



**ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S LANGUAGE FEATURES
THEORY USED BY TWO MAIN FEMALE
CHARACTERS IN *TRIFLES* ONE-ACT PLAY BY SUSAN
GLASPELL**

A THESIS

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for S-1 Degree
Majoring Linguistics in the English Department,
Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University**

Submitted by:

Desi Wulandari

NIM 13020118130081

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DIPONEGORO UNIVERSITY
SEMARANG
2023**

PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer genuinely declares that she wrote this thesis on her own, without taking any ideas from other researchers, for a diploma, S-1, S-2, or S-3 degree. Furthermore, the writer ascertains that she only takes material from the references mentioned.

Semarang, December 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Desi Wulandari', written in a cursive style.

Desi Wulandari

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

“It is hard to fail, but it is worse never to have tried to succeed.”

Theodore Roosevelt

“Success belongs to those who believe in the power of their ideas.”

Michael Irwin

*This thesis is dedicated to
my beloved family as my support system,
shibuya as my beloved best friends
and those who helped me in finishing this thesis.*

Thank you.

APPROVAL

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SUSAN GLASPELL**

Written by:

Desi Wulandari
NIM: 13020118130081

Is approved by the thesis advisor

on 27th December 2022

Thesis Advisor



Dwi Wulandari, S.S., M.A.
NIP. 19761004200112001

The Head of English Department



Dr. Oktiva Herry Chandra, M. Hum,
NIP. 196710041993031003

VALIDATION

ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S LANGUAGE FEATURES THEORY USED BY TWO MAIN FEMALE CHARACTERS IN *TRIFLES* ONE-ACT PLAY BY SUSAN GLASPELL

Written by

Desi Wulandari

13020118130081

Was tested and defended in the examination session in front of Strata 1 Thesis Examination Committee Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University on 7 February 2023, and was revised according to the suggestion of the Examination Committee

Thesis Advisor

Dwi Wulandari, S.S., M.A.

NIP. 19761004200112001

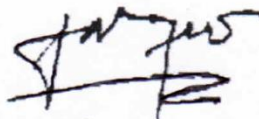


on 14 February 2023

Chair Person

Dr. Catur Kepirianto, M.Hum.

NIP. 196509221992031002

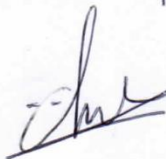


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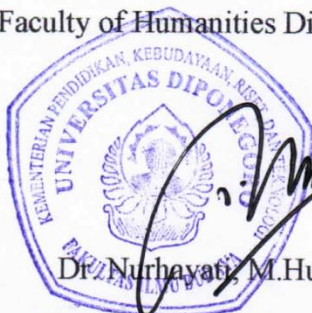
Dra. Wiwiek Sundari, M.Hum.

NIP. 195906071990032001



on 14 February 2023

The Dean of Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University



Dr. Nurhayati, M.Hum

NIP. 196610041990012001

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This thesis is not perfect in any way. As a result, I would appreciate some advice and helpful criticism to improve this thesis. Last but not least, I hope that this thesis will be helpful to readers who want to conduct similar research on language and gender.

Semarang, December 2022



Desi Wulandari

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ABSTRACT

Trifles (1916) is a one-act play written by Susan Glaspell which contains many symbols about feminism and focuses on the feminist spirit of its two main characters, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters. In some of the utterances of the two main female characters, they use many female language features initiated by Robin Lakoff (1975). The research entitled “Analysis of Women's Language Features Theory Used by Two Main Female Characters in *Trifles* One-Act Play by Susan Glaspell” focuses on analyzing which features of women's language are used by Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters in *Trifle* and finding out how to express the characteristics of the two main characters through the features of the women's language they use. This research was analyzed with qualitative methods and by using Mrs. Hale's and Mrs. Peters' speeches as the object of this research. This research used a purposive sampling technique, which was used to make it easier for the writer to find the features of women's language used in the research object. The results of this study show that not all features of the female language are used by the two main female characters in the *Trifles* drama. They only use seven of them, namely avoiding strong swear words, lexical hedges, empty adjectives, superpolite forms, tag questions, intensifiers, and hypercorrect grammar with features the most widely used are hypercorrect grammar and lexical hedges. The researcher also found that the features of the women's language can show the characters of the two main characters in the drama *Trifles* with the help of Murphy's theory (1972) about characterization, and the result show that their characterization are polite, brave, and like to give opinions.

Keywords: women's language, language and gender, women's language features, trifles.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. 1 Background of the Study

Language is the way people express their ideas by combining the means of speech sounds into words, then the words are formed into sentences, and then uttering those ideas into people's thoughts (Henry Sweet, 1988). Language has become a medium for interaction and communication that people use in daily life, either individually, in pairs, or groups. Language is a very important and the most effective communication medium for humans. People can convey their feelings and thoughts to others using language. Language studies related to society or community are called sociolinguistics. Coulmas (as cited in Wardhaugh, 2006) stated that certain micro-sociolinguistics investigated social structure can affect the way people communicate in society and also found that there is any correlation between language varieties and patterns with social characteristics such as class, age, and sex. In addition, language has the role of characterizing and providing identity-based on the speaker's gender. Gender and stereotype, as social contexts, could affect the behavior of women and men and how they use language for communication. Malkawi and Rababa'h (2012) stated that female speakers use more informal and relational language in their communications. Female speakers also establish an appropriate investigation of the interlocutor's social environments and relationships to maintain intimacy. Male speakers, on the other hand, are more likely to employ euphemisms or indirect

expressions to prevent insulting the interlocutor. The findings also reveal those female speakers provided more thorough responses than male speakers.

According to Labotka (2009), women are systematically required to speak with specific language features related to lack of power, which indicates that women are powerless and men have greater power than women. For example, women are permitted to complain, but only men can shout in rage. Because women are more polite in conversation and their daily behaviors, they must be able to control their emotions. In line with that statement, Francine (1978, cited in Mukminin 2010) also stated that women are generally more polite and respectful and are more likely to pay attention to proper grammar and pronunciation. Meanwhile, men are more inclined to use "harsh" speech, such as profanity and slang words. Those facts exist and unknowingly generalize, making people think ladies lock in a few characteristics to recognize between men and ladies.

These women's unique features are not only shown by their behavior but also by their language style in communicating with each other. Lakoff (1975 cited in Mazidah 2013) said that sometimes women are seen as weaker and powerless, reflected in their language. Women could be more expressive in several ways because they used to show several expressions to reveal their feelings, and sometimes it becomes more expressive than what men do. These several unique features of using language style by women are called women's language theory conducted by Lakoff (1975). The writer used women's language theory (1975) since it can describe how women communicate in their society.

Trifles drama is one of several plays that reflect the use of women's language theory in its characters. *Trifles* drama is an American mystery play performed for the first time at the Wharf Theatre in Provincetown, Massachusetts, on August 8, 1916. Susan Glaspell wrote *Trifles* drama about the murder of Minnie Foster's husband. Minnie's character does not play directly in the story; other characters only mention her. There are only two female main characters: Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters. The two main female characters in this *Trifles* drama have excellent feminist power reflected in their actions when they want to solve a problem. In this story, the main problem is the murder of a husband whose perpetrator is his wife. Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, with their feminist spirit, protected the perpetrators of the murder, Mrs. Minnie Foster, because they could feel the injustice experienced by Minnie.

On the other hand, the female characters sometimes show their weakness toward the male characters. Niken and Nindy (2018) also stated that in *Trifles* drama, the female characters tend to be underestimated by the male characters. They laughed at their opinion, were ignored, and their role was minimized. There is no resistance verbally that they do when they receive such treatment. They tend to be silent and accept any comments from the male characters about them. It allows the female characters to doubt their worthiness. Therefore, this research aims to investigate how Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, the two main female characters, use some features of women's language in *Trifles* drama concerning how they can solve the problem and how they act toward the male characters.

Three primary reasons made the writer decide *Trifles* drama to become the research's object; First, some women's language features are used by both main female characters, and the writer found that *Trifles* drama gives more data to be analyzed with women's language theory by Lakoff (1975). Second, the two main female characters in *Trifles* drama can solve the story's whole problem, which is inseparable from their great feminine power. This side of femininity is also indirectly shown in some of their dialogues, and it made the writer want to analyze how far the characterization, including the feminine power of Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, can be shown through the use of women's language features. Last, the writer will identify reason why both women characters use different women's language features.

1.2 Research Problems

This research is conducted to answer the following questions below:

1. What types of women's language features are used by Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters in the *Trifles* drama?
2. How can the characterization be shown through the women's language features used by Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters in the *Trifles* drama?
3. Why the women's language features used by Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters are different?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Following the problem study, the purposes of the study of this research are intended to achieve these goals:

1. To identify women's language features used by Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, two main female characters in the *Trifles* drama.
2. To describe how the characterization of Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters is based on the highest and the minor frequency of women's language features they used in the *Trifles* drama.
3. To identify the background of Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters and reason why they used different women's language features.

1. 4 Previous Studies

Many studies in previous years have discussed the analysis of the use of women's language theory in film or novel characters. However, no one has discussed the women's language features used in *Trifles* drama until now. The writer found ten previous studies that reviewed the features of women's language in the character's speech by referring to Lakoff's theory of women's language (1975). These existing studies want to reveal how female characters in literature and society use women's language features.

