

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & METHODOLOGY

2.1. Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. Language Features

According to Lakoff (1975) , females are expected not to talk roughly, which makes them inferior and powerless. Language features which are associated with females refers to the lexical elements, syntactic norms, intonational and suprasegmental forms utilized by women (Lakoff, 1975 : 8). Lakoff as cited by Holmes (2013) suggests that the language features consist of lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonation on declaratives, empty adjectives, precise color terms, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress.

2.1.1.1. Lexical Hedges

Lakoff (1975) says language used by women appears to consist of more uses of *well*, *you know*, and *kinda*. Aside from these words, women can be identified by utilizing the phrases *I guess* and *I think* to preface statements and *I wonder* to preface asks. Furthermore, Lakoff (1975) explained that hedges are more commonly utilized by females than males and create the impression that the speaker is unsure about what he or she is saying or cannot guarantee the truth of their assertion. The example of the use of lexical hedge is “*I guess it will rain this afternoon*”.

2.1.1.2. Tag Questions

According to Holmes (2013), some studies state that females use tag questions more than males. Lakoff says (as cited in Mary, 2010: 48), that when a person is unclear about the validity of a statement, a tag question is utilized to function as a bridge between the speaker and the addressee. Lakoff (1975) stated that it is a declarative statement that does not make the assumption that the statement should be believed. It is thought to be more popular among women. The examples of tag questions are explained below.

- (a) Sure, is hot here, *isn't it?* (The speaker and the recipient know the answer)
- (b) I have a headache, *don't I?* (Only the speaker knows the answer)
- (c) The way prices are rising is horrendous, *isn't it?* (The speaker seeks the other opinion and confirmation)

2.1.1.3. Rising Intonations

Lakoff (1975) discovers a distinct contrast between women's intonational patterns, especially a distinctive phrase intonation pattern seen merely among female English speakers. This pattern is similar to a declarative response to an inquiry, using a rising inflection and a hesitant tone, conveying the sense of requesting confirmation even if the speaker may know the crucial details (Lakoff, 1975). Rising intonation can be seen in these dialogues.

- (a) "*When will we go to dinner?*"
- (b) "*Oh...around five o'clock...?*"

Speaker (b) increases their intonation to ask for confirmation and indicate their doubt.

2.1.1.4. Empty Adjectives

Other inequalities may be seen throughout the lexicon. In this regard, there is a category of adjectives that, along with their unique and actual meanings, may be used to express the speaker's approval or appreciation for something. Some of these adjectives are gender-neutral which either men or women can use. Nevertheless, another set appears to be restricted to language used by women in its figurative implementation (Lakoff & Bucholtz, 2004: 45). The examples of empty adjectives are categorized into two. Lakoff (1975) stated that *great*, *terrific*, *cool*, and *neat* are examples of neutral adjectives, and *adorable*, *charming*, *sweet*, *lovely*, and *divine* are the adjectives used more by females.

2.1.1.5. Precise Color Terms

Females make precise color discriminations than men, with terms like *beige*, *ecru*, *aquamarine*, and *lavender* appearing in their regular vocabulary but not in most males. Lakoff (1975) explained that males find conversations about naming colors like *lavender* or *mauve* strange because they view such problems as insignificant and unimportant in real life. If a woman says, "*The wall is mauve*," no one will develop any specific opinion of her based on the sentence alone. However, if a man says the same sentence, one may think he is sarcastically

impersonating a woman, is gay, or is an interior designer. This lexical gap reflects a social bias in females' situations.

2.1.1.6. Intensifiers

The intensifiers are more common in women's speech than men's, but they can also be used by men. Lakoff (1975) explained that intensifier is used to hedge on strong feelings, such as "*I feel strongly about this*" or "*I like him very much.*" When the phrases are unemotional or non-subjective, men utilize this structure less difficult (Lakoff, 1975). Employing an equative, such as *so*, rather than absolute superlatives appears to be a method for avoiding firm commitment to an idea.

