

## Conversational Strategies Used by Gilang Widya Permana and Shandy Purnamasari in the SB30 Podcast

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### ABSTRACT

This qualitative study was conducted to determine how speakers of different genders employed conversational strategies. In addition, the writer intended to find the similarities and differences in the use of conversational strategies by male and female speakers. Therefore, the writer chose to analyze the guest stars of SB30's podcast that represented both genders. The guest stars were Gilang Widya Permana (male) and Shandy Purnamasari (female). To analyze the data, the writer referred to Gender and Conversational Strategies theory by Coates (2013). Coates (2013) classifies conversational strategies into seven strategies. This study showed that Gilang used six out of seven strategies, while Shandy used all seven. The writer concludes that conversational strategies can be used by men and women, depending on one's emerging condition. Therefore, the chances of using conversational strategies for both genders are equal.

**Keywords:** conversational strategies; gender; podcast

### INTRODUCTION

Most daily tasks require interaction and cooperation with other people, and for that to be successful, there must be a form of communication. According to Coates' *Women, Men, and Language* (2013), some differences occurred in the interactions attributed to gender. Gender is one of the various distinctions in language. Gender is still present in society because the speakers of the linguistic community are men and women (Winarto, 2016). Unlike sex, gender is not innate. Gender refers to socio-cultural behavior, while sex is a biological distinction (Holmes & Pinto, 2013). Social constructivism's theory mentions that men or women are not born into a particular gender but are gendered through their interactions (Kamada, 2011).

Maltz and Borker (1982), as cited in Coates (2013), furthermore explain that men and women possess different understanding in communication, which causes them to have different conversation styles. The way men and women use language is regarded as conversational styles or conversational strategies. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003, p. 122) explain that "a male style is to be competitive rather than cooperative. Furthermore, Coates (2013) classifies conversational strategies of men and women into seven aspects. The descriptions of each strategy are as follows:

- Minimal responses: a strategy that uses very few words to respond or no response at all (e.g., "yeah", "right", and "mhm"). The function is to support the interlocutors in a conversation and to express agreement. Coates (2013) describes this strategy as a women's specialty.
- Hedges: a strategy that shows uncertainty (e.g., "I think", "I believe", "you know", "sort of", "like", and "maybe"). Coates (2013) mentions that women are more tentative; therefore, hedges are associated with women.
- Tag questions: a strategy that uses a grammatical structure that applies in an interrogative structure (e.g. "..., isn't it?"). The function is to make the statement has lesser assertion. Lakoff (1975), as cited in Coates (2013), hypothesizes that tag questions are mostly used by women, but there is no empirical evidence on that.

- Questions: a strategy to elicit an answer from the interlocutors to make the conversation keep going. Questions can be in the form of yes or no questions or WH-questions (e.g., "is it good?" and "what does it say?"). Questions are used by men and women.
- Commands and directives: a strategy to get someone to do something (e.g. "let's, "gonna", can", and "could"). Previous studies find out that male speakers use this strategy more than female speakers. When using this strategy, men tend to use aggravated directives, while women tend to use mitigated directives.
- Swearing and taboo languages: a strategy to express very strong emotions, anger directed at another person, or simply deep frustration. Folk linguistics says that men swear more than women. If women happen to use swearing words, the word choice is less harsh than men (e.g., "goodness" and "gosh").
- Compliments: a strategy to explicitly or implicitly attribute appreciation to others. Compliments can be used to make others feel good because they express positive evaluation, admiration, appreciation, or praise (e.g., "I like your...", "that's good", and "nice!"). Female speakers use compliments more than male speakers because female speakers like to receive compliments.

(Coates, 2013)

Coates (2013) further explains how males and females use conversational strategies in communicating in same-sex conversations and mixed interactions to a different degree. For instance, minimal responses, hedges, and compliments are claimed to be used more frequently by women rather than men. Meanwhile, commands and directives and swearing and taboo languages are frequently used by men. Some conversational strategies are frequently used by both genders, such as tag questions and questions (Coates, 2013).

