

# The Analysis of Women and Men Language Features on America's Got Talent

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study are: 1) To find out the female language features of female judges in America's Got Talent 2018; and 2) To find out the male language features of the male judges in America's Got Talent 2018. This research is a qualitative descriptive study. The methods and data collection techniques used in this study are the *simak* method that uses the *sadap* technique with the advanced techniques of *simak bebas libat cakap* and the *catat* technique. Data is taken from America's Got Talent video. The data analysis method and technique used is the *padan* method with the *pilah unsur penentu* technique with *daya pilah sebagai pembeda referent*. The results of data analysis are then presented descriptively. As the result, there are six female language features used by female judges in America's Got Talent, namely lexical hedges, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjectives, intensifiers, superpolite forms, and emphatic stress. There are three male language features used by male judges in America's Got Talent, namely direct forms, interrupt, and swear words.

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**Keywords:** Language and gender, women language features, men language features, America's got talent.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A language is a communication tool in the form of sounds and utterances used by humans. One interesting example in the discussion between language and human relations is in the discussion of language and gender. Holmes (2008: 157) said that In sociolinguistics, gender is different from sex. Gender is more directed at men and women in the view of society. For example, before the emancipation of women in Indonesia, girls in the community were not allowed to get lessons in school. So, it can make the different between men and women. For example, men and women language.

Judging from his linguistic elements, Lakoff in his book entitled *Language and Women's Place* (1975) states that men are described to speak more firmly, mature, and speak on point. It is different from women who are not strict and overt (using figurative words). They often use more refined and polite words. Lakoff (2004) said there are ten female language features namely lexical hedges, tag question, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjective, precise color terms, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, superpolite forms, avoidance of strong swear words and emphatic stress. Lakoff (2004) states that there are many things that form the basis for the emergence of differences between women and men in language. It is described that the male language is more assertive, mature, and on point

or direct forms. Coates (2004:97) states that the folk linguistic belief that men swear more than women and use more taboo words is widespread. Coates (2004:157) said the male speaker was found to be more likely to interrupt others disruptively; they were also much more likely to interrupt women than women were to interrupt men.

A phenomenon of language and gender was found in a got talent show in America. This phenomenon is found in the judges' speech on America's Got Talent Season 13 in 2018. Based on phenomenon above there are two questions that will be answered by researchers. First, What are the female language features of the female judges in America's Got Talent 2018?, and second, What are the male language features of the male judges in America's Got Talent 2018?.

Based on question above there are two purpose in this research. First, To find out the female language features of female judges in America's Got Talent 2018. Second, To find out the male language features of the male judges in America's Got Talent 2018.

This research comes with a different subject of the others research, namely language and gender in the community that appears on television. In a sense, these communities are people who are well aware that they need to control all their sayings and actions because they will be watched by millions of people out there. As for other factors in conducting language and gender research, this type of research has never been conducted on language and gender in a got talent show.

## **2. THEORRETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1. Sociolinguistics**

Fishman (1976: 219) says that in studying sociolinguistics related to language and speech community, there are two main things that need to be explored, namely: (1) descriptive sociolinguistics that discusses "who is speaking or writing, what language or what language variations, to whom, when and for what purpose "to find out patterns of language use by the community both small scale and large scale; (2) sociolinguistic dynamics that discuss "what causes the level of difference in the use of language" to find out the reasons why and how the use of language by society can differ between groups of people or between individuals.

### **2.2. Language and Gender**

According to Holmes (2008: 157), language and gender are one of the aspects discussed in sociolinguistics. The forms of language used by women and men differ - to different degrees - in all language communities. A brief commentary on the meaning of the terms sex and gender in sociolinguistics. He uses the term gender rather than sex because

sex refers to categories that are differentiated based on biological characteristics, while gender is more suitable for distinguishing people based on their socio-cultural behavior, including speech. Discussions on gender focus on the differences between speech features of women and men.

### **2.3. Women Language**

Lakoff (2004) tried to describe the habits of female language features namely lexical hedges, tag question, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjective, precise color terms, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, superpolite forms, avoidance of strong swear words and emphatic stress.

