


Dalia Mogahed expressing woman’s language features during her Islamic lecture *Body Image: Reality and Standard*

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Article History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article Received September 1, 2023 • Article Accepted January 8, 2024 <p>Keywords</p> <p>Feminine Language and gender Woman language feature Dalia Mogahed Islamic lecture</p>	<p>Differences between men's and women's language use are due to the structure of the language, social norms, or the people in society who use the language. Holmes also explained that standard speech forms usually refer to women and femininity. A theory mentioned a particular woman's speech pattern that suggested fragility, unsureness, and unimportance. This research aimed to investigate the features used by Dalia Mogahed in her Islamic lecture <i>Body Image Reality and Standards</i> to prove the theory. The research method in this study is categorized as qualitative research since the descriptive data in this study is presented in spoken or written words by people. The researcher found 6 out of 10 features used by Dalia; they are lexical hedges, tag questions, rising intonation, empty adjectives, intensifiers, and hypercorrect grammar. It can be concluded that women in majority prefer using feminine features to bargain the position in the society.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.</p> </div>

I. INTRODUCTION

Holmes (2013, p. 166) said women use more standard speech forms than men because they are more conscious about their status than men. Traditionally, women used standard forms because society tended to expect better behavior and attitudes from women. Holmes also explained that standard speech forms usually refer to women and femininity (Holmes 2013, p. 175). Women's speech is different from men's speech, so studying the characteristics of women's speech becomes an essential aspect.

American feminist and linguist, Lakoff (1975, p. 45-80), she explained that women have some things in common when voicing their opinions. Those features include lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjectives, precise color terms, intensifier, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress.

Women's language is particularly intriguing to study since it is related to gender variation, which is the key parameter in language use. Since scholars have studied women's linguistic characteristics in many sources and media, the study relating to these features has grown. Likewise, the study of women's language features can be done in Islamic lectures by female lecturers. This study has chosen Islamic lecture of an international woman lecturer named Dalia Mogahed.

This study chooses Dalia Mogahed's Islamic lecture "Body Image: Reality and Standards" to be analyzed this study. In her Islamic lecture, Dalia often uses the word "I think", "you know", and "well", which is considered as one of the features of women's language features stated by Robin Lakoff called lexical hedges. There are several reasons for the researcher to choose this speech. Firstly, the Islamic lecture was delivered by Dalia Mogahed, the first woman wearing a hijab to work in the White House during the tenure of Barack Obama. Secondly, Dalia is a female speaker who uses the women's language features in her Islamic lecture as in Lakoff's women's language theory. Another motivation was that the researcher saw Dalia's topic in her speech are remarkably interesting to illustrate the body image of success and self-satisfaction in the view of beauty.

Based on the research background, the researcher formulated the problem to investigate the types, purposes, and most frequent features used by Dalia Mogahed in her Islamic lecture "Body Image Reality and Standards". Moreover, the data were gained from the utterances of Dalia Mogahed in her Islamic lecture "Body Image: Reality and Standards". The video was published on August 30, 2014, on MSA National's YouTube channel.

Since scholars have studied women's linguistic characteristics in many sources and media, the study related to these features has grown. Women's language terms can be found in speech, in movie dialogue, and in specific events. The researchers have reviewed several studies relating to women's language features. As a further matter, in this study, the researcher aims to present the results of the most used women's language features by Dalia Mogahed in her Islamic lecture. Considering many studies on women's language features, the researcher added question to discover the purposes of using women's language features by Dalia Mogahed in "Body Image: Reality and Standards".

Wardani & Kristiani (2020) in Women's Language Features in Michelle Obama's speech "The First Lady on The Importance of Studying Abroad" identify women's

language features based on Lakoff's theory. This study was collected using a descriptive-qualitative method. The data was collected by watching videos multiple times and reading transcripts of Michelle Obama's speeches. This search yielded 89 items, of which items were 18 items or 20% lexical hedges or fillers, 1 item or 1% rising intonation in declarative, 13 items or 15% intensifier, and 57 items or 64% were found to be emphatic stress.

