



**GENDER LANGUAGE CHARACTERISTICS USED
BY STUDENTS IN BOARDING HOUSE**

Herois T. Simaremare

Amrin Saragih

Sri Minda Murni

Linguistik Terapan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Negeri Medan

Diterima Februari 2017; Disetujui April 2017; Dipublikasikan Juni 2017

ABSTRACT

The study deals with the gender language characteristics used by students in boarding house. This study attempted to find out the gender language characteristics used by students and to describe the reason why are the gender language characteristics used by students in boarding house. This study was conducted by using qualitative design. The data in this study were taken from the recorded utterances of the students in boarding house and interview. The source of data were four male and four female students. The utterances were recorded and transcribed in order to be analyzed. The data were analyzed by using interactive model by Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014). The findings show that all the male language characteristics used by male and female students in boarding house. While, not all female language characteristics used by them, the male students used 7 kinds of female language characteristics and the female students used 8 kinds of female language characteristics. The most dominantly of male language characteristics used by gender students is judgement adjectives, while the most dominantly of female language characteristics is taq questions. Meanwhile, there were four reasons that affect the using of language characteristics used by students in boarding house.

Keywords : Gender Language, Male Language Characteristics, Female Language Characteristics, Utterances

How to Cite: Simaremare, Herois T. (2017).

Gender Language Characteristics Used by Students in Boarding House. *Jurnal Linguistik Terapan Pascasarjana Unimed*, 14 (1): 80-89

INTRODUCTION

Gender differences are the fundamental facts of social life and human differences. Naturally, a man is differently created from woman. For example, a man has more mass of muscle than a woman does. This makes man physically stronger than woman. Women are more inhibited with feelings or emotions than men, while men are destined to more rational. Eckert & Ginet (2003) stated that learning to be male or female involves learning to look and act in particular ways, learning to participate in relationship and communities and learning to see the world from a particular perspective. It is also said that the brain of men are different from that of women. A brain is the center of senses by which human beings make senses or perceptions of the world. Since the brain of men and women are different, a man perceives the world differently from a woman does. This is the reason why a man uses language or produces texts differently from women. In social interaction, men and women have different interests in choosing their conversation topics. Men are more interested to choose the topics about politics, economics, sports and current news. While women are more interested to choose the topics about home activities or family affairs, such as the education of children, clothes, foods and fashion.

Eggin (2004) stated that gender refers to values, rights and responsibilities socially and culturally given to someone due to the consequence of the fact that she/he is male or female. It can be simply viewed that gender determines roles someone is required to play as masculine or feminine. The way how people regard the roles has been rooted and ingrained in social practices. Due to the fact that women are physically weaker than men, in human civilizations, women are assigned to keeping home and doing house works. But nowadays, both men and women have the same rights and responsibilities in society. As seen in university, the male and female students have the same right in taking the same major. This phenomenon effect the using of language.

In affecting the language, there are four factors that affect the using of language differences, such as status, formality, affect and contact. Status is seen in participants' roles involving power relationship. Power in using language is defined as the ability to coerce over others. The using of language differences also caused by the different situation and environment as found in boarding house.

Lakoff in Holmes (2013) suggested that women's speech can be distinguished from the men's speech in a number of language characteristics, such as, lexical hedge/fillers, tag question, empty adjective, etc. While, Crawford (1997) pointed out that language characteristics of men can be identified in the using of direct sentences, brief sentences, slang or swear words, etc. But, based on the previous research observation, both men and women did not perform specific language characteristics as suggested by theories. In boarding house environment, the male students sometimes used the female language characteristics and female students used the male language characteristics as seen in the data below.

Female : Tutupkan pintu itu!(Close the door!)

Male : Aku, ka?(Me, sist?)

Female: Ya iala, siapa lagi?(Yes, of course. Who's anything else?)

Male : Jangan langsung marah-marahlah ka.(Don't be angry sist)

Female: Nyalakan lampu luar skalian!(Turn on the lamp!)

Male : Hmmm, pelan bilangny ka. (Speak lowly, sist)

Female: Tutupkanlahalap becakap. (Close the door, you speak too much)

From the conversation above, it is seen that there is a different of using language. The female used direct sentences and brief sentences when she's talking to the male. The utterances, "*tutupkan pintu itu; nyalakan lampu luar sekalian, tutupkanlah*" are formed in imperative sentences. An imperative can directly control different aspect of another person's thinking or behavior. Based on theory, direct sentences are used by male in their communication. It's one of the male language characteristics as Crawford (1997) suggested that men are more direct than women because men use the communication to show the power. It's contrast with the conversation above. In this conversation, the female used the language characteristics of male. Vice versa, the male also used the female language characteristics as seen in the data below.

