

Men's and Women's Language Features Used by the Characters in the *Do Revenge* (2022) Movie by Jennifer Kaytin Robinson

- Authors : Nur Hikmah Afief¹, Yana Qomariana², Ni Made Ayu Widiastuti³
- Affiliations : ^{1, 2, 3} Udayana University
- *Correspondence : hikmahaal8@gmail.com
- Abstract : It is said that men and women communicate differently, attaching different meanings to the same words. Men speak in concrete words to convey information, while women use artistic license and dramatic vocabulary to express and convey their feelings. Therefore, this research aims to (1) identify men's and women's language features used by the characters in the *Do Revenge* movie and (2) examine the factors that influence the differences in language use between men and women. This research applied the theory from Lakoff (1975) about women's language features and factors that influence the differences in language use between men and women, and Coates (2013) about men's language. The data source is taken from a movie entitled *Do Revenge* (2022) directed by Jennifer Kaytin Robinson. The researcher got the data from the dialogue between male and female characters. The qualitative research method was used to analyze the data in this study. The technique of data analysis is the descriptive method. The findings show that female characters showed 9 out of 10 women's language features in a total of 175. They were lexical hedges or fillers, avoidance of strong swear words, empty adjectives, intensifiers, tag questions, rising intonation on declarative, hypercorrect grammar, emphatic stress, and super polite forms. On the other side, male characters showed 4 out of 5 men's language features in total 37. They were minimal responses, the use of swearing and taboo language, commands and directives, and question. The researcher also found that psychology and social status are factors that affect the differences in the language of women and men in the *Do Revenge* movie.
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1. Introduction

It is an unavoidable notion that men and women do not communicate in the same way. Men and women speak differently and attach different meanings to the same words. Men speak in concrete words to convey information, while women use artistic license and dramatic vocabulary to fully express and convey their feelings. Tannen (1992) stated that men tend to use their logic, whereas women tend to use their emotions and feelings in conversation. Language is a tool for expressing gender in society, and gender influences how people use it. It seems clear that language and gender are linked.

The differences in language used by men and women are always interesting to discuss and have attracted some sociologists who have proposed theories and explanations. The dominance theory emphasizes men's dominance and control over society. Men dominated the language because they had greater power in politics and social life. It allows them to assert control over many things, including language use. Weatherall (2002) argued that men had higher power in languages since the majority of philosophers, orators, politicians, grammarians, linguists, and lexicographers were men.

Otherwise, it is said that women's languages are inferior to men's languages. Lakoff (1975) sees women's style as a reflection of their powerlessness as well as men's control over them. Women were expected to speak in particular ways due to their lower social status than men. As a result, women's language expression was less efficient than men's.

The difference theory emphasizes that women and men do not communicate in the same way. Women and men talk differently because they are socialized in different sociolinguistic subcultures. As stated by Tannen (1992), men and women grow up in distinct worlds by enlarging patterns formed in childhood, as a result, men, and women speak differently.

In the book *Language and Women's Place* (1975), Lakoff gives a list of ten features of women's language; Lexical Hedges or Fillers, Tag Questions, Rising Intonations on Declarative, Empty Adjectives, Precise Color Terms, Intensifiers, Hypercorrect Grammar, Super polite Forms, Avoidance of Strong Swear Words, and Emphatic Stress. On the other side, Jennifer Coates (2013) supported Lakoff's theory by mentioning men's language such as Minimal Responses, Swearing and Taboo, Commands and Directives, Compliment, and Questions. In addition, three factors affect the language differences between men and women proposed by Lakoff (1975); psychology, social status, and cultural background. Therefore, these theories will be used for this research in analyzing men's and women's language.

There are some studies reviewed on the topic related to this research. The first was from Simon's article entitled *The Different Language Use between Male and Female University Students* (2021). This study focused on analyzing the language used by males and females of third-semester university students and the reason why they use language differently. The second study was an article from Bagaskoro (2022) entitled *Gender-Specific Features of Language Use on Joe Biden's and Kamala Harris's Speeches*. The research focused on analyzing the language features of men and women in Joe Biden's and Kamala Harris's speeches. The last study was an article entitled *The Differences Between Men and Women's Language in The Devil Wears Prada Movie* by Juwita (2018). This research focused on the differences between men's and women's language features and the consistency of the use of that language features by each gender.

