

GENDER LANGUAGE CHARACTERISTICS USED BY STUDENTS IN SCHOOL

*Chrystin Wulandary Sipahutar
**Drs. Willem Saragih

ABSTRACT

This study deals with the gender language characteristics used by students in school. The objectives of this study were to reveal the gender language characteristics used by students and to describe why students interact using the gender language characteristics in school. The research design in this study was a descriptive qualitative. The data was collected by observing language utterances between male and female students from one class of grade eight and interview. The findings of this study show that sometimes male students used female language characteristics, and female students also used male language characteristics in school. And the male students used 6 kinds of female language characteristics, and the female students used 9 kinds of male language characteristics. The most dominant female language characteristic used by female students is taq questions, while the most dominant male language characteristic used by male students is minimal responses. And, there are four reasons that affect the use of language characteristics used by female and male students in school, namely equal status, formal situation, positive affect, and contact. So, the researcher can conclude that the female students are more dominant in using female and male language characteristics in school. In addition, of the four reasons that affect students' use of language characteristics, frequent contact is the dominant reason affecting students' use of language characteristics when they communicate.

Keywords: *gender language, male language characteristics, female language characteristics, affect.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The language used verbally and in writing has different characteristics of each human. Humans also have gender differences. Eggins (2004) discussed 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. In simple terms, it can be seen their socio-cultural behavior, including speech, can distinguish that gender, and if it looks masculine, then he is male, and if it looks feminine, then she is female. Males and females are not only different in their physical appearance but also in the way men and women use their language. Gender differences in language are not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a social phenomenon.

Gender differences in human life are a basic fact of social life. In social life, there are several factors for differences in the language used to affect the way people communicate with other people. Men and women have different language characteristics. In certain contexts, the characters of the language used can be classified as polite, precise, intimate, or functional as in their communication. Judging from his linguistic elements, Lakoff (as cited in Holmes, 2013) suggested that women are supposed to speak more politely than men. It is commonly known that males usually are more direct and demanding in their way of communicating, while females tend to be more modest and polite. There are several stereotypes in society that women are more polite than men who communicate directly and firmly. This arena in society has become inherent in social practice, and the roles of men and women have been reflected. In physical appearance, women are weaker than men, so women do housekeeping and household chores. This phenomenon affects the use of language and affects the language; according to Eggins and Martin (2004), four factors affect the use of language differences, such as status, formality, affect, and contact.

But, based on the previous research observation, the findings of male students did not perform specific language characteristics, and female students did not perform specific language characteristics as suggested by theories. In the school environment, male students sometimes used female language characteristics, and female students used male characteristics, as seen in the data below.

Female : Jangan ribut!(Be quiet!)

Male : Siapa yang ribut?(Who is noisy?)

Female : Kau, siapa lagi? Kau yang paling keras suaranya (You, who's anything else?

You're the loudest)

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

From the conversation above, it is seen that female students use direct sentences and short sentences when female students talk to male students. In this case, it can be seen when the teaching and learning situation, in this case, can be seen when the class situation is not conducive or noisy, and one of the female

students makes a greeting, "Jangan ribut" to the students. The utterances "Jangan ribut" are formed in command sentences. A command can directly control different aspects of another person's thinking or behavior. And male avoided the use of direct and was more polite when he ordered something. The characteristics of male language are not realized in his utterances. The male used the super polite form in their utterances, as seen in the data below.

Male : Jangan ribut, tolonglah teman-teman. (Be quiet, please)

Female: Iihhh, bukannya suaramu paling kuat. (Iihhh, your voice is the loudest)

Male : Aku dari tadi diam. Jadi tolonglah jangan ribut, nanti aku yang dimarahin Maam. (I have been silent. So please be quiet, Ma'am will scold me).

Based on the research findings through preliminary data, the researcher is interested in investigating the characteristics of gender language in different phenomena, as seen in the preliminary data found by the researcher, where female students use direct sentences and short sentences while male students use less direct sentences and more polite. In fact, based on the theory that men and women use different language characteristics, such as women should speak more politely than men, and men use direct sentences, but this is not entirely true. It was found that the language characteristics used by male and female students are sometimes not language characteristics found in boys and girls; therefore, this phenomenon is important to be studied.

