

WOMEN'S LANGUAGE FEATURES USED BY ENGLISH TEACHER CANDIDATES

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Abstract

This paper discussed women's language features used by female students in English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) as English teacher within teaching learning practices in micro-teaching class. The study aimed to investigate the frequency of the women's language features and the possible reason of using the features by female students. The writer assumed that women have characteristics in speaking, including female English teacher candidates. Unconsciously, female English teacher candidates use some or all of women's language features when they are doing teaching practice in Micro Teaching class. These features indicate that actually, if a woman or a female English teacher candidate uses most of the features, that she is not really sure about what she is uttering to the pupils in English learning activities. Besides that, a teacher should be confident in delivering materials or teaching the pupils. Those features have been discussed by Robin Lakoff in one of her books entitled *Language and Woman's place*. In that book, she writes about ten language features which are usually used by the women when they are speaking. Therefore, it encouraged the writer to conduct a paper about women's language used by female students in ELESP as English teacher candidates. This paper was a qualitative research which the writer used discourse analysis to conduct this paper.

Keywords: micro teaching, English teacher candidate, women's language feature

Introduction

Language is a part of communication system which implies regularity and rules of order. Language is controlled by some rules, like grammar, to make that language easy to be understood. According to Joseph (2004) that is cited by Edwards (2009): the early 1980s saw the appearance of important studies focusing on linguistic aspects of identity. It means that one of the ways to learn language in communities is by studying linguistics and one of linguistic aspects is sociolinguistics. In sociolinguistic, there is a topic about language and gender which is about men's and women's language.

The matter of gender differences here is about the language used by men and women. Although men and women, from given social class, belong to the same speech community, they may use different forms of linguistics. Women are usually considered that they use weak language and excessive politeness

language. According to Lakoff as cited in Talbot (2010, p. 36), typical of women's speech is lack of confidence, weakness, and excessive politeness. They are demanded to speak as a 'lady' and they should speak softly and politely. Then, women tend to use Standard English more than men do. Another perspective about women's language is that women are more likely to make speech or sentences which boost listeners' response and more actively engaged in insuring interaction than men (Fishman, 1978, p. 12).

English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) students have Micro Teaching Class to develop their teaching practice and to prepare professional teacher candidates who master English language. In that course, ELESP students have to try to deliver materials to pupils correctly and confidently. It is because the way of delivering the materials will influence information that will be caught by the pupils unconsciously and it is to prepare the students to be better teacher for the future. When teachers teach correctly but unconfidently, they will use the features more than one feature because they may feel that they need to clarify the information whether it is correct or not, or whether that information can be understood well or not by the pupils.

That issue encouraged the writer to conduct a research about women's language, especially women's language features (Lakoff, 1973), that is used by female students of ELESP. Why female students or female teacher candidates? Based on Chudger and Sanker (2008), "being in a female teacher's classroom is advantageous for language learning" (as cited in Robert, et al., 2013, p. 122). It is because the women are more communicative in speaking so that the language course might be interesting to be learned if the materials are given by female teachers. So, the writer chose the female students of Micro Teaching class because the possibilities in using women's language used by female students are more than male students. It is also because based on the theory, female will have lack of confident more than male students in teaching practice and possibilities of using the features may be higher.

In this paper, the writer would like to discuss further about women's language features used by female students in ELESP as English teacher candidates. This study aims to investigate women's language features, the frequency of the features and the possible reason of using the features by female students. The following research problems are formulated. First, what are the women's language features in female ELESP students' utterances as English teacher candidates? Second, what are possible reasons of using the features by female ELESP students'?

Literature Review

In the literature review, the writer provides the theoretical review related to the topic of this research. There are three parts of this section. Those are the related theories of micro teaching, women's language, and women's language features.

Micro Teaching

According to McLaughlin and Moulton (1971), Micro Teaching is a performance training method designed to isolate the component part of teaching process. The students or the trainees are trained to be good teacher by having simulation in teaching process in the classroom before they have real one in the future. Then, step by step, they will be able to develop and improve their teaching abilities to be skillful teachers. So, Micro teaching class in ELESP is also to train the students to be professional teachers.

Women's Language

Language that is used by men and women are different, especially when they are speaking. Edwards states that "the eternal stereotypes of women are weak, changeable and unreliable, endlessly, talkative" (2009, p. 127). Those stereotypes affect the language that be used by women. According to Scherer and Giles (1979) as cited in Edwards (2009, p. 134) "findings within a speech community reveal that women's speech tends to use standard language." "Women are disempowered by being constrained to use "powerless" language, ways of speaking that simply are not very effective in getting others to think or do what the speaker wants them to (Lakoff, 1975 as cited in Eckert and Ginet, 2003, p. 159).