Male : Habis sabun ku lah. Bisa minta tolong abang Fit (My soap is used up . Would you help me, Fit)

Female : Malas kali lah aku keluar bang.(It's so lazy to go out, brother)

Male : Tolonglah dek.(Help me, please)

Female : Abanglah pigih, palah malu, warungnya sangat dekat pun.(Buy by yourself, don't be shy, the stall is so near)

Male : Tega kau dek liat abang pigih belinya?(Would you let me to buy by my self?)

Female : Ahhhh. modus. Pintar kali abang kalo mau nyuruh memang, biar ga ngelak awak. (Ahhhh, You are so great to order someone, I can't refuse it)

Male : Serius loh dek, pigihlah.(I'm serious, Go away, please)

From the conversation above, it is seen that the male did not use their language characteristics. He avoided the use of direct and brief sentences when he ordered something. The male language characteristic is not realized in his utterances. He used the superpolite form in his utterances. It's contrast with Crawford (1997) who stated that in their communication, men use less of politeness and seldom to keep someone's feeling. Besides that, the male use term of address "*dek*". It is contrast with

Frankie (2013) finding who found that men do not use many terms of address in their communication. On the other hand, the male's utterances are matched with findings of Xiufang Xia (2013), men like to use falling intonation to show that they are quite sure of what they are saying.

Some recent research have been conducted on investigating the language differences. Frankie (2013) in his research about gender differences in the use of linguistic forms in the speech of men and women found that (1) woman use more polite forms of address than men, ask more questions and use more humours than men; (2) both male and female are direct in their conversation, (3) both male and female do not use intensifiers and use very few fillers, hedges and affirmatives in their speech; (4) men's conversation focus on the topic of doing things i.e. works of *entrepreneurs* whereas women centre on the topics of home, self, feelings and affiliation with others. Analysing the linguistics forms used, women appear more polite than men as they prefer using their ethnic group terms of address when addressing and referring to one another.

Based on the previous research findings, the writer is interested to investigate the gender language characteristics in different phenomena. As seen in the preliminary data above, it's find that the male and female students did not use the specific gender language characteristics in boarding house, therefore this phenomenon is important to be studied.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted by using qualitative research. According to Ary, et al (2010), qualitative research focuses on understanding social phenomena and providing rich verbal descriptions of setting, situations, and participants. It is conducted to describe the current status of phenomenon that exists at the time of study. How they proceed is based on theoretical assumptions (that meaning and process are crucial in understanding human behavior, that descriptive data are what is important to collect and that analysis is best done inductively).

According to Lichtman (2013:17) the purpose of qualitative research is to describe and understand human phenomena, human interaction, or human discourse. This type of research attempted to describe or explain why a phenomenon happens. Furthermore, qualitative research means to find out how a theory works in different phenomena whose data collected are in the form of words rather than numbers (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007).

The data in this study were taken from the conversations of male and female students who live in Harianja Boarding House. The sentences produced by them had been analysed in order to answer the two research problems. According to Mashun (2005) there are some criteria to get representative data, to choose the respondents as subject of research based on age, sex, have education, and different background

of family situation. Therefore, the participants of this study were chosen by purposive random sampling with the following criteria.

1. Sex: male and female
2. The range of students age : 19 – 25 years old.
3. The participants had been living in the boarding house for more than two years.
4. The participants come from the different family situation.

Based on the above criteria, there were 8 students, 4 males and 4 females were selected from 43 students who belong to those criteria. The participants selected in this study as source of data.

The technique of data collection used documentary technique and interview. There were three steps used to collect the data through documentary technique. The first step was observations. In this step, the researcher applied the direct observation when participants were engaged in conversation. Then, the utterances produced by male and female students were recorded. The main purpose of recording is to be able to get the natural data. Then, the utterances transcribed in order to organize the data.

Next, the researcher applied interview to the male and female students to make sure the data and gain the answer to know the reason why are the language characteristics used by them in boarding house.

Instrument of data collection is a tool or equipment used in collecting the data. The researcher is the key instrument who collect and observe the available data. In this study, the instrument were needed recorder and interview sheet. Recorder used to record the conversation between males and female students in boarding house environment. Interview sheet used to make sure the data and gain the answer to know the reason why are the students used the language characteristics in boarding house.

Trustworthiness is the corresponding term used in qualitative research as a measure of the quality of research. Trustworthiness is the extent to which the data and data analysis are believable and trustworthy. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the trustworthiness of qualitative research can be established by using four strategies: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

Based on the data analysis, some research findings were specified below:

Based on the analysis provided in the previous parts, the findings are specified as follows.