Furthermore, Herman, Sinurat, et al. (2021) examined the type and function of women's language used by Jacinda Arden when speaking about COVID-19. The purpose of this study was to identify features of female language used by Jacinda Arden in speech about COVID-19. The researchers used Lakoff's theory to conduct their research. The researchers employed a qualitative research design and used content analysis to answer the research question. The results of this study showed that Jacinda Arden did not use all types of female language features. The researchers found seven types of female language features. This function is split as follows: lexical hedges 18,15%, rising intonation 0,89%, empty adjectives 1,19%, intensifier 16,96%, hypercorrect grammar 20,83%, super polite form 1,19%, and emphatic stress 40,77%.

II. METHOD

The research method in this study is categorized as qualitative research. Moleong (2009, p. 6) states that qualitative research is a study that intends to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects, for example, behavior, point of view, motivation, and other holistically, by descriptions in the form of words and language, in a specialized context of natural and by utilizing the scientific method. Since the descriptive data in this study is presented in spoken or written words by people, it is referred to as qualitative research. This study will also include a number or statistic in order to support the findings in exposing the amount of women language features used by the female characters.

The data forms are words, phrases, and sentences. Totally, the main data were taken from Dalia Mogahed's utterances in her Islamic lecture on YouTube video. The data source in this research is the transcript from "Body Image: Reality and Standards" by Dalia Mogahed. The observation method (*metode simak*) was utilized to collect data in this qualitative research Sudaryanto (2015, p. 203). The observation method is done with basic technique and advanced techniques. To collect data, the researcher applied basic techniques called tapping technique. The tapping technique has been done by tapping on all the words in Dalia Mogahed's Islamic lecture that have female linguistic features. In Sudaryanto (2015, p. 203-205) the advanced technique is divided into participative observation technique (*simak libat cakap*), non-participative observation technique (*simak bebas libat cakap*), recording technique, note-taking technique, and the last is classifying data. The researcher applied the non-participative observation technique (*simak bebas libat cakap*) because the researcher became only the observer

or listener. Although numbers were not the main focus of qualitative research, the researcher utilized them as a tool to aid in the data collection process. These are the steps of collecting the data: the researcher used the recording technique by downloaded the video of an Islamic lecture by Dalia Mogahed; the researcher utilized note-taking technique to write down all of Dalia Mogahed's utterances into a transcript to facilitate data retrieval during the research; and after performing the note-taking technique, the researcher conducted data classification or grouping.

According to Miles & Huberman (1992, p. 16), data analysis consists of three layouts that occur simultaneously: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion withdrawal. Below are the steps for analyzing data taken from Dalia Mogahed's Islamic lecture: the data reduction is a form of sharpening analysis and discarding the unnecessary, so that the final conclusion of data is drawn and verified. At this stage, the researcher used data reduction to support identifying the women's language features and the purposes of using women's language features; data presentation is designed to combine information that is composed into a coherent, accessible form. The researcher presented data in the form of an explanation to describe the identification data from the previous stage; and conclusion withdrawal is only a portion of one activity of the whole configuration. At this stage, the researcher drew a conclusion from the result of the data analysis that had been done at the previous stage.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Two focus points of this research are language features and the purposes of having them in lecture have been revealed.

Language Features

The language features found in the data are:

Lexical hedges

According to Lakoff (2004, p. 53), lexical hedges are an insignificant particle that provides a respite for women to understand what they want to say. It is the frequent use of "such as", "well", "like", "you know", "like", "I guess", "I think", and "it seems like". The example of sentences can be seen below.