In this study, the writer decided to analyze a podcast. Rachmawati (2019), in her study, states that a podcast is an innovative learning medium that brings out clear benefits for the audience. The podcast that was analyzed in this study entitled "Kisah Sepasang Muda Mudi Yang Merintis Karir dari Nol Sampai Beli Ferrari Di Usia 27 Tahun | MS Glow". The podcast was uploaded by Success Before 30 or SB30 YouTube Channel on June 10, 2020. The moderator was Chandra Putra Negara and the guest stars were Gilang Widya Permana and Shandy Purnamasari. They are deservedly known as a couple-preneur since they successfully built their business as a married couple. The podcast mainly discussed the story of Gilang and Shandy when they were still developing MS Glow from scratch until it became a well-known beauty brand in Indonesia (MS Glow, n.d.).

This study is within the scope of sociolinguistics and is interested in finding out the relationship between language and society (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2008). However, there are several limitations of this study. There were two parts of the podcasts, but the writer only chose the first part to be analyzed. Moreover, the writer only chose to analyze the guests' utterances because the guests of the podcast, Gilang (male) and Shandy (female), already represented both genders. The analysis in this study only paid attention to Gilang and Shandy's utterances without looking at the status of the interlocutors or the setting. The analysis could be done based on Gilang and Shandy's utterances when responding to the moderator's questions or talking to each other as long as the conversational strategy was used.

To obtain a deeper understanding of the way each gender employs conversational strategies in a conversation, the writer chose to analyze the conversational strategies of Gilang (male) and Shandy (female) as the guest stars in SB30's podcast. After finding out the conversational strategies used by Gilang and Shandy, the writer tried to find the similarities and differences in

the use of conversational strategies. To analyze their utterances and to identify the similarities and differences, the writer referred to Coates' (2013) theory regarding gender and conversational strategies.

## METHODS

In this study, the writer used descriptive qualitative analysis to analyze the conversational strategies used by Gilang and Shandy as the guest stars in SB30's podcast. As the main instrument of the study, the writer collected and analyzed the data from its source based on the theory of gender and conversational strategies by Coates (2013). The data that was being analyzed was taken from Gilang and Shandy's utterances in SB30's podcast.

There were several steps that the writer used in collecting the data. First, the writer watched the podcast on YouTube platform. Next, the writer downloaded the podcast's script from YouTube. Then, the writer listened and compiled the transcript using the open transcript method. According to Jenks (2011), the open transcript method collects data by recording and copying the speaker's speech. Next, the writer watched the podcast again while taking notes on the podcast script to recheck the utterances. After that, the writer decided on the utterances that would be analyzed further according to some criteria and finally inserted the utterances into tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3.

This study's analysis was based on Coates' (2013) theory of Gender and Conversational Strategies. In analyzing the data, the writer used Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 to help the writer to organize, categorize, and analyze the data. The writer categorized each utterance based on the speakers and gave two-digit alphabet and numbering system. After that, the writer identified the conversational strategies employed in each utterance, and the final result was used to present the conversational strategies used by each speaker. Finally, the findings and discussion are elaborated in the next section.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the writer's study of conversational strategies used by the guest stars of SB30's podcast, the writer found some interesting findings that will be discussed in this section. Before presenting the discussion, the writer presents Table 1 below to summarize the findings.

**Table 1: Table of Findings**

No.	Speakers	Conversational Strategies						
		MR	H	Q	TQ	CD	STL	C
1.	Gilang Widya Permana	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
2.	Shandy Purnamasari	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

These are the initials of the conversational strategies:

MR : Minimal Responses

H : Hedges

Q : Questions

TQ : Tag Questions

CD : Command and Directives

STL : Swearing and Taboo Language

C : Compliment

The tick (✓) indicated the use of each conversational strategy.

From Table 1, it can be inferred that Shandy Purnamasari used all conversational strategies. Meanwhile, Gilang Widya Permana used most conversational strategies except swearing and taboo language. In the following section, the writer discusses the conversational strategies used by Gilang Widya Permana and Shandy Purnamasari, as well as the similarities and differences that the writer could draw from the findings.