Women's Language Features

Based on Lakoff as cited by Fillmore, G. Lakoff and R. Lakoff (1974), there are ten women's language features as follows: (1) Lexical Hedges or Fillers; it expresses a lack of confidence and reflects of women's insecurity. By hedges, she refers to the frequent use of such as *you know*, *well*, and so on, (2) Tag Question; asking question is a prime example of women's insecurity and hesitancy. For examples, *See?*, *really?*, and so on, (3) Rising Intonation; it is not only the form of declarative answer to a question, but also has the rising inflection typical of a yes-no question and seems like being especially hesitant, (4) Empty Adjective; a group of adjective which has their specific and literal meanings and also indicating the speaker's approbation or admiration for something. It means that those only convey an emotional reaction rather than specific, (5) Precise Color Terms; in lexical differences, women like to use more precise words in naming colors (mauve, plum) and have richer vocabulary in areas that are traditionally female specialties, (6) Intensifiers; it is claimed as having something of the eternally feminine about it. It also to hedge in this situation is to seek and avoid making strong statement, (7) Hypercorrect Grammar; it is the consistent use of standard verb forms. Hypercorrect grammar involves avoidance of coarse language; more frequent apologizing and the usage of super polite forms are additional features, (8) Super Polite Forms; in the same sense a request may be a polite command, (9) Avoidance of Strong Swear Words; swearing is kinds of interjection that can express extreme intensify. It has been widely considered as an expression of very strong emotion, and (10) Emphatic Stress; along with tag question, Lakoff identified that "the use of a question intonation on sentence that are not question as a central she characterized as women's and powerless or

weak.” This question intonation has a high rising tone at the end of the sentence (Eckert and Ginet, 2003, p.174). Women tend to use words which are used to emphasize the utterance or strengthen the meaning of an utterance.

Method

Instruments

In analyzing the data, descriptive qualitative method which the writer chose discourse analysis to be used as the research design. According to Afrizal (2015, p. 17) in qualitative research, the data are generally in words form (written and spoken) and based on Stark and Trinidad (2007), discourse analysis concerns on the language use. Then, the writer conducted a discourse analysis to study the phenomenon about the use of women’s language used by teacher candidates by using utterances that were collected from the Micro Teaching class videos. The writer used 10 videos of students’ teaching practice in Micro Teaching class which were asked from the staff of Micro Teaching Laboratory.

Data Collection

While listening to the videos, the writer analyzed the students’ or the teacher candidates’ utterances within those videos to find the women’s language features by using cross tabulation table. Table. 1 is an example of cross tabulation table.

Table 1. The Example of Cross Tabulation Table

<u>No</u>	<u>Utterances</u>	<u>Min</u>	<u>LH</u>	<u>TQ</u>	<u>RI</u>	<u>EA</u>	<u>CT</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>HG</u>	<u>SF</u>	<u>SW</u>	<u>ES</u>
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Min : Minutes

LH/F : Lexical Hedges or Fillers

TQ : Tag Questions

RI : Rising Intonations

EA : Empty Adjectives

CT : Precise Color Term

I : Intensifiers

HG : Hypercorrect Grammar

SF : Super Polite Form

SW : Avoidance of Strong Swear
Words

ES : Emphatic Stress

By watching and listening to the videos, the writer could know the intonation of the students whether it is rising intonation, one of the women’s language features, or falling intonation.

Findings and Discussion

In this section, the writer presents the data findings gained from the study undertaken to answer the first research question formulated. This section contains three parts which discuss the research problem. The first part is result of the findings. It showed the frequency of each women’s language feature used by the students. The second part is teacher candidates’ language features which discussed the women’s language features used by the Micro Teaching students and its possible reason of why they used that or those features in their utterances. The third part is candidates’ absent features which discussed the women’s language that were not used by the students and the possible reasons why they did not use the features.

Results of the Findings

In the table 1, you may see the frequency of women’s language features used by the Micro Teaching students. The writers found 669 utterances of the female students that showed the use of the features in women’s language. The data was taken by listening to eight videos of Micro-teaching class and it has around twenty-five up to thirty minutes for each video.

From the selected videos, there were 669 features that were used by Micro Teaching students in their teaching practice. There were 315 (47.09%) lexical hedges or fillers that appeared the most, 142 (21.23%) super polite form, 117 (14.49%) rising intonation, 37 (5.53%) tag questions, 30 (4.48%) hypercorrect grammar, 21 (3.14%) intensifiers, and 7 (1.04%) emphatic stress. Those features were used by the female students of Micro Teaching class. The rest of those fillers, like empty adjectives, precise color terms, and avoidance of strong swear words, did not used by the students.

