A function of language analysis through language features showed by Stella Grant in the *Five Feet Apart* Movie (2019)

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Abstract

Movie is the combination of audio and visual language in a movie makes it acceptable to the audience. This study aims to examine the language function and features used by women in the movie based on Stella's utterances. The researcher used features of language mentioned by Jennifer Coates' (2013) and Roman Jakobson's (1960) theory function of language. This study used a descriptive qualitative method employed purposive sampling to collect data from the *Five Feet Apart* (2019) movie and the *Five Feet Apart* movie script. The results revealed that the main female characters use all language features. Features that Stella uses such as minimal responses, hedges, tag questions, questions, commands and directives, swearing and taboo languages, and compliments. Additionally, Stella mostly used expressive functions. The research also shows the social factor that Stella mostly used is a topic factor. Thus, it can be concluded that as the main female character, Stella Grant wants to express her feelings to her speech partner through her utterances which is included in the features of language.

Keywords: Language features; function of language; *Five Feet Apart* movie

1. Introduction

In the present study, the researcher will examine features of language depicted in *Five Feet Apart* (2019) movie using the features of language mentioned by Coates (2013) in her book Women, Men, and Language. *The Five Feet Apart* movie is an American romance movie with a cast who has a rare disease. The movie *Five Feet Apart* was chosen as the research's data source because it highlights questions about what it means to live and die as well as the struggle for love, both of which resonate strongly with teenagers and are important themes in today's culture.

The researcher is interested in examining the *Five Feet Apart* movie because the main female character who expresses a lot of curiosity uses one of the types of language cited by Coates, namely question, minimal response, tag question, command and directive, swearing and taboo language, compliment, and hedges which are included in the type of language. In addition, the researcher will also examine the language function based on Jacobson. There are several studies that have been undertaken on the topic of women's language and the function of language. Rahadiyanti (2020); Anjani and Setiawan (2019); and Priska, et al., (2020) have analyzed their studies using Lakoff's (1975) theory and a descriptive qualitative as their research method. The results of these studies show lexical hedges were most frequently used and followed by several other features of women's language. Oktapiani, et al., (2017) has analyzed women's language features using Lakoff's and Jakobson's theories based on their theoretical foundation and used a descriptive qualitative method. The findings clearly and in detail that *The Devil Wears Prada*'s female characters use intensifiers the most

frequently because they want to highlight or strengthen their words thoroughly to get the attention of their target audience.

Furthermore, two previous studies used Coates' theory are Setyorini and Indarti (2013). The result of their research shows that Oprah knows about the follow-up story because of her minimal response. Besides that, the directive is one that is used to maintain the social connections of the speaker. Meanwhile, Muthia et al. (2021), uses Spotify podcasts as their object. According to their research, there are no commands, directive features, and taboos or swearing.

Arbella et al. (2022) used Coates' (2013) theory for their theoretical foundation and also used qualitative methods to present the data of their study, which had video games as its focus. The findings show that male and female conversational techniques differ in the purposes and impressions they try to express. Following the previous studies, the researcher also found a previous study that was related to the function of language. Putri, et al., (2018) used Jakobson's (1987) theory and was conducted by using mixed-method research. The result of this study were only five functions of language out of six and the most dominant in this study is a referential function because the genre of the movie was spy-thriller, where the most often used expressions were straightforward, direct, and to the point in using language.

Ginting and Suryani (2022) and Maharani, et al., (2022) focus on analyzing characterization in the *Five Feet Apart* movie. The differences between the present study and the previous studies on the subject of the study, and the object of the study—which is being the gap that the researcher offers because the researcher wants to examine the object of research entitled *Five Feet Apart* (2019) movie using the theory of Coates (2013) and Jakobson (1960). Using Coates' and Jakobson's theory the researcher thoroughly investigates the main female character to see what women's language features she uses and the function of the language she uses.

2. Methods

This research is categorized into descriptive qualitative method. The researcher used a purposive sampling technique by annotating the Stella utterances that were part of the language features and showing the function of language. The data are taken from Stella's utterances in the *Five Feet Apart* (2019) movie and the research's data sources from the script of the *Five Feet Apart* movie. The population of the data is the clauses in which Stella participates actively and passively in every utterance.

