Analysis of Male and Female Language Features of Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire Novel

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Abstract

Gender differences can affect the use of language and socially divide it into male and female language. This study aims to analyze female and male language features spoken by male and female characters in Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire novel and the social contexts that causes differences in language use in that fictional story using Coates's (2016) theory of language features and Holmes's (2013) theory of language and social context. An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was used through two stages to collect and analyze data; quantitative and qualitative. The results show that the dominant female language feature is hedge while the male ones are command and directives. However, there are cross-gender, or shared language features in both male and female languages: hedges, tag questions and questions found in male language features; and commands, directives, swearing and taboo language found in female language features. The results indicate that the use of cross-gender language features can be caused by the social context during the conversation. Those social contexts are social distance, status, formality and functionality.

Keywords: Female Language, Harry Potter, Language Features, Male Language, Social Context

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender is a social construct that involves all the genetic, psychological, social, and cultural differences between men and women (Wardhaugh, 2006). The categorization of society based on gender also divides the language used in society into male and female language. For example, there is an assumption that women are more polite in using their language than men, and men use swear words more than women. This assumption suggests that men and women have a number of distinctive language feature differences when using language in everyday life (Priyadi & Setiawan, 2015). A number of features that often differentiate between male and female language are the form of speech, word choices and the way or style of one's speech.

Referring to the views of scholars (Coates, 2016; Holmes, 2013; Lakoff, 1975), it is stated that language behavior between men and women has differences. Women are considered to be more careful in using their language by speaking more politely, tend to talk more and not directly to the point when conveying a certain purpose. On the other hand, men who are considered to have more power and dominance than women do not always follow the norms and rules. They can clearly use language to convey what they want, feel and think directly to others and use swear words more often. However, changes in the times, the emergence of language variations and the increasingly diverse character of society have led to new changes in the language features of men and women. Nowadays, many women use swear words and taboo words that were previously considered male language features, and there are also many men who speak politely and use female language features (see Alzahrani, 2022; Dinata et al., 2023; Uhlman, 2015).

In this study, the novel Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire is investigated to observe how men and women speak. The novel, which was set in a wizarding school in England, has many aspects in terms of the social construction of the wizarding world and school. There are also various roles filled by diverse male and female characters. It is interesting to see how language and gender are portrayed in fiction through the language features used by male and female characters and how social contexts lead to different language use. Since the novel is a work of fiction, the results that will be found are the perspective of the author, JK. Rowling, since novel as a branch of literature not only presents a story as the author's imagination, but also often shows the author's principles and ideology (Lindasari, 2021). Coates (2016) describes the typical language features that are commonly used by men and women in conversation. She states that the language features that are more often used by women are minimal responses, hedges, tag questions, questions, and compliments while the language features that are more often used by men are commands, directives, swearing and taboo language.

Holmes (2013) divides the social dimensions related to social context factors into four, namely social distance that related to the relationship between individuals of the participants, status context that related to the relationship of participants in terms of status or position, formality context that related to the setting or type of interaction and functional context that related to the purpose or topic of interaction, namely referential and affective. Studies related to female and male language features have mostly dealt with non-fiction characters (Anggara Putra & Prayudha, 2020; Coates, 2016; Holmes, 2013; Lakoff, 1975). However, there are still few studies that focus on fictional characters. However, most existing studies only focus on the language features of each gender based on existing theories. This present study aims to fill that gap by focusing on the language features of fictional characters and expanding the