2. REVIEW LITERATURE

The Nature of Gender

Historically, the terms "sex" and "gender" have been used interchangeably, but in modern society, their meanings are becoming increasingly distinct. Cameron (2006) stated that in Modern Feminist Theory, it has been traditional to distinguish gender from sex. Eckert and Ginet (2003:10) said that gendered performance is available to everyone. In Language and Gender, Eckert and Ginet (2003:30) have explained that gender development does not end with childhood or adolescence. In addition, Eckert and Ginet (2003:30) stated that learning to be male or female involves learning to look and act in particular ways, learning to participate in particular ways in relationships and communities, learning to see the world from a particular perspective.

Language and Gender

Gender and language is a relatively new specialization of the communication field that focuses on the ways females and males of the human species communicate in different contexts. Pan (2011) and Wardaugh (2006) agree that gender is the important element of our identities and knowing gender differences is a crucial fact in life. Tannen (1990) argues that “for most women, the language of conversation is primarily a language of rapport which means a way of establishing connections and negotiating relationships”. Coates (2004) stated that there are five language characteristics of the male, namely minimal responses, command and directives, swearing and taboo language, compliments, the theme and Coates (2004) stated that there are four language characteristics of the male, namely lexical hedges, tag questions, minimal responses, questions.

Factors Affecting Different Language Characteristics

In the relationship between context of situation and language systems in the Halliday an model adapted from Eggins and Martin (2004), tenor are realized through accounted with reference to four factors, namely (1) status or power of the participants in their relationships, (2) the level of formality involved in the participant's interaction, (3) effective relation between the participants, and (4) frequency of contact between the addresser and addressee.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study applied the descriptive qualitative research. A descriptive qualitative design is chosen to explore and understand the social phenomenon (Creswell, 2009).

The data of this study are sentences consisting of gender language characteristics used by students on speaking skills in Bahasa at school and the answer from the students based on the results of interviews. In this research, the data source were students from the VIII-I class, which consists of 20 students. In this research, the researcher used observation and interview as technique of collecting data. The researcher obtained the data by coming to the school and asking students who are willing to be interviewed.

4. RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Findings

In this part, the researcher presents the result of the research that has been conducted. After analyzed the data, the researcher found that sometimes male students used female language characteristics and female students used male

language characteristics in school. And the characteristics of male language that female students sometimes were used command and directives, which are the characteristics of male language, but in this study, it was found that female students used it more dominantly than male students. The percentage of male students who used command and directives is 32.20%, while the percentage of female students is 34.48%. The second most dominant male language characteristic used by female students is brief sentences. It can be seen from the percentage of male students who used this characteristic is 18.64%, while female students are 20.68%. And the third characteristic of male language used by male students and used most by female students is judgment adjectives. And the percentage of male students who used this characteristic is 8.47%, while the percentage of female students is 12.06%. And this characteristic is most dominantly used by female students than male students with the percentage of female students is 5.17% meanwhile, the percentage of male students is 3.38%. The characteristics of self-references are the characteristics of the male language used by female students and male students. And this characteristic is most dominantly used by female students compared to male students. It can be seen from the percentage of male students who used this characteristic is 1.69% while female students are 3.44%. The characteristics of the male language used by both male and female students are joke-telling/humor. And in the study, it was found that this characteristic was used most by female students rather than male students. Male students used this characteristic are 3.38%, while female students are 3.44%. And the characteristic of male language used by female students is less politeness. And in the study, it was found that this characteristic was used most by female students rather than male students. The percentage of male students used this characteristic is 1.69%, while female students are 3.44%.

Men sometimes used female language characteristics are lexical hedges, minimal responses, taq questions, questions, rising intonation on declarative and superpolite. The minimal response characteristics are the characteristics of the female language and male language used by male and female students. And this characteristic is the most dominant used by male students than female students who can be seen from the percentage of male students who used this characteristic 35.86%, while female students are 11.66%. The second most dominant female language characteristic used by male students is questions with the percentage of female students is 15% meanwhile, the percentage of male students is 25.64%. And the characteristics of female language that male students sometimes used superpolite, which are the characteristics of male language, but in this study, it was found that male students used it more dominantly than female students. The percentage of male students who used this characteristic is 7.69%, while female students' percentage is 1.66%. Taq questions are the characteristics of the female language used by female and male students. And in this study, it was found that these characteristic is the most used by female students, with the percentage of taq questions used by female students is 40% while male students is 25.64%.