Furthermore, the researcher watches the movie *Five Feet Apart* (2019) on Netflix, uses the movie transcript as accompanying data from the original data which contains the conversations between actors in the *Five Feet Apart* movie, and marks Stella's utterances including features of language in the movie transcript in order to collect the data. In addition, the researcher classifies the features of language and describes the social factors that influence the function of language in Stella's utterances in the *Five Feet Apart* movie for data analysis

3.   Results

3.1.   Findings

Table 1. Language Function and Language Features used by Stella Utterances in *Five Feet Apart* movie.

Language feature	Factor	Function						Total
		Ref	Ex	Cona	Phat	Meta	Poet	
	The participants	-	2	-	2	-	-	13

Minimal Responses	The setting or social context	-	1	-	1	-	-	
	The topic	-	6	-	4	-	-	
Hedges	The participants	-	1	-	-	-	-	6
	The setting or social context	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	The topic	-	5	-	-	-	-	
Tag Question	The participants	-	4	-	-	-	-	12
	The setting or social context	-	1	-	-	-	-	
	The topic	4	3	-	-	-	-	
Question	The participants	-	3	-	4	-	-	33
	The setting or social context	-	3	-	-	-	-	
	The topic	1	6	-	11	5	-	
Command and Directive	The participants	-	-	6	-	-	-	11
	The setting or social context	-	-	2	-	-	-	
	The topic	-	-	3	-	-	-	
Swearing and Taboo Language	The participants	-	4	-	-	-	-	11
	The setting or social context	-	1	-	-	-	-	
	The topic	-	6	-	-	-	-	
Compliment	The participants	-	1	-	-	-	-	7
	The setting or social context	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	The topic	-	6	-	-	-	-	

Table 3.1 above describes the function of the language used by the main female character in the language feature. In table 3.1 can be seen the results that Stella frequently uses questions as an element of her speech. Furthermore, Stella used 12 utterances that contained the tag question feature, showing how frequently she used this feature. The result connects with Lakoff's assumption as cited in Coates' book (2013: 90) that women employ tag questions more frequently than males. Stella employs commands and directives to show off her ability to control conversations. Stella mostly used those instructions to command Will to be disciplined when doing medical treatments. Stella also used swearing and taboo language to swear harshly or to be nasty to her friends or to his circumstances, which contradicts Lakoff's statement that men use stronger expletives (damn, shit) than women (cited in Coates 2013:97) [1]. The researchers also found 7 utterances with language features and hedges. The expressive function of language is the one that is most frequently used can be seen in table 3.1. In this movie, Stella utilizes this function in minimal response, tag questions, questions, swearing or taboo language, and compliments.

a. **Minimal Responses**

According to Coates [1], Minimal responses are in the form of body language, nodding, and short words like *"mhm," "yeah," "right," and "I agree."* The concept of minimal responses refers to the short comments or statements made by conversation participants. Women frequently use minimal responses to show that they are listening and following the conversation. The use of minimal responses in the main female character of the Five Feet Apart movie can be seen as follows:

(1)   Mom's stella: "I'm stealing your look?" Stella: "**Mmm-hmm.**"
          Mom's stella: "Okay, maybe I need this more than you do."(00:29:42 - 00:29:45)

In data 1, it can be seen that Stella uses the minimal response **"Mmm-hmm"** to answer her mother's question asking if she is copying Stella's looks, and Stella agrees by using a short answer. The relationship between Stella and her mother is so close that they are able to joke together like friends. Stella uses expressive function because the sentence **"Mmm-hmm"** can describe or express Stella's opinion that approves her mother's question about her mother's looks like her. There is a topic factor that influences the use of expressive functions in minimal responses. This is in line with reseach conducted by Wulandari & Sumarlam (2001). The topic being discussed by Stella and her mother is an informal topic with a casual conversation between mother and daughter.

b.   Hedges

Hedges express the speakers' certainty or uncertainty about the topic being discussed (Coates, 2013: 88) [1]. Hedges are verbal expressions such as *I think, I'm sure, you know, kind of, and perhaps.* Hedges are more often spoken by women than men because men's talks typically keep clear of sensitive topics in contrast to women speakers. In the *Five Feet Apart* movie, hedges were portrayed as well and used in the following ways:

(3)   Stella : "**Well**, you can just Photoshop me in with your fancy editing apps."
       Camila : "What are you talking about?"

