

**SPEECH FEATURES USED BY THE MAIN CHARACTERS
IN “BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA” MOVIE**

THESIS



**BY:
HIDAYATUL FITRIA
REG. NUMBER: A73217072**

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES
UIN SUNAN AMPEL SURABAYA
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communication. The speakers speak differently with other people according to the situational context when they communicate.

Men and women are expected to have different types of conversation, different roles and interests, and different reactions toward other people (Lakoff, 1973, p. 62). They are expected to be the important people in society so they try to build a good relationship by using their speech features. When members of different cultures communicate, they bring their communication rules and assumptions to understand the interaction with others. In this case, a language demonstrates a culture. Men and women are shaped by the culture so they will speak in different ways if they socialize in a different culture and environment. Pilkington (cited in Coates, 2004, p. 138) states that “the goal of women’s and men’s talk is solidarity”. They just do different strategies to achieve this goal.

Tannen (1990) states that “men like to behave as dominant as talkers while women are in second place during the process of conversation”. Men are more aggressive to have a position of dominance. It is different from women who are assigned a submissive role either in the workplace or at home. Both women and men have their speech features to be accepted by society and to show their identity. Lakoff (1973) describes that “women’s style conveys weakness, uncertainty, and unimportance”. It is influenced by social norms that persuade men to be competitive and women to be cooperative.

Some researchers have researched speech features. Nafilaturif’ah (2017) analyzed the linguistic features of Katniss Everdeen in Suzanne Collin’s “The Hunger Games” which was concentrated on Lakoff’s (1973) theory to investigate

whether or not Katniss more uses women's linguistic features in her utterances.

This research showed that Katniss as a woman breaks Lakoff's theory because she does not need to apply some features as long as Katniss does not require it.

Pahlevi (2019) analyzed the speech features of men characters in the "Bohemian Rhapsody" movie. This research applied Coates' (2004) and Hymes' (1974) theories to analyze speech features of men characters and the situations in using these speech features. Rullyanti & Dohona (2018) analyzed women's speech features of men characters in "Pride and Prejudice" and "Zombies" movies. They used Lakoff's (1973), Holmes' (2001), and Hoppe's (2000) theories to analyze women's speech features, the function of these features, and social manners that are reflected by men characters. This research showed that women's linguistic features that had been spoken by men characters might be the same as women's, but they have different kinds of analyses that referred to the function of the features and the kinds of social manners of the men characters.

Many research about speech features (Mazidah, 2013; Yuniarti, 2014; Sholikha, 2016; Ma'rifah, 2018; Handyanta, 2018; Apridaningrum, 2018) have focused on Lakoff's (1973) theory and the source of data was in form of movies, talk shows, and public speeches. There was previous research that investigated the speech features of women and men characters in "The Devil Wears Prada" movie using Lakoff's (1973) and Coates' (2004) theories (Juwita, Sunggingwati, & Valiantien, 2018). This research was designed to analyze men characters using men's speech features and women characters using women's speech features. The result of this research explained that men and women do not consistently use their

language based on their gender. This is also influenced by the environment of the speaker who uses those language features.

However, from all previous research, as far as the researcher knows, no research uses Lakoff's (1973), Coates' (2004), and Hymes' (1974) theories in analyzing speech features of the main female character and the main male character in "Bridge to Terabithia" movie (2007) by Jeff Stockwell and David Paterson (IV). But, there were previous research, Khoiroh (2017) that analyzed implicature, and Fitria, Ningrum, & Suhandoko (2020) that analyzed politeness strategies, used the "Bridge to Terabithia" movie as the data source. This "Bridge to Terabithia" movie is a faithful adaptation of the novel. It had been nominated for seven awards and won five at the Young Artist Awards (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>). Besides that, "Bridge to Terabithia" movie is a suitable movie to be analyzed about speech features because the utterances of the main characters who are Leslie and Jess can reflect the speech features based on Lakoff's (1973) and Coates' (2004) theories. By analyzing the main characters, this research gives a big result about what the speech features used and their situational context in their utterances. They have many interactions and conversations with other characters and it makes the speech features more apparent. These are why the researcher is interested in investigating this movie about speech features through the main characters.

The researcher uses a movie as the data source because a movie can be a good medium to learn speech features in communication. Because speech features are related to society, a movie can be a good reflection of the real condition in

society. It eases the researcher to analyze the speech features. Besides that, nowadays, people are so close to digital devices from which they can watch movies everywhere and every time. Also, knowledge of speech features has great importance because both the researcher and the readers can adopt these speech features in their real-life since it affects communication in daily life. That is why the researcher chooses speech features in the movie as a topic in this research.