There have been a lot of studies conducted on men's and women's language. However, not many studies have been conducted to examine the factors that influence the use of language by men and women. Therefore, this research aims to examine men's and women's language features and the factors that influence the use of language between men and women in a movie. A movie is a great resource for visual learners because it allows them to immediately understand and recognize the concepts of the movie, including language features used by the characters. In a movie, people can see directly and easily find out the language features used by the characters.

This research analyzes male and female characters' utterances in the *Do Revenge* movie. The researcher used the *Do Revenge* movie as the object because of its stylish and entertaining teen movie that walks a fine line between satire and staying true to Gen Z's way of life. It also gives a moral message to the audience that victims cannot remain silent and allow patriarchy to drag their lives down; instead, they must surround themselves with those who lift them and support them to lighten this burden. As a result, the researcher identifies how the language features characterized their talk and the factors that influenced the use of language in this movie since the male main character has privileges and is supported by patriarchy, while the female is subordinated.

2. Methods

The source of data in this study is taken from a movie entitled *Do Revenge* (2022) directed by Jennifer Kaytin Robinson. This movie is a dark comedy with a *Mean Girls* vibe, social criticism, and a ton of pop culture references. The cast is led by Camila Mendes as Drea and Maya Hawke as Eleanor who give their characters just the right amount of heart and flare. The data is presented through utterances from the dialogue of the main and supporting characters in the movie. The main female characters are Drea Torres and Eleanor Levetan. Meanwhile, the supporting male characters are Max Broussard, Russ Dara, and Elliot Tanners.

This study is qualitative research. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research design is an approach that is focused on analysis and data collection through observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials (Creswell, 2014). The Researcher uses the documentation method in collecting the data. The first step was watching the movie thoroughly and accurately to identify the dialogues that contain the men's and women's language features. The second step was taking notes to classify into two parts; men's and women's language features and the factors that influence the differences in language use between men and women.

The collected data were analyzed qualitatively and descriptively. The data were processed through several steps. First, analyze the language features used by female characters based on the theory proposed by Lakoff (1975) and male characters based on the theory proposed by Coates (2013). Second, analyzing the factors that influence the differences in language use between men and women based on the theory proposed by Lakoff (1975).

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Women's Language Features

a. Lexical Hedges or Fillers

Lakoff (1975) stated that women use hedges to express uncertainty, lack of confidence, and intensifying methods to urge their addressee to take them seriously. Whereas fillers are to fill the gap or pause in the conversation. The researcher found 30 utterances of women's language features that include lexical hedges or fillers features.

Data 1

Drea : "Tonight was really cute and everything, but **you know I think** that Teen Vogue video is stupid, right?"

In the conversation above, Drea even used double hedges **you know** and **I think**. It shows her uncertainty in uttering her utterance. She felt she didn't deserve to be in a Teen Vogue video because she is just a scholarship student. On the other hand, she was also delighted to appear in a Teen Vogue video which can help in her admission to Yale University. She felt unsure of what she was saying to Max about the Teen Vogue video, not knowing whether it was nice or stupid. Thus, she used **you know** and **I think** to hedge her statement.

b. Tag Questions

This feature can function to start a discussion, express uncertainty, or get a response. Women are said to use tag questions more since they are more insecure and need to have their comments validated (Lakoff, 1975). The researcher found 5 utterances of women's language features that include in the tag question feature.

Data 2

Drea : "Sage. You're not trying to diminish the hard work of a fellow woman of color, **are you**?"

The above utterance happened after Drea overheard the conversation between Sage and Arianna who was degrading her. Sage said that Tara arranged the party for Drea because Drea was only a scholarship student with no money to throw such a huge party. Drea was irritated by Sage's utterances. She uttered a tag question **are you** as shown above which functions to get a response. Drea's statement implies that she is unsure about what she heard and needs validation from Sage. It means she wants to know if Sage intends to degrade her or not. As a result, she makes the claims but is unsure about the truth.

c. Rising Intonation on Declaratives

Lakoff (1975) stated that women tend to state something with a rising tone to make a firm statement because they are less sure about themselves and their opinions. The researcher found 15 utterances of women's language features used by female characters in this feature.