       Stella   : "**You know** what I'm talking about."(00:02:40) - (00:02:48)

In data 3, Stella uses hedges **"Well"** and **"You know"** in her conversations with her two best friends. Stella said **"You know what I'm talking about"** in her In data 3, this happened when Stella's two best friends, namely Camilla and Maya. They were sad because Stella, who had planned a vacation with them, didn't have to go because they had to do hospital treatment, and Stella tried to cheer them up by joking. Stella uses hedges **"Well"** and **"You know"** in her conversations with her two best friends. Stella said **"You know what I'm talking about"** in her line to hold the conversation that happened in an unpleasant situation. She used hedges to get a little more time to make her statement because she couldn't believe Camilla didn't know what she meant. The sentence **"Well**, you can just Photoshop me in with your fancy editing apps" contains the hedges feature **"Well"** This word needs to be used so that the speaker's intent is conveyed correctly and it can be useful for expressing the uncertainty of Stella's thoughts about her photos which can be edited with Camilla's photo editing application. Another reason for using this language feature is to soften the impact of his statements and convey politeness by avoiding arguments that would make them fight about editing apps. In the conversation between Stella and Camilla above, there is a social factor that influences the expressive function, namely the topic factor. The topic being discussed by Stella and her best friend was about Stella being unable to take part in the vacation together that had been planned with her friends, this topic was an informal topic so Stella expressed her opinion using informal language as well.

c.   Tag Questions

As stated by Coates (2013) [1], speaker-oriented tag questions are those that express certainty, whereas addressee-oriented tag questions express the speaker's perspective on the

addressee. Women frequently utilize facilitative or addressee-oriented tag questions. The *Five Feet Apart*'s dialogue included the following sections which enabled the use of tag questions:

(5)   Stella : "Okay, come on. Thank you for the burgers. Honestly, you guys are gonna have so much fun, Okay? **Bye**. I love you."
Maya : "I love you more." (00:02:55) - (00:03:05)

In data 5, the word **"okay?"** Stella said included in the tag questions, the sentence "Okay, come on. Thank you for the burgers. Honestly, you guys are gonna have so much fun, **okay?** Bye. I love you." Stella wanted to convince her two friends that their vacation even without Stella's presence would still be fun, Stella didn't want to make her friends sad about her absence because she had to do a health check-up at the hospital. There is a social factor in the conversation, namely the participant factor which influences the expressive function occurrence in the utterances used by Stella. The participants in the data conversation above are Stella and her best friends, where they have a very close relationship so that Stella uses informal language to carry out conversations.

d.   Question

In terms of communication, questions are more powerful than statements because they give the speaker the ability to elicit a response. Women prefer to ask more questions to continue the conversation with the other person. Below is how the female main characters in the *Five Feet Apart* movie use the questions:

(9)   Stella : **"What room's Poe in?"**
Julie   : "310 and open up. All right. You are all set. I'll see you in a bit."
Stella : "Thank you, Julie."(00:04:37 - 00:04:40)

The analysis of women's language features used by Stella is a question **"What room's Poe in?"**. Here Stella uses this feature because, in the context of the conversation, Stella wants to know where Poe's room is, and because of that Stella asks Julie. Then Julie answered by mentioning the room number where Poe was, namely 310, and Stella immediately sent a message to Poe to let him know that she was in room 307. The expressive function used by Stella in this conversation, there is a social factor that influences the expressive function of the conversation is the topic factor, where Julie was checking on Stella then they started a conversation with an informal topic then Stella asked her friend Poe's room to Julie. This question expressed Stella's curiosity about the location of Poe's room.

e.   Commands and Directives

Goodwin's research cited in Coates (2013:94) [1] indicates that men and women employ various types of directives, with men typically using explicit directions. The following is an explanation of how the main female character in *Five Feet Apart* uses commands and directives:

(12) Stella : "What are you doing? Will?"
Stella : **"Will, stop, please! Please get down now! Will, stop! Oh, my God!"**
Will: (laughing) Relax! (00:18:40) - (00:18:48)

In data 12, Stella said the sentence **"Will, stop, please! Please get down now! Will stop! Oh my God!"** to ask Will to stop his sniffing drug which made Stella panic. This statement shows that Stella's character uses direct and commanding features. During her speech, Stella explicitly instructs Will. She says, **"Will, stop, please! Please get down now ! Gonna stop! Oh my god!"** reveals that she wants Will off drugs and Stella doesn't want Will to sniff her again. This statement uses a conative function to indirectly make a request for information or issue a command. Stella's story aims to give orders to Will to do something. The conative function is used in Stella's utterance. Social factor that influences conative function is participant factor because the participant in the

conversation is a close friend or people who the main female character already knows and there is an intimate relationship with her speech partner so that Stella uses informal language to give command and directive to the person she is talking to.