The most discussed topic by previous researchers was the types of features of women's language used by the study's object. On the other hand, previous researchers also discovered the function of using some of these women's language features. Here, the writer of this study found five previous journals that discussed this topic, entitled "Women's Language Used by Female Characters in the Movie How To Be Single" by Ni Ketut Putri and I Nyoman Sedeng (2018); "Katniss Everdeen's Linguistic Features

and Personal Identity Construction in Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games*" by Nafilaturif'ah (2017); "Type and Function of Women Language Found in *Furlough Movie: A Sociolinguistics Perspective*" by Reka Indah (2019); "An Analysis of Women's Language Features Used by Mia in *The Princess Diaries Movie*" by Monica Leoni (2018); and "Women's Language in *Tangled Movie: A Sociolinguistic Study*" by Assari Wulan Safitri (2017). These studies have the same main objectives: the use of women's language features in a literary work and the function of using these features. Although these studies have different objects, there are some similarities in the research results, the fact that the object of their research does not use all women's language features, and the most widely used features are lexical hedges, tag questions, and rising intonation. The least used feature is the precise color terms feature. Some studies also show that there is a function of use in several features that are widely used by the object of the research. Most research indicates uncertainty, starting the discussion, getting a response, and intending to be polite. These previous researches inspired the writer to observe how the women's language features are used by the characters who became the object of research. The writer for the current study will not discuss the function of each feature. However, the writer will reveal how these language features influence the characterization of the two main female characters.

The writer also found several previous studies about analysis that only focused on the type and the use of women's language features. The writer found two previous studies, entitled "Women Language Used by The Main Characters of

"Mockingjay" Movie" by Lisda (2016) and "Women Language Features in Recode World's Technology Conference: A Sociolinguistic Studies" by Deby and friends (2019). The previous researchers found that the objects often used women's language features studied by women and men, who became the object of the previous study. Both men and women found that men also used women's language features and the most frequently used features between men and women are the rising intonation, super polite form, and question tags. These two studies used qualitative descriptive methods and showed that both men and women were not consistent in using language features of each gender because this would be influenced by the speaker's environment.

Furthermore, two previous studies made observations based on the type of women's language features used by the research's object and the reason why these features were used. The writer found two previous studies that focused on this topic. The two journals are "The Existence of Women's Language Features in Men and Women Interaction in the Ellen Show" by Yohana (2018) and "Women's Language Features Used by Indonesian Female Bloggers" by Annisa (2013). This study found that the majority of conscientious figures will use several women's language features that have some reasons to emphasize what the speaker is doing or speaking, to express the lack of confidence in saying something, and to emphasize the most important word and assertion.

When compared with current research, many previous studies have discussed how the features of women's language from Lakoff's theory (1975) are used for each

character that became the object of the study, both men and women, to prove that women's language features are not only used by women, but also by men. In this study, the writer will discuss the relationship between the use of women's language features and the characterization of the research object, which are Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, two main female characters from *Trifles* drama by Susan Glaspell, precisely to find out how women's language features can be used to reveal their characterization.

The writer also found three previous studies that used the *Trifles* drama as the object of the research. The writer uses this research on *Trifles* drama to add information related to the object of the research, the three previous journals entitled "The Hidden Meaning Seen from The Symbols, Characters, and Setting in Susan Glaspell's *Trifles*" by Diana (2019); "Social Values Reflected Through Female Characters in Susan Glaspell's Drama *Trifles*: A Sociological Review" by Niken and Nandy (2018); and "The Representation of Sisterhood in Susan Glaspell's *Trifles*: A Kinesic Analysis" by Ni Komang and Alexei (2021). These three studies focus on analyzing the hidden meaning of the symbols in the *Trifles* drama, while others discuss the social values. In previous research, it can also be stated that most researchers found that Susan Glaspell included strong feminist spirits in the *Trifles* drama. While in this current research, the writer focuses on how the main female characters, namely Mrs. Peter and Mrs. Hale, can be identified their characterizations through the women's language features proposed by Robin Lakoff (1975) that they used, which will also show their principles or feminism during the whole story of the *Trifles* drama.

1.5 Scope of the Study

Within the scope of the research, the writer is aware that research studies using a sociolinguistics approach are common in society. To keep the scope of the study from expanding the discussion, the writer will limit this research to the analysis of the women's language theory proposed by Lakoff (1975), a theory based on the sociolinguistics approach, which is language and gender. This research focuses on the women's language features in the *Trifles* drama. The writer only uses a literary work which is drama entitled *Trifles*, a one-act play written by Susan Glaspell that focuses on Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale's utterances as two main female characters in this drama.

1.6 Writing Organization

This research is described in four chapters through the following organization:

CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains eight sub-chapters, including the background of the study, problem statement, research questions, purpose of the study, previous studies, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, and writing organization.

CHAPTER II : THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter comprises the theory of women's language proposed by Lakoff (1975), which contains ten features. The theory relates to sociolinguistics, which is language and gender analysis. Also explains

the type of research, data, population, sample, and sampling technique; method of collecting data; and method of analyzing data.

CHAPTER III : RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter describes the result by showing tables and explains the finding of this study, what women's language features are used by two female main characters in *Trifles* drama, and proof of how far this women's language theory can be used to analyze Mrs. Hale's and Mrs. Peters' characterization.

CHAPTER IV : CONCLUSION

This chapter contains a summary of the entire research based on the analysis of the results from the whole study.

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Language and Gender

According to the Oxford Dictionary, gender can be defined as either of the two sexes (male and female). Society generally used the term gender beginning in the late 1960s and 1970s (Speer 2005 cited in Mukminin 2010). The discussion about gender is also never separated from the topic of gender differences, and it will give people a certain stigma to each gender with their characteristics.

Various factors, such as society, cultural or historical background, and others, can influence and create each individual's characteristics. Gender differences in society play different roles for men and women. According to Haeberle's theory (1981: 9), men's social roles are designed to support them as masculine male figures, whereas women's social roles are designed to support them as feminine women. These gender differences in the roles of each man and woman will significantly affect how they use their identities in speaking to each other.

Men and women tend to have different linguistic behaviors (White. 2003, cited in Lisda, 2016). One notable gender communication difference is that men are more direct in their communication and authoritative and influential. In contrast, women are more respectful, soft, and emotional (as cited in Nafilaturif'ah, 2017). To be accepted in society, women must speak by applying specific aspects that require

women to show their feminine side, making them choose language choices based on particular aspects of speech and eventually becoming some features of the linguistic characteristics that are frequently used by women (Lakoff 1975, as cited in Labotka 2009).

In conclusion, it can be said that linguistic or communication differences between men and women do not only arise due to gender differences. Many studies have discovered some factors about the relationship between language and gender and what are the primary reasons for the differences between women's and men's language characteristics. The result showed that social and cultural aspects significantly influence how men and women should speak and be accepted in society. The public allows gender to be expressed as a social identity through language.

2.1.2 Women's Language Features

Women's language depicts inconsequential and disabled women speaking and expressing their emotions in various situations. Robin Lakoff researched women's language in 1973, entitled *Language and Women's Place*, which discussed the difference between men and women in their way of speaking with others. Women are perceived as less wise, more vulnerable, less aggressive, and more expressive, which is reflected in the linguistic qualities of women's discourse (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2003). Women experience linguistic preconceptions in how they use language, which is expected of social conditions and various other aspects and how the use of language in general towards them. Both are concerned with the function of women's

roles in their respective societies (Lakoff, 1975). According to Lakoff (1975, as cited in Holmes, 2013), there are ten advanced features of women's language:

2.1.2.1 Lexical Hedges

Lexical hedges or fillers are language elements that indicate obliqueness and fragility, as well as a general sense of insecurity, doubt, and skepticism. Women frequently use this feature in their conversations. Hedges such as, *you know*, *you see*, *sort of*, *kind of*, and *well* present women's lack of confidence. These features are used by women when they feel uncertain about something. Whereas fillers or words categorized as meaningless particles such as *um*, *ah*, and *uh* are features that have a function to help women to give pause to think about what they want to say (Lakoff, 1973).

2.1.2.2 Tag Question

According to Lakoff's (1973) theory about women's language features, "A tag is midway between an outright statement and a yes-no question: it is assertive than the former but more confident than the latter." Tag question is used when the speakers, especially women, make a point but are not sure enough about it, and then they use the tag question feature to express uncertainty. The examples of language used in tag questions are *isn't it?*, *right?*, *don't we?*, and soon that will appear at the end of the sentences, which refers to a final statement. Sometimes we find a tag

question feature used when the speaker builds a small conversation or tries to make a new topic (Lakoff, 1975).

2.1.2.3 Rising Intonation

Rising intonation is a feature women use to respond to interrogative sentences and is placed at the end of declarative sentences. Only women who have a particular sentence intonation pattern. The question requires a definite answer, an inflection typical of a yes-no inquiry, and the appearance of being unusually hesitant (Lakoff 1975, cited in Cameron, 2003). According to Brend (2006), the investigation's results found that women use specific rising patterns and combine them with surprise and politeness form more often than men.

2.1.2.4 Empty Adjective

The empty adjective is a category of adjectives besides their specific and literal meaning. It is used when women desire to declare their feelings towards something in a particular circumstance, especially indicating the speaker's admiration for something (Lakoff, 1975). The words such as divine, charming, and cute have trivial meanings that women use to make them sound more amusing (Lakoff. 1973). According to Arliss (1991), women seem to have an extended vocabulary to express their emotions verbally.

2.1.2.5 Intensifiers

Intensifiers are elements that are used with other expressions to indicate an attempt to intensify the meaning of the expression they modify. Intensifiers can happen as amplifiers, emphasize, downtoners, et cetera (Bussmann et al., 2006, p. 576). Intensifiers emphasize and amplify someone's proposed meaning and ensure that the interlocutors can understand and receive the speaker's message. The general example of intensifiers is the word *very*, *totally*, *so*, and *awful*.