Lexical Hedges is a pause in the form of phrases word, or filler contained in conversation sentences to lack of self-confidence, information that is not fully accurate, uncertainty, doubt, and confusion.

Lakoff (2004:48) said "A tag, in its usage, as well as its syntactic shape (in English), is midway between an outright statement and a yes-no question: it is less assertive than the former, but more confident than the latter." tag question is a question followed by a statement or declarative sentence, and some of them are used because of someone's uncertainty about the statement that he said.

According to Lakoff (2004:49), "rising intonation on declarative is related to this special use of a syntactic rule is a widespread difference perceptible in women's intonation patterns. The intonation on declarative occurs in declarative sentences but becomes a question because there is an intonation that rises at the endpoint of the word. For example, it's really good ?.

According to Lakoff (2004:45) empty adjective are the word only concerns emotional reactions rather than specific information. There are a number of adjectives that can be used both male and female or neutral. But there are adjectives that are mostly used by women only. Examples of neutral adjectives: great, neat, cool, terrific. Examples of adjectives that are only used by women: adorable, charming, sweet, lovely, divine, gorgeous, cute.

Lakoff (2004:43) said that differences in color specifications only occur in women. Women give color details far more precisely in naming colors than men do. Words like *beige* 'yellowish-gray', *lavender* 'bluish-purple', 'dark reddish-brown' *maroon* are examples of ordinary words in women's active vocabulary, but the vocabulary is not used by most men.

Lakoff (2004:48) said that the intensive so, used where purists would insist upon absolute superlatives, heavily stressed, seems more characteristic of women's language than men though it is found in the latter, particularly in the speech of male academics. From the Lakoff intensifier theory, it is more of a female language characteristic. The following are

examples of intensifiers: incredibly, exceedingly, topping-extremely well, extremely, truly, really, very, utterly, absolutely, perfectly, and sublimely. Intensifiers are a word that can reinforce a statement that is said so that listeners are sure of the speaker.

Lakoff (as cited in Holmes, 1995) state that hypercorrect grammar is the consistent use of standard verb forms. Lakoff said that hypercorrect grammar involves avoidance of terms considered vulgar or coarse, such as 'ain't', and the use of precise pronunciation, such as sounding the final 'g' in words such as 'going' instead of the more casual 'goin', or double negatives

Lakoff (2004:80) explains women are supposed to speak more politely than men. Lakoff (via Cameron, 1990: 231) suggests that in the same sense a request may be a very polite order, which does not require open obedience but suggests something to do as help or sympathy to the speaker. For example, You are standing in front of the TV. In the sentence above the subject is not just standing in front of the TV, but the speaker wants the person who is standing in front of the TV to go or move to avoid blocking the TV.

Avoidance of strong swear words according to Lakoff. Lakoff (2004:44) argues that women's invective is different from men. Women use 'oh dear' more often than 'shit'. Women tend to avoid violent curses. Men and women have different preferences for using swear words. Men often use rude and forbidden invective words like damn, bloody hell, and shit often found in male language while women use more polite versions such as oh dear, my dear, my goodness, goodness, and good heavens.

Emphatic stress quoted from Talbot (2010: 38) Lakoff says that women use a strict emphasis on increasing their intonation as in the example of "what a beautiful dress!" This shows that women use emphasis because they anticipate not being taken seriously by the other person.

## **2.4. Men Language**

Lakoff (2004) states that there are many things that form the basis for the emergence of differences between women and men in language. It is described that the male language is more assertive, mature, and on point or direct forms. Another theory discussing about the differences between female and male language linguistically is Coates (2004:97). Coates states language feature that used by men. First, minimal responses, this is also known as backchannel. These include term such as mhm, yeah, and right. Men tend to use these terms to assert dominance. Second, command and directives, men tend to use explicit commands especially when they were in the same-sex groups, for example: gimme, gonna, and gotta. Third, swearing and taboo language, there is a widespread belief that men used more swear than women. Research of Coates showed that men and men conversation used substantially

