

**WOMEN LINGUISTIC FEATURES USED BY THREE
FEMALE HEROES IN THREE DIFFERENT SUPERHERO
MOVIES BY MARVEL CINEMATIC UNIVERSE**

THESIS



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WOMEN LINGUISTIC FEATURES USED BY THREE FEMALE HEROES IN
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UNIVERSE

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women's speech. They tend to show uncertainty and less confidence. Lakoff created a theory about women's language features in 1975. In her theory, ten features are found in women's language. These ten features are lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjectives, precise color terms, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, superpolite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress.

There have been some studies that have analyzed women language features in some cases. Nafiratulrif'ah (2017) analyzed a novel, Pebrianti (2013) analyzed female bloggers, Solikha (2016) analyzed speech, Buano (2016), Safitri (2017), and Wati (2016) analyzed the movie. With these various subjects, it can be said that women language features applied in many ways in this society. Therefore, the previous study related to this present study is the study by Buano (2016). This study conducted data on language features from the Pitch Perfect movie. The writer only focused on the utterances of the main female characters and the function of features languages. With Lakoff's women language features theory, the writer found five features used by seven main female characters. There were lexical hedges, tag questions, raising intonation, intensifiers, and super polite form. Those features included formal and informal speech.

The second previous study is the study by Safitri (2017). With the same subject, movie, but the data of this study was conducted from the animation movie. It only focused on the main character's language features. The writer used theory by Lakoff and found eight features in this study. This study also revealed

the functions of women language features and described the modification of language features to reduce feminine effects.

The other previous study is the study by Wati (2016). The writer used two characters from two different movies as the subject of the study. The writer made a comparison of two female characters in different movies. However, this study only focused on women's linguistic features of the characters and their differences and similarities between the two characters. This research also concerned with its influence on the differences. The result showed that only seven features used by the first character, and four features used by the second character. This study revealed that the similarity and difference of the language features were social factors.

As it is already explained from those previous studies, women's language features have become an essential aspect of women's speech. Not just in real life representation, but movies can also be an aspect of portraying women's language features. However, there are still a little studies in women language features portrayed in action movies. Because of the previous studies, the writer found studies in analyzing drama movies. The studies tended to focus on ordinary women characters rather than heroin characters in action movies. Because heroin characters usually tend to have masculine characteristics more than feminine characteristics. Therefore, this present study analyzes the feminine language features in heroin characteristics.

Since many studies in language features used movies as the data, the researcher thought that using movie will be interesting. Because in the movie, the

representation of daily speech is described in many kinds. There are movies with animated women, females with masculine personalities, a single mother, a workaholic, an alien, and a princess who lives in the kingdom. With that various kind of women pictured in the movie, it would depict their different kind of personalities. According to Vogeli, with the representation of how gender described in some ways have influenced the classification of how the genders are represented in the language (2005). Therefore this study uses movies as the source of data. Nevertheless, different from others, this present study will use superhero movies from Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU).

Not many studies used superhero movie as their data source. The previous study that the writer found is the study by DeMarci (2014). This study examined the representation of the female character in the Marvel Avengers series. It also focused on the use of the female character to epitomize the woeful lack of a significant portrayal of women in the movie. The other previous study is the study by Kinnunen (2016). This study aimed to determine how female characters are represented or described in visual representation through their speech and different behavior. The writer only focused on visual appearance and the character's contribution to the storyline. It analyzed in detail, one by one, from the oldest movies to the newest movies.

From those two previous studies, we know that the studies with the data source from superhero movies are mostly analyzed about the representation of female characters. Mostly those studies analyzed their behavior and their appearance. Therefore, this present study analyzes the comparison between heroin

characters since not many studies compare characters in the superhero movie. This present study analyzes female characters in finding their language features. Women and men language feature theories used by the researcher to compare each female characters' utterances to find out which language features used by three female heroes more. The researcher analyzes their utterances because it helps the researcher determine what types of language features they used in their daily speech.