analysis of each character's language features even though the language features are opposite. Hence, the present study seeks to know and identify the language features of male characters and female characters in the novel Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire and to know how certain social contexts affect the use of language between characters in the novel Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The present study employed the explanatory sequential mixed method. The researcher first conducted quantitative research, analyzed the results, and then developed the findings using qualitative research to explain them in more depth (Creswell, 2017). The research method used was content analysis, which is the process of organizing information into categories related to the research question(Anggara et al., 2023). The data source came from JK. Rowling's novel *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2014) published by Bloomsbury Publishing in London. The data collected were limited in the language features in the form of words, phrases, clauses and sentences used by dominant male and female characters when they were angry. The selection of dominant characters was done through purposive sampling, and the characters whose utterances would be analyzed were the dominant characters of male and female students, namely Harry Potter and Hermione Granger; the dominant characters of male and female professors, namely Professor Snape and Professor McGonagall; the dominant characters of male and female parents, namely Mr. Weasley and Ms. Weasley.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Through the analysis that has been carried out from the utterances of all the dominant characters, it is known that in this study there is the use of female language features by male characters and the use of male language features by female characters. The figure below shows the language features found and used by male and female characters in the novel.
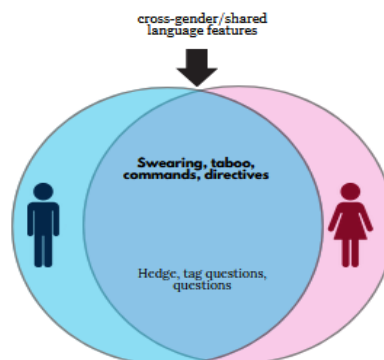

Figure 1. Language Features used by Male and Female Characters

Figure 1 shows that the language features found in the novel tend to be cross-gender, or shared. Female language features such as hedge, tag questions and questions, were also found in male languages while male language features like swearing, taboo words, commands, and directives also appear in female utterances. Interestingly, the figure also shows that specific gender language features that are not shared, meaning female/ male language features only used by them respectively, were not found.

3.1 Male and Female language Features Analysis

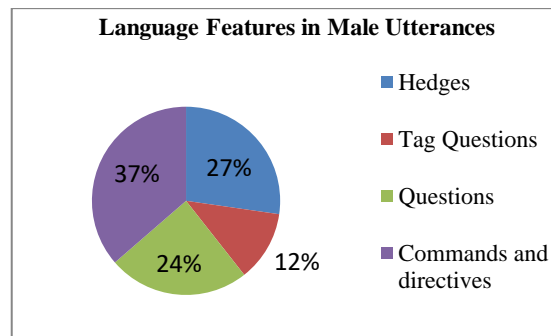### 3.1.1   Male Language Features

Figure 2. Language Features in Male Utterances

As shown in Figure 2, Commands and directive are the most used language features found in male characters' utterances with a percentage of 37%, while swearing and taboo language features are not found. Through the analysis, it is also found that quite a number of female language features are used by male characters, namely hedges at 27%, tag questions at 12% and questions at 24%. The following are examples and descriptions of the analysis of male language features in male characters' utterances:

*"Very well!" said Snape. "Potter — **take your bag and get out of my sight!**"* (page 255)

The comments spoken by Severus Snape happened when a student named Colin Creevey conveyed a message that he needed to take Harry Potter away from Professor Snape's Potions class to take photos of tournament participants. However, Snape initially did not let Harry go. Because Colin kept repeating that Harry had to go get his stuff as all the champions had to gather, Snape got annoyed and told Harry to leave immediately and bring his bag. It can be seen from the sentence "take your bag and get out of my sight!" spoken by Snape when he told Harry to take his bag and immediately leave the ongoing potions class, he used the imperative tense. This command and directive feature is a feature that is more often used by men.
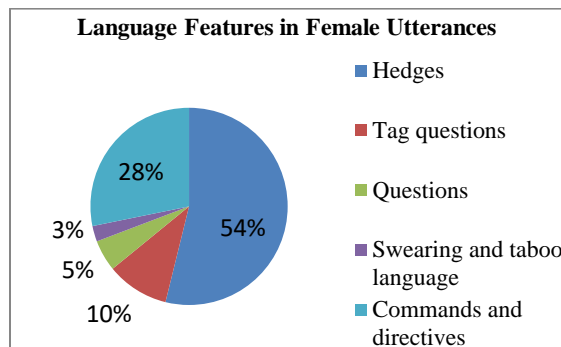
3.1.2   Female Language Features

Figure 3. Language Features in Female Utterances

Figure 3 shows that in the utterances of female characters in the novel, the *hedges* language feature with a percentage of 54% is the dominant feature used by female characters, while other female language features found are *tag question* with a percentage of 10% and *question* with a percentage of 5%. However, there are also male language features used in female characters' utterances, namely *commands and directive* language features at 28% and *swearing words and taboo language* at a small amount of 3%. The following is an analysis of female language features in female characters' utterances:

a) Hedges

> *Mrs. Weasley:"__I would__ have thought you'd know that, working at the Ministry!"* (Page 519)