2.1.2.6 Hyper-correct Grammar

Hypercorrect grammar means the consistent use of standard verb forms. Women routinely employ typical English forms to convey civility. Hypercorrect grammar includes avoidance of strong swear words, more frequent apologizing, and super polite forms as additional features. Lakoff (2004) gives an example of hypercorrect grammar as the use of *g'* in the word *singing* which is dropped more by men than women. According to Holmes (1992), women employ more grammatical standard forms than males at every social level.

2.1.2.7 Superpolite Form

Superpolite form means a polite command and polite language.. Lakoff (1973, cited in Holmes, 2013) declared that superpolite forms indirect requests and euphemisms. According to Lakoff (1973), the superpolite form is classified as an imperative statement, but it is used by women more politely. An example of the

superpolite form in the sentence "would you please close the door?" sounds more polite than "would you close the door?" which shows the usual polite form. The words "thank you" and "please" are often used in the superpolite form feature (as cited in Monica, 2018).

2.1.2.8 Avoidance of Strong Swear Words

According to Lakoff (1973), women use expletives or avoid strong swear words to express how strongly they feel about something. When women are surprised by something, they usually say things like *fudge*, *my goodness*, *oh my*, *oh sugar*, and soon without using swear words.

2.1.2.9 Emphatic Stress

According to Holmes (2013), emphatic stress was frequently utilized to emphasize the speaker's meaning, particularly among women. The examples of sentences that use emphatic stress are shown in these slash words "It was a *brilliant* performance, it is a *great* movie, I had the *best day ever*," for example, are some statements with emphatic stress. (as cited in Monica, 2018).

2.1.2.10 Precise Colors Terms

Lakoff (1973) said that women have their color vocabulary. Precise color terms have a goal to emphasize the speaker's utterances and to utter an emotional reaction rather than to give specific information about the speaker's opinion. Women tend to give more exact colors, for example, magenta and aquamarine.

2.1.3 Characterization Theory

According to M.J Murphy (1972), characterization is how an author attempts to make his characters understandable and come alive for the readers. The readers can easily understand the message indirectly mentioned by the author. Murphy (1972) developed nine ways of characterization in the previous study. The first is a personal description, stating that the author can describe a person's character, especially by showing their appearance and fate through the personal description. The second way is a character seen by another, which means knowing the character from the other character's point of view and opinions.

The third way is seeing a character from speech; the author can give information about a character through what the other characters say. The fourth way is from their past life; the author gives the readers clues to events that can build someone's characterization by mentioning their past life and life lesson from that event. The fifth way is by seeing from the conversation of others; the author gives clues through the conversation of other characters.

The following way is from the character's reactions; by showing how the character will react to different situations and events. The seventh way is from direct comment; by directly describes someone's characterization to the readers. The eighth way is showing a character by their thoughts; by showing what the character is thinking about. Mannerism is also a way to show a characterization by giving the readers indirect information by describing someone's mannerisms and habits.

2.2 Research Methods

2.2.1 Types of Research

This research applied a descriptive qualitative method analysis. Qualitative analysis is an interpretation of meaning from the content of the text (Hsieh and Shannon (2005:2). According to Edmonds and Kennedy (2017:142), qualitative research is a collecting data analysis that focuses on understanding and interpreting phenomena presented by persons rather than attempting to conclude the relationship between cause and effect. The writer of this research used qualitative research because it did not deal with numbers for the primary data. It became the tool to help the writer collect the data to take a percentage of the existing data. To be more specific, the researcher used descriptive analysis intending to elaborate on and answer the research questions.

2.2.2 Data and Data Source

The data from this study were obtained from conversations between the two main female characters and the other characters, and the two female characters were Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters; where their conversation is taken from the play *Trifles* (1916) and will be clarified by the existence of a script from the play's script. The population of this research is all the speeches and actions taken by Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, who will show their characters. The sample in this research will lead to the speeches of the two main female characters, which contain women's language features.

The primary data from this research were obtained from the script of the *Trifles* drama and the entire performance of the *Trifles* drama. The whole performance of this drama was also used to get an overview of the context based on the event between the participants, mainly Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, who became the main object of this research. The writer's method of collecting the data applies is the documentation method. The writer used Lakoff's (1973) women's language theory to analyze the data. The writer used a purposive sampling technique; as Crossman (2020) explained, "A purposive sample is a non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study." This purposive sampling technique makes it easier for the writer to find criteria of female language features that appear in Mrs. Hale's and Mrs. Peters' utterances in more detail and precision.

2.2.3 Methods of Collecting Data

There were several steps to collecting data in this research: first, the writer watched and listened to all of the utterances in the *Trifles* drama. Second, observed and compared the scripts and conversations in the *Trifles* drama to make the data more effective and valid. Third, the writer chooses only Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters' utterances as the main female characters to classify the sentences that use women's language features. Then the writer double-checks that the list of utterances is not repeated. Last, the writer classified the data in a table to search the frequency and certain types of women's language proposed by Lakoff (1973) that Mrs. Peters and

Mrs. Hale used in *Trifles* drama. Several techniques, such as classifying the data, calculating the frequency of the data, analyzing the utterances also interpreting the implicit meaning of the data, are engaged to reach the final result of the research.

2.2.4 Methods of Analyzing Data

The method used by the writer to analyze the data is an articulatory method based on speech and an inferential method that provides a conclusion from the words produced by the speaker. Here, the speakers who became the object of the research are Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters. The inferential analysis technique that the writer used is an abductive technique that is not only made based on the speech but also considers aspects of the characters' actions. Researchers will connect Mrs. Hale's and Mrs. Peters' utterances with their behavior based on the interpretation of several things included in the women's language theory proposed by Lakoff (1975). In some features, such as the frequent use of question tags, the character's behavior can be seen to be self-doubting, analyzed through the intonation of speech and from the movements they made.

The writer typed Mrs. Hale's and Mrs. Peters' utterances into a column while observing the drama. At the same time, the writer categorized the utterances, examined them, and checked off the appropriate feature on a checklist table. The writer then numbered all the features and calculated the total amount and percentage of each feature used by Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters.

In order to answer the second research question, "How the characterization can be shown through the women's language features used by Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters in the Trifles drama?" the writer used Murphy's (1972) theory about characterization. The writer also read related theories from articles, books, and journals related to characterization, women's language features, and gender that can help the writer elaborate on the answer and make it more valid for the third research question. Last, the writer concludes the whole analyzed results.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Results

Based on the results of this *Trifles* study that the writer has done, it was found that not all features of the women's language initiated by Lakoff (1975) were used by the female characters in the *Trifles* drama, which are Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters. The two main female characters in this study only use seven out of ten features of women's language. The seven features Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters used include avoiding strong swear words, empty adjectives, tag questions, lexical hedges or fillers, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, and superpolite form. Meanwhile, three features of women's language were not found in this research; rising intonation, emphatic stress, and precise color terms are absent in Mrs. Hale's and Mrs. Peters' speech. The table below will describe the women's features used by Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters in the *Trifles* drama.

Table 3.1 Women's Language Features in Trifles Drama

No	Women's Language Features	Features Used by the Characters		Results	
		Mrs. Peters	Mrs. Hale	Σ	%
1	Precise color terms	-	-	0	0,0%
2	Avoiding strong swear words	2	1	3	4,61%
3	Empty adjectives	4	1	5	7,69%

4	Tag question	-	4	4	6,15%
5	Rising intonation	-	-	0	0,0%
6	Lexical hedges	10	15	25	38,46%
7	Intensifiers	2	7	9	13,84%
8	Emphatic stress	-	-	0	0,0%
9	Hypercorrect grammar	7	8	15	23,07%
10	Superpolite form	2	2	4	6,15%
Total features		27	38	65	100%

Based on the data from the research that has been done on *Trifles* drama, the writer found a total of 65 speeches from the two main female characters containing the women's language features. These two main female characters widely use women's language features: lexical hedges and hypercorrect grammar. Lakoff (as cited in Holmes, 2013:304) stated that since women are seen as subservient in public, they typically use vocabulary hedges or fillers, implying weakness and mistrust of women. In contrast to the male character, which emerges more frequently only at the beginning of the story, Susan Glaspell, the writer of *Trifles* drama, often shows distrust and caution toward female characters. Some expressions of Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, which contain lexical hedges, show suspicion and doubt about their opinion. On the other hand, it is also often used to provide new topics in their conversations.

The feature Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale frequently use in second place is hypercorrect grammar. Women in every social class are more likely than men to use standard forms of language, regardless of their social background (Lakoff, 1973, p. 49). Women use hypercorrect grammar due to their desire to have a better social status in society. Women's lack of social status also causes many of them to employ standard forms of language (Holmes, 1992, p. 171). Besides that, hypercorrect grammar has a purpose: to avoid misunderstandings or miscommunication between the speaker and the interlocutor (Pebrianti, 2013). This hypercorrect grammar is used by Mrs. Peters 7 times and used by Mrs. Hale 8 times.

The male characters in *Trifles* drama frequently underestimate the female characters because they think they are too complicated and only spend time thinking and analyzing things that the male characters find trivial. The female characters in the *Trifles* drama use hypercorrect grammar to get a better social status from the point of view of the male characters, who often underestimate them. When women speak in a standard form of language, they will be noticed more (Holmes, 1992).