more swear words than women and women conversation, while mixed conversations tend to accommodate both sides. For example, damn, fuck, suck, shit, etc. Fourth, compliments, research show that men tend to compliment each other based on skill and possessions. For example, it's cool, good boy, good job. Fifth, theme, men and men or in the same-sex group conversation sometime talk about current affairs, travel and sports. And the last, question, men ask the questions to gain information, it has different pattern to women which sometime use question tag to ask question. They ask the question directly. Coates (2004:157) said the male speaker was found to be more likely to interrupt others disruptively; they were also much more likely to interrupt women than women were to interrupt men.

### **3. RESEARCH METHOD**

This research is a qualitative descriptive study because the ultimate goal is to explain and describe all facts objectively with the final results in the form of lingual units such as words, phrases, and sentences not in the form of numbers.

In this study, the object studied was the speech of men and women. The subject of this research was the speech of men and women judges in America's Got Talent 2018. The event was chosen due to several factors, such as a large number of enthusiasts as evidenced by the number of YouTube subscribers on America's Got Talent compared to other events. The data in this study came from 2 videos with one 1 hour 24 minutes duration. Each video consists 9-10 pieces of data that are used as research data to answer questions that have been formulated in the problem statement.

The method used in this study is *Simak* method. It used technique *Sadap* with advanced technique *Simak Libat Bebas Cakap* and technique *Catat*. Sudaryanto (2015:203-204) states that *Simak* method is a method of listening to the use of language by someone. *Sadap* technique is a basic technique in the form of tapping, while *Simak Libat Bebas Cakap* technique is the advanced technique where the tapper is not participating in the dialog or conversation. Then, Technique *Catat* could be conducted after the first technique be completed with a specific writing tool.

As for the process of collecting data, the steps are described as follows:

1. Conducting observations on prospective data on Youtube with several considerations that have been disclosed above.
2. After obtaining prospective data that is deemed suitable for the purpose of the study, the researcher download a full video through the indoxxi.cool website.
3. The researcher then observe the judge's comments in America's Got Talent.
4. Transcript judges comments in America's Got Talent.

5. Grouping data found on judges comments in America's Got Talent in two parts.  
Language groups used by men and women.

The data analysis method used is *Padan* method with the technique of *Pilah Unsur Penentu* with *daya pilah sebagai pembeda referen*. According to Sudaryanto (2015: 15) the *Padan* method, the determinant outside, is detached and is not part of the language (langue) concerned. The method is used because the thing studied in this study is the language features of men and women. The technique used is the technique *Pilah Unsur Penentu* with *daya pilah sebagai pembeda referen*. According to Sudaryanto (2015: 26) that the determinant is the fact pointed out by the language or the language referent. The language referent in the data is women and men language features by Lakoff (2004).

## **4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

This section is divided into two parts. The first part discusses the language features of the female judges in America's got talent 2018. The second part discusses the language features of the male judges in America's got talent 2018.

### **4.1. WOMEN LANGUAGE FEATURES**

This section will explain what are the female language features used by women judges in America's Got Talent.

#### **4.1.1. Lexical Hedges**

Lexical Hedges Performance 4 Video 1

F2 : I love you guys. It was a lot of fun watching you, and I **kinda** wanna see what else you guys can do.

In her statement there is Female language feature namely lexical hedges. Word 'kinda' here make F2 doubt and still confuse. That she want to see or not the appearance from that contestant. The purpose of F2 using lexical hedges is to reduce the power of speech.

#### **4.1.2. Rising Intonation on Declarative**

Rising Intonation on Declarative Performance 6 Video 1

F1 : Wow, oh gosh, you are so on point and so honest, and **you are only 14?** oh! I love you. I love you.

In her statement there is female language features namely Rising Intonation on Declarative. At the end in the utterance 'you are only 14?' there is rising intonation. Rising intonation here changing statement into question. The effect rising intonation using by F1 is F1 like looking for confirmation.

