

Language Features Used by Jerry Lorenzo in the Mavericks with Mav Carter Podcast

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out the language features used by Jerry Lorenzo in the Mavericks with Mav Carter Podcast. For this study, the writers used Lakoff's (2004) and Coates' (2013) language features theory. This study was done using a qualitative approach in which the writers transcribed and analyzed all of Jerry's utterances which contain language features. The writers discovered that Jerry used the following language features: adjectives, hedges, tag questions, intensifiers, grammar, politeness, commands and directives, minimal responses, and compliments. Based on the findings of Jerry's language features, it can be concluded that men can use women's language features too. The language features found were influenced by the context and topic of the conversation.

Keywords: gender, language features, podcast

INTRODUCTION

This study discusses the language features used by Jerry Lorenzo in the *Mavericks with Mav Carter* podcasts. In this study, the writers analyzed the data using the language features theories by Lakoff (2004) and Coates (2013). According to Lakoff (2004) and Coates (2013), women and men may have the following language features in their speech: color terms, adjectives, hedges, tag questions, intonations, intensifiers, grammar, politeness, swear words, commands and directives, minimal responses, compliments, and questions.

The first language feature as stated by Lakoff (2004) are color terms. According to Lakoff (2004), women are much more precise at distinguishing between colors compared to men. Lakoff lists "beige," "ecru," "aquamarine," "lavender," and "mauve" as a few examples of how women describe colors (Lakoff, 2004, p. 9). Lakoff (2004) claims that women are more detailed in giving information about color than men. This may be due to the fact that men do not usually state their feelings verbally. Another factor is that women are not expected to make important decisions or choices in society. According to Lakoff's (2004) theory, men view the precise color vocabulary employed by women as insignificant and unnecessary in making decisions in the actual world. Consequently, men typically give colors less thought than women do and prefer to use simpler terms.

The second language features are adjectives. Lakoff (2004) states that there are two types of adjectives: neutral adjectives and women adjectives. Neutral adjectives are generally acceptable to be used by both men and women as it is gender-neutral. "Great," "Cool," and "Neat" are some examples of neutral adjectives (Lakoff, 2004, p. 46). Men are more inclined to use neutral adjectives since deviating from neutral adjectives might create a negative image for men in society. On the other hand, women are flexible to utilize both neutral and women's adjectives in their utterances (Lakoff, 2004). Examples of women's adjectives are "adorable," "sweet," and "lovely" (Lakoff, 2004, pp. 45–46). Women's adjectives are more divergent, emotional, and expressive compared to neutral adjectives.

Next, Lakoff (2004) and Coates (2013) define hedges as pauses in spoken phrases that express uncertainty, ambiguity, inaccurate information, doubt, or confusion. Lakoff (2004) continues to state that “women are also taught to believe that asserting themselves is not ladylike” (Coates, 2013, p.88) and so their speech usually contains more hedges. On the contrary, men avoid talking about personal concerns or sensitive matters so they generally use fewer hedges in conversations (Coates, 2013). Examples of hedges are the words “well,” “y’know,” “kinda,” “I guess,” and “I think,” (Lakoff, 2004, p.79) and “you know,” “sort of”, and “perhaps” (Coates, 2013, p. 88). The word “like” (Coates, 2013, p. 89) is also a recent addition to hedge words.

Intonations are also one of the language features stated by Lakoff (2004). Rising intonation on declarative, which is a noticeable distinction in women's intonation patterns, is related to the particular use of a syntax rule (Lakoff, 2004). Lakoff (2004) also notes that women are more likely to ask questions with rising intonation than men, as it is also a unique linguistic trait found in women. Lakoff (2004) further explains that rising intonations of a declarative sentence are used to respond to a question and are similar to a yes-no question in terms of language features.

The fifth language features are tag questions. Lakoff (2004) explains that tag questions are yes-or-no questions used by both men and women when they are unsure of the statement they have just made. Tag questions can also be seen as a declarative statement as the listener is not required to have the same perspective as the speaker (Lakoff, 2004). Examples of formal tag questions are “She’s coming around noon isn’t she?” and “That was pretty silly wasn’t it?” (Coates, 2013, p. 91). While examples of informal question tags are “Right?” and “OK?” (Coates, 2013, p. 91).