Meanwhile, three of the ten women's language features, namely rising intonation, empathic stress, and precise color terms were not found in this research. In this *Trifles* drama, the two main female characters do show a desire to get validation for the opinions given to the interlocutor. However, they do it without rising intonation and emphatic stress features. Meanwhile, they use other features such as tag questions and lexical hedges. The two female main characters, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, tend to use a flat intonation. They do not use the rising intonation and

empathic stress features because they are depicted in the drama *Trifles* as middle-aged characters, so their delivery tends to be smoother.

The factors that influence the style of speech and the choice of vocabulary used by Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters are caused by gender differences. In *Trifles* drama, these two characters use subtle language and aim to increase their modesty. This is also in line with Lakoff (1975), who states that society requires women to use soft language and show their feminine side to be accepted by society. This is in line with the time setting of the *Trifles* drama, where in 1916, people highly respected the norms of decency and avoided any harsh language or swearing which would make them very bad in society.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Women's Language Features

3.2.1.1 Avoidance of Strong Swear Words

A woman from childhood has always been taught to speak politely and not involve her emotions when giving a speech, women are also forbidden to show anger, and they will also be punished if they speak roughly or loudly (Lakoff, 2004). The difference between using *shit* (or *damn*, or one of many other words) as opposed to *oh dear*, *goodness*, or *oh fudge*, lies in how forcefully one expresses how one feels. One could even say that one's choice of the particle is a function of how strongly one feels about something, so the intensity of the emotion expressed in a sentence corresponds to the intensity of the particle (Lakoff, 1975, p. 10).

Women usually use *fudge*, *oh my*, *my goodness*, *shot*, and *oh sugar* to express their surprise at something without saying harsh swear words (Murti, 2018). This statement is also supported by an article written by Devi (2003, cited in Safitri, 2017) which claimed that women prefer to use weaker expletives instead of powerful ones, such as *oh dear*, *my goodness* and others to include some solid expletive words such as *shit*, *damn*, and so on, because women do not want to be considered immoral and violate norms. This also occurs in several expressions of *Trifles* drama where both female characters use speech that contains avoidance strong swear words. Mrs. Peters avoids strong swear words in her speech twice, while Mrs. Hale uses them once. Mrs. Peters first uses this feature in a sentence when she is in a situation where she invites Mrs. Hale to check the closet room to take Mrs. Wright's things. The details of the expression are in the sentences below.

Datum 1

Mrs. Peters

MRS PETERS: Well, I must get those things from the front room closet, (*she goes to the door at the right, but after looking the other room, steps back*) you coming with me, Mrs Hale? You could help me carry them. (*They go in the other room; reappear, MRS PETERS carrying a dress and skirt, MRS HALE following with a pair of shoes.*)

MRS PETERS: **My**, it's cold in there. (*She puts the clothes on the big table, and hurries to the stove.*) (p.4)

This conversation occurred when Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale were in the kitchen, and it was warmer in the kitchen because it was so close to the fireplace. Then Mrs. Peters invited Mrs. Hale to check another room, the closet room. The room was described as being in the front so that more air enters and makes the room cold.

Finally, Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale went to the room, and a few moments later, they came back with some of the things they had been looking for. After returning from the room, Mrs. Peters felt the temperature difference between the closet and kitchen rooms. The closet room was colder than the kitchen, so Mrs. Peters mumbled a mixed feeling of shock and complaining at how cold the room was, saying, "**My**, it's cold in there."

Mrs. Peters chose to use sentences containing features of avoidance of strong swear words, which are women's language (Lakoff, 1975); in this case, she wants to show politeness to the interlocutor. In the *Trifles* drama, Mrs. Peters has much dialogue with Mrs. Hale, which Mrs. Hale is older than Mrs. Peters and forces her to speak more politely to Mrs. Hale. The value of this politeness also influenced Mrs. Peters not to say bad words and be rude to constantly show that she keeps applying the principle of politeness to others; this is also following the statement of Brown (1980), which states that women speak politely and more gently.

Datum 2

Mrs. Peters

MRS PETERS: (*takes the bottle, looks about for something to wrap it in; takes petticoat from the clothes brought from the other room very nervously begins winding this around the bottle in a false voice*) **My**, it's a good thing the men couldn't hear us. Wouldn't they just laugh! Getting all stirred up over a little thing like a—dead canary. As if that could have anything to do with—with—wouldn't they laugh! [*The men are heard coming down stairs*]

MRS HALE: (*under her breath*) Maybe they would—maybe they wouldn't.
(p.9)

The male characters often laugh at and belittle things that female characters pay attention to in great detail, such as fruit in jars, bird cage, the dead bird kept in a beautiful box, quilt, and many other things, when in fact they can be essential parts of evidence in the murder case committed by Mrs. Wright. Finally, Mrs. Peters voiced her dissatisfaction at the male characters who had earlier dismissed the subjects under investigation by the female characters and expressed her gratitude that their opinions had not been heard by the male characters, who might have made fun of them if they had remembered some of the things that Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters were contemplating.

Mrs. Peters uses the avoidance strong swear word *my* to smooth down her speech. It does not contain harsh swear words to communicate her dissatisfaction with male characters that frequently undervalue the viewpoints of female characters. According to Lakoff (1973), who studied the theory of women's language, women tend to overlook a man's outburst, but men do not do the same way. This means that while women are also permitted to fuss and complain, only men can shout angrily and curse. Mrs. Peters could have said, "*Shit*, it's a good thing the men couldn't hear us," if she had used profanity. She then expresses irritation at the male character, who frequently makes fun of the female character's thoughts. Mrs. Peters will use harsh or profane language when she says *shit*, which goes against Brown's (1980) observation that women tend to speak politely and subtly. Mrs. Peters decided to avoid using swear words not to be perceived as defying social conventions while still appearing polite and soft-spoken. Mrs. Peters, in particular, does not want to be made fun of by

the male characters in the drama *Trifles*, who frequently mock the opinions of the female characters.

Datum 3

Mrs. Hale

MRS PETERS: Why, this isn't her scissors.

MRS HALE : (*lifting the silk*) *Oh*, Mrs. Peters—it's—

[*MRS PETERS bends closer.*]

MRS PETERS : It's the bird.

MRS HALE : (*Jumping up*) But, Mrs. Peters—look at it! It's neck! Look at its neck! It's all other side to.

MRS PETERS : Somebody—wring—its—neck. (p.7)

The conversation between Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, based on Mrs. Hale's incident, finds several clues to Mr. Wright's murder case. The playwright also intended some of these findings to become a symbol of feminism. A symbol is something that describes something else or has a hidden meaning behind the symbol itself (Hans P. Guth, 1997).

Some of these symbols appear and are narrated directly by Susan Glaspell through dialogue between the characters, and the readers themselves will discover some. Indeed, readers can find their symbols in literary works by reading them (Thomas R. Arp and Greg Johnson, 2012). Here, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters's character finds several symbols: cherries in the jar, a pretty box, a piece of silk, a quilt, a birdcage, and a bird. The most surprising thing was when Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters found a bird carcass, the main symbol, and clue to the death case in the *Trifles* drama.

The discovery of the bird shocked Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, but they could express their feelings by avoiding the use of harsh words. Mrs. Hale, when she took off the silk, only gave a surprised expression and stammered as she said, "**Oh**, Mrs. Peters —It's— . "In this sentence, Mrs. Hale expresses her feeling by saying **oh**, without saying the slightest harsh words. Lakoff (1973) stated that when women wanted to express how strongly they felt about something, they avoided using harsh swear words or expletives. Lakoff (1973:44) also declared that a woman is taught to act like a "little girl" when she is a kid. When women are encouraged as "little girl" they are not allowed to scream loudly, or they will get punished for being angry as loudly as a boy. This social construction makes women choose not to use harsh words and replace them with weak expressions. Safitri (2017) also supports Lakoff's theory in her research which reveals that women are required to avoid using harsh words and can replace these expressive words with weak expletive words such as *oh*, *oh my God*, *oh my dear*, *my goodness*, and there are many others. If a woman uses harsh words, then the woman will be considered to disobey the norm and not have good manners. The same thing happened to Mrs. Hale avoids using harsh words to remain polite and not make herself considered flawed in society.

3.2.1.2 Empty Adjective

According to Lakoff (1973), women have different views of their choice of words. Women use empty adjectives to express their feelings toward something or someone in a specific situation. Some words like cute, charming, and others with

trivial meanings are used to make the sentences more attractive. This empty adjective is used to emphasize the speaker's speech, to express a more emotional reaction than to provide specific information about the opinion that the speaker wants to convey (Pebrianti, 2013).

Likewise, the two main female characters who played in the *Trifles* drama, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, use empty adjectives in some of their speech, as much as 7.69 %. Based on data from *Trifles* drama, Mrs. Peters said several sentences containing empty adjectives three times. While Mrs. Hale only expresses empty adjectives in her sentence once.

Datum 4

Mrs. Hale

MRS HALE: You weren't raised round here, were you? (*MRS PETERS shakes her head*). You didn't know—her

MRS PETERS: Not till they brought her yesterday.

MRS HALE: She—come to think of it, she was kind of like a bird herself—*real* sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and—fluttery. How—she—did—change. (p.7)

The background of the conversation was when Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters wondered how Mrs. Wright was at home. Mrs. Wright had no children and was left to work by her husband. This situation made Mrs. Wright feel very lonely and want a friend. In the end, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters also get the answer that Mrs. Wright's loneliness caused the presence of a bird in the house. Mrs. Wright was no longer lonely and could have friends after having a bird in her house. Mrs. Hale also stated that the bird she found was a symbol of Mrs. Wright, who has a sweet, pretty, timid,

and fluttery personality. Melissa Russell (2014) also mentions that birds symbolize freedom, where freedom is something that Mrs. Wright wants.