### **Conversational Strategies Used by Gilang Widya Permana in the Podcast**

Coates (2013) explains that there are seven aspects of conversational strategies. In the podcast, the writer found out that Gilang used six out of seven conversational strategies. The conversational strategies used by Gilang were minimal responses, hedges, questions, tag questions, command and directives, and compliments.

According to Coates (2013), female speakers tend to employ minimal responses more often than male speakers. During the podcast, Shandy employed more minimal responses than Gilang. However, Gilang also employed lots of minimal responses during the podcast, which made the difference less significant. The following was an example of Gilang's utterance that used a minimal response strategy:

- Gilang : **“Baik, Alhamdulillah”** [Good, Thanks God] (G.1)

The statement above is categorized as minimal responses. One characteristic of minimal responses is using very minimal words to respond. G.1 showed that Gilang gave a very brief answer that consisted of only two words to respond to the moderator's question.

According to Coates (2013), women use hedges more often because of their choice of topics. However, it is shown in the podcast that Gilang also used hedges almost as much as Shandy. The following was an example of Gilang's utterance that used hedges:

- Gilang : **“paling enggak satu Avanza”** [At least at least required the cost of one Avanza ] (G.19)

One function of hedges used in a situation is to avoid making any strong statement (Lakoff, 1975). When the moderator asked Gilang how much money he needed to be a civil servant or PNS, he was not certain of the exact amount of money needed. Therefore, he used “at least” to estimate the price instead of giving a strong answer.

Lakoff (1975), as cited in Coates (2013), states tag questions are mostly attributed to women. Male speakers employ tag questions more often than female speakers when talking about modals or uncertainties. However, during the podcast, Gilang employed more tag questions rather than Shandy to express his uncertainty about the discussion.

- Gilang : **“ya mi ya?”** [Right, mi?] (G.30)

The word “mi” refers to “Mami” which means mother but can be used by a husband to call his wife. The statement above is categorized as a tag question because the tag question is associated with tentativeness (Coates, 2013). Gilang was not sure of his answer. Therefore, he asked for justification from his wife.

According to Coates (2013), women use questions in an interrogative form more often than men in order to keep the conversation going. The finding showed that Gilang employed fewer questions than Shandy.

- Gilang : **“mana namanya ma?”** [What is it, ma?] (G.42)

The word “ma” refers to “mama” which literally means mother but can be used by a husband to call his wife. The utterance above is considered a question because a relevant answer must follow a question, and the function is to keep the conversation going. After Gilang asked that, Shandy answered with a relevant answer and the conversation continued.

According to Coates (2013), men tend to use aggravated directives for people to follow their instructions and show their powers. It is shown in the podcast that Gilang used aggravated directives several times.

- Gilang : “*bikin keset kenapa?*” [Why don’t you create mats?] (G.49)

Even though the form of the sentence was interrogative, the statement above meant to order Gilang’s wife to do something, which was to create mats. He was using aggravated directives because he wanted to emphasize his status as Shandy’s husband. It was commonly believed that the wife should be obedient to her husband.

Coates (2013) explains that women tend to use compliments more than men. However, in this study, the writer found out that Gilang also gave compliments to his wife.

- Gilang : “*Pertama kali langsung naksir*” [Having crush at the first sight] (G.39)

The utterance above is categorized as a compliment because the utterance above is implicitly giving a compliment to Shandy. Even though Gilang did not directly express his admiration, he was implicitly complimenting Shandy that she was very pretty and very attractive and that she was able to make Gilang fall in love instantly the very first time they met.

In this podcast, Gilang did not employ a strategy, namely swearing and taboo language. Gilang did not employ this strategy because, throughout the podcast, no discussion triggered Gilang’s anger, and no discussion made Gilang feel a negative emotion.

### Conversational Strategies Used by Shandy Purnamasari in the Podcast

Unlike Gilang, Shandy used all the conversational strategies. In this section, the writer would like to review several examples of Shandy’s utterances when she employed conversational strategies in the podcast.