Lakoff (2004) also discovered that women generally apply intensifiers more than men do. This is because women need to strengthen points and emphasize the importance of their statements. One of the intensifiers used by women is the word "so" as seen in these examples: "I feel so unhappy!" and "That movie made me so sick!" (Lakoff, 2004, p. 48). Men also use intensifiers, but they use it in utterances that are unemotional and do not refer to the speaker himself (Lakoff, 2004). An example is saying "That sunset is so beautiful!" (Lakoff, 2004, p. 48).

In addition to that, swearing, as defined by Lakoff (2004), is a form of language feature which communicates extreme emotion. Both men and women curse, according to Lakoff (2004) and Coates (2013). However, women tend to swear less frequently than males in conversations (Coates, 2013). As noted by Lakoff (2004), when swearing, women also commonly use softer terms like “Oh dear,” “Oh fudge,” “Goodness,” and “Dear me” (Lakoff, 2004, p. 44). In contrast to that, men tend to use stronger language and more violent insults like “shit,” “damn,” or “hell” (Lakoff, 2004, pp. 44-45).

Furthermore, according to Lakoff (2004), women are expected to use formal grammar at all times since they are responsible for taking care of literacy and culture. Lakoff (2004) also explains that women should use formal grammar when using words like "Going" as opposed to a more informal "Goin" (Lakoff, 2004, p. 55). The use of informal grammar or slang is not seen as a good option for women. Contrarily, men often use informal grammar. For example, men omit the final "G" and say "Singin" instead of "Singing" (Lakoff, 2004, p. 80).

Another language feature is politeness. Lakoff (2004) defines politeness as an expression of courtesy, such as when people say "thank you" or "please". Society expects more courtesy from women, and thus, women always speak more politely and maintain morals in conversations compared to men (Lakoff, 2004). Men, on the other hand, tend to overlook

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politeness. They do not pay much attention to polite language, especially if they are used to being impolite (Lakoff, 2004).

Additionally, commands and directives are also one of the language features stated by Coates (2013). Coates (2013) defines commands and directives as "a speech act which attempts to get someone to do something" (Coates, 2013, p. 94). Women use commands and directives in mitigated forms and are more likely to leave space for the listener to make decisions. Coates (2013) also explains that women often use the word "Let's" to include both the speaker and listener as in the following example: "Let's go around Subs and Suds" (Coates, 2013, p. 95). On the other hand, men use more direct and aggravated forms of commands and directives (Coates, 2013). Some examples are: "Get off the steps" and "Gimme the pliers" (Coates, 2013, p. 95).

The next language feature according to Coates (2013) are minimal responses. Minimal responses are language features that women use to express a listener's support and or agreement for the speaker (Coates, 2013). Minimal responses in conversations are used by women more than men (Coates, 2013). Words like "yeah" and "right" (Coates, 2013, p. 87) are included as examples of minimal responses. However, Coates (2013) notes that men would employ minimal responses in the form of a delayed response to assert their dominance.

Compliments are also a language feature, as stated by Coates (2013). According to Coates (2013), men and women give and receive compliments in various ways. Women typically compliment each other's appearances, for instance: "You look nice" or "You've got such lovely eyes" (Coates, 2013, p. 99). While "Men tend to compliment each other on possessions or skill" (Coates, 2013, p. 99). An example of this is "Man, your boots are wicked" or "You're very quick with witty one-liners — I would imagine you must have a very high IQ" (Coates, 2013, p. 99).

Last but not least, Coates (2013) includes questions as a language feature. Coates (2013) believes that both men and women ask questions. Men offer questions only in certain situations, such as in business-related issues, but women ask questions more often to keep the conversation going (Coates, 2013). Due to the gender roles that society has assigned them, women also feel less restricted to ask questions (Coates, 2013).

For this study, the writers chose the *Mavericks with Mav Carter* podcast as the source of the analysis. The *Mavericks with Mav Carter* podcast is an eight-episode series, in which the host, Mav Carter, invites different guest speakers to share their insights and career journey (Baruch, 2023). The writers chose specifically to analyze the videos with Jerry Lorenzo since he is a well-known entrepreneur and his podcast video provides valuable insight on the world of business.

Wardaugh (2006) also states that men and women communicate differently. However, Coates (2013) points out that just because men and women express themselves differently through language does not prevent men from using features of women's language or vice versa. Consequently, the writers chose to analyze the language features of Jerry Lorenzo.