Mrs. Hale describes her parable of Mrs. Wright using sentences that contain empty adjectives. In the sentence in datum 4, Mrs. Hale mentions that Mrs. Wright has a resemblance to a bird that makes her curious, so Mrs. Hale likens that the bird is the embodiment of Mrs. Wright herself by saying, "She come to think of it, she was kind of like a bird herself *real* sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and fluttery." Mrs. Wright is likened to a sweet, pretty, timid, and fluttery bird. In showing her expression, Mrs. Hale even uses an empty adjective in the word "*real* sweet and pretty." The word *real* in this sentence emphasizes that Mrs. Wright and the bird are charming and pretty.

The word *real* can be omitted, and it will keep the meaning of the whole sentence that Mrs. Hale wants to give a compliment to Mrs. Wright. However, Mrs. Hale chose to use this sentence to make her compliment more meaningful and to emphasize that she felt there were similarities between the bird and Mrs. Wright.

Datum 5

Mrs. Peters

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Frank's fire didn't do much up there, did it? Well, let's go out to the barn and get that cleared up. (*The men go outside.*)

MRS HALE: I don't know as there's anything so strange, our takin' up our time with little things while we're waiting for them to get the evidence. (*she sits down at the big table smoothing out a block with decision*). I don't see as it's anything to laugh about.

MRS PETERS: (*apologetically*) Of course they've got *awful* important things on their minds. (p.5)

The conversation occurs in the middle of the drama when Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters are looking and gathering some trifle objects that might serve as clues. At that time, Mrs. Peters discovered that Mrs. Wright was piecing a quilt. Then Mrs. Hale chimed in on Mrs. Peters, wondering if the blanket would be a quilt or knot by Mrs. Wright. At that moment, the male characters descended the stairs, overheard the conversation between Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale, and downplayed what the two female characters were talking about. The male characters in the *Trifles drama* have often underestimated women and thought that women's thoughts on trivial things were funny. Of course, the opinions and ridicule of the male characters offended Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, and they disliked their thoughts.

In this conversation, it appears that Mrs. Peters uses one of the women's language features, namely the empty adjective, by saying, "Of course they've got **awful** important things on their minds." According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2022), awful is an adjective that can be defined as something wrong or unpleasant. However, awful can also be interpreted as something very great or large, depending on the context of the sentence that uses it. This explanation is also supported by the Collins Dictionary (2022), which explains that the word awful could be used with groups of nouns that refer to a number to emphasize how large the number is.

The word **awful** here is an empty adjective to emphasize that Mrs. Peters felt that men had awful important things on their minds; in this context, the word **awful** mean something bad or unpleasant about women that the man keeps on their mind. In that sentence, Mrs. Peters aims to show her dislike for the male

characters and wants to convey this to the interlocutor. Mrs. Peters also wanted Mrs. Hale's opinion, which is under the theory of Lakoff (2004:25), which states that women use empty adjectives to get an emotional connection from the speaker and their interlocutor and want to get approval for the opinions they have conveyed. In the conversation of datum 5, it can be concluded that Mrs. Peters uses the empty adjective to get an emotional connection between herself and Mrs. Hale about Mrs. Peters' opinion towards male characters who like to underestimate the trifle things and think women's thoughts are too complicated, so it is suitable for men to laugh at.

Datum 6

Mrs. Hale

MRS HALE: I wish if they're going to find any evidence they'd be about it. I don't like this place.

MRS PETERS: But I'm *awful* glad you came with me, Mrs Hale. It would be lonesome for me sitting here alone. (p.7)

According to the definition from Online Etymology Dictionary, which refers to the Oxford Dictionary, the word awful has several different meanings. Awful in Middle English comes from the word agheful "worthy of respect or fear, striking with admiration; cause fear" from aghe, the beginning of awel. The Old English word is egefull. The weakened meaning of "excessive, very great" was in 1818. Previously it was also sometimes used in the sense of "very respectful" in 1590.

The word *awful* that Mrs. Peters use in her utterance, "But I'm *awful* glad you came with me, Mrs Hale. It would be lonesome for me sitting here alone." demonstrates the use of empty adjective that communicate the sentiment of Mrs.

Peters, who was delighted to have Mrs. Hale around her to make her feel less alone. Mrs. Peters said that to suggest that she was either extremely glad or pleased to have a friend who came with her to Mrs. Wright's home. The word *awful* in the phrase "*awful* glad" here displays an empty adjective that signifies "extremely" or "excessive," which can be interpreted as very glad that makes Mrs. Hale as an interlocutor will, empathize or have an emotional response to Mrs. Peters as the speaker (Lakoff, 2004).

The word *awful* used by Mrs. Peters here can also function as an intensifier that shows the frequency or intensity of the next word that is added to these empty adjectives. In this case, she uses the phrase "*awful* glad" to show how strongly she felt happy in the presence of Mrs. Hale.

3.2.1.3 Tag Question

The question tag is one of the features of women's language theory (Lakoff, 1975). Women often use it when they are in dialogue with others to show doubts and uncertainty about their opinions. Women are known to use the question tag feature more often than men, where this question tag becomes a phrase to convey an opinion that is in the middle between the direct statement form and the yes/no question. Research from Lisda Miftahul Aini (2016) found that sometimes the question tag can be found in sentences uttered by the speaker even though they know the exact answer and do not need confirmation anymore.

In *Trifles* drama, not all female characters use the tag question feature. Only Mrs. Hale uses this question tag feature, while Mrs. Peters does not use this tag question feature at all. Mrs. Hale uses this feature five times in several of her speech with several purposes, one of which is to ask the other person's opinion because Mrs. Hale feels she needs confirmation from the other person on the topic they are talking about. The conversation is detailed below.

Datum 7

Mrs. Hale

MRS PETERS: But I'm awful glad you came with me, Mrs Hale. It would be lonesome for me sitting here alone.

MRS HALE: It would, *wouldn't it?* (*dropping her sewing*) But I tell you what I do wish, Mrs Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes when she was here. I—(*looking around the room*)—wish I had. (p.7)

The background of the conversation in datum 7 was when Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters had a conversation with each other, and Mrs. Hale started the conversation by saying that she did not like the place (Mrs. Wright's house). Then Mrs. Peters chimed in on the conversation with Mrs. Hale by expressing her feelings. Mrs. Peters was happy because Mrs. Hale accompanied her in it. Mrs. Peters felt it would be very lonely if she were sat there alone. Then Mrs. Hale agreed with Mrs. Peters, and she wanted confirmation of her agreement with Mrs. Peters and gave her opinion first from the start. In that sentence, Mrs. Hale uses a feature of women's language, namely the tag question in the sentence, "It would, *wouldn't it?*". Tag question "*wouldn't it?*" in the sentence that is in datum 7 has the aim of adding a sense of certainty from the interlocutor (Lakoff, 1975). More specifically, the

sentence indicates that Mrs. Hale wanted Mrs. Peters as her interlocutor, related to her agreement about the atmosphere of Mrs. Wright's house that they did not like and how lonely Mrs. Wright was. This is undoubtedly following one of the functions of the question tag feature itself, which helps emphasize what is being conveyed by the speaker and makes the other person more confident in what the speaker is saying (Pebrianti, 2013).

3.2.1.4 Lexical Hedges

Lexical hedges or fillers can be interpreted as language elements that show impartiality and vulnerability, insecurity, doubt, and skepticism about something. Since women are seen as subservient in public, they typically use vocabulary hedges or fillers that imply weakness and mistrust of women (Lakoff as cited in Holmes, 2013:304). Fillers are unnecessary words that women use, such as the pause fillers oh, um, uh, and ah (Holmes, 2013, p. 303). In line with Lakoff's theory, Murti (2018) also mentioned words like *umm*, *well*, *you know*, *you see* are some fillers, then words like *it's kind of*, *sort of*, and several others are examples of lexical hedges. These lexical hedges often function as lexical words that express a lack of confidence in an ongoing conversation and clarify the existence of an expression of uncertainty that is being thought of (Pebrianti, 2013). Conversely, women use fillers, meaningless words, to fill up the blanks in a dialogue (Lakoff, 2004). In addition, lexical hedges also have several additional functions, such as distinguishing a topic or changing one

topic to another in a conversation and giving the interlocutor time to think about what they will say later (Nafilaturif'ah, 2017).

In *Trifles* drama study, the lexical hedge is a feature of women's language that is mainly used by the main female characters, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters. They express themselves in doubt, keep the chat open, and lack confidence in conveying opinions from a female character (Holmes, 2013).

Datum 8

Mrs. Hale

MRS HALE: It never seemed a very cheerful place.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: No—it's not cheerful. I shouldn't say she had the homemaking instinct.

MRS HALE: *Well*, I don't know as Wright had, either.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: You mean that they didn't get on very well?

MRS HALE: No, I don't mean anything. But I don't think a place'd be any cheerfuller for John Wright's being in it. (p.4)

Datum 8 shows that there is little debate between Mrs. Hale and the County Attorney who co-investigated Mr. John Wright, this was motivated by the words of Mrs. Hale who said that the place (Mrs. Wright's house) was not a cheerful place and was never seen as a pleasant place. Then the County Attorney agreed with Mrs. Hale and then said that Mrs. Wright did not have the instinct to run a household. Then Mrs. Hale replied to the conversation by changing the topic in the sentence “*Well*, I don't know as Wright had, either.”