Data 3

Eleanor : "Oh, is that what this is about? **You're jealous I'm with your old friends?**"

The conversation happened outside Eleanor's house when they have a small argument. It was Eleanor's birthday, she expected Drea would visit her, so they could celebrate together. But Drea didn't remember. Meanwhile, Eleanor got a surprise Drea's old friends. Then, Drea came to Eleanor's home and feel both jealous and angry that Eleanor celebrate her birthday with old friends and an ex-boyfriend of hers. The example above, shows that Eleanor uses rising intonation in her utterances to get information from Drea. Eleanor needs information on whether Drea was really jealous or not.

d. Empty Adjectives

Lakoff (1975) stated that women use empty adjectives to express their emotional reactions to impress them and to address someone. The researcher found 4 utterances of this feature.

Data 4

Drea : "Oh, **sweetie**. Are you listening to yourself right now? You think I framed you?"

By looking at the utterance above, it found the word indicated an empty adjective feature, **sweetie**. The word **sweetie** used by Drea is to address someone. She called Erica **sweetie**. This happened when Erica was caught using cocaine and was arrested for rehab. Erica was angry with Drea for thinking she was the one who framed her. Even though Erica spoke to her in a screaming tone, Drea still spoke elegantly and called her sweetie. It shows that Drea calling Erica **sweetie** really demonstrates her femininity.

e. Emphatic Stress

Emphatic stress refers to the speaker's use of a higher pitch range to highlight, compare, correct, or explain a word in a phrase. The researcher found 10 utterances of emphatic stress features.

Data 5

Eleanor : "I know it's bad, but watching them escort Carissa away was, like, one of the **best** moments of my life."

During the ring ceremony, Drea and Eleanor put poison mushrooms from Carissa's farm into the meal, causing all of the students to feel euphoric. Then, Carissa was arrested by police for rehabilitation. Eleanor used emphatic stress **best** (with a higher pitch) to reinforce her meaning about the best moment in her life and persuade Drea that her idea of the revenge plan was good and running well.

f. Super Polite Forms

Women used the super polite form in their conversation because they tend to pay attention to manners, including using less aggressive phrases, making indirect requests, and euphemisms. The researcher found 8 super polite forms in the movie.

Data 6

Headmaster : "Whatever you've been distracted with, I hope it's worth your future. Because that's what it cost you."

Drea : "Can I please be excused?"

Drea was disappointed by the unfair behavior of the headmaster and worried about being rejected by other universities. She asked for an apology and included a polite indirect request for a response from the headmaster. She used the word please to demonstrate her politeness and requested forgiveness. She is aware of the manner in which she speaks to elders.

g. Hypercorrect Grammar

Lakoff (1975) Stated that women tend to communicate with good grammar and pay more attention to using standard vocabulary. The researcher found 11 utterances of these features.

Data 7

Drea : “**I’m not** like you, Eleanor. My mom is a nurse who spent her whole life **working** to ensure I can have a better future. I **can’t** mess this up and Rose Hill is my only path to Yale.”

The setting place of the conversation above is in Restaurant. It is the second time Drea and Eleanor met and decided to have lunch together after telling their individual problems and feeling connected. Drea used the women's language feature which is hypercorrect grammar **I'm not** is intended for the usage of the standard verb form and avoid *ain't*. In addition, Drea also said **can't** is a standard verb form that might truly indicate "I don't want to," "I'm afraid," etc. Further, Drea said **working** instead of “workin’”. She revealed her politeness through standard English form and correct pronunciation.

h. Intensifiers

Women used intensifiers to either diminish or raise a speaker's emotional intensity or as a boosting device. The researcher found 78 utterances of women's language features included in this feature.

Data 8

Eleanor : “It **just really** helps sometimes. You should try it. It'll **really** help with the Max stuff.”

Drea : "I'm fine. I don't even think about Max anymore."

Eleanor : “**Just** do it.”

