

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the research provides the rationale, research questions, research objectives, scope of the research, and significant of research.

1.1 Rationale

In the field of sociolinguistics, differences in language use between male and female have become a significant focus of research. Studies have shown that men tend to use more direct, dominant, and competitive language, whereas women often adopt a more cooperative and supportive style Coates (2016). These differences reflect not only individual communication preferences but also stem from broader social norms and gender expectations Aisah & Fatmasari (2021). Understanding how linguistic features reflect gender roles is therefore essential in analyzing how communication contributes to social constructions. One influential medium that explicitly portrays gender interaction is film. Beyond its entertainment function, film acts as a cultural artifact that mirrors societal norms and gender dynamics. The portrayal of characters in films often reinforces traditional gender stereotypes men are frequently depicted as strong, authoritative, and emotionally reserved, while women are shown as caring, submissive, or sentimental. Such representations shape audiences' perceptions of how gendered communication should occur in real life.

Differences in speech between male and female have long been a concern in sociolinguistic studies, especially in media representations such as films. However, most previous studies tend to focus only on women's language features or use data from light film genres such as comedy or everyday life. Research on gendered language features in dystopian films, which are full of power hierarchies and social tensions, remains very limited. In fact, within such contexts, the language used by male and female characters is likely to reflect more complex social roles and gender ideologies. Several previous studies have explored gender-based language features in various media. For instance, Ding & Li (2023) conducted a quantitative analysis of gendered language use in the sitcom *How I Met Your Mother*, focusing on

adjectives, hedges, and interrogative forms. Hidayati (2022) applied Robin Lakoff's theory to examine women's language in Tekotok animated YouTube videos, finding that female characters sometimes employed features typically associated with male speech, such as swearing. Ginarti Dewi et al., (2022) analyzed male and female language use in Instagram and Twitter posts under the hashtag #SaveJohnnyDepp, using Lakoff's theory as the primary framework and Coates' theory as support. Kholid et al., (2024) applied Lakoff's framework to the film *Freedom Writers*, focusing on the speech of the female protagonist. Similarly, Aisah & Fatmasari (2021) examined gendered language in *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle* using Wardhaugh's theory, identifying linguistic features such as adverbs, modality, imperatives, and grammatical correctness.

In addition, many previous studies use two different theories to analyze the language features of male and female separately for example, using Karlsson's theory for male and Lakoff's theory for female. This approach risks producing unbalanced results due to the lack of a shared theoretical foundation. In contrast, the present study uses a single theoretical framework Jennifer Coates (2016) theory—to analyze both male and female language, ensuring consistency and comparability in the analysis.

Despite the growing interest in gendered language in media, relatively few studies have examined dystopian films, which often present unique narrative settings involving power imbalances and rigid social structures. *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* (2023), a prequel to *The Hunger Games*, provides a compelling case study for investigating how gendered language is used in such a complex sociopolitical context. While most existing studies focus on everyday interactions or lighter film genres Maulidya et al., (2024); Wulandari & Sari (2024), this study responds to the need for more nuanced analysis within darker, more ideologically rich narratives.

This study adopts Coates' theory as its main analytical framework, focusing on seven specific language features associated with gender: Minimal Responses, Hedges, Tag Questions, Questions, Commands and Directives, Swearing and Taboo

Language, and Compliments. By analyzing how these features appear in the dialogues of male and female characters in *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*, the study aims to reveal whether the film reinforces or challenges prevailing gender stereotypes in communication.

Ultimately, this study seeks to contribute to the broader understanding of how language shapes gender characterization in film and how these representations influence societal perceptions of gender roles. By employing a consistent theoretical approach, the study offers a balanced view of how male and female characters communicate, particularly within the layered and hierarchical setting of a dystopian narrative. Furthermore, it aims to enrich sociolinguistic research in the realm of media and popular culture, and serve as a valuable reference for future studies examining the role of language in shaping gendered social constructs in film and other media.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How do language features reflect gender differences in communication in the context of the movie?
2. What are the language features frequently used by male characters in *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* movie?
3. What are the language features frequently used by female characters in *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* movie?

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To identify differences between male and female language features as depicted in the movie
2. To analyze the language features frequently used by male characters in *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*.
3. To analyze the language features frequently used by female characters in *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*.

1.4 Scope of the Research

This research focuses on analyzing the language features used by male and female characters in *The Ballad of the Songbird and the Snake*. This research uses Coates' theory to examine how gender differences are manifested in communication. The research will analyze the film transcripts, particularly the dialogues and interactions between male and female characters, with an emphasis on key conversations that reveal gender-specific linguistic patterns.

1.5 Significant of Research

This research has significance for several reasons. This research contributes to the field of sociolinguistics by analyzing features of gendered language in the context of popular films, providing insight into how gender roles and communication patterns are portrayed in the media. By applying Coates theory, this research enhances the understanding of contemporary representations of men's and women's language, further enhancing the discourse on gender and language. In addition, this research also provides a critical perspective on how social norms and gender dynamics are reflected in fictional narratives, allowing audiences to better understand the impact of language on character development and storytelling. Finally, this research serves as a valuable reference for future research that explores the intersection of gender and language in various forms of media and entertainment.