METHOD

For this study, the writers used a qualitative approach. The data was collected from the *Mavericks with Mav Carter* podcast video entitled "Designer Jerry Lorenzo Shares Intention Around Creating Fear of God | *Mavericks with Mav Carter*" (SpringHill, 2023). The writers watched, downloaded, and transcribed all the utterances in the video. Then, the writers

highlighted the utterances which contain language features and numbered them. Finally, the writers analyzed the utterances based on the language features theories by Lakoff (2004) and Coates (2013).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are discussed in this section. The first part presents the language features used by Jerry Lorenzo when speaking to Mav Carter. The second part shows the interpretation of the findings of this study.

Language Features Used by Jerry Lorenzo when Speaking to Mav Carter

Jerry Lorenzo used the following language features in his utterances to Mav Carter: adjectives, hedges, tag questions, intensifiers, grammar, politeness, commands and directives, minimal responses, and compliments.

1. Adjectives

Utterance 1.6: "Oh, that's the intention. I mean, that's what we try to do, is like how can our clothing make someone feel like the best version of themselves, you know what I mean? Like let the clothing kind of become second to that, to that- their personality and to who they- their character. But that's the intention, you know, not to be too loud or you know, effortless and elegant at same time."

In utterance 1.6, Jerry tries to describe the image he is trying to achieve for his fashion brand. The words "*effortless*" and "*elegant*" can be considered as a women's adjective as they are often associated with femininity and are more expressive. While the word "*loud*" is a neutral adjective since it is gender-neutral and less emotional.

Utterance 1.66: "Everything you're doing and the whole squad, I just think it's super amazing, man."

In utterance 1.66, Jerry used "*amazing*" as a neutral adjective to express his admiration for Mav's efforts and achievements. The word "*amazing*" is a gender-neutral word, thus making it a neutral adjective which is a feature of men's language.

2. Hedges

Utterance 1.12: "Yeah. Dolce & Gabbana, Beverly Center. Umm.. and maybe six months after grad school I got a job with a Dodgers front office. So I was working as a front office executive for like three years. I was doing like corporate sponsorships and partnerships, and then I went to Chicago to head the marketing division of a somewhat of a small sports agency. At the time it was a CSMG, and I was only there for a year. The agency fell apart."

In utterance 1.12, Jerry uttered "*umm..*" as a women's language feature, suggesting that he is taking some time to organize his thoughts before continuing his utterance. Next, Jerry used "*maybe*" and "*somewhat*" to express his uncertainty regarding his past experiences. This is in accordance with Lakoff's (2004) and Coates' (2013) theory which states that hedges as women's language feature are used to show doubt in a conversation. Jerry also used the hedge word "*like*" to make his statements less direct.

Utterance 1.18: "Somehow I had given some T-shirts to Virgil who umm.. passed away not that long ago. And he got some T-shirts to- to Ye, and Ye called me, said "Hey, can you be in Atlantic City tomorrow?"

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Still talking about the past, in utterance 1.18, Jerry tells Mav the story of how he got to work with Kanye West. In the utterance, Jerry employed a hedge as a pause to soften his statement as he is talking about a friend's recent passing, which is a sensitive topic. It is also part of women's language features as it makes the utterance less direct (Lakoff, 2004).

3. Tag Questions

Utterance 1.46: "How do these sweats feel like that?' You know what I mean?."

Utterance 1.46 Jerry used the tag question "you know what I mean?" to seek confirmation or agreement from Mav. It invites Mav to confirm whether he understands Jerry's perspective.

Utterance 1.56: "Right? And so um.. , yeah, I've always- I've kind of lived by that, not knowing it was make it till you make it."

Utterance 1.56 showed that Jerry used "right?" to seek confirmation that Mav agrees with or understands his point. As Coates (2013) states, "right?" is an informal tag question inviting the listener to affirm or validate the speaker's statement.

4. Intensifiers

Utterance 1.16: "...My situation at home changed, I had a son and was getting engaged, and I intentionally really wanted to do something that got me out of the nightlife, right? I wanted to do something that, you know, both my wife and my kids could respect. A lot of the guys coming to the clubs were street wear brand owners. And having a clothing line just really at that time felt like it was something I could do.."

The use of the word "really" in utterance 1.16 emphasized the significance of Jerry's intentions and motivations. Men usually use intensifiers only in impersonal statements (Lakoff, 2004) but it was proven untrue as Jerry used intensifiers in personal statements as seen above. Lakoff (2004) also explains that women use intensifiers to strengthen personal statements.