Umm because I think the issue of body image which umm broadly speaking is on how people view themselves and their own beauty

Dalia used the lexical hedge, 'I think,' a term woman commonly used as a hedging device to express uncertainty and hesitancy in expressing a confident speech. The phrase "I think" indicated that she only assumed based on her opinion and was uncertain with her utterance, but she wanted to strengthen her arguments at the same time. Although she is unsure about how people define body image, she wanted to give the audience a common thought about the issue of body image.

Tag Question

According to Lakoff (2004, p. 48), a tag question is utilized when the speaker makes an assertion but lacks complete confidence in its authenticity. The phrase such as “isn’t it”, “shall we?”, “should I?” are classified as tag questions. Based on the finding the researcher only indicated 1 tag question.

 Hmm it's who has the coolest job, who has the most money, who's driving the best car, who looks the best right?

In datum 2 the word “right” appeared and showed hesitancy in her utterance, also she wanted her addressee to confirm her statement so that it would be clear. On the other words, she demands a response. It was said by Dalia Mogahed when she was talking about how success is defined in a high school reunion.

Rising Intonation

The rising intonation is employed when the speaker is seeking confirmation, even if only the speaker possesses the necessary information. The utterance, which comprises of declarative intonation in Dalia Mogahed’s Islamic lecture of using rising intonation, as follows:

 Were you successful or unsuccessful? The answer is? it depends on how you responded to that.

From datum 30, rising intonation “the answer is?” occurred in a question phrase and become a declarative phrase due to the rising intonation at the word endpoint. The analysis of the findings revealed that when Dalia Mogahed asked the question, instead, one of the chances was that she had already thought of a positive answer.

Intensifier

An intensifier's function is to emphasize a claim. The intensifier performed nearly the same effect as hedging. Intensifier found in Dalia Mogahed Islamic lecture are really, a little bit, just, most, absolutely, very, truly, a lot, so, literally, completely. One of the utterances which contained intensifier was performed below.

 If that becomes our criteria for success if that truly in everything we think about and everything we do we would see things completely differently

In the sentence above the word ‘truly’ categorized as intensifier because it showed Dalia strong intention about what was she said. Dalia wanted to convince her audience if they really think about the criteria of success from Al-Qur’an then the criteria of success will change. She strengthens her utterance using intensifier because she wanted her audience to change their point of view about success.

Hypercorrect grammar

Because ladies spoke as near to the formal English language as feasible, they avoided terminology considered vulgar or coarse, such as "aint," as well as using accurate pronunciation, such as pronouncing the last g in words like "going" rather than the more casual "goin." Below is a hypercorrect grammar example addressed.

And if you think with me what success how does success is defined at a high school reunion

Dalia used the standard form of the verb in her utterance by employing 'how does' instead of just saying 'how'. However, at her Islamic lecture "Body Image: Reality and Standards", Dalia Mogahed spoke before the MSA National Continental conference, so she frequently used formal wording because it is regarded as a premium form. Despite the fact that this feature is associated with politeness, Dalia employed hypercorrect grammar to demonstrate the intensity of her statement and to make the listener aware of the essential value of her sentence.

Empty adjective

According to Lakoff (2004, p. 25), empty adjectives are specific adjectives used by women to differentiate themselves from men in their use of language. The type of empty adjectives such as "great", "cool", "fabulous", "lovely", "sweet", and so on. Dalia in her Islamic lecture also applied empty adjectives as in the example:

Anyone here had that thought maybe run into their mind once or twice last year perhaps a few times, okay? one honest person in the audience, Alhamdulillah

From the datum above, Dalia Mogahed used the word honest as considered to the researcher as an emphatic stress when Dalia Mogahed reveals her utterance. In minute 4:69 Dalia talked about the definition of beauty standard that some of her audiences are dealing with the definition of beauty standard. Thereafter, she used it to load a question. A few seconds after asking the question, one of the audiences raised a hand. Instantly, Dalia responded with the sentence "one honest person in the audience, Alhamdulillah". Additionally, an empty adjective occurs when a sentence contains an emphasized word and rising intonation.