1. From what was found in this study, the theories said that the men and women used different language characteristics are not completely true. In this study, it was found that male and female students in boarding house used language characteristics of male and female. Sometimes male language characteristics used by female students, vice versa, female language characteristics used by male students in boarding house. Judgement adjectives was the most dominantly used by male and female students. The male students percentage of using this characteristics is 28.89% while the female student is 20.69%. It means that the male students used this characteristics more frequently than female. The second most dominantly used of male language characteristics was brief sentences. The male students percentage used this characteristics is 25.56% while the female student is 14.96%. It means that the male students used this characteristics more frequently than female. The less dominantly used was the using of less politeness. The percentage of using the less of politeness is 6.78%. The male students percentage used this characteristics is 4.44% while the female student is 9.19%. It means that the female students used this characteristics more frequently than male. Meanwhile, the most dominantly of female language characteristics used by male and female students was taq question. The percentage of using the taq question is 20.64%. The male students percentage used this characteristics is 20.27% while the female student is 20.98%. It means that the female students used this characteristics more frequently than male. The second most dominantly used of female language characteristics was declaration with interrogative questions. The male students percentage used this characteristics is 17.57% while the female student is 18.51%. It means that the male students used this characteristics more frequently than female. While the emphatic stress and avoidance of strong swear words were the less dominantly used by the male and female students in boarding hose. The male students' percentage of using the emphatic stress is 9.46% while the female students' percentage is 8.65% and the female's percentage of using avoidance of strong swear words is 3.70%, while the males did not used this characteristics.
2. There were four reasons affecting the using of language characteristics used by students in boarding house, they are equal status, informal situation/environment, positive contact, and frequent contact. The male and female students were direct in conversations as the realization of their equal status relation on adulthood period and their same social position as a student. The informal situation consequently required informal language. It also affected the male and female students to use the brief sentences. The male and female used empty adjective as the realization of positive affect. The male and female students also used telling-joke/humours as the realization of frequent contact.

Discussion

From the data analysis, it was found that the male and female students used both male and female language characteristics in boarding house. Sometimes male language characteristics used by female students, vice versa, female language characteristics used by male students in boarding house. Judgement adjectives was the most dominantly used by male and female students. The male students percentage of using this characteristics is 28.89% while the female student is 20.69%. It means that the male students used this characteristics more frequently than female. The second most dominantly used of male language characteristics was brief sentences. The male students percentage used this characteristics is 25.56% while the female student is 14.96%. It means that the male students used this characteristics more frequently than female. The less dominantly used was the using of less politenes. The percentage of using the less of politeness is 6.78%. The male students percentage used this characteristics is 4.44% while the female student is 9.19%. It means that the female students used this characteristics more frequently than male.

Meanwhile, the most dominantly of female language characteristics used by male and female students was taq question. The percentage of using the taq question is 20.64%. The male students percentage used this characteristics is 20.27% while the female student is 20.98%. It means that the female students used this characteristics more frequently than male. The second most dominantly used of female language characteristics was declaration with interrogative questions. The male students percentage used this characteristics is 17.57% while the female student is 18.51%. It means that the male students used this characteristics more frequently than female. While the emphatic stress and avoidance of strong swear words were the less dominantly used by the male and female students in boarding hose. The male students' percentage of using the emphatic stress is 9.46% while the female students' percentage is 8.65% and the female's percentage of using avoidance of strong swear words is 3.70%, while the males did not used this characteristics.

The male and female students used the same language characteristics, actually because of four factors, such as equal status, informal situation/environment, positive contact, and frequent contact in boarding house. Eggins (2004) stated that there are four factors that affect language differences such as, status or power of the participants in their relationships, (2) the level of formality involved in the participant's interaction, (3) affective relation between the participants, and (4) frequency of contact between the addresser and addressee. The percentage of equal status reason for each gender is 25.00%, frequent contact is 25.00, the informal situation is 25.00%, the positive affect is 18.75% and affect

6.25%. While, the unequal status, formal situation and infrequent situation are not included as the reasons of using language characteristics in boarding house.

In line with previous theories, there are 10 kinds of female language characteristics proposed by Lakoff. In this study not all the female language characteristics can be found in female students language in boarding house. In this study, it was found that the female students were dominantly used ellipsis such as such as “mmm, huh,bah, etc” in order to show her compliment or dislike to the others. Elipsis is defined as the omission of one or more words that are obviously understood but that must be supplied to make construction grammatically complete.

