

Men's and Women's Language Features in "Enola Holmes 2" Movie

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Fitur

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji penggambaran bahasa bergender dalam film Enola Holmes 2. Penelitian ini berfokus pada identifikasi perbedaan linguistik antara tokoh laki-laki dan perempuan yang mencerminkan identitas gender dan posisi sosial mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, dengan pengumpulan data melalui transkripsi manual terhadap dialog-dialog tertentu yang dipilih dari film tersebut. Analisis dilakukan berdasarkan teori bahasa perempuan dari Lakoff (2004) dan teori bahasa laki-laki dari Coates (2013). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya perbedaan yang nyata dalam pola kebahasaan yang digunakan oleh tokoh laki-laki dan perempuan, yang dipengaruhi oleh konteks dan faktor sosial. Tokoh perempuan lebih sering menggunakan ungkapan pelemahan atau ketidakpastian (hedges), pertanyaan penegas (tag questions), kata-kata penguat (intensifiers), serta ungkapan yang sangat sopan. Hal ini menunjukkan keterlibatan emosional dan kepekaan terhadap hubungan interpersonal. Sebaliknya, tokoh laki-laki cenderung menggunakan perintah langsung, jawaban singkat, dan strategi bertanya yang tegas, yang mencerminkan otoritas dan penekanan pada status sosial. Pola-pola tersebut menunjukkan bahwa film ini tidak hanya merepresentasikan norma gender konvensional, tetapi juga secara tersirat mempertanyakannya. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini berkontribusi terhadap kajian sosiolinguistik mengenai gender dengan menunjukkan bagaimana dialog dalam film dapat sekaligus memperkuat dan membentuk ulang persepsi tentang identitas gender dalam budaya populer.

Keyword:
Gender, Language
Features,
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Abstract

This study examines the portrayal of gendered language in the film Enola Holmes 2. The study focuses on identifying linguistic differences between male and female characters that reflect their gender identities and social positions. A descriptive qualitative approach was used, and data were collected by transcribing selected dialogue from the film manually. The analysis draws on Lakoff's (2004) theory of women's language and Coates's (2013) theory of men's language. The findings reveal noticeable differences in the linguistic patterns used by male and female characters, which are shaped by contextual and social influences. Female characters frequently use hedges, tag questions, intensifiers, and highly polite expressions, indicating emotional involvement and relational sensitivity. In contrast, male characters tend to use direct commands, brief responses, and assertive questioning strategies that reflect authority and a focus on status. These patterns suggest that the film represents and subtly questions conventional gender norms. Overall, this study contributes to sociolinguistic discussions on gender by demonstrating how cinematic dialogue can reinforce and reshape perceptions of gender identity in popular culture simultaneously.

Information Production:

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INTRODUCTION

Movies are one of the most effective mediums for conveying language, both verbally and non-verbally, by utilizing elements express complex stories, emotions, and ideas. The movie Enola Holmes 2 presented Enola as a female detective in the Victorian era, a time when women's roles were still heavily restricted by social norms and patriarchal culture. Enola's bravery in opposing male authority demonstrated the mechanics of language power between men and women in addition to illuminating the social struggle of women. The film illustrated how language served as a tool to manage gender relations, identity, and authority in a complex setting through the discourse between the characters. This film was chosen as the study's subject because it offered a wealth of linguistic information in a sophisticated social context. Movie dialogue can serve as both a reflection and a means of influencing viewers' ideas about gender roles.

A number of previous studies have discussed language and gender in films, Dewanti & Wulandari (2023) examines language features used by male and female characters in "The Prince & Me" movie, finding that both genders used similar language features with questions feature being the most common. The study showed that the topic of conversation was the main factor influencing their dialogue, and gender did not

significantly affect language use. Another study by Nisa (2022) analyzed gender differences in language features in the movie *Legally Blonde* using mixed methods. The study found nine out of ten female language features, except precise color terms, and identified five male language features used in the film. In addition, a journal entitled “Gender Language Used by Main Characters in *Hidden Figures* Film” by Husain et al., (2022) analyzes gendered language features of main characters Katherine and Al Harrison in the film *Hidden Figures*, identifying eight female language features in Katherine’s speech based on Lakoff’s theory, the most frequent features were super polite forms which align with traditional female politeness and subtlety.