Table. 2 The Occurrence of Women’s Language Features used by Female Students in Micro Teaching Class

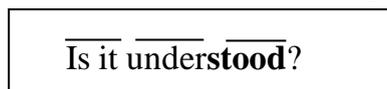
No.	Features of Women’s Language	The Frequency of Each Features	The Percentage of Each Features
1	Lexical hedges or fillers	315	47.09%
2	Tag questions	37	5.53%
3	Rising intonations	117	17.49%
4	Empty adjectives	0	0%
5	Precise color terms	0	0%
6	Intensifiers	21	3.14%
7	Hypercorrect grammar	30	4.48%
8	Super polite form	142	21.23%
9	Avoidance of strong swear words	0	0%
10	Emphatic stress	7	1.04%
The Number of Features		669	100%

Teacher Candidate's Language Features

The feature that was used the most was lexical hedges or fillers. The fillers that were used by them were like 'okay', 'so', 'well', and '[aaa]' or '[emm]'. It may be usually done by the teachers because sometime the teachers, both male and female teachers, will need time to decide what other things or materials that should be conveyed to the pupils or just to think the best words using to deliver the materials or the information. So that those all materials or information that have been planned by the teachers can be transferred maximally.

Then, female students of Micro Teaching class used super polite form in their teaching. Two of the examples of it was that these female teacher candidates used word 'please' in their utterances when asked one of the pupils to do something and say 'sorry' or 'I'm sorry' when they gave inappropriate information then they conveyed the right one. This feature may be used by the teachers to help them showing the politeness because unconsciously, pupils will duplicate what the teachers do. By doing simple thing like saying please to ask for help or saying sorry when do some mistake, also be able to teach the pupils to do so in same situation.

On the other hand, sometimes, in delivering materials or information, these teacher candidates still look unconfidently in their teaching practices. The Micro Teaching students still asked the pupils or just clarify whether what they said was easy to be understood or confusing.



Picture 1. Schema of Rising Intonation

Picture 1 showed the example and the schema of the rising intonation. The features that may indicate that the teachers are not really confident in teaching are tag questions and rising intonation at the end of the sentences or statements, like word 'right' and 'okay'. It might be because the students still learn how to be a good and a professional teacher.

Besides, teachers should teach how to use language in appropriate way, especially English teachers. English teachers should teach English by using correct or good grammar. ELESF teacher candidates in Micro Teaching class have tried to use good grammar. One of the examples of hypercorrect grammar was 'you may discuss it with your friends'. That sentence was used by them when asking the pupils to do the assignments. This feature may help the teachers to behave the pupils to use correct grammar in daily conversation or communication.

The next feature that was used by the ELESF teacher candidates was intensifiers. They use that feature in their statements to strengthen their points so that the pupils could know what they said. It also to hedge in this situation is to seek and avoid making strong statement as a characteristic of women's speech. The intensifiers that were used by the students in the selected videos were 'so', 'just', 'really', and 'too'.

ELESF teacher candidates in Micro Teaching class also used emphatic stress. This question intonation has a high rising tone at the end of the sentence (Eckert and Ginet, 2003:174). Women tend to speak expressively. Then, they used that feature to strengthen their expression when giving feedback for the pupils, for examples, 'EXCELLENT', 'GREAT', and 'NICE'. Those words were said by them

to appreciate the pupils' work. As teacher candidates, ELESP students also did appreciate the pupils when they did some task correctly. Sometimes, this feature is good to be used because the pupils also need to be motivated by giving the appreciation.

Teacher Candidate's Absent Features

Three of ten were not used by the Micro Teaching students, empty adjectives, precise color terms, and avoidance of strong swear words. For precise color term, in the videos of the students' teaching practices, the students did not use this feature. It might be because in their materials of teaching practice, there were no materials of color or there were no materials that were related to the color terms.

By using the feature of avoidance of strong swear words, the teachers might avoid reproach while teaching the pupils. Some students may do some mistakes or do inappropriate things in teaching learning process. So, when the teachers meet this kind of the pupils, the teachers must to avoid the strong words to express tantrum or irritation to the pupils. It is because the roles of the teachers are to guide and help the pupils to be better one by giving good knowledge, behavior and attitude. So here, Micro Teaching students have attempted to do not give strong swear words or just use this feature as diversion.

Empty adjective was also not used by the students. According to Lakoff (1973), "There is a group of adjectives which have, beside their specific and literal meanings, another use that of indicating the speaker's approbation or admiration for something". In this case and in the writer's perception, they did not use this feature because they try to admire some pupil so that the other pupils would be not jealous. It is also important to be done by the teachers because the teachers should watch over students' motivation in teaching and learning process.

Conclusion

As a teacher, we should pay attention to what we would like to say to the pupils because the pupils will absorb and duplicate what the teachers do to them. Every single word that comes out from teachers' mouth will be able to influence teaching learning process. Women's language is considered to defend good communication. Then, the students as teacher candidates should be able to use the appropriate language and effective communication while transferring the materials or in teaching the pupils. So, they will not create misunderstandings and confusion to the pupils. Also, the teacher candidates also should to show their politeness and confidence. Those may help the teacher candidates to improve their communication in teaching and to try creating a good relationship between fellow pupils and the teacher.

This study is suggested as a reference for future writers especially those who conduct research in term of women's language. This study is expected that the future writers may be able to discuss further about woman's language, as a teacher candidate in teaching learning process. Moreover, this study is also useful to enrich the knowledge about the phenomenon of women's language.

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