Utterance 1.34: "Yeah. It's 162 games. It's a grueling season, and umm.. you just have to be super convicted of what it is that you bring to the game that no one else does. 'Cause that's all that's gonna separate you."

The word "super" in utterance 1.34 functions as an intensifier that emphasizes the word "convicted" and highlights the value of conviction in the baseball context. It also shows that Jerry used intensifiers as a men's language feature to highlight and emphasize points of his utterance in an impersonal statement (Lakoff, 2004).

5. Grammar

Utterance 1.13: "...I was like, man, I don't wanna work for anyone. And somehow started throwing parties, was able to bring a lot of skills, and help Matt grow his off the field marketing business, as well as styling him and work, helping him with his image. And it was through that that I understood that I had a perspective on clothing."

Utterance 1.13 showed that Jerry used "wanna" (informal) instead of "want to" (formal) when telling Mav about his past experiences. Jerry might choose to use informal grammar as it is a personal story and Jerry wants to deliver it in a casual manner. Lakoff (2004) states that informal grammar is a feature of men's language.

Utterance 1.58: "I finally made one of your lists, man. It's a celebration, bro."

In utterance 1.58, Jerry used "bro" (informal) to address Mav in a casual or familiar manner. "bro" is also short for "brother" and is commonly used among friends or acquaintances in informal conversations.

6. Politeness

Utterance 1.3: "Thanks, man. Thank you."

In utterance 1.3, Jerry replied to Mav's compliment by saying "thanks, man" and "thank you", which emphasizes politeness and expresses Jerry's gratitude. This shows Jerry's use of women's language features as in accordance with Lakoff's (2004) theory.

Utterance 1.60: "Yeah, thank you man."

Utterance 1.60 showed Jerry's response to Mav's compliment. Jerry replied by saying "thank you man". Lakoff (2004) explains, "thank you" is considered as a feature of women's language that expresses politeness.

7. Commands and Directives

Utterance 1.4: "Let's work it out. Let's work it out."

Utterance 1.4 showed that Mav expressed his enthusiasm towards Jerry's brand and implied a collaboration with Jerry. Jerry's response, "let's work it out" can be interpreted as a directive and indicates Jerry's openness to discuss the details of a future collaboration. The utterance also shows the use of commands and directives as women's language feature as Jerry invites Mav to future collaborations by saying "let's", which is a command and directive in mitigated form (Coates, 2013).

8. Minimal Responses

Utterance 1.29: "Yep"

Utterance 1.29 contains a minimal response which shows agreement with Mav's statement without adding any further information. In this context, "yep" can be categorized as a women's language feature (Coates, 2013).

Utterance 1.56: "Yeah"

Utterance 1.56 suggests that Jerry agrees with Mav's opinion. This aligns with Coates' (2013) theory that minimal responses as a women's language feature is used to express the listener's agreement.

9. Compliments

Utterance 1.5: "I- it's the best I've seen you, bro."

In utterance 1.5, Jerry complimented Mav since Mav was wearing an outfit from Jerry's fashion brand for the podcast. This is quite interesting as complimenting appearances are actually more common among women and seen as part of women's language features (Coates, 2013).

Utterance 1.66: "Everything you're doing and the whole squad, I just think it's super amazing, man."

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In utterance 1.66 Jerry compliments Mav's skills and possession as he admires Mav's dedication to his whole business team. This finding is in accordance with Coates' (2013) theory that men tend to compliment each other's skills or possession.

Interpretation

In this study, the writers found that context and topic were the main factors that influenced Jerry Lorenzo's language features. An example is how Jerry used commands and directives as a women's language feature, using the word "let's" in the context of making small talk with Mav in the beginning of the podcast. Jerry, as a fashion designer, also used women's adjectives ("effortless" and "elegant") to describe his clothing line designs. Women's adjectives are more expressive and various, so the topic of discussing his fashion designs influenced his use of women's adjectives.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the writers found that Jerry Lorenzo used both men's and women's language features in his utterances to Mav Carter. The use of language features was heavily influenced by the context or topic of the conversation. The findings align with Coates' (2013) statement that men can also use women's language features. In spite of the limitations of the present study, the writers hope that the findings of this research would contribute to the growing body of research on language features and gender. Further research for the *Mavericks with Mav Carter* podcasts that would focus more on other factors such as status influencing language features would be recommended. Another suggestion would be to conduct a further study on how ethnicity might influence language features.

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