In the sentence in datum 8, Mrs. Hale used the filler *well*, indicating doubts about the County Attorney's presumption that Mrs. Wright did not have a

homemaking instinct. Additionally, Mrs. Hale said that sentence because she felt Mr. John Wright might not have a good homemaking instinct. She said with some hesitation that Mrs. Hale did not know what was going on between Mr. John Wright and Mrs. Wright, but she felt that the house could not be happier with John Wright in it.

Datum 9

Mrs. Hale

MRS HALE: (*examining the skirt*) Wright was close. *I think maybe* that's why she kept so much to herself. She didn't even belong to the Ladies Aid. I suppose she felt she couldn't do her part. (p.4)

The background of the dialogue on datum 9 is when Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters ask each other about how Mrs. Wright, mainly because thirty years ago, Mrs. Wright was a happy woman in beautiful clothes and could sing in the choir. However, everything changed after she married Mr. John Wright, who was cold and made Mrs. Wright a different person. In expressing her opinion, Mrs. Hale feels doubt by using one of the features of women's language, namely lexical hedges, in the sentence, "Wright was close. *I think maybe* that's why she kept so much to herself". Mrs. Hale uses the phrase "*I think maybe*," which is included in lexical hedge phrases such as *I think, you know, I am sure, and perhaps* (Jakobsson, 2010). Mrs. Hale uses the phrase here to show that she doubted Mrs. Wright and thus made herself change her personality to be closed. Mrs. Hale feels this is close to some of the things shown as symbols in the drama *Trifles*.

Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters had talked about how diligent Mrs. Wright who can do housework well and pay attention to details such as preparing the cherries in the jar, which she has been doing this past summer. However, much of her work was not appreciated by her husband, John Wright, so Mrs. Wright felt she had never done a good job and felt unworthy in many ways. This made Mrs. Hale suspect that Mrs. Wright became a closed woman and kept everything she felt alone by saying, "Wright was close. *I think maybe* that's why she kept so much to herself." The phrase *I think maybe* shows that there is doubt in Mrs. Hale's opinion because the use of lexical hedges and fillers expresses a lack of confidence in a woman (Holmes, 2013).

Datum 10

Mrs. Peters

MRS HALE: What do you suppose she was so nervous about?

MRS PETERS: Oh—I don't know. I don't know as she was nervous. I sometimes sew awful queer when I'm just tired. (*MRS HALE starts to say something, looks at MRS PETERS, then goes on sewing*) **Well**, I must get these things wrapped up. They may be through sooner than we think, (putting apron and others thing together) I wonder where I can find a piece of paper, and string. (p.6)

The conversation begins with the curiosity of Mrs. Hale, who feels that there is something wrong with Mrs. Wright, where the previous scene shows the stitching pattern by Mrs. Wright, where the other stitch patterns look even and neat. At the same time, in certain parts, it becomes untidy, which certainly makes Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale curious about the actual things that happened to them. Mrs. Hale asked her interlocutor what made Mrs. Wright so nervous that it affected her untidy stitches by

saying, "What do you suppose she was so nervous about?" then Mrs. Peters answered doubtfully about what had happened to Mrs. Wright, saying that she did not know why Mrs. Wright became so nervous. Mrs. Peters also explained that she would make stitches poorly when tired.

After a while, Mrs. Peters started the conversation again by saying, "*Well*, I must get these things wrapped up. They may be through sooner than we think.". In that sentence, Mrs. Peters uses fillers in the form of the word *well*, which is the prefix in the complete sentence she conveys. This happened indirectly after the two of them discussed the reason why Mrs. Wright became nervous, and after a while, the lexical hedge feature was used with the intention of starting the conversation again so that the gap or distance between the previous and the next conversation can be filled and stay on track so that it would also keep the conversation going well (Pebrianti, 2013).

Datum 11

Mrs. Peters

MRS HALE: What do you suppose she was so nervous about?

MRS PETERS: *Oh*—I don't know. I don't know as she was nervous. I sometimes sew awful queer when I'm just tired. (*MRS HALE starts to say something, looks at MRS PETERS, then goes on sewing*) Well I must get these things wrapped up. They may be through sooner than we think, I wonder where I can find a piece of paper, and string.

MRS HALE: In that cupboard, maybe. (p.6)

The background of the conversation between Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters in datum 11 is when they talk about the causes of Mrs. Wright's nervousness. Mrs. Hale asked what might be the cause of the nervous feelings experienced by Mrs. Wright

and further answered by Mrs. Peters with the sentence, "**Oh**—I don't know. I don't know as she was nervous. I sometimes sew awful queer when I'm just tired.". The sentence uttered by Mrs. Peters uses the features of women's language, namely fillers. The word **oh** used by Mrs. Peters at the beginning of her utterance becomes a meaningless particle with the function of thinking about what she wants to say (Lakoff, 1973). In this case, the filler **oh** has a function to help Mrs. Peters to get some time to think about how she will answer Mrs. Hale's question, being unsure of what she was going to say and then she used filler before continuing her opinion, which further expressed doubts about her opinion about the cause of Mrs. Wright felt nervous by saying "I don't know. I don't know as she was nervous."

The writer noticed a difference between the word **oh** in the lexical hedges feature and the avoidance of vital swear words feature in the dialogue from the *Trifles* drama. The word **oh** that appears in datum 11 is included in lexical hedges because it is used to communicate uncertainty and is followed by the phrase "I don't know," which denotes speaker confusion while responding to questions. Susan Glaspell used the en dash punctuation mark in the *Trifles* dialogue script. It may be observed in the phrase "**Oh**—I don't know," which indicates a disruption or pause in the dialogue because the speaker is confused (Erin Wright, 2022). This fits with Lakoff's (1975) theory that the use of lexical hedges can give the speakers pause when they are unsure about their opinion.

The word **oh**, on the other hand, is used by women to avoid using strong swear words when they are shocked, offended, or annoyed by something that

happened. In this *Trifles* drama, the writer observed differences in using the word *oh* depending on the context and chronology, which denotes the avoidance of strong swear words. Specifically, when Mrs. Hale was shocked by something she discovered and observed, she opted not to express it with strong swear words but rather in sentences that contained avoidance of strong swear words, as shown in datum 3 (page 31).

3.2.1.5 Intensifiers

According to the Oxford Expert Learner's Dictionary (1989), an intensifier is a linguistic feature that can emphasize and strengthen the meaning of following words. The intensifier is also defined as a feature of women's language to indicate elements used with other expressions that try to intensify the meaning of the vocal expression. Lakoff (1975) found that females use more intensifiers than males, such as *so*, *awfully*, *pretty*, *terribly*, *quite*, and so on. Intensifiers can occur as amplifiers, suppressors, and downtoners (Safitri, 2017). However, in this *Trifles* drama, the writer discovered that several intensifiers could have the meaning of empty adjectives and vice versa. Some words mentioned by Lakoff in empty adjectives can be used as intensifiers. Susan Glaspell used the word "awful" a lot to show empty adjectives in several sentences spoken by the main female characters, which makes the word "awful" function as both an intensifier and an empty adjective in this *Trifles* drama, as shown in datum 5 (page 35), datum 6 (page 36) and datum 14 (page 47).

Several previous studies have shown that many female characters use the intensifier feature. The results of research from Pebrianti (2013) show that the intensifier is the main feature that female bloggers in Indonesia are most widely used. This feature is used to strengthen and emphasize their speech in more depth and get their blog readers' attention. Arliss (1991) says that intensifiers focus on attracting attention to the emotional message rather than the actual sentence's cognitive message.

In the *Trifles* drama, the two main female characters are also found to use this intensifier feature in some of their speech. Mrs. Peters used it twice, while Mrs. Hale used this feature more than seven times in some sentences. The total use of the intensifiers feature in this *Trifles* drama is nine times. The details of using the intensifiers feature are discussed in the sentences below.

Datum 12

Mrs. Hale

MRS HALE: (*looking about*) It never seemed a *very* cheerful place.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: No—it's not cheerful. I shouldn't say she had the homemaking instinct. (p.3)

In the conversation on datum 12, Mrs. Hale revealed that the place where Mrs. Wright is not a pleasant place is expressed by saying, "It never seemed a *very* cheerful place." which contains an intensifier feature with the word *very*. The intensifier in that sentence is used to strengthen the word *cheerful*. This is the complete sentence that would mean that Mrs. Hale felt that Mrs. Wright's place was a home that was never seen to become a happy place or, in other words, is described as a place that is unpleasant, gloomy, and unhappy for Mrs. Wright. The word "never

seemed a *very* cheerful place" here can easily be interpreted as a place that never seems very pleasant and makes the person who lives in it also feel unhappy. In contrast, the word *very* indicates that the place does not bring happiness.

Datum 13

Mrs. Hale

MRS PETERS: Oh, what are you doing, Mrs. Hale?

MRS HALE: Just pulling out a stitch or two that's not sewed *very* good. (*threading a needle*). Bad sewing always made me fidgety.

MRS PETERS: I don't think we ought to touch things.

MRS HALE: I'll just finish up this end. (p.6)

The background of the dialogue above is when Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters found a clue in Mrs. Wright's activity in the murder case, which is the main problem in the *Trifles* drama story. Mrs. Hale noticed some stitch patterns that did not look neat and made her want to fix the sloppy patterns because they made her feel uncomfortable. In showing how untidy Mrs. Wright is, Mrs. Hale expresses it by saying, "Just pulling out a stitch or two that's not sewed *very* good." The word *very* in Mrs. Hale's utterance is an intensifier that shows the next word. It will be "*very* good" in the full sentence, "Just pulling out a stitch or two that's not sewed *very* good," which means that the stitches from Mrs. Wright are very untidy or imperfect. The intensifier *very* indicates that there is an emphasis on meaning in the sentence uttered by Mrs. Hale (Safitri, 2017).