Thus, this present research analyzes speech features that are used by the main female character and the main male character who are Leslie and Jess in the “Bridge to Terabithia” movie because it has not been researched yet by previous researchers. Meanwhile, there is little research that concerns the main female character and the main male character using their speech features in their utterances. The researcher analyzes based on Lakoff’s (1973) theory about women’s speech features, Coates’ (2004) theory about men’s speech features, and additional theory from Hymes’ (1974) about S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G factors. Here, S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G factors mean the situational context which refers to Scene and Setting, Participant, End, Act, Key, Instrumentality, Norm, and Genre. The researcher combines two theories which are Lakoff’s (1973) and Coates’ (2004) to find out women’s speech features that are used by Leslie and men’s speech features that are used by Jess. Lakoff is the first linguist who has put forward ten basic assumptions about a special language for women based on her intuitions and observations. The last, the additional theory from Hymes’ (1974) is used to describe the situational context of the utterances because when describing the

2.2 Speech Features

Speech features are the features or characteristics that are used by people for communication to show their identity to be accepted in society. Besides the difference in physical appearances, women and men also have differences in using their language. When men or women speak their language, they do not speak in a given way but they construct their identity through talking with others (Brown & Attardo, 2006, p. 167). In this case, Wardaugh (2006, p. 316) argues that “gender is a key component of identity”.

Although women and men live in the same environment, it does not mean they have the same language. They grow up in a different world of words. They set up different relations with their environment and it reflects the language which is used by them. Their speech styles are considered consistent with their ideas about social learning. The way language is used and understood varies depending on where, when, and in what situational context interaction is taking place. According to Weatherall (2002, p. 63), “using the concept of a community of practice, speech features are not simply a reflection of the gender of the speakers in a particular situational context. Instead, the language used in any interaction emerges from the social practices of a community in combination with the linguistic patterns that the speakers develop as they act in their other linguistic communities”. One of the effects of context is gender differences in speech. The real gender differences in speech will emerge until the results of the context are controlled for.

Tannen (1990, p. 18) states that “women speak and hear a language of connection and intimacy while men speak and hear a language of status and independence”. They have their characteristic or styles in using their language because they have different roles and status in society. As Lakoff pointed out (cited in Weatherall, 2002, p. 55), “men and women are intimately related to the judgments of members of a culture about how to be and think like a good woman or a good man”. It means that either women or men struggle with their position in society. Women’s speech features are based on the values of affiliation and connection while men’s speech features reflect their concern for status.

According to Tannen (1990, p. 36), “for most women, the language of conversation is a language of rapport which is a way of establishing connections and negotiating relationships. It can be done by displaying similarities and matching experiences. On the other hand, for most men, talk is a means to preserve the independence and negotiate and maintain status in a hierarchical social order. This is done by exhibiting knowledge and skill and by holding center stage through verbal performance such as storytelling, joking, or imparting information. They are more comfortable speaking in larger groups which are called ‘public speaking’ which is more like giving a report”. If men often use opposition to establish connections, women can be competitive and critical using obvious cooperation and association.

Speech features can be divided into two parts which are women’s speech features and men’s speech features.

- 3) 'E' refers to ends, goals, purposes, or outcomes of the communication. It refers to what is conventionally expected or publicly stated as the object of the event from the point of view of the community.
- 4) 'A' refers to acts including both form and content. It can be the story's plot and development by the speaker. According to Hymes (1974), "any action can be considered a communicative action if it conveys meaning to the participants". For example in terms of 'He prayed saying "..."' which the words appearing between double quotation marks represent the form and 'He prayed that he would get well' which reports the content only.
- 5) 'K' refers to the key. It refers to the tone, manner, or spirit in which a particular message is conveyed such as lighthearted, serious, precise, pedantic, mocking, sarcastic, pompous, and so on. The key may also be marked nonverbally by a certain kind of behavior, gesture, posture, or even deportment.
- 6) 'I' refers to instrumentality. It refers to the choice of the channel such as oral, written, or telegraphic, and to the actual form of speech employed such as dialect, code, or register that is chosen.
- 7) 'N' refers to the norms of communication. The social rules guide the event and participants' actions and reactions. According to Hymes (1974), "norms refer to the rules relating to the conduct of the speech event". These will include rules about floor holding, turn-taking,

Leslie knew it before and she had prepared the gift for Jess. Maybe she got the information from Belle about Jess' birthday. She bought a set of drawing tools for Jess because Leslie knew that Jess was good at drawing. Firstly, Jess was questioning about the price because the gift was so beautiful and pricey. But, Leslie answered, "What's the matter what it costs?" Afterward, to fulfill Jess' want, she applied the lexical hedge feature by saying 'if you want' to answer Jess' statement. It was used to minimize the possible unfriendliness that Leslie and Jess may get. Then, the filler 'well' uttered by Leslie also expressed the uncertainty of Leslie to respond to Jess' statement. By saying 'well', Leslie was unsure about what she said. It indicated that Leslie said it in a polite way to keep a good relationship with Jess. Leslie did not want to take the gift back but she did it because maybe Jess wanted to have another one. She tried to understand Jess' feeling by using this feature.