This study analyzes three different female heroes from three different superhero movies in Marvel Cinematic Universe. Those characters are Natasha Romanoff, Hope Van Dyne, and Gamora. The researcher analyzes those characters because it would be interesting to analyze women characters in a superhero movie that usually is male dominance. Besides, those three characters have different backgrounds and different characteristics. Natasha Romanoff is a former Russian spy. She had a bad childhood memory where her mother was forced her to join in such a red room community. She trained to be a spy and assassin. However, when she was hired by a community named SHIELD, she decided to do right by helping each other. Hope Van Dyne is the daughter of a scientist named Dr. Hank Pym. She is just an ordinary woman who has not any background to be a hero. She becomes a hero because her father created a suit, named the wasp suit, which can shrink in a bee's shape. Although Hope has a skill in fighting, she then becomes a hero and partners with her boyfriend Scott Lang, who also a hero with Ant-man suit. The next is Gamora. She is an alien from another planet. She is just an ordinary alien that has skills in fighting. But she was

adopted by a supervillain, she trained to be an assassin. When she knew that her stepfather's crimes had gone too far, she decided to stop her father's evil plan and betrayed him by trying to kill him. This study uses three different movies in MCU as the data source because the writer wants to find the data until it is saturated. Also, from these three movies, they pictured different conditions and situations that influenced each subject in using their language features.

This study analyzes the data through movie representation. There are some of previous studies that examined the data through movies, but it has different genres since this present study uses an action superhero genre. Some previous studies have the same subject, but those were analyzed only the representation of the character's appearance in the movie. Meanwhile, this present study analyzes the character's utterances. In this study, the researcher analyzes the linguistic features of female heroes in superhero movies since people think superheroes are just referred to male characters. The researcher's hypothesis is those female heroes do not have feminine features in their speech since they are pictured as a heroin character. So, the researcher compares their utterances with female and male language features. The researcher also analyzes the function of women language features from each character, and the factors that shape their language features since the three of them have different backgrounds and characteristics. It proves that they also have different features in their speech even though they are claimed as heroes.

differently. While, when humans are older as men and women, they have different roles and various roles in society. Women and men have their roles in society, with that, and their ways of using language can be connected. They would have taken advantage and take the benefit of the freedom in ways to use language that will be produced (Wardhough, 2006). The prestige form tends to be used by women. They tend to use the prestige form of other phonetic variables. Based on Trudgill, women produce more prestigious sounds in the pronunciation (Jane, 2006).

Men tend to use their power to dominate others, including women. That applies in terms of power in society, while some women try hard to dominate the others. Men tend to take control and to interrupt when they speak. In speaking, the prestigious form is commonly used by women in their language, that is why they tend to be more powerless even they try to dominate the others. For their features of the language, men and women have learned in certain ways in their speech.

As in conclusion, language and gender are some of the field studies on sociolinguistics. It deals with the differentiation of linguistic gender reflected on how people speak their language. The things that concerned are pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and women's and men's speech interaction patterns.

Because there are many differences between women and men, women have their language characteristics (Qi Pan, 2011).

2.2 Women Language Features

The term women's language features began popular in the 1970s because of the research by Robin Lakoff for specific features in women's speech. Women tend to have some features in their speech (Lakoff in Holmes, 1992). Women are more frequently use features than men. There are ten lists of women's language features as the characteristics of their speech. They are lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, raising intonation, 'empty' adjectives, precise color term, intensifiers, 'hypercorrect' grammar, super polite form, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress. Lakoff's theory has become the basic theory of researching women's language features for any researcher.

2.2.1 Lexical Hedges or Fillers

One of the kinds of women's language features is Lexical Hedges, based on Lakoff (2004). Generally, lexical hedges or fillers are the words as the evidence of the unconfident in the speaker's speech (Lakoff in Holmes, 1992). Hedges has a function as the words that help the speaker to convey the unconfidently or that can not guarantee the accuracy of their statement. It has a meaningful purpose than fillers. The word like 'kind of' or 'sort of' can be considered as hedges. Meanwhile, fillers are more depicted as meaningless sentences and only used to fill the pause in people's speech. The words such as 'you see' 'well,' and 'um' can be considered as fillers.

studios are the producer behind these movies. The characters are based on Marvel comics. The franchise has expanded to include comic books, short movies, television series, and digital series. For the movies itself, MCU has released for more than 20 movies. They are divided into many phases.