The findings of this study also are supported by four previous research finding. Firstly, Romaine (1994) who conducted a research about Language in Society. She found that male and female who has the high status will be more direct than someone who has low status. Secondly, Frankie (2013) who researched about Gender Differences in the Use of Linguistic Forms in the Speech of Men and Women in the Malaysian Context. He found that both male and female are direct in their conversation depend on the topic discussed. Thirdly, Van Han (2014) who conducted research about The Relationship between Language and Gender. He found that the gender differences in language are not invariable, they are influenced by the age, education degree, occupation and status and change according to social development. Fourthly, Jinyu (2016) who conducted a research about Study on Gender Differences in Language Under the Sociolinguistics. He found that the gender differences in language are not invariable, they are influenced by age, education degree, occupation and status and change according to social development.

CONCLUSIONS

With the reference to the research problems, some conclusions are drawn as follows:

- (1) all the male language characteristics used by male and female students in boarding house. While, not all female language characteristics used by them, the male students used 7 kinds of female language characteristics and the female students used 8 kinds of female language characteristics. The most dominantly of male language characteristics used by gender students is judgement adjectives, while the most dominantly of female language characteristics is taq questions.
- (2) there were four reasons that affect the using of language characteristics used by students in boarding house, they are equal status, informal situation, positive affect, and frequent contact. The male and female students were direct in conversations as the realization of their equal status relation on

adulthood period and their same social position as a student. The informal situation and frequent contact consequently required informal language.

REFERENCES

- Bogdan, R and Biklen, S. 1992. *Qualitative Research for Education*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Crawford, M. 2003. *Talking Difference on Gender and Language*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Eckert, P & Ginet, S, M. 2003. *Language and Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eggins, S. 2014. *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group
- Flotow, L. 2004. *Translation and Gender*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- Frankie, S. 2013. Gender Differences in the Use of Linguistic Forms in the Speech of Men and Women in the Malaysian Context. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*. 13(3), 67-69.
- Gray, J. 2002. *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*. United States: Harper Collins.
- Holmes, J. 1992. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. New York: Longman.
- Hubberman, M. & Miles, M.B., 1994 . *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook 2nd ed.* California: Sage.
- Hubberman, M., Miles, M.B. & Saldana, J. 2014. *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Method a Source Book*. United States of America: Sage.
- Kamarul, A. 2010. Mars, Venus, and Gray: Gender Communication. *Journal of International Business Research*, 3 (2).
- Jinyu, D. 2014. Study on Gender Differences in Language Under the Sociolinguistics. *Journal of Canadian Social Science*. 10 (3), 92-96.
- Lakoff, R. 1975. *Language and Woman's Place*. New York: Harpet and Row.
- Lincoln, Y.S., Guba. E. G. 1985. *Naturalistic Inquiry*. London: Sage.
- Martin, J.R. 1992. *English Text: System and Structure*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Meyerhoff, M. 2006. *Introducing Sociolinguistics*. New York: Routledge Tylor and Francis Group.
- Nemati, A & Bayer, J. M. 2007. *Gender Differences in the Use of Linguistic Forms in the Speech of Men and Women: A Comparative Study of Persian And English*. 13 (8)
- Nguyan, V.H. 2014. *The Relationship between Language and Gender: A Case Study in Vietnamese*. *GlobalJournal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*. Global Institute for Research & Education. 3(3). 96-99.

- Saragih, A. *Variations and Functional Varieties of Language*. Medan: The State University of Medan.
- Schneider, D. 2005. *The Psychology of Stereotyping*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Semiring, E. 2016. *Linguistic Characteristics of Gender language in Families with Parents of Different Ethnicity and Social Status*. Unpublished Thesis. Medan: State University of Medan
- Tanjung, S.M. 2013. *Gender Differences in Expressing Polite in English*. Unpublished Thesis. Medan: State University of Medan.
- Talbot, M.M. 2010. *Language and Gender*. Malden: Polity Press
- Tannen, D. 1990. *You Just Don't Understand*. United States: Ballantine Books.
- Trask, R.L. 2004, *Language: The Basics*, New York: Routledge
- Uchida, A. 1992. When Difference is Dominance: A Critique of the Anti-power-based Cultural Approach to Gender Differences. *Language in Society*, 21, 547-568
- Vinita & Azhar, S. 2013. Gender Communication: A Comparative Analysis of Communication Approach of Men and Women at Workplaces. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*. 2 (1) 18-27.
- West, C. & Zimmerman, D. 1987. *Doing Gender: Gender and Society* in Eckert, P. & Ginet, S, M. 1990. *Language and Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wood, J. T. 2009. *Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender, and Culture*. Canada: Nelson Education.
- Xia, X. 2013. *Gender Differences in Using Language*. Finland: Academy Publisher. 3 (8). 1485-1489
- Zendelel, A,A & Ebrahimi, S. 2013. Gender Differences in Language Use: An Analysis of Simin Daneshvar's *Savushun*. *European Scientific Journal*. 9 (2). 181-189.