2. Tag Question

Tag question refers to the use of 'don't we?', 'right?', 'isn't it?' and so on. This feature is used to ensure the communication runs smoothly. It is also used when the speaker tries to evoke dialogue from the hearer by having 'small talk'. Besides, it can be used when the speaker states a claim but lacks confidence in the truth of the claim. Tag question requests a confirmation of the information which the speaker is unsure about. In this research, the researcher found 4 data of Leslie's utterances that contained tag questions. The tag questions that she used were 'right?', 'is it?', 'won't we?', and 'isn't it?'. The researcher concluded that

Although Jess applies all men's speech features which are general topic choice with 5 data, monologues and playing the expert with only 1 datum, handing over through questions with 13 data, verbal sparring with 2 data, and overlapping turn-taking with only 1 datum, the frequency of his utterances in using men's speech features is less than Leslie's utterances in using women's speech features with the total is 22 data. His utterances did not frequently follow Coates' (2004) theory about men's speech features.

Handing over through questions feature is mostly used by Jess in his utterances. It is because Jess wants to get the information from the hearers and he wants to give the hearers a chance to speak as an expert. Because Jess asks about the hearers' activities, they know what happens. It makes Jess get the information that he wants.

Furthermore, when describing the speech features, it also covers the situational context when the speech features are used. Here the researcher also describes the situational context of speech features used by the main female character and the main male character in the "Bridge to Terabithia" movie. The kinds of situations were fulfilled in each speech feature. Some emotions and situations caused the main characters to use a certain feature in their utterances. It appears from the setting, the participants, the goals of the communication, and the tone of speech act. The researcher concludes that either women or men use their speech features are also influenced by the situational context of their utterances.

Based on the findings above, the researcher wants to discuss this present research with several previous studies. This research has similarities with many

previous studies about the theory which is proposed by Lakoff (1973). For example, it is from the research conducted by Nafilaturrif'ah (2017). The result of her research showed that Katniss tends to break Lakoff's (1973) theory as long as she does not require using women's speech features. While in this present research, Leslie frequently used women's speech features in her utterances with a total is 71 data. Similar to other research (Juwita, Sunggingwati, & Valiantien, 2018), Leslie and Jess do not consistently use their language based on their gender. This is also influenced by the situational context when they use their speech features. Sometimes, Leslie used men's speech features in a certain situation, and sometimes, Jess also used women's speech features in a certain situation.

Moreover, the other similarity between this research and previous research is from the source of data which is a movie. Many researchers had conducted research using a movie as a data source in analyzing speech features. Meanwhile, the difference between this present research and previous researches is that this research uses theories which are Lakoff's (1973) theory, Coates' (2004) theory, and the additional theory by Hymes' (1974) to find out the speech features used by the main female character and the main male character in the "Bridge to Terabithia" movie. In this case, this research can be supported by previous research to discover a fresh discovery of speech features.

Having found that there are 71 data for women's speech features used by Leslie in "Bridge to Terabithia" movie, it shows that Leslie wants to maintain the social relationship with others, especially Jess, her close friend. She concerns with

the values of affiliation and connection between her and the hearers (Lakoff, cited in Weatherall, 2002, p. 55). While for Jess, his utterances do not frequently follow men's speech features proposed by Coates (2004). The researcher only found 22 data in Jess' utterances. As Coates (2004, p. 135) pointed out, men tend to hold the floor as dominant people which they very concern with their status. But here in this research, the researcher found that Jess did not too hold the center stage in his utterances when communicating with others.

For the explanation above, the researcher concludes that the speech features are dynamic. It is not absolutely that women will use women's speech features and men will use men's speech features. Lakoff (1973) and Coates (2004) only proposed the generalization and the tendency of women and men using their speech features. It is still influenced by the existing context of the conversation. Besides, when it is applied in this era, the frequency of using women's speech features or men's speech features will be less than at the time which Lakoff's (1973) and Coates' (2004) theories are proposed. The condition of that era and this era is quite different. In this era, many women have a bravery to speak up and they also tend to be the dominant one in the community. It aims to reach the social status and also to maintain the social relationship with others. This case also occurs toward men who sometimes use politer words in some occasions. They do not want to get a bad image because it will affect the social status of them. Either women or men know when and why they should use women's speech features or men's speech features in their utterances. Still, it is influenced by the situational context when they utter their utterances.

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