Mrs. Weasley said this when she responded to Amos Diggory's sentence that seemed to blame Harry Potter for the news article written by Rita Skeeter. Mrs. Weasley responded by saying that Rita Skeeter was a person who liked to make trouble, and as a ministry employee Amos Diggory should have known it. Mrs. Weasley used the hedge *"I would"* as a response to her disbelief in Amos Diggory's attitude. The use of hedges in the form of modal auxiliary verbs "would" in the sentence serves to strengthen the opinion conveyed to the interlocutor but softens the statement.

b) Tag Questions

> *"His slave, you mean!" said Hermione, her voice rising passionately, "because he didn't pay Winky, __did he?__"* (Page 131)

In the utterance, Hermione Granger was arguing with Percy Weasley about a house-elf , Winky, who was treated badly by Percy's supervisor, Mr. Crouch. The sentence Hermione uttered to Percy contained a language feature with a *tag question* type because it used emphasis with the phrase *"did he?"*, which functioned to convince Percy of her opinion that house elves were slaves and not servants because Mr. Crouch did not pay them.

c) Questions

*Hermione:"Don't be so stupid!" she said after a moment. "The enemy! Honestly — **who was the**
one who was all excited when they saw him arrive? Who was the one who wanted his
autograph? Who's got a model of him up in their dormitory?" (Page 356)*

The data above occurred in a conversation between Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley. Hermione used many interrogative speech forms which were considered as language features that were more often used by women. The questions were asked to demand a response from her interlocutor, Ron Weasley. The interrogative form of speech is used because it is stronger than a statement, as the question gives the speaker the power to elicit a response from the interlocutor.

3.2 Social Context Analysis

As mentioned earlier, there were also female language features found in the speech of male characters and male language features used in the speech of female characters. Social context analysis is used to see the reasons for the use of these different languages.

3.2.1 Male Utterances with Female Language Features

a) Hedges

*"He never even told us, did he? **I reckon** she was so mad he wouldn't give her loads of horrible
stuff about me, she went ferreting around to get him back."*

"Maybe she heard him telling Madame Maxime at the ball," said Hermione quietly.

*"We'd have seen her in the garden!" said Ron. "Anyway, she's not supposed to come into school
anymore, Hagrid said Dumbledore banned her. . . ."*

Harry Potter who used the hedge in his utterances was the speaker. The addressees in the data were Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley. The relationship between the three of them was best friends, so there was a context of social distance that showed how close a person was to others. This can be one of the reasons for the choice of language used. The hedges feature used by Harry showed his presumption and belief in his statement about the possibility of what Rita Skeeter, the object of his speech, has done. The way Harry expressed his language and statements showed that he had an intimate and friendly relationship with his friends, rather than a formal, distant, or respectful relationship.

b) Tag questions

*Harry seized one of the POTTER REALLY STINKS badges off the table and chucked it, as hard
as he could, across the room. It hit Ron on the forehead and bounced off. "There you go," Harry
said. "Something for you to wear on Tuesday. You might even have a scar now, if you're lucky. . .
That's what you want, **isn't it?"***

The *tag questions* used by Harry were intended to confirm the preposition in his sentence by expressing the level of confidence in his statement to the speech partner or interlocutor. There was a social context of formality related to the setting and type of interaction. Although Harry and Ron had a close relationship with each other, in the data above they were in a situation of misunderstanding that made their friendship crack. Both of them were in a bad relationship so they were cold to each other. The situation was also reflected in the language Harry used which was not friendly and reduced the strength of his statement by using tag questions.

c) Questions

*Before any of them could say anything else, there was a faint popping noise, and Mr. Weasley appeared out of thin air at George's shoulder. He was looking angrier than Harry had ever seen him. "That wasn't funny, Fred!" he shouted. "**What on earth did you give that Muggle boy?**"*

The speaker of the data was Mr. Weasley who used the question language feature and his speech partner was Fred, one of his sons. This question feature was spoken with the aim of obtaining information from his speech partner. The social context found in this conversation was the context of formality or setting and the type of interaction. Mr. Weasley said he was so angry at Fred's behavior that deliberately played a prank on Harry's cousin. He asked for an explanation of the truth of Fred's behavior. In his sentence, Mr. Weasley also expressed his feelings of anger and upset over his son's behavior, showing the functional context of his language which shows the speaker's feelings.