Datum 14

Mrs. Peters

MRS HALE: But I tell you what I do wish, Mrs Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes when she was here. I—(*looking around the room*)—wish I had.

MRS PETERS: But of course you were *awful* busy, Mrs Hale—your house and your children. (p.7)

There was a conversation between Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, initiated by Mrs. Hale wishing she could visit Mrs. Wright to accompany and make Mrs. Wright not feel lonely at home. Hearing the regret, Mrs. Peters then calmed Mrs. Hale not to blame herself anymore. Mrs. Peters uses a defense sentence by saying, "But of course you were *awful* busy, Mrs. Hale—your house and your children.". In that sentence, Mrs. Peters uses the intensifier *awful*, which is used to emphasize the word very busy. Mrs. Peters felt that Mrs. Hale could not visit Mrs. Wright because Mrs. Hale must be very busy with the house and the children so that she does not have to feel guilty and blame herself all the time.

Awful is an adjective that can indicate anything bad or unpleasant. However, depending on the context of the sentence in which it appears, *awful* can also mean something very huge or significant (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). According to the definition, Collins Dictionary (2022) noted that the term awful could be used to emphasize how large a group of nouns that refer to a number is. Additionally, Online Etymology Dictionary, which uses the Oxford Dictionary as a source, defined the term *awful* in several ways. Awel, the beginning of the word awful, derives from the Middle English word agheful, which means "worthy of respect or fear, striking with admiration; create fear."

The Old English term for *awful*, egefull, was weakened in 1818 to imply "very, exceedingly great." Before 1590, it was occasionally used to mean "very respectful." According to the Meriam Webster's Dictionary (2022), by the late 18th century, *awful* was a common adjective in speech and informal writing. Then, in the early 19th century, the adjective awful was used as an intensifier and adverb. *Awful* continues to be used frequently in newspapers and other media after becoming awfully. The adverb *awful* is mainly used by Americans and is generally limited to simple text and the spoken language it emulates. In this *Trifles* drama, the word *awful* is used by Susan Glaspell as an empty adjective, as shown in datum 5 (page 35) and datum 6 (page 36). *Trifles* drama written in 1816 also used *awful* as intensifiers, as shown in datum 14.

Mrs. Peters' speech which contains the intensifier *awful*, is also intended to give meaning to the emotional message of Mrs. Peters to Mrs. Hale, following the opinion of Arliss (1991), who said that intensifiers could be used to convey emotional messages. In this case, Mrs. Peters has a goal that she can calm Mrs. Hale, who feels very guilty; conveys her emotional message by emphasizing that Mrs. Hale has done nothing wrong and that it was acceptable not to accompany Mrs. Wright because she also has other activities that cannot be left out.

3.2.1.6 Hypercorrect Grammar

One feature that women often use in their speech is standard verb forms (Holmes, 2013). Women more often display words that are standard and do not

violate the general rules of grammar that apply. For example, when saying the word *singing*, women will use the letter *g* at the end because it follows the original form and does not leave a single letter in their speech. Using words following the correct grammatical rules is also used to display politeness towards the interlocutor. Women will use this hypercorrect grammar feature to sound more assertive, reduce demands, and make sentences more polite (Rubbiyanti, 2017).

This hypercorrect grammar feature also appears in the *Trifles* drama, which Mrs. Hale uses and Mrs. Peters in some of their remarks 15 times, detailing Mrs. Peters using this feature seven times and Mrs. Hale using this feature eight times.

Datum 15

Mrs. Peters

MRS PETERS: Oh, her fruit; it did freeze, *She worried about that when it turned so cold. She said the fire'd go out and her jars would break.*

SHERIFF: Well, can you beat the women! Held for murder and worryin' about her Preserves. (p.3)

In the dialogue by Mrs. Peters in datum 15, Mrs. Peters uses sentences that are complete and under the applicable grammar rules. Mrs. Peters is also used to speaking concerning grammar, saying, "*She worried about that when it turned so cold. She said the fire'd go out and her jars would break.*" The sentence identifies Mrs. Wright's past activities completed in the past or before Mr. John Wright passed away. Mrs. Peters expresses her feelings while still paying much attention to the grammar. Sentences that use this grammatical standard are more often used by women than men (Holmes, 1992). The dialogue Mrs. Peters said in datum 11 also

reflects the existence of a word that does not use the grammatical standard, and the sentence is spoken by the Sheriff, one of the male characters in the play *Trifles*. The Sheriff said, "Well, can you beat the women! Held for murder and *worryin'* about her preserves." The use of the letter g at the end of the word *worrying* is often dropped by men, which makes men often find that their sentences do not contain hypercorrect grammar features.

Datum 16

Mrs. Hale

MRS HALE: Do you think she did it?

MRS PETERS: (*in a frightened voice*) Oh, I don't know.

MRS HALE: Well, I don't think she did. Asking for an apron and her little shawl. *Worrying* about her fruit. (p.5)

The background of the dialogue above is the curiosity of Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters about the truth about Mr. John Wright, where the only person accused of being the perpetrator was Mrs. Wright because she lives alone with John Wright. Mrs. Wright is considered innocent because she only thinks about preserved cherries, an apron, and a little shawl. If we examined more deeply, the things underestimated could become evidence that incriminates Mrs. Wright. When saying these words, Mrs. Hale uses the women's language feature, namely hypercorrect grammar, in the sentence, "Well, I don't think she did. Asking for an apron and her little

shawl. *Worrying* about her fruit." In saying *worrying*, Mrs. Hale still uses the letter g at the end of that word, which men often do not do.

In the *Trifles* drama, the male characters often do not use standard language in their conversations. In this case, the male characters often seem to leave the letter g' in several words ending in ng', as exemplified by Lakoff (2004) the use of 'g' in the word singing, which men often drop. This also applies to several words ending in ng', where the male characters in *Trifles* drama do not use the word correctly.

The use of the letter g' in the word rocking is left out by a male character named Hale in the sentence "She was *rockin'* back and forth" (p.2), which occurred when the County Attorney asked about Mrs. Wright at the time Hale saw her. Then Hale also left the letter g' when he gave further information about what Mrs. Wright did at the time in the sentence "...and just went on *pleatin'* at her apron" (p.2) and also "left g' in the word lying in the sentence "We went upstairs and there he was *lyin'*." Hale often does not use words according to the standard English spelling, which proves that Lakoff's (1973) theory is correct. That is, men often leave the g' in words ending in ng'.

Not only Hale but there are also male characters who become Sheriffs in *Trifles* who also do not use the letter g' in some words that end in ng'. In this case, the Sheriff did not mention the letter g' in the word worrying in the sentence "Held for murder and *worryin'* about her preserves." (p.3). In that case, the Sheriff was having a conversation with the County Attorney and Hale, where they talked about how it is so

easy for women to worry about things that male characters take for granted and take for granted.

In stark contrast to the male characters, the two main female characters in the *Trifles* drama, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, mostly stick to the 'g' in words that end in 'ng'. They do not leave the 'g' suffix because they are used to using standard and correct forms of language, as explained in datum 16.

3.2.1.7 Superpolite Form

Pebrianti (2013) asserts that to ask a question to an interlocutor, speakers will try to use a polite attitude. One way to make speakers use polite language is to use the 'superpolite' form in the sentences they say. For example, with euphemisms or more polite indirect sentences. This superpolite form feature is based on the principle of politeness that is upheld by women, where women are still expected to have a more polite attitude than men, which is still ongoing (Murti, 2018).

The use of the superpolite form feature in the drama *Trifles* is reflected in some of the conversations spoken by Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters 4 times; both Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters use this feature twice. This feature is used by the two main female characters in the drama *Trifles* to increase politeness in their dialogue. Both characters put forward a sense of politeness regardless of gender. Examples of its use are in the following sentences.

Datum 17

Mrs. Hale

MRS HALE: (*examining the skirt*) Wright was close. I think maybe that's why she kept so much to herself. She didn't even belong to the Ladies Aid. I suppose she felt she couldn't do her part, and then you don't enjoy things when you feel *shabby*. She used to wear pretty clothes and be lively, when she was Minnie Foster, one of the town girls singing in the choir. But that—oh, that was thirty years ago. This all you was to take in? (p.4)

The dialogue on datum 17 contains a superpolite form on Mrs. Hale, to be precise in the "I suppose she felt she couldn't do her part, and then you don't enjoy things when you feel *shabby*.". Mrs. Hale uses the sentence to describe Mrs. Wright, who was often silent and kept all her feelings to herself and felt that Mrs. Wright felt that she could not do her job and appealed to Mrs. Peters by saying, "And then you don't enjoy things when you feel *shabby*.". The word *shabby* here is a superpolite form, using a euphemism, where people, in general, will use the words bad, scruffy, lack of care, and shameful to describe Mrs. Wright because the sentence has the meaning that Mrs. Wright felt so bad. Mrs. Hale carries out the use of the superpolite form feature to show courtesy and respect for Mrs. Wright, refining the words she uses.