Purposes of using women's language features

The features found in the data are not free from purposes. Some of them can be depicted to express various purposes.

To express uncertainty

Women's language is like "kind words", "you know", "somewhat", "like", "you know", "somewhat/sort of", "I think", "I guess" and so on are meant to express their uncertainty and lack of confidence in the conversation. Nevertheless, before speaking about her

opinion Dalia often started with the words “I think”, “you know”, and “well”. It implied that she merely assumes based on her viewpoint and is uncertain about her statement.

Why are we talking about body image well, because there is a very defined and well-known standard of beauty that we all are exposed to that we all are dealing with

In her Islamic lecture, Dalia often expressed her opinion by using hedges. The hedge “well” was used by Dalia after she declared why people talk about body image. The word “well” in this context suggested that Dalia was not sure of her reason.

To get a response

Women want to be understood by the person they are speaking to. As a result, women frequently used the statement to elicit reactions from other people. Sometimes they do so in an implicit way. The women's language feature used Dalia Mogahed that indicated the function of getting a response are tag questions and rising intonations. The data and explanation are covered below

Were you successful or unsuccessful? The answer is? it depends on how you responded to that

In the sentence above Dalia wanted a response by asking a question that she had already thought about the answer. When she was asked the audience, Dalia not only expected a response but she also hoped her audience noticed the remarkable point of her utterance.

To emphasize utterances

In comparison to males, women tended to use the intensive words "so," "really," and "very" more frequently. In most cases, it strengthened a statement by showing that the speaker is backing up a viewpoint as explained. As the explanation below Dalia used some intensifier feature to provide emphasis on his opinion.

People are equating perhaps their entire life's happiness with what they look like right now and they're really worried about it especially women

The sentence above spoken by Dalia when she spoke of the body image that was important to women was her beauty. Dalia clarified many believe that the beauty they experience throughout this period is what made them happy. She also said that people are very worried about their appearance especially women. Dalia added the word ‘really’ to strengthen her opinion about how people were worried about their look.

To express feeling

Expressive function meant expressing the speaker’s feelings. It tended to produce an impression of a certain emotion and reveal the emotional reaction whether it’s true or

feigned. The feature that Dalia used to show her feelings when speaking in her lecture is the empty adjective feature.

Anyone here had that thought maybe run into their mind once or twice last year perhaps a few times okay, one honest person in the audience, Alhamdulillah

The datum above showed that Dalia was convinced of her feelings toward her audience. Dalia asked, “most of you you're probably thinking about marriage anyone here had that thought maybe run into their mind once or twice last year perhaps a few times?”. Suddenly, one of her audience members answered her question by raising her hand. Afterward, Dalia showed her reaction by saying “okay, one honest person in the audience, Alhamdulillah”, this utterance showed how Dalia appreciated and praised one of her audiences that responded to her question.

IV. CONCLUSION

Women’s language has unique characteristics. Due to the unique characteristics, women’s language became extraordinary and crucial. Unlike men, the language that women used heavily dependent on their society because society tended to expect better behavior and attitudes from women and women should be role models of appropriate behavior in society. From the data analysis, the objective of this research is to investigate the types of women’s language features, to describe the purposes of using women’s language features, and to identify the most frequent feature used by Dalia Mogahed in her Islamic lecture. This research is categorized as qualitative research since the descriptive data in this study is presented in spoken or written words by people. The result of this study found that there are 6 over 10 women’s language features found in the data there are lexical hedges, tag question, rising intonation, empty adjective, intensifier, and hypercorrect grammar. The researcher also found that the purposes of women’s language features used by Dalia are to express uncertainty, to get a response, to emphasize a statement, and to express feelings. The most frequent feature used by Dalia is lexical hedges. It is found with a total amount 49%. Intensifier (40%) in the second position followed by rising intonation (7%) took the third position, hypercorrect grammar took the fourth position (2%). Lastly, tag question (1%), and empty adjectives (1%) are in the sixth position

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