

Women's Language Features in Maudy Ayunda's Interview on YouTube

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Abstract

This study examines the linguistic features of women's language used by Maudy Ayunda in her interview with *The Jakarta Post* on YouTube. The research applies Lakoff's (1975) theory of women's language and uses a qualitative descriptive approach. The data were collected from the interview transcript and analyzed to identify linguistic features and their meanings in context. The findings reveal six features of women's language: lexical hedges, rising intonation on declaratives, empty adjectives, intensifiers, super polite forms, and emphatic stress. These features reflect Maudy's communication style as a female public figure who uses language strategically to appear polite, confident, and expressive. The study contributes to the understanding of gendered communication in Indonesian media discourse and reinforces Lakoff's argument that women's speech often carries social and psychological meanings related to politeness and identity.

Keywords: *women's language, sociolinguistics, gender, Lakoff, YouTube interview*

INTRODUCTION

Language and gender have long been central topics in sociolinguistics, exploring how men and women use language differently in social interaction. Holmes (2008) states that gender influences not only how individuals communicate but also how they construct identity and social relations through language. Lakoff (1975) introduced the concept of *women's language*, which includes linguistic features that reflect women's politeness, hesitation, and emotional expression. In Indonesia, gendered language can also be observed among female public figures who interact in both English and Indonesian contexts. One such figure is Maudy Ayunda, a multilingual artist and Oxford graduate whose communication style attracts attention for its balance between confidence and modesty. This study investigates the linguistic features of women's language used by Maudy Ayunda in her interview with *The Jakarta Post* on YouTube. The research aims to identify (1) the features of women's language she employs and (2) the meanings these features convey in context.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Previous studies, such as Septiari (2016) on *Wonder Woman* and Putra (2018) on *America's Got Talent*, found that women commonly use features like hedges, rising intonation, and intensifiers to express politeness and empathy. However, little research has examined women's language in Indonesian celebrity interviews.

Lakoff (1975, 2004) identified ten features of women's language: lexical hedges, tag questions, rising intonation on declaratives, empty adjectives, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, precise color terms, and emphatic stress. These features reflect social expectations for women to be polite and non-assertive. This study uses six of those features as the analytical framework since they appear in the selected data.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze linguistic data from Maudy Ayunda's interview with *The Jakarta Post* (available on YouTube). The transcript was manually examined to identify utterances containing women's language features as proposed by Lakoff (1975). Each feature was then analyzed in its conversational context to determine its pragmatic function and meaning. The interpretation focused on how these features contribute to politeness, confidence, and self-presentation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Lexical Hedges

In several instances, Maudy uses hedges such as "*I think*" and "*maybe*" to soften her statements. For example, when asked about her favorite book, she says, "*I think I don't know... this is horrible, I have to think about it.*" This indicates hesitation and carefulness, which align with Lakoff's notion that women tend to avoid sounding too assertive.

Rising Intonation on Declaratives

When asked to name five people she would invite to dinner, Maudy responds with "*Five? Oh, wow, five people?*" The rising intonation conveys surprise and invites confirmation, showing politeness and engagement with the interviewer.

Empty Adjectives

In describing her music, Maudy uses adjectives like "*sultry*" and "*folky*". These terms express emotional tone rather than factual description, consistent with

Lakoff's idea that women often use adjectives to show feelings and aesthetic appreciation.

4.4 Intensifiers

Maudy frequently uses "really" and "very", as in "*I really miss just going out in sweats*" and "*they're all very alpha.*" Intensifiers emphasize sincerity and emotional involvement, a common feature of women's speech.

Super Polite Forms

When she fails to recall her favorite book, Maudy apologizes with "*I'm really sorry, I can't answer this one.*" This polite expression reinforces her image as respectful and self-aware, fitting Lakoff's politeness principle.

Emphatic Stress

In "*They are such amazing people!*", Maudy raises her intonation to emphasize admiration. This emphatic stress adds emotional warmth and engagement to her speech.

Overall, the findings show that Maudy Ayunda naturally exhibits several women's language features in her responses. Rather than signaling weakness, these features reflect emotional intelligence and strategic communication, aligning with modern interpretations of female linguistic power.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that Maudy Ayunda's language use in her interview reflects key characteristics of Lakoff's women's language theory. She employs lexical hedges, rising intonation, empty adjectives, intensifiers, super polite forms, and emphatic stress to maintain politeness, express emotions, and construct a positive public persona. These findings suggest that women's language features in media contexts can be understood not as linguistic deficiency but as adaptive strategies for managing interpersonal relationships and self-representation. Future research could compare these findings with male celebrity interviews to further explore gendered communication styles in Indonesian media.

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