In contrast, Al Harrison exhibits six male language features, prominently swearing and taboo language, reflecting authority and dominance as supported by Coates’s theory. On the other hand, research from Yulita et al., (2022) analyzed gender and language in the movie *Raya and The Last Dragon* uses qualitative descriptive methods and expert validation. The study found that lexical hedges and fillers were the dominant linguistic features, following Robin Lakoff’s theory. It aimed to examine linguistic features and identify the types of Genderlect Styles used by male and female characters in the film. Lastly, Afief et al., (2023) analyzes men's and women's language features in the movie *Do Revenge* (2022) using Lakoff's and Coates's theories with qualitative descriptive methods. The study found female characters exhibited 9 out of 10 women's language features, while male characters showed 4 out of 5 men's features. Psychology and social status were identified as factors influencing language differences.

While the contributions of these studies are important, previous studies on gendered language in movies have mostly relied on Lakoff’s (2004) theory of women’s language and Coates’s (2013) theory of men’s language, focusing only on linguistic features. By incorporating this perspective, this research possess not only identifies the features of male and female language in *Enola Holmes 2* but also analyzes how these features serve different communicative purposes, offering a more comprehensive understanding of how gender identity is negotiated through movie. make it short

The purpose of this study is to determine and examine how male and female characters in *Enola Holmes 2* employ gendered linguistic elements. The primary focus is on identifying the many kinds of linguistic techniques that appear and comprehending how these strategies work to shape and negotiate gender identity through the language of movies. In addition to promoting more critical and inclusive viewpoints in sociolinguistics and gender studies, this type of research helps us better understand how gender is portrayed in the media.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach because it is considered the most appropriate to examine the characteristics of language and its functions based on naturally occurring data. This method was used because the research focuses on attempts to comprehend, analyze, and categorize the language used by the male and female characters in the film *Enola Holmes 2*. Data will be gathered using a combination of note-taking and observational methods. In order to find and document sequences with gender-based linguistic traits, the researcher saw the film several times. To distinguish between the traits of men's and women's language, this analysis will make use of Lakoff's (2004) and Coates' (2013) ideas. Descriptive descriptions are used to narratively present the analysis's findings. To elucidate the gender-based categories of linguistic traits, a few straight lines from the film dialogues are given, along with an explanation of each example's purpose.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research provides how women and men language in *Enola Holmes 2* movie use language differently and shows that their speaking styles reflect broader social expectations about gender. Referring to Lakoff (2004), women’s language is often associated with features that signal politeness and a historically subordinate social position. In the film, the female characters display eight of Lakoff’s features: lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonation on declaratives, empty adjectives, intensifiers, superpolite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress. Their speech seems more relationship-focused, cautious, and expressive because of these patterns. Conversely, according to Coates (2013), men's language frequently emphasizes dominance, prestige, and rivalry in discourse. The male characters in the film frequently employ minimal response, interruptions, question, command, swearing taboo language, and compliments. Traditional notions of masculinity that place a premium on confidence and authority are reflected in this speech pattern. All things considered, the disparities in the movie demonstrate how language can be a subtly effective means of communicating and reiterating gender norms.

Women's Language Features

Lexical Hedges or Fillers

Lexical hedges or fillers are words or phrases that in a discourse imply hesitancy, insecurity, or uncertainty. For example, in their languages, women frequently use "I guess," "you know," "well," "I think," "kinda," and "maybe."

[1]: [00:26:29]
"Maybe I can help"

In the data, **Maybe** is a part of lexical hedges of women's language type proposed by Lakoff (2004). This happened when Enola went to talk to Sherlock at his workplace. Enola knew that Sherlock was having difficulties in his work as a detective, but Sherlock did not like other people interfering in his work. This led Sherlock to kick Enola out of his room even though the situation was difficult, but Enola insisted on offering her help to Sherlock. Enola's words show doubt and uncertainty, indicating that the speaker is not fully involved in the situation. Enola herself is hesitant because she is thinking back on what Sherlock had just said to her earlier.

Rising Intonation on Declaratives

Rising intonation on declarative is employed when a speaker wants to get confirmation. This is a common variation in women's intonation patterns is a special application of a syntactic norm.

[1]: [00:13:38]
"Why were you **here**?"

Enola's use of the word "**here**?" exhibited the rising intonation. She was looking into the disappearance of Sarah Chapman at the time of this day. She had already found connections between the match factory workers and a larger plot at this stage of the story. "Why were you **here**?" was the direct query she posed to a dubious individual whose presence at a specific spot seemed erratic. The incident happened in the middle of the investigation, after Enola had found inconsistencies in the person's account. The question's interrogative effect was enhanced by its increasing intonation. Rising intonation in women's speech was frequently seen as a sign of hesitancy or uncertainty, according to Lakoff (2004).