Currently, MCU has three phases for their movies. The first phase began with the first movie was released in 2008, *Iron Man*. Then they released *The Incredible Hulk* (2008), *Iron Man 2* (2010), *Thor* (2011), *Captain America: The First Avengers* (2011), and *Marvel's Avengers* (2012). Continually, Phase Two began with *Iron Man 3* (2013), *Thor: The Dark World* (2013), *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* (2014), *Guardian of the Galaxy I* (2014), *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015), and *Ant-Man* (2015). Next, phase three began with the release of *Captain America: Civil War* (2016), *Doctor Strange* (2016), *Guardian of the Galaxy vol. 2* (2017), *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017), *Thor: Ragnarok* (2017), *Black Panther* (2018), *Avengers: Infinity War* (2018), *Ant-Man and the Wasp* (2018), *Captain Marvel* (2019), and *Avengers: Endgame* (2019).

As explained before that, MCU has more than 20 different movies with superhero themes. Based on comic books Marvel created by Stan Lee. This study will take many movies in MCU as the data sources in finding the data. But it depends on the appearance of female characters. As one character can appear in more than three movies, and the other character can only appear in just one movie. The researcher uses three movies as data sources. Each different subject from each different movies. Natasha Romanoff in *Avengers: endgame*, Hope Van Dyne in

Ant Man and The Wasp, and Gamora in *Guardian of the Galaxy 1*. The researcher also describes the background in their movies.

2.6.1 Background of Characters in Movies

For this part, the researcher describes the characteristics and background of the three female heroes in their movies. They are Natasha, Hope, and Gamora. Each of them is from different movies and has a different background story that influenced each movie's plot.

2.6.1.1 Background of Natasha Romanoff in *Avengers Endgame*

Natasha Romanoff is one of six builders in *the Avengers* team. Her role has significant importance in helping and saving people. Among her teammates, Natasha has the smallest ego. Because she is the only woman in the *Avengers* team, and she is a very calm person. Despite being an ex-spy, Natasha is extremely fearless. She is cunning, intelligent, and unpredictable. She is smart in keeping her emotion under her control.

The researcher decided to analyze *Avengers Endgame* movie as the data source for Natasha Romanoff. In this movie, Natasha is devastated because of the big loss from the supervillain, Thanos. Natasha, who is smart at keeping her emotion under her control, suddenly become emotional and ready to give up. With her characteristics in this movie, the researcher can analyze her language features since she shows her emotions here, not like in any of her previous movies. This movie is the sequel of the previous *Avengers Infinity War* movie. *Avengers Endgame* is about the loss of *Avengers* team had in the past from a powerful

supervillain, Thanos. They have lost to Thanos because Thanos had wiped out fifty percent of living creatures in the universe. Mostly, the living creatures that have been wiped out turn to dust. *Avengers Endgame* has a mixed-up plot since it takes a backward and forward storyline. In the early scene, the team already had one chance to take down Thanos. But they were late since Thanos already destroyed the infinity stones. Natasha, being the one who has big confidence before, looks very disappointed and devastated.

Then the plot moves forward to five years later. It shows Natasha discuss with some fellow member of the team to seek any changes in bringing back people who turned to dust. This scene shows how eager Natasha is in finding anyways. Meanwhile, the rest of the team builders have given up on it, but Natasha still believes in some ways. But still, she had nothing to find. Until she met Scott and told her about time travel in the quantum realm. She becomes more optimistic in travel back time to gather the infinity stones. But in doing so, she needs to be the one who sacrifices herself to get the soul stone. With her best friend Clint in her side, she jumps to the cliff to kill herself so that Clint can get the soul stone. After gathering all the stones, the rest of the team brings back all people who have been turned to dust. Then the team also fights together to take down the powerful villain, Thanos.