Datum 18

Mrs. Peters

MRS PETERS: Well, I must get those things from the front room closet, (*she goes to the door at the right, but after looking into the other room, steps back*) You coming with me, Mrs Hale? You *could* help me carry them. (p.4)

Mrs. Peters contains a sentence that uses the superpolite form. In the whole sentence, Mrs. Peters asked Mrs. Hale to check the front room for some of the things she was looking for. In conveying her wish, Mrs. Peters asked Mrs. Hale whether she would accompany Mrs. Peters and then continued the question by stating that later if

Mrs. Hale follows Mrs. Peters, Mrs. Hale can help Mrs. Peters to carry things. The sentence used by Mrs. Peters uses the superpolite form feature, namely by using the word *could* which shows Mrs. Peters' politeness towards Mrs. Hale, who is older than her. Mrs. Peters could have used the word, "You can help me carry them." but she did not do that so she could still be polite to the other person.

3.2.2 Characterization Theory

According to MJ Murphy (1972), a character is a way a storyteller or author brings the story alive and makes the reader or audience understand the characterization between characters and the storyline. In other words, a character is an actor in a story who can describe how the event or story happened. The characters in a story can also explain the hidden meanings displayed in the story itself. The readers can easily understand the message indirectly mentioned by the author.

Murphy (1972) developed nine ways of characterization in the previous study. Some of them are ways of knowing the character of their speech by looking at their dialogue with other characters or when they give opinions. There are other ways, such as assessing character by looking at other characters' conversations; another is seeing the character's reactions in several situations. Then there is also a way of knowing a person's character by looking at their thoughts. Murphy's four ways of describing characterization in a story are easy to trace clearly to the characterizations in the *Trifles* drama. In this section, the writer also analyzes how far the characterization

of a character in the story can be revealed by using the women's language feature in some of their speech.

3.2.2.1 Mrs. Hale Character

Mrs. Hale, in the whole *Trifles* drama story, is described as a brave character. Moreover, she is brave to voice her opinion and criticize the behavior of men. In some of her dialogues, it is seen that Mrs. Hale gets angry when the male characters express opinions that corner women and laugh at the thoughts of the female characters. Mrs. Hale is also described as a character who has high sympathy for her friend, Mrs. Wright, and she expresses regret that she rarely visits Mrs. Wright. She feels that Mrs. Wright is a lonely woman struggling with her unhappy feelings. Mrs. Hale has a high sense of empathy so that she can feel what Mrs. Wright is reflected in the dialogue on datum 8.

Datum 8

Mrs. Hale

MRS PETERS: But I'm awful glad you came with me, Mrs Hale. It would be lonesome for me sitting here alone.

MRS HALE: It would, *wouldn't it?* (*dropping her sewing*) But I tell you what I do wish, Mrs Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes when she was here. I—(*looking around the room*)—wish I had.(p.7)

In that sentence, Mrs. Hale uses the tag question feature in the sentence "It would, *wouldn't it?*" to request reconfirmation of her approval. Pebrianti (2013) said that the tag question feature could also be used to emphasize the speaker's opinion and make the other person believe what the speaker is saying. Mrs. Hale uses this

feature to request a reaffirmation of her agreement with Mrs. Peters, which is about the loneliness faced in the home alone, and Mrs. Wright has long felt this. This situation shows Mrs. Hale's high level of sympathy and empathy for Mrs. Wright and points out that Mrs. Hale has a high sense of empathy.

Concluding from the highest women's language features used by Mrs. Hale, it is known that Mrs. Hale often uses the lexical hedges feature, she often uses the words *well*, and *I think* as in datum 8 and datum 9. She used this feature to take over the conversation and deliver her opinion. Mrs. Hale also often keeps the conversations open by using the lexical hedges feature, which allows herself and the other person to have frequent discussions. This indicates that Mrs. Hale has a character who likes to discuss, think, and often gives her opinion. Mrs. Hale also often gives her opinion and wonders what is going on, although sometimes she feels more confident about what she says.

Another trait that can be seen in the character of Mrs. Hale is a polite personality, and this is reflected in the avoidance of strong swear words used. The use of these features is due to the demand for women to be polite, and if a woman violates this, then she will be shunned by society because she is considered a bad woman (Lakoff, 1975). This makes Mrs. Hale polite to the person she is talking to; even when she is upset or disappointed, he still uses soft words and avoids harsh language or swear words. Besides, Mrs. Hale also uses the superpolite form feature and hypercorrect grammar, which illustrates Mrs. Hale's characterization. The superpolite form feature shows her politeness because she respects the person she is

talking to. She also uses euphemisms, making her choose words that sound softer than words many people use. Besides, Mrs. Hale also uses hypercorrect grammar, demonstrating politeness and avoiding misunderstandings between Mrs. Hale and the people she is talking to.

3.2.2.2 Mrs. Peters Character

Mrs. Peters is the main female character in the *Trifles* drama, where she is described as the wife of a Sheriff who also plays a role in this drama. Mrs. Peters has a character that is not much different from Mrs. Hale; she is a person who is polite, courageous, and also has a high sense of empathy. Based on the linguistic aspect, Mrs. Peters in this *Trifles* drama is described as a woman who obeys the applicable rules, has a high value of politeness, and likes to discuss with Mrs. Hale. Based on the data of Mrs. Peters' highest features of using women's language, Mrs. Peters also likes to use the feature of lexical hedges in her speech. This makes Mrs. Peters have the character of daring to speak her thoughts, likes to think, and has a few doubts about her opinion, as reflected in datum 10, where Mrs. Peters uses filler *well* that she uses to change the topic of conversation to keep their conversation on track (Pebrianti, 2013).

Mrs. Peters also has a highly polite attitude where she avoids harsh words by using the avoidance of strong swear words feature and replacing them with words like *oh my* so that she can still express her feeling, but she does not use swearing words as used by many people. Mrs. Peters also uses hypercorrect grammar and

superpolite form features, which further show her polite character towards the interlocutor. In this *Trifles* study, Mrs. Peters is known to refrain from using the question tag feature. This shows that she has few doubts about what she conveys. Mrs. Peters has a better level of self-confidence and obedience than Mrs. Hale, so she would act and say more cautiously. Mrs. Peters does not need validation or reaffirmation from the interlocutor for her opinion or thoughts.

At the end of the story, both Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters show their high empathy toward Mrs. Wright, and they end up breaking the rules to defend Mrs. Wright as a fellow woman and finally choose to hide the evidence for the murder case so as not to burden Mrs. Wright.

3.2.3 Background of Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters

The use of language is different, could be caused by cultural differences or other aspects of differences. This includes the differences between Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters utterances and women's language features they used in their dialogue. Sumarsono and Pranata (2002:113) stated that these differences are caused by social phenomena closely related to social attitudes. This social attitude is inseparable from the existence of social status that underlies the background of the two female characters in the *Trifles* drama, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters. Mrs. Hale is a middle-aged woman who lives in a family of farmers and is Mrs. Wright's neighbour. Mrs. Wright is the main suspect in the murder case of John Wright. Mrs. Hale is described as a protagonist with a high sense of empathy for fellow women and has a high spirit

of feminism. This drama *Trifles* takes place in America at the turn of the 20th century, where many women face sexism problems, but Mrs. Hale has a high spirit to fight against men who often underestimate her. Mrs. Hale did not hesitate to voice her opinion by using the lexical hedges feature to change the topic of conversation and express her opinion to the male characters. In addition, Mrs. Hale knew Minnie Foster or Mrs. Wright when he was young, namely 30 years ago, so that made him more daring to voice his opinion with the lexical hedges feature 15 times.

In contrast, Mrs. Peters's character is played as the wife of a Sheriff who handles the murder case committed by Mrs. Wright of her husband. Mrs. Peters accompanied her husband on errands, but her feminist spirit led her to support Mrs. Wright as a fellow woman. She did not know Mrs. Wright, so she did not have many opinions about the case. Mrs. Peters more often continued the discussed topic brought by Mrs. Hale, using the lexical hedges feature.

Mrs. Peters, a female character who is younger than Mrs. Hale, often indicates a desire on her part to show sympathy and to gain emotional closeness when talking to Mrs. Hale, by using the empty adjective feature 4 times, which Mrs. Hale because she had experienced more events related to Mrs. Wright and hoped for some emotional attachment to the person she told about Mrs. Wright story. Mrs. Peters also avoided strong swear words more than once compared to Mrs. Hale because she had to show politeness to older characters.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

. According to the first research problem, the writer found that the two main characters in the *Trifles* drama, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, use a total of 65 speeches that contain some features of women's language. Lakoff's (1975) women's language features used by the two main female characters in *Trifles* drama include avoiding strong swear words, empty adjectives, tag questions, lexical hedges, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, and superpolite forms. The features most used by Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters are lexical hedges and hypercorrect grammar. Three features are not found in the dialogue of the female characters in *Trifles* drama: emphatic stress, rising intonation, and precise color terms. This shows that the female characters in the *Trifles* drama only use some of the women's language features examined by Lakoff (1975).

The writer observed that Lakoff's theory (1975) which discussed some features of women's language, can be used to reveal the characters of the main female characters in the *Trifles* drama with the help of characterization theory from Murphy (1972). The results show that Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters are the main female characters who are brave and have a high sense of sympathy and empathy. They are always polite because they often use hypercorrect grammar and avoidance of strong swear words, have high curiosity, and are open to discussion because they keep the conversation on track by using lexical hedges, although several times they expressed

doubts about their opinion by using fillers. However, it is also known that Mrs. Peters has a more confident character than Mrs. Hale because Mrs. Hale often feels doubtful and seeks validation or confirmation of her opinion by using the tag question feature. These two main female characters use different language features among others, because of their social status, family background, and age difference.

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