Coates (2013) mentions that women are more aware of supporting their interlocutors. That is why women tend to use minimal responses than men. It is shown in the podcast that Shandy employed more minimal responses than Gilang.

- Shandy : “*Oke*” [Alright] (S.2)

Shandy was asked to greet the audience, and she agreed. To express agreement, she said, “alright”. The statement above is considered a minimal response because one of the functions of this strategy is to express agreement.

Women mostly use hedges because it is believed that if women asserting themselves too much is not appropriate (Coates, 2013). Coates (2013) also explains women use hedges more than men because they are lacking of confidence. It is shown in the podcast that Shandy employed more hedges than Gilang.

- Shandy : “*Itu kayak nggak prestige gituloh*” [It was **like**, not prestigious] (S.38)

Coates (2013) mentions that “like” is one example of hedges. Shandy used “like” to reduce the power of her speech to prevent anyone from being offended by what she said.

According to Coates (2013), women tend to use tag questions more when they become facilitators. The term facilitators refer to those who are responsible for ensuring that interaction proceeds smoothly. However, during the podcast, it is shown that Shandy employed less tag questions than Gilang.

- Shandy : “*keren banget kan?*” [very cool, right?] (S.8)

Women often initiate questions and tag questions to keep the conversation going. As seen in the statement above, Shandy used the tag question to keep the interaction going with the moderator by involving the moderator in her statement, using the tag question “right?” which aims to seek the moderator’s agreement of Shandy’s opinion.

Questions are powerful linguistic forms because they give the speaker the power to elicit a response from their interlocutor (Coates, 2013). Society believes that female speakers use more questions than male speakers (Coates, 2013). This study also showed that Shandy used to question more often than Gilang.

- Shandy : “*Berapa lama ya?*” [How long is it?] (S.45)

The moderator asked Shandy about how long it took for her to adapt to that kind of situation. Shandy answered with, “*Berapa lama ya?*” [How long is it?] to express that she could not remember the exact time of how long it took for her to adapt to that situation. However, in this context, Shandy was asking the question to herself because not long after that, she answered her question.

Coates (2013) explains that women tend to use mitigated directives in their speech act. It means that women tend to command others softly to make the commands more like recommendations. In the podcast, Shandy was seen to use mitigated directives.

- Shandy : “*Ayo kamu bilang ke papa, udah kamu jadi PNS saja*” [Let’s tell your father to make you a civil servant] (S.53)

The statement above is considered command and directives because Shandy asked Gilang to follow her instruction which was to ask Gilang’s father for a job as a civil servant. According to Coates (2013), unlike men, women tend to use mitigated directives and the form “let’s” (*Ayo*) in Shandy’s statement explicitly includes the speaker together with the addressee(s) in the proposed action.

Lakoff (1975), as cited in Coates (2013), states that men tend to use expletives or rougher swearing words such as “shit”, “fuck” than women. Women tend to use softer swear words such as religious words like “Gosh” and “Jesus”. It is shown in the podcast that Shandy only employed one swearing language and she used it in a very subtle way.

- Shandy : “*yaampun ini tuh kayak rumah-rumah orang pemulung, dimana mana ada barang, itu kayak, aduh*” [Gosh, this is like a scavenger’s house, stuff’s everywhere, ouch] (S.41)

In the utterance above, Shandy employed swearing and taboo language. Still, she used it in a softer way which turned the swearing into more like a grumble or a complaint by saying “*Yaampun*” [Gosh] and “*Aduh*” [Ouch] to show her frustration. Shandy chose those words because using harsh words was impolite, especially when the utterance was directed to her husband.

Coates (2013) explains that women tend to use compliments to express their positive politeness. Based on Coates (2013), females receive and give more compliments than males. However, in the podcast, Gilang gave more compliments than Shandy.

- Shandy : *“tapi tenang aja sih, udah terbukti pengusaha ternyata lebih sukses”* [No worries, it turns out that entrepreneurs are more successful] (S.48)

The statement above reflects the use of compliments. Through the statement, Shandy implicitly complimented Gilang that he was not a failed husband for Shandy. One characteristic of compliments is to make others feel good, appreciated, and admired. Through Shandy's statement above, she was able to make Gilang feel flattered and appreciated.