2.1.1.7. Hypercorrect Grammar

Hypercorrect grammar is the constant utilization of standard verb forms as it is stated by Lakoff (as cited in Holmes, 2013). Lakoff (1975) says that hypercorrect grammar involves an avoidance of terms considered vulgar or coarse, and the use of precise pronunciation. It is found that women rarely use the word *ain't* using the final sound 'g'. The example of hypercorrect grammar is in the word *going* and don't say *goin'*. Holmes (2013) reveals that women often prefer standard speech forms, reflecting their sensitivity to contextual factors. These forms are employed in formal situations to express social distance and part, and they may be perceived as accommodating to their intended recipients.

2.1.1.8. Super Polite Forms

In society, women are expected to be more polite than men, and this includes the way they speak. Lakoff (1975) states that this is related to women's hypercorrectness in grammar because this is considered to be more mannered across middle-class society. This feature is used to decrease the power of an emotion portrayed in a statement. Super polite forms by women use *thank you*, and *please* to make the utterances more polite. It can be seen in the sentence "*Would you help me please?*".

2.1.1.9. Avoidance of Strong Swear Words

Lakoff (1975) considers swear words with the use of strong particles such as *shit*, *damn*, and *hell*. Females are expected to use less powerful expletives, while males use more powerful expletives. Females change swear words by using more polite words such as *goodness*, *oh dear*, or *oh fudge*. Men and women's usage of various particles shows non-linguistic differences and exposes the disparity in cultural expectations of men and women. The distinction between using stronger words and gentler ones is in how strongly one communicates their emotion. The choice of particle shows the degree to which one lets oneself to feel (Lakoff, 1975).

2.1.1.10. Empathic Stress

Emphatic stress is considered to be one of boosting devices which used to strengthen an assertion (Holmes, 2013). Lakoff (1975) stated that this feature is

used to express the uncertainty of women's self-expression. However, this feature also seems to strengthen an utterance. One of the examples of emphatic stress is "*it was a BRILLIANT performance*", which the emphatic stress can be seen in the capitals used by the word *brilliant*. It is considered that emphatic stress is utilized as a boosting device since women believe they will not be heard or given attention to (Holmes, 2013: 304).

2.1.2. Social Factors Influence Language Choice

Holmes (2013) mentions that language use can be influenced by some factors. The factors are categorized into the participants, the setting or social context, the topic, and the function. The participants refer to the person who talks and to whom they are talking. The setting or social context is the background of the scene where the scene happens. The topic explains the subject of the conversation. Lastly, the function describes the reason and goal of the conversation (Holmes, 2013). According to Pratiwi et al. (2021), as social creatures, people must increase their socialization skills to adapt to their communities and fulfill both physical and symbolic requirements within their groups.

Social dimensions are then used to analyze the social factors explained before. Holmes (2013) explained the social dimensions that include four types. It contains the solidarity-social distance scale, status scale, formality scale, and two functional scales. The solidarity-social distance scale measures intimacy and solidarity with others, while the status scale analyzes the participant's position and

status towards others. These scales concern with the participants' relationship. The formality scale explains how language use is influenced by the level of a setting or topic of interactions. Lastly, two functional scales include referential and affective scales. These scales relate to the aims or topic of the conversation.

The referential scale explores utterances that contain information, and the affective scale examines expressions that show someone's feelings about the subject. Referentially oriented interactions tend to share less individual emotions, such as weather broadcasts. On the contrary, the more emotionally focused interactions put more emphasis on expressing sentiments, which results in less new knowledge being shared. It appears in the dialogues between neighbors or friends. An expression can involve both referential and affective scales, like when people gossip (Holmes, 2013).