Tag Question

Tag questions are linguistic expressions that fall somewhere between a yes-or-no question and a direct statement. Compared to a statement, they are less assertive, but they are more confident than a simple question. For instances 'it's so hot, isn't it?', 'It's nice today, isn't it?.'

[1]: [00:19:45]
"She did, **didn't she**? And Bessie doesn't know"

In the data above, the woman's language shows a tag question. A tag question is a short question at the end of a sentence. The datum Enola uses the tag question "**Didn't she**?" after saying her idea to Mae. This shows Enola's doubt or suspicion. The tag question asks for a response. It helps Enola check if her guess is true by getting an answer from Mae. Women often use tag questions to confirm what they say when they are unsure. So, the tag question here is to ask Mae to confirm Enola's guess.

Emphatic Stress

Emphatic stress is strong emphasis on certain words to show their feelings or make their message clearer. Women often use emphatic stress to express emotions like excitement, surprise, or certainty.

[1]: [00:02:42]
"I assure you it was **mine**"

According to Lakoff (2004), the data demonstrates the use of emphatic stress, a characteristic typically linked to women's language. In order to highlight that she, not her brother Sherlock, solved the case, Enola emphasizes the word "**mine**" in the statement "I assure you it was mine." She expresses her annoyance and makes sure the listener grasps her argument with this strong emphasis.

Avoidance to Strong Swear Word

Swear words are offensive or impolite words. Women are more careful in using swear words; they prefer to use words that sound soft and elegant, avoiding strong, harsh words.

[1]: [01:03:11]
"My word, you do get in awkward places"

Enola expresses surprise when Lord Tewksbury shows up in this data by using "**my word**" rather than violent profanity. The social norms of Victorian England, when women were supposed to talk properly and refrain from using harsh or offensive words, are reflected in this choice. In a society where manners were strictly enforced, ladies were able to preserve a refined image and uphold standards of propriety by using gentle language.

Empty Adjectives

Empty adjectives are words that exclusively address feelings, not facts. These words serve as an assessment, often conveying approval or admiration based on feelings. Examples words such as "great," "terrific," "cool," and "neat".

[1]: [00:49:56]

"This is a **wonderful** occasion, is it not?"

According to Lakoff (2004), **wonderful** is an empty adjective since it doesn't express precise, quantifiable, or in-depth information. In this instance, the word only conveys the speaker's favorable assessment of the event without providing any specific details. Enola made this exact statement when she went up to Mr. Lyon and his family. In order to keep things from getting awkward, she struck up a conversation right away.

Intensifiers

Intensifiers used to soften statements and negotiate politeness. Which include words like "extremely," "truly," "so," "just," and "quite," which serve to emphasize meaning and influence the interlocutor to take the speaker seriously.

[1]: [00:22:08]

"His poetry is **extremely** bad."

Enola was the one who said the datum. The adjective "bad" is strengthened by the word "**extremely**," which emphasizes Enola's intense disapproval of the poetry. By employing this intensifier, Enola makes it evident how she feels and emphasizes the gravity of her assessment, demonstrating how women's language uses intensifiers to evoke strong feelings and grab the attention of the listener.

Super Polite Form

Women often considered experts in the use of euphemisms, skilled in choosing words that avoid misunderstanding and show sensitivity to the feelings of the people they are talking to.

[1]: [00:50:16]

"I was wondering if I **might** be able to speak to you, Mr. Lyon"

As stated by Lakoff (2004) a super polite form, *might* was shown in the data. Enola said it at the dance when she wanted to discuss anything with Mr. Lyon. Enola requested permission to talk with Mr. Lyon when she first met him, who was accompanied by his parents. Since Mr. Lyon was the only clue that could help her solve this dilemma, she wanted to speak with him in order to learn more about Sarah. However, Mr. Lyon was perplexed in that circumstance since he was unsure about the person who wished to speak with him.

Men Language Features

Minimal Response

When men use minimal responses, they generally intend to agree rather than show concern or solidarity. Coates (2013) state the phrases categorized as minimal responses (back channels) such as "yes," "right," "mhmm," and so on.

[1]: [00:24:21]

"**Mm-hmm**"

The usage of minimal response is demonstrated by the data above. Sherlock's simple "Mm-hmm" reaction serves as both an acknowledgement and a sign that he agrees with Enola's directions. In this scenario, Sherlock simply said "**Mh-hmm**" when Enola offered to help because he was intoxicated, so she walks him to his room, which is up several stairs. It demonstrates that he was listening and following instructions without providing further details or showing emotion. Coates (2013) asserts that this is consistent with the way that limited responses are typically used by males to indicate agreement.