### **The Similarities and Differences of Conversational Strategies Used by Gilang Widya Permana and Shandy Purnamasari**

This section discusses the similarities and differences in the use of conversational strategies by Gilang and Shandy. The writer discovered similarities and differences between Gilang and Shandy in their ways of using conversational strategies. From the findings in Table 1, the writer found six similarities between the conversational strategies used by Gilang and Shandy in the podcast. Males and females used minimal responses, hedges, questions, tag questions, commands and directives, and compliments. In some conversational strategies, the female speaker used the conversational strategy more frequently than the male speaker and vice versa, but the difference was not that significant.

In this section, the writer would like to highlight some similarities. In this podcast, Gilang and Shandy happened to employ the same amounts of questions. No one is asking questions more often than the other. The possible reason why both Gilang and Shandy did not employ many questions in this podcast is because of their roles as guest stars. In a podcast or talk show, it is more common for the host to ask questions to the guest stars, not the other way around (Dewanti, 2017). As a result, most of the questions they employed were shown to be asked to each other (Gilang to Shandy and vice-versa, not to the moderator).

The writer also found out that Shandy used commands and directives strategy more than Gilang, but the difference was not that significant. It is interesting because, according to Coates (2013), men tend to use this strategy more frequently than women. The possible reason for this might be because of the changes in society. Back then, women were expected to be obedient and could not argue with anything, especially with their husbands. The wife needed to be submissive toward her husband and often unable to express her thoughts or feelings. However, as time goes by, societal changes also affect this. Nowadays, women are given more freedom to express themselves. Women have the same ability and power as men, and both men and women have the same level.

The last similarity that the writer wanted to highlight is the use of compliments. The difference between Gilang and Shandy's usage of compliments was not very significant. Shandy gave compliments to Gilang several times. The possible reason for this might be because of Shandy's personality, that she is straightforward and not shy to express her thoughts and feelings. Exchanging compliments toward one another could make them feel appreciated and valued by their spouse.

The findings found that Shandy employed swearing and taboo language strategy once, while Gilang did not. Gilang did not employ this strategy because the discussion in the podcast did not have any sensitive topic that could trigger Gilang's anger. On the contrary, one topic in the discussion that was very sensitive for Shandy triggered her to use this strategy. However, Shandy used a subtle swearing word like “gosh” to express her frustration. That is in line with Coates' (2013) theory that women tend to use subtle swearing words, unlike men, who tend to

use rougher words. Another reason was since they are quite famous in Indonesia, they need to maintain their image. Shandy needs to maintain her image as a polite wife. Therefore, she did not use harsh words in her speech that were directed at her husband, and that also applied to Gilang.

## CONCLUSION

This study is about the conversational strategies used by Gilang and Shandy in SB30's podcast. The findings of this study showed that Shandy used all conversational strategies, while Gilang only used six out of seven strategies. From the finding, Gilang did not seem to use any swearing and taboo language in the podcast. Even though Shandy used swearing and taboo language, that did not necessarily infer that she was a rude woman because she chose to use the subtle word.

The writer found out that the speakers' roles, personalities, and the type or the context of the conversation might affect the choice of conversational strategies and could cause differences in both genders' ways of using conversational strategies. From there, the writer concludes that the language of men and women cannot be separated anymore because conversational strategies can be used by both genders nowadays. This podcast shows that conversational strategies can be employed by men (Gilang) and women (Shandy). In short, the chances of using conversational strategies for both genders are equal.

Since the present study was based on a short podcast on YouTube, the writer suggests future researchers conduct a study on a longer podcast on this YouTube channel. The channel itself has many podcasts with different interesting guests invited to the podcast to share their motivational stories. A further study of conversational strategies that focuses on the same-sex is recommended. Hopefully, this study adds to the readers' understanding of the conversational strategies used by a different gender.

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