2.2. Research Method

2.2.1. Type of Research

Descriptive-qualitative method is used to explain the statements of Ruth and Martin Ginsburg in the movie "*On the Basis of Sex*" (2018) by Mimi Leder. Qualitative research, according to Creswell (2014), investigates individuals' or groups' views of social or human issues through inductive analysis, data collecting, and interpretation by researchers. The qualitative method consists of the research design, sample, data collection, analysis procedures, and techniques for presenting, interpreting, validating, and suggesting possible conclusions. Qualitative research allows for a comprehensive understanding of the social world,

including everyday life, participants' experiences, social processes, institutions, discourses, and the significance of their meanings (Mason, 2002: 1). This study discusses specifically on Ruth and Martin Ginsburg's utterances which contain language features based on Lakoff (1975) theory.

2.2.2. Data and Data Sources

The data of this study are the utterances by Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Martin Ginsburg in "*On the Basis of Sex*" (2018) by Mimi Leder. The author uses the data transcript from the downloaded English subtitles of "*On the Basis of Sex*" (2018) and checked the transcript by synchronizing it with the movie. The units of the data are in the form of words, phrases, sentences, and clauses expressed by the main character, Ruth, and her husband, Martin. The utterances collected as the data are then analyzed based on Lakoff's theory (1975). The utterances that contain language features are used for the samples. The secondary sources used in this research are books, papers, articles, and journals related to language features, and gender, including Lakoff's (1975) *Language and Woman's Place*, and Holmes' (2012) *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*.

2.2.3. Population and Sample

The further analysis is conducted to examine the utterances that contain language features based on Lakoff's theory (1975). All the utterances stated by Ruth and Martin that contain the language features are used as the population. The author also employs the purposive sampling approach to select the data based on a

certain characteristic, in this study is language features. Crossman (2020) explains that the purposive sampling approach is a sampling method where the data chosen based on a specific types or purposes. The utterances that contain language features then are used as the samples.

2.2.4. Method of Collecting Data

The author conducts this research on Lakoff's (1975) language features in Mimi Leder's "*On the Basis of Sex*" (2018). The author uses non-participant observation and note-taking techniques to analyze social acts, behavior, interactions, and events. According to Barner-Barry (1986), non-participant observational approach allows the researcher to examine individuals in a setting. Non-participant observation, as defined by Williams (2008), is a qualitative research approach that entails acquiring primary data on a social element without actively interacting with the participants. This method focuses on the language features used by Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Martin Ginsburg, and studies their surroundings.

Note-taking is used to record information from sources to support and help the research. Piolat et al. (2005) highlights that note-taking is a complicated process that involves cognitive abilities, selection of the information, and textual result processes. This method ensured efficiency and tied the data collection.

In conducting this research, the researcher downloads "*On the Basis of Sex*" (2018) movie. Then, the researcher watches and listens to the movie carefully to see what Ruth and Martin say clearly. The researcher divides the data

into two groups. The first group is the utterances produced by Ruth, and the second group is the utterances produced by Martin. For data analysis purposes in the next step, the author uses different labels for each feature. The labels used are as follows.

Table 2.1. Labels for Language Features

Number	Language Features	Label
1.	Lexical Hedges	LH
2.	Tag Questions	TQ
3.	Rising Intonations	RI
4.	Empty Adjectives	EA
5.	Precise Color Terms	PC
6.	Intensifiers	IS
7.	Hypercorrect Grammar	HG
8.	Super polite Forms	SP
9.	Avoidance of Strong Swear Words	AS
10.	Emphatic Stress	ES

2.2.5. Method of Analyzing Data

The data are examined by employing the referential identity method, as Sudaryanto (1993) explains, it is used to examine how words or phrases relate to certain concepts in different circumstances. In the process of analyzing the data, the author uses several steps.

- 1) The author re-watches the movie and pays more attention to the situation in the movie when Ruth and Martin utter their words.
- 2) The author categorizes the utterances from Ruth and Martin which include language elements by applying the labels.
- 3) The author creates a table to show the calculated features used by the main characters.
- 4) The author analyzes the data and explains the language features used by Ruth and Martin. Then, the researcher examines the factors of the language features.
- 5) After all the data has been examined, the author can make conclusions based on the final results of the research.