f.   Swearing and Taboo Languages

There is a common folk linguistic assumption that men use more taboo words and swear more than women. Jenny Cheshire's research on adolescent speech (1982) cited in Coates (2013: 98) believes that using swearing has a symbolic significance for this age group. It indicates that young people, particularly those from working-class backgrounds, believe that using taboo language is part of being "cool." Girls from the same background also employ linguistic strategies that are usually employed by male speakers. Women are therefore permitted to swear in informal conversations. In the movie, the main female character's use of swearing and taboo language is shown below; the conversation included the following:

(15)   Stella : "**Oh, shit.** Barb knows we're gone." Will : "Okay."
          Stella   : "Uh, she'll look for me first in the NICU, so... Bye! Okay." (01:08:32) - (01:08:40)

In data 15, Stella said to Will "**Oh, shit.** Barb knows we're gone." The word **"Oh, shit"** includes swearing and taboo language that is used more often by men than women. Stella uses the word **"oh, shit"** when she panics because Barb knows that Stella and Will are not in their rooms, and Stella immediately leaves to leave Will and says that Barb will look for her in the NICU so she has to go to the NICU as soon as possible before being caught by Barb. Stella used an expressive function. The factor in the expressive function is participants. The participant who is talking to Stella is Will, a close friend where they have an intimate relationship and their social distance is close. The use of swearing in Stella's utterance is an expression of Stella's shock when Barb finds out that Stella and Will aren't in their room.

g.   Compliments

Based on Coates (2013:98), women use compliments more than men because in some situations women tend to use compliments as a positive sign of politeness. It is not surprising that women like receiving and giving compliments to one another. The main female characters of *Five Feet Apart* movie were found to compliment the other characters in the following ways:

(18) Stella   : "No, you need something… **This is actually cute**."
       Camila   : "That's actually really cute. Let me see."
       Stella   : "I like that."
       Camilla   : "Oh, yeah, that's actually really pretty. But I can't tell, is it too trampy or not
                               trampy enough?" (00:01:57 - 00:02:02)

Stella uses the sentence **"This is actually cute"** This sentence is included in the language feature compliment because in her words Stella is seen praising cute objects or bikinis to be used by Camilla for the upcoming holidays. The compliment is not only used by women to compliment other women, but they can also praise objects or circumstances around them. The social factor that influences the expressive function used is the topic factor. The topic is that Stella and her two best friends talking about the swimsuit that will be used by her best friend when they go on vacation and Stella uses compliments to express her admiration for the swimsuit.

h.   Function of Language in Language Features

The function of Language is an analysis that contains the purpose of someone speaking by using that sentence or phrase. Jakobson (1960) identified the referential function, expressive function, conative function, phatic function, metalingual function, and poetic function as the six most important functions of language used for communication. According to the data, referential

function dominates the frequency distribution of language function in tag questions. Stella used a referential function to convey information or make listeners know the speaker's perspective and used it in tag question to indicate communication with the aim to provide another person with information. Expressive function, on the other hand, is frequently used to convey the speaker's emotions throughout a conversation. Stella used this ability to express her feelings and thoughts in an effective way. Stella uses a conative functions to give commands and directions to Will. The phatic function consists of the everyday small conversation we participate in to build relationships, connect with others, and assure beneficial interactions. Stella uses the phatic function as an expression to keep the lines of communication constant with her speech partner. In the feature question, Stella also makes use of the metalingual function to confirm any cases of code that need to be clarified or corrected because it was misinterpreted. Furthermore, there is no data found that indicate a poetic function in the F*ive Feet Apart* movie.

4.   Conclusions

Based on the first research problem, the conclusion shows that Stella, the main female character in the *Five Feet Apart* movie uses all the language features based on Coates' (2013) such as questions, minimal responses, tag questions, commands and directives, swearing and taboo languages, compliments, and hedges. This research is related to the way Stella useslanguage in the *Five Feet Apart* movie, the use of language certainly has a different function in each of Stella's utterances. The dominant function that appears in Stella's utterances is the expressive function, phatic function, conative function, metalingual function, and referential function.

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