2.6.1.2 Background of Hope Van Dyne in *Ant Man and The Wasp*

Hope Van Dyne is the daughter of ex-scientist, Dr. Hank Pym. She is very intelligent and has a strong will, but also can be arrogant. She sometimes likes to underestimate other people. But all of that, she is a sincere person. That is why

she sometimes can be blunt and self-assured. Despite that, Hope is a very loving daughter. Since she lost her mother when she was young, she always keeps her father safe and still helps him. She also does help Scott by encouraging him to have the skill to be an Ant Man.

The researchers decided to use *Ant Man and The Wasp* movie because Hope Van Dyne finally becomes The Wasp. This movie is the second series of *Ant Man*. The researcher used this movie because Hope Van Dyne has a significant influence in helping her father. They have plans to bring her mother back. Also, here in this movie Hope is showing more of her ability to fight and combat. Besides, in this movie Hope and her father also in a lot of pressure because the government has chased them for breaking the rules. So, the situation is complicated because they have to hide while in doing so, they also have to save Hope's mother. In *Ant Man and The Wasp*, Hope helps her father in re-building their company in creating the quantum realm. This movie followed the storyline of another movie by Marvel, *Captain America: Civil War*. In *Ant Man and The Wasp*, Hope and her father manage to open a tunnel to the quantum realm. Hope believes that her mother, who has been stuck for almost thirty years still alive in the quantum realm. *Ant Man and The Wasp* is the sequel movie of *Ant Man*. In the *Ant Man* post-credit, Hank Pym had told Hope to become the next wasp after her mother.

At the early scene of *Ant-Man and The Wasp*, Hope and her father are already working on building the tunnel, and they kidnap Scott to get more entangled with her mother, Janet. The efforts did not go well since they are being

watched by the police. During the movie, Hope Van Dyne described as confident and an optimistic woman. She never gave up easily in bringing her mother back. After all, obstacles that got in her way, she manages to be a strong independent woman in fulfilling her endgame.

2.6.1.3 Background of Gamora in *Guardian of the Galaxy 1*

Gamora is an alien that was grown up as a warrior. She is very tough and has a strong will. She is determined to get what she wants. Despite that, she is also like to work alone. She has a trust issue toward other people since her stepfather, a supervillain Thanos, lied to her about the murder of her family. Her step-sister, Nebula, also called her a softie since she is selfless and has a heart in helping the right one.

The researcher decided to use *Guardian of the Galaxy 1* because this movie is the origin story of Gamora. This movie also shows the background of Gamora. So, the researcher able to analyze Gamora since she is an alien from outer space. And, it would be interesting to compare her utterances with Natasha's and Hope's utterances. *Guardian of the Galaxy 1* started with Peter Quill, trying to steal a valuable item, the orb. This movie takes place in outer space, on a planet called Morag. In this movie, Gamora described as a stepdaughter of a supervillain, Thanos. Thanos raised her as an assassin and a killing machine for him and his ally, Ronan. Gamora is an alien who had been adopted by Thanos right after he was slaughtered her hometown. Since then, Gamora had been trained with another adopted daughter of Thanos, Nebula. As she has grown up, she plans to rebel against Thanos and used her opportunity to betray him.

to Steve when they talked about the sudden appearance of Steve in the Compound. When Steve told her that he wants to see a friend, Natasha is stressing the word "clearly" because she knows that Steve indirectly asks her about her condition. Natasha also used that word to clarify the addressee that she is doing fine. And Hope stresses the word "really" to Sony when they are discussing business. But Sony is asking Hope to work with him. Then she is stressing her words because it proved that she appreciated what Sony do to her. Meanwhile, Gamora is in a conversation with Yondu. Yondu is torturing Peter because Peter betrays him. Gamora is trying to help Peter. She tries to tell Yondu they are in danger. In her utterance, Gamora emphasizes "we have to warn them" because she wants to make Yondu sure of her utterances. She is expressing her anger to him because he is not listening. It concludes that each subject used this type of feature to make their addressee understand what the speaker intended.