The dialogue above happened in the car after Eleanor screamed loudly. Eleanor suggested that Drea scream as well to relieve the emotions she was facing because doing so was advised by medical professionals. Thus, Eleanor used intensifiers **just** and **really** to strengthen her statement. She wants to make strong feelings to Drea about her statement. Eleanor expressed her strong feelings with the word she was intensifying. In Eleanor's second utterance, she also used the intensifier **just** to strengthen the word ‘do’. She used intensifiers to stronger her suggestion for Drea to scream.

i. Avoidance of Strong Swear Words

Lakoff (1975) stated that women are not meant to speak harshly, and they avoid using swearing since it is considered unfeminine. The researcher found 14 Avoidance of Strong Swear Words in the movie.

Data 9

- Eleanor : “Do you ever worry that you’ll lose yourself?”
Drea : “**Oh my God!** Don’t be so dramatic.”
Eleanor : “Are you in therapy?”
Drea : “**God**, no. Why?”

Drea altered Eleanor's looks to catch Max's attention, but Eleanor felt uncomfortable. Even Drea was annoyed, she still responds Eleanor in a feminine manner and does not use swear words. She uses the phrases **Oh my God** and **God** to express her emotions and avoid using unpleasant utterances.

2. Men’s Language Features

a. Minimal Responses

Coates (2013) stated that men tend to use minimal responses to assert dominance such as *yeah, mhm, and right*. The researcher found 5 utterances of this feature.

Data 10

- Drea : “So hostile. I’m waving the white flag, Max. Look, can’t we just put this ugliness aside? I mean, you said you didn’t leak the video, and I believe it. So, why are we still fighting, right?”
Max : “**Yeah. Yeah.** You’re **right**.”

The conversation above took place at Eleanor’s birthday party. Max was surprised because suddenly Drea who was not invited came to the party. Max’s minimal response, **Yeah. Yeah. Right**, shows his act of confirmation from him towards Drea’s utterance that has the purpose of asking for confirmation. The type of minimal response given by Max asserted the power of validating or reassuring the things that were initially spoken by Drea. In other words, the power in the conversation is still under the control of the male speaker.

b. Commands and Directives

Commands and directives are statements used to persuade another person to do something. According to Coates (2013), men use more aggravated commands and directives than women such as *gimme and gotta*. The researcher found 4 utterances of men's language features that include this feature.

Data 11

- Drea : “Max.”
Max : “Um, I **gotta** go. Thank you, Derek.” (Talking to the phone)

In this case, Max was on the phone with his father's lawyer when Drea came up to him. As can be seen from the commands and directives **gotta go** used by Max, he gave directives that he need to go and immediately hang up the call. This sentence suggests that men often use such a directive sentence to request something from others. Unlike women, men hardly ever make an indirect or polite request in their speech.

c. Swearing and Taboo Language

According to numerous scientific research, men swear more than women (Coates, 2013). The researcher found 26 utterances of swearing and taboo language features.

Data 12

- Max : "Oh, wow. **Fuck** you, dude!"
- Elliot : "Step the **fuck** back!"
- Max : "**Fuck** you. You're **fucking** nothing without me. You'd all be **fucking** nothing!"

The conversation took place at the Admission Party when Max was attacked by everyone when a video on the screen showed Max admitting the actions that he leaked Drea's videotape. Max urges Elliot to inform everyone that the video is not true. They both used swearing language **fuck** in their whole conversation. Max said **fuck** to express his frustration with both the attack he received and Elliot who won't defend him. Similarly, Elliot expresses his displeasure toward Max by using the swear word **fuck**.

d. Questions

According to Coates (2013), men ask more questions than women. Coates said that a male speaker was found to be more likely to interrupt women. The researcher found 2 utterances of men's language features that include this feature.

Data 13

- Max : "I love Saunders."
- Eleanor : "Cool"
- Max : "I studied them at Yale. I just did their literary arts summer program"
- Eleanor : "Cool"
- Max : "**Do you say anything other than cool?**"
- Eleanor : "So cool"

The conversation above happened when Eleanor was alone reading and listening to music. Max seems to be attracted to Eleanor and approaches her, so they may have a conversation. It shows that Max interrupting Eleanor. Max took the book entitled "*Saunders*" beside Eleanor that she had been reading and started the conversation. Max interrupts Eleanor by asking questions in order to get closer to her and know more about her. When Max asked, **Do you say anything other than cool?** It implies that she must provide an answer other than cool.