And male students used minimal response characteristics more often than female students. There are four reasons that influence the use of language characteristics used by female and male students in schools: namely, equal status, formal situations, positive affect, and frequent contact. And the most dominant factor in that is always why students did their language because they often make contact as school friends.

Discussion

This study aims to describe the gender characteristics of eighth grade in school. The data obtained from this study is the pronunciation of the language of female students and male students in communicating, which consists of 20 students. The researcher found things with the characteristics of the language used by male and female students in the characteristic school with the language by Coates' theory (2004) and Eggins and Martin (2004).

The result of this study showed that in determining gender language characteristics used by students in school, the researcher found that there were not all language characteristics by Coates (2004). From some of the characteristics of male language dominated by female students are swearing and taboo language, command and directives, brief sentences, judgment, joke and self-references. And the characteristics of female language that are most dominant used by female students are lexical hedges, tag questions and rising intonation on declarative. While, the characteristics of female language mostly used male students is questions. And the characteristics of male language that are most dominant used by male students are minimal responses and compliments. In this case, as suggested theoretically, women use minimal responses more than men, but this study found that male students used minimal responses more dominantly than female students. And in politeness and avoiding harsh swear words, the male and female students in school are less dominant. Where male students more polite than female students, in this study that swearing and taboo language was more dominant used female students and superpolite was more dominantly used by male students than female students. In this case, it can be said that male students use the characteristics of politeness more than female students.

In line with the previous theory, there are characteristics of women's language proposed by Coates. In this study, not all female language characteristics can be found in the language of female students at school. And, in this study, it was found that female students were more able to use the language characteristics of both females and males. Male and female students use the same language

characteristics actually because of four factors, namely equal status, formal status, positive effects, and frequent contact at school.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings, the researcher concludes that first, male and female students express their gender identity as female and male. And the characteristics of male and female languages are not all used by male and female students. And male students used 6 kinds of female language characteristics, while female students used 9 kinds of male language characteristics. Second, the reasons affect the use of the characteristics of the language students use in school, namely equal status, formal situations, positive affect, and frequent contact. Male and female students immediately speak as a manifestation of their equal relations of status and social position. Frequent contact so that students need free language regardless of the formal situation.

Based on the explanation and the conclusion above, the researcher intended to give some suggestions. For teachers can use the results of this study to recognize the character of female and male students at school so that they can build better student character at school and renew the learning strategies of students' speaking by paying attention to the needs and characteristics of gender language in English learning. For students, female and male students should pay more attention to their polite or impolite language in the school environment, and also they should try to be confident in speaking to both male and female students. Then, the result of this research can be used for future researchers to guide them when researchers observe males who prefer to act like women or females who choose to act like men in everyday life and further research in different languages. It will reveal a more significant difference in the characteristics of the language that occurs.

REFERENCES

- Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*, Second Edition. San Fransisco: Longman.
- Coates, J. (2013). *Women, Men and Language A Sociolinguistic Account of Gender Differences in Language* Third Edition. .New York : Routledge.
- Crawford, M. (2003). *Talking Difference on Gender and Language*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Design Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Third Edition. USA: Sage.

- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. United Kingdom: Sage Publications.
- DONG, J. (2014). Study on Gender Differences in Language Under the Sociolinguistics. *Canadian Social Science*, 10(3), 92-96.
- Eckert, P., & McConnell-Ginet, S. (2003). *Language and Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eggs, S. (2004). *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Grammar*, 2nd Edition. London: Continuum.
- Eggs, S. 2014. *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*. Newyork: Continuum International Publishing Group
- Febriadina, Z. F., Sumarwati, S., & Sumarlam, S. (2018). Male and Female Students' Politeness in Sragen, Central Java. *Humanus*, Vol. 17 No. 1, 2018. 17(1), 73-83. Padang : Pusat Kajian Humaniora.
- 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. (Jul. - Aug. 2013). e-ISSN: 2279-0837. from: <http://www.iosrjournals.Org>
- Halliday, M.A.K & Mathiessen Christian M.I.M. (2004). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Third Edition. London: Edward Arnold
- Hanan A. Taqi. (2015). Choosing an English Teacher: The Influence of Gender on the Students' Choice of Language Teachers. *English Language Teaching*. Received: October 15, 2015, doi:10.5539/elt.v8n12p182.