Based on the results, it can be concluded that female heroes such as Natasha Romanoff, Hope Van Dyne, and Gamora used women's language features. Even though they claimed as heroes who have skills in combating and fighting, they still have their women's features in their speech. However, female heroes also use men language features in their utterances. It is caused by their personality who have more masculine characteristics than feminine characteristics. It is also because they usually work in the male dominance area. That is why the researcher compares their women language features with men language features.

reinforce her thoughts. She often emphasizes her utterance in order to strengthen her statement.

Lexical hedges or filler is the second most frequently used by all three female heroes. There are 10 utterances in total contained lexical hedges or filler features in three female heroes' speech. And Natasha Romanoff is the one that mostly used lexical hedges or fillers. There are 7 utterances of Natasha, which contained lexical hedges or fillers. She uses a lot of lexical hedges or filler because she often feels unsure of her statements. In *Avengers Endgame*, Natasha has emotionally despaired with the situation. She felt devastated because of her big loss. According to Poynton (cited in Wahyuni, 2015), lexical hedges reflect women's feelings of insecurity. It relates with Natasha's situation in the movie whereas she is feeling uncertain about what to do in helping others.

The third most frequently used of women language feature is raising intonation. There are 8 utterances in total that contained this type in three female heroes' speech. Among all three female heroes, Gamora is the one that used this type more in her utterances. Regarding the fact that Gamora is an alien, she often uses high intonation in declarative sentences. Based on Lakoff (2004), the use of high intonation in declarative is to show women emotion or empathy about something. It is also accordance to the findings of men language features.

The findings of men language features show that Gamora uses more men language features in her speech among all three female heroes. As it already mentions that she is an alien, she also used to be a kid who raised as a killing machine by her stepfather. 46% of Gamora's utterances contained men language

features. She often uses command in her utterance. Due to her personality, who is hard in trusting others and usually work alone, she often uses a command to make others do what she intended to.

The use of women language features has the function of each. The function of each relies upon the purpose behind the speaker's intention in delivering their speech. This present study shows that three female heroes use women language features to express their uncertainty, to get a response, to start a discussion, and to express feelings or opinions. The most dominant function used by all three female heroes is to express their feeling or opinion. According to the findings of this study, the use of emphatic stress is the most frequently used in three female heroes' speech. Based on Pearson (1985), women use emphatic stress to express feelings. It indicates that three female heroes try to gain more attention by showing their affection or feeling.

All three female heroes use women language features in their speech. But from this study, the findings show that they do not have the same women language features, although they labeled as a hero. Many factors affect their differences. The social factor is one of them. In this study, the researcher found out that Natasha's role is affecting her language features. In *Avengers Endgame*, there is a scene where Natasha leads a meeting. It is a meeting between Avengers members. The members are reporting things to Natasha. It makes her a leader. From this, the researcher found out that her language features shaped by her role as a leader. Nevertheless, Hope's and Gamora's language features are not affected by social factors. In the movie, Hope being chased by the FBI. While Gamora is

the stepdaughter of a supervillain. That is why they do not have any roles in their society. Based on Qi Pan (2011), the environment civilization that exists about how women should talk among people can also shape women language features. But, the researcher did not find the data, whereas each female heroes have a scene in their environment. In each movie, the three female heroes did not have any scene, whereas they were in public and shows the culture of how women speak properly.

This research has attempted to examine the women's language features used by female characters in action movies. The present study seems to develop the study of women language features in the movie. It can be considered as the continuance of the previous related studies that researching women's language features in the movie. The study by Bueno (2016) analyzed language features used by all main characters in *Pitch Perfect* movie found out that there are five features used by all characters. Another study by Safitri (2017) with the subject of the female character in animation movie analyzed language features, and the modification to reduce feminine effects had found eight features in the study. The study by Wati (2016) analyzed the comparison of two female characters from two different movies in using women's language features found seven features used by the first character and four features used by the second character. Based on the previous studies, it can be concluded that in movie representation, many kinds of female movie characters are using women language features. But it is rarely found the use of women language features used by heroin characters. However, this research is not in accordance with the hypothesis. It is because the results of the