3. Factors Influence the Differences Between Men's and Women's Language

According to Lakoff (1975), there are three factors that affect the language differences between men and women. They are psychology, social status, and cultural background. However, along with the times and society, there will be fewer differences in the use of language between men and women. As in *Do Revenge* movie, the researcher found fewer differences between the language of women and men. Men use women's language and vice versa, however, the frequency of usage differs.

a. Psychology

Psychology influenced male and female characters in using language. In *Do Revenge* movie, Drea has feminine traits. Eleanor also has some slightly feminine traits. Male characters such as Max, Russ, and Elliot also possess masculine traits. It can be said men's language is more assertive and direct than women's. This has shown that male characters used directive speech to command others while women used tag questions. The researcher did not find male characters using tag questions. Men tend to say something directly and to the point.

Female characters use swear words as much as men. Yet, the lexical hedges employed more frequently by female characters demonstrate that they are subtle and sensitive to significant variation across speakers and contexts of use. Whenever the female characters are uncertain of what they are saying, they use hedges. Other than that, female characters frequently utilize intensifiers to emphasize their intended meaning and to ensure that others take their words seriously. Rising intonation in declarative sentences is also employed more by females than by males in conversation. It shows that women aren't reluctant to share their guts and ask questions. The woman raised her intonation since she was surprised by people's opinions. This makes women's language appear more emotional.

b. Social Status

The main focus of *Do Revenge* movie is showing the privileges that rich men have in a patriarchal society through the character Max. Max faces no punishment, whereas Drea is saddled with an abundance of problems. It is shown from Drea utterances:

"For girls our bodies, our choices are all policed by shame. Our weaknesses are their strengths. If they have a lot of sex, they're crushing it. If we do it, we're sluts. If they're angry they're powerful. But if we show any emotion, we're hysterical."

"If men in general are hard to take down, Max is patriarchy incarnate. The ultimate manic pixie dream boy. Max has a meticulously curated persona. Rose hill is an orchestra, and Max is its conductor. Everyone loves him, which means he can get away with anything."

Drea is expelled from her popular group immediately after the sex tape is exposed, while Max remains the school's 'golden boy'. This demonstrates Max's social status in school. With his social status, he can do anything to achieve what he wants including using their power in the language during his speech or conversation. Likewise, Elliot, who is in a group with Max. There is power in his language when he makes moves to help Max raise his image in public.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the discussion above, the researcher found that female characters showed 9 out of 10 women's language features in a total of 175. They were lexical hedges or fillers, avoidance of strong swear words, empty adjectives, intensifiers, tag questions, rising intonation on declarative, hypercorrect grammar, emphatic stress, and super polite forms. The female characters did not use precise color terms. The most frequent type of women's language features was intensifiers with 78 occurrences. On the other side, male characters showed 4 out of 5 men's language features in total 37. They were minimal responses, the use of swearing and taboo language, commands and directives, and question. One feature that is not used by male characters was compliments. The most frequent type of men's language features was swearing and taboo language with 24 occurrences.

The researcher also found that psychology and social status are factors that affect the differences in the language of women and men in the *Do Revenge* movie. However, along with the times and society, there will be fewer differences in the use of language between men and women. As in the *Do Revenge* movie, there is less difference between men's and women's language. Male and female characters did not consistently use men's and women's language based on each gender. Additionally, female characters occasionally use men's language and vice versa. The female character used swearing and taboo language. The same for male characters, they also used lexical hedges or fillers and intensifiers. The huge contrast between men's and women's language in *Do Revenge* movie is only the usage of empty adjectives and tag questions. It is most likely empty adjectives associated with femininity that no male characters employed. Gender norms and expectations around language use may have an impact on this. Males may feel more liberated to use profanity to demonstrate their masculinity. It also indicates that male characters are more assertive since they tend to use commands and directives than tag questions. As opposed to women who are typically insecure about their statements.

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