#### **4.1.3. Empty Adjective**

Empty adjective Performance 2 Video 1

F1 : You have really good like ballerina's hands. **It's gorgeous**, and you are just unbelievable.

In her statement there is female language features that is empty adjective. The utterance used by F1 'it's gorgeous' show that F1 is very impressed with appearance that have shown by contestant. F1 is very interested and unbelievable. In other words, F1 shows more emotional reactions than specific information.

#### **4.1.4. Intensifiers**

Intensifiers Performance 2 Video 1

F1 : You have **really** good like ballerina's hands. It's gorgeous, and you are **just** unbelievable.

In her statement there are two intensifiers. The intensifiers are 'really' and 'just'. Intensifiers here used by F1 to show that the appearance of contestant was really good. The purpose of F1 using intensifier is to reinforce convincing the audience and contestant.

#### **4.1.5. Superpolite Forms**

Superpolite forms Performance 4 Video 1

F1 : It was original, it was funny.  
M2 : What?.  
F1 : **Simon doesn't get it at all**. It was absolutely brilliant.

In her statement F1 used superpolite forms as the female language feature. F1 does not only explain that M2 does not know anything. But here F1 also want to M2 be silent and do not disturb her commentary. The purpose of F1 using superpolite forms is to prevent the other person from being offended.

#### **4.1.6. Emphatic Stress**

Emphatic stress Performance 5 Video 2

F1 : Oh that was so **beautiful** it really was from start to end your harmonies. you know I don't think you could have done much better than what you just did. I truly I truly I truly enjoyed it well done each one of you.

In her statement there is female language features, that is Emphatic stress. There is emphasis in the word 'beautiful' here. Emphasis 'beautiful' explain the meaning of performance. The performance was so beautiful. The purpose of emphatic stress used by F1 is to convince listener.

### **4.2. MEN LANGUAGE FEATURES**

This section will explain what are male language features used by men judges in America's Got Talent.

### 4.2.1. Direct Forms

Direct forms Performance 10 Video 2

M1 : I can't sit down, I can't sit down. You were born to be wild, and this was wild you are amazing the buzz is gonna continue **my prediction is you're gonna win America's got talent 2018.**

In his statement there is male language feature namely direct forms. M1 said 'my prediction is you're gonna win america's got talent 2018' firmly and no doubt. Because, the contestant was shown with amazed performance. The purpose of the sentence is to give a statement directly to the contestant.

### 4.2.2. Interrupt

Interrupt Performance 4 Video 1

F1 : Simon doesn't get it at all. It was absolutely brilliant.  
M2 : **No, it wasn't.**

In his statement there is male language feature namely Interrupt. M2 refute and interrupt F1 when F1 give comentary. M2 does not like at the contestant performance. The purpose of M2 is to show firmness in refuting F1 statement.

### 4.2.3. Swear Words

Swear words Performance 4 Video 1

M2 : It wasn't amazing. **It was just stupid !**, and I am gonna kick this off.

In his statement M2 used swear word. M2 said 'it was just stupid' show M2 is very uninterested, disappointed and assessment that performance was bad. The purpose of swear word is to express M2's heart condition and give information to audience that M2 did not like the performance.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This article analyzes the language features used by women and men. From 10 language features of women in this research, the female judges in the show are found to only used 6 of them, those are lexical hedges, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjective, intensifiers, superpolite forms, and emphatic stress. Even there could be found 6 language features of women in the video, there could only be found 3 language features that mostly found in the performance of the videos. They are lexical hedges, intensifier, emphatic stress. While the other language features only appear a few bit on the comment section.

There are 3 language features of men in the research, and three of them are found in the comment of the male judges in America's Got Talent show. They are direct forms,



interrupt, and swear words. Direct forms is the most language features found in each performance of the show.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that in a got talent show especially "American's Got Talent 2018". From 10 female language features, only 6 features are used by female judges. Most female language features frequently used from the 6 language features found in the data are lexical hedges, intensifiers, and emphatic stress. As for the male language features, men use all the language features found in the data. The most frequently used language feature is the direct form.

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