as a form of lack of confidence.

The results suggest that the female characters used women's language features to keep their femininity. Women should talk like

women; if they refuse, they are ridiculed and subjected to criticism as unfeminine (Lakoff, 2004). Men's social roles are designed to support the masculine concept, while women's social roles are to be feminine (Sun, 2013). The movie implies that the female characters use the women's language features because they want to adhere to their social roles and didn't want to be considered rude when talking to others.

The Use of the Opposite of Women's Language

Unlike previous studies that are focusing on women's language used only by women, the researcher found contrary evidences in this movie. The female characters freely use the opposite of women's speech features more than the women's speech features described by Lakoff (2004). The researcher found two uses of the word "*cool*", which according to Lakoff (2004) is used more often by men than women.

According to Aini (2016), women are free to choose between neutral words and feminine words in empty adjectives. Both genders can also use adverbs to their liking (Hanafiyeh & Afghari, 2014). However, it is also wrong to say that there is no risk for women to freely use neutral or women's words, because they will be considered as being unable to express their feelings by doing so.

Chen (2021) claims that women use more adjectives than men do, although the qualitative differences are not significant. For this reason, we can conclude that the empty adjective feature is not gender specific. Both women and men use empty adjectives in their speech. The number of uses depends on the speaker's social background or the topic being discussed.

The researchers also found that the female characters use impolite forms of speech and offensive expressions to strengthen and emphasize their words so as not to be underestimated by others as well as to express their annoyance. This finding is not in line with Lakoff's (2004) theory suggesting that women use the super polite form more in their speech

to avoid offending others. To explain this phenomenon, Cameron and Coates (1985) explain that the amount of discourse we produce is influenced by who we are with and what we are doing.

Omen (2017) suggests that Linguistic politeness is the use of language in conversation to show consideration for the feelings and desires of one's interlocutors, to create and maintain interpersonal relationships (so-called political behaviour), and to follow the rules for what society or one's culture considers appropriate behaviour. Hobbs (2003) mentions that the frequency of negative politeness markers of male speakers is about the same as that of women, whereas men prefer to use more positive politeness techniques than women when they are in legal settings. It is suggested that women are often more polite than men is not true.

According to Lakoff (2004), women tend to avoid the use of swear words, however the researchers found that all female characters use many swear words in their speech. There were nine '*fucking*' words, eighteen '*fuck*' words, four '*motherfucking*' or '*motherfucker*' words, fifteen '*shit*' words, five '*hell*' words, one '*fuckbag*' word, two '*damn*' words, two '*asshole*' words, one '*stupid-ass*' word, one '*dick*' word, and one '*crap*' word. The female characters used swear words as an affix. It was not used for swearing but to emphasize their subsequent words.

In contrast to our findings, Walsh (2016) assert that male speakers use swear words more frequently than females. Interestingly, the female characters in the movie used more swear words than men, either when they were stress, in hurry, frustrated, habit, or in a precarious situation. Swearing can also be associated with their educational background. In the movie, the female characters grow up in a high crime rate environment. They live in a city where the average people are criminals and mafia.

Furthermore, work-environments can also be the reason behind vulgar languages. The female characters, except Cassandra, work

in a place that was closely related to criminals. Harley is unemployed, Hunter is an assassin, Rene is a low-ranking police officer, Black Canary is a club-singer, while Cassandra is just a child whose parents are always fighting. Based on social classes, the low-class people use swear words more often than those of the high class in their conversation.

In other situation, people use swear words to create or show intimacy Wiranty (2015). Women use swear words more when they are communicating with their own gender (Varma & Tan, 2015). The words they use are mostly related to religion, bodily functions, and body parts, such as shit, fuck, hell, and God. It can be said that women use swear words in their speech because they want to express their feelings. Their low social status and living environment also motivate the use of swear words in their speech.

Hay (2000) says that uncertainty and lack of confidence is not the only reason why women use women's speech features. She agrees that there are several factors aside from gender, topic and social status that influence the use of women's language. These factors include practice community, educational background, and social psychological perceptions (Arisandy, 2018). Nowadays, not only women, men also practice Lakoff's (2004) women's language features in their daily conversations.

Many linguists and researchers have also criticized and expressed opposing views on Lakoff's theory. Hall & Bucholtz (2012) point out that Lakoff's claims are not supported by empirical evidence. The majority of her findings were made by researchers in the empirically oriented social sciences (anthropology, psychology, sociology, and speech communication). Likewise, Holmes (2001) notes that Lakoff's assertions were based on her intuitions and observations, and that much of her initial research was methodologically unsatisfactory. Anderson et al. (2011) argued that Lakoff's description of women's linguistic characteristics is inaccurate. They demonstrate that the frequency of women's language features in speech is correlated with two other factors: the

speaker's social status and the speaker's experiences.

In her study, Aini (2016) found male characters in the movie used five types of women's language features. They were: raising intonation, super polite form, lexical hedge, intensifier, and tag questions. In the "I Tonya" movie, three women's language features were used by the male characters, which are lexical hedges/fillers, intensifiers, and avoidance of swear words (Purnata et al., 2021). From the previous linguistic studies above, we can conclude that women's language features can also be used by men.

Furthermore, after analysing the use of women's language features used by female characters in the movie, the researchers concludes that the use of women's language in this movie does not always reflect self-confidence, difficulty in making decisions, and uncertainty about their words, but there are several social factors and dimensions that can be the reason behind the use of women's language, such as educational background, social status, friendship, topics of conversation, formal settings, and work. Nowadays, many women have started using the male language as well as many men. Men have also started using some features of the female language. Women and men can interact with each other without having to think about their gender status (Pebrianti, 2013). We can observe that in social and work relationships, women and men can communicate without having to think about gender differences or language styles.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The female characters use different women's language features in their speech to express specific purposes. In the *Birds of Prey* and the *Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn* movie, the researchers found six features used by the female characters, they are lexical hedges/fillers, empty adjectives, tag questions, super polite forms, avoiding strong words, and emphatic stress.

The female characters use female language features to express their femininity.

They do not seem to be perceived as impolite when conversing with people in higher positions. They also use female language features to express their emotions when they speak. It does not always reflect self-confidence, difficulty in making decisions, and uncertainty about their words, but there are several social factors and dimensions which can be considered as a reflection of the use of women's language, such as educational background, social status, friendship, topics of conversation, formal settings, and work.

The researchers also found the use of neutral words, swear words, offensive words, and impolite requests by the female characters in the movie. This provides evidence that women also began to use the opposite of women's language. When women make fast decisions, they often express their annoyance using harsh words like men do and become more confident in speaking.

Since the scope of this study was limited to analysing the use of women's language features based on Lakoff's theory, it would be interesting to see how the results may response if it was analysed using the most recent theory from other experts. Future researchers can also compare the use of women's language proposed by Lakoff with that proposed by other expert to find out the differences between the two theories.

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