Another finding of this study is the prominent use of language features. From the data collected, the most use of *hedge* language features comes from the student category, both female and male. In addition, the male professor category is the most user of *commands and directives* features. The *hedge* feature was found most in the students' utterances, and this can indicate that students as immature teenagers do not use language with strong statements and there are still many doubts in their utterances. On the other hand, the male professor, Professor Snape, used the *most commands* and directive language features. This can be explained by looking at his position. In the context of school, as a Professor and Head of the Slytherin House, Professor Snape has a fairly high position, so he has the power to give orders and sentences directly to others.

3.2.2 Female Utterances with Male Language Features

a) Swearing and taboo language

*"**You fool!**" Professor McGonagall cried. "Cedric Diggory! Mr. Crouch! These deaths were not the random work of a lunatic!"*

"I see no evidence to the contrary!" shouted Fudge, now match-ing her anger, his face purpling. "It seems to me that you are all determined to start a panic that will destabilize everything we have worked for these last thirteen years!"

The speaker of the swearing and taboo language feature in the data was Professor McGonagall, and the addressee was the Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge. In this conversation, the relationship aspect between participants in terms of status did not affect the use of language because Professor McGonagall does not use formal and polite sentences even though her addressee has a higher position.

On the other hand, looking at the context of formality or the situation in which the conversation takes place as well as the type of interaction, this conversation took place in the Hogwarts hospital ward where Harry was being treated, so it was not in a formal setting. The interaction that occured was also in an emotional atmosphere. Professor McGonagall's speech also expressed both information and feelings towards the Minister of Magic, or also called the referential and affective context. She informed that with the evidence of the deaths of the two victims that had occurred, it showed that it was not just the work of lunatics. In addition, the swearing expressed to the Minister of Magic showed her feelings of anger and dislike for the Minister of Magic and the things he said.

b) **Commands and Directives**

*"Peeves, **get down here NOW!**" barked Professor McGonagall, straightening her pointed hat and glaring upward through her square-rimmed spectacles.*

"Not doing nothing!" cackled Peeves, lobbing a water bomb at several fifth-year girls, who screamed and dived into the Great Hall.

Professor McGonagall shouted angrily and told Peeves the poltergeist who was flying on the ceiling of the school to come down because he had made a mess. In this data, there was a status context where Professor McGonagall had a higher position and power so she used a direct command sentence. In addition, through Professor McGonagall's utterances, the affective function can be seen, which shows Professor McGonagall's feelings of annoyance and anger at Peeves for the pranks he played on Hogwarts students.

From the discussion that has been presented, it is known that the use of male and female language features in the novel Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire does not fully comply with the theory of language features according to Jennifer Coates (2016). In this research, there are features of female language in the utterances of male characters and there are also features of male language in the utterances of female characters or in other words, shared. The social context affects a person's language use and selection, so there can be differences in language use. The presence of social context explanations

that influence the differences in language use is what distinguishes this research from previous researches on the language features of men and women which also found a mixture of language features used by men and women.

4. CONCLUSION

In this research, there were shared uses of male and female language features according to Coates. There are 5 language features according to Jennifer Coates found in the utterances of female characters, namely the female language feature *hedges* as the dominant feature, then *tag questions* and *question*. The other 2 features are male language features *commands & directives* and *swearing & taboo language*. In the utterances of male characters, 1 male language feature *commands and directives*, which is the most widely used feature, and 3 female language features *hedges*, *tag questions* and *questions* were found. The reason for the different language use where male characters use female language features and vice versa can be seen through the social context of the conversations and interactions that occur between the characters. In this research, the most influential social context in the difference in language use is the formality context and functional context.

This research has a data limitations by only analyzing the utterances of male and female characters in angry emotional situations. In the further research, the context of the utterances to be analyzed can be expanded. In addition, future research can also analyze the language features in literary works and compare them directly with the language in the community in the context of same regional origin or background so that the differences or similarities in the language features of men and women between fictional stories and real life can be seen more accurately.

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