Question

This features are typically used in a manner that emphasizes assertiveness, control, and status negotiation rather than seeking consensus or emotional connection.

[1]: [00:56:03]

“What are you doing here?”

In order to demand an explanation or information, Tewksbury's "What are you doing here?" question serves as an assertive act. Tewksbury and Enola happen to cross paths in this scene. Without any further delay, he asks Enola why she is here. It is straightforward, demonstrating authority and control in the exchange, which is characteristic of masculine communication styles that prioritize dominance and status negotiation. This question clearly establishes a power dynamic by putting the listener, Enola, in a position to justify her presence.

Command & directives

Commands and Directives in male language highlight how gender affects the dynamics of power in communication. In addition, Coates (2013) argue that men often use their language to give orders, lecture, debate, and argue.

[1]: [00:25:21]

“Don’t go in there”

Commands and directives are language used to guide other people's behavior, according to Coates' (2013) theory of men's language. Sherlock spoke the data. This starts when Enola takes Sherlock home intoxicated. She considers Sherlock's study, which is full of information and puzzles pertaining to his work as a detective, to be highly impressive after entering his room. When Enola reads the letters and plans, he has prepared, Sherlock, who dislikes them, instructs her to go home and not come into his office.

Swearing and taboo language

Men are more likely than women to use harsh language. The stronger words "fck" and "sht" are preferred by men, whereas "oh my god" and "oh my goodness" are more frequently used by women. In addition, Lakoff (2004) has surveyed conversations between males and females and concluded that females are more polite in choosing languages and avoid swearing words more.

[1]: [00:56:31]

That's enough! Stop that! Can't anyone control these **bloody** women?

According to linguistic studies, men prefer to use harsher language and taboo terms, as evidenced by Mr. Crouch's usage of the word "**bloody**" in the dialogue when he asks, "Can't anyone control these bloody women?" This supports Coates' (2013) finding that men are more prone to use profanity as a means of commanding attention, expressing annoyance, or asserting power, whereas women typically refrain from using it to be courteous. Here, Mr. Crouch uses profanity to highlight his rage and frustration, establish his authority, and exert control over the circumstance.

Complements

Compliments are usually given and received in a manner that emphasizes honesty, competition, and status reinforcement rather than emotional warmth or relationship bonding.

[1]: [00:57:31]

“Good. You **dance well.**”

According to this data, Tewkesbury's remark, "You dance well," is a straightforward affirmation of Enola's dancing prowess. Tewkesbury praised Enola by saying, "Good, you dance well," because she was quite good at following his directions when he was teaching her to dance. This compliment's succinct and critical tone highlights proficiency and demonstrates a status-oriented communication style, wherein commendation is employed to recognize aptitude rather than to foster intimacy.

Interruptions

Men often use interruptions as a strategy to gain control of conversation and assert dominance.

[1]: [00:15:12]

“Did I ask for your advice?”

Men's linguistic features as interruption is demonstrated by the data utterance, "Did I ask for your advice?" Charles was overseeing the employees when the incident occurred inside the match factory. An

employee makes an effort to respond or explain the work being done. Charles interrupted the worker's explanation before he could complete it. The tone is patronizing and firm. Despite having an interrogative phrase structure, the speech is not used to obtain information. Rather, it functions to interrupt the other person's input. In order to limit participation and uphold hierarchical control, Charles interrupts the employee. This is in line with Tannen's theory of status-oriented communication, which holds that men utilize interruption to manage turn-taking and establish dominance. The utterance restricts dialogue and eliminates the possibility of collaborative discussion.

CONCLUSION

This study on Enola Holmes 2 movie explores the forms of women's and men's language features based on the theories of Robin Lakoff (2004) and Jennifer Coates (2013). The results indicate that female characters, especially Enola Holmes, frequently use linguistic features commonly linked to women's speech, including hedges, tag questions, rising intonation, intensifiers, empty adjectives, emphatic stress, and highly polite expressions. Rather than reflecting weakness or subordination, these features serve as deliberate strategies for persuading others, negotiating situations, and managing investigations. For instance, hedges and tag questions are used to gather information and check assumptions, while intensifiers and emphatic stress strengthen authority. Meanwhile, male characters tend to employ minimal responses, straightforward questions, commands, compliments, and interruptions, which represent a more direct and status-oriented communication style. Overall, the movie presents gendered language as a socially constructed tool through which identity, power, and agency are actively shaped and expressed, offering a critical view of how media discourse both mirrors and transforms gender norms.

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