

AN ANALYSIS OF ALYSSA'S SPEECH IN TV SERIES THE END OF THE F***KING WORLD: WOMAN LANGUAGE FEATURES STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This research analyzes woman's language features used by Alyssa in the TV series *The End of the F***ing World*. The study is based on Robin Lakoff's theory of women's language, which identifies several linguistic features such as lexical hedges, tag questions, intensifiers, super polite forms, rising intonation, empty adjectives, and the use of strong swear words. The purpose of this research is to examine how these features are manifested in the conversations Alyssa and to identify the social factors that influence her language choices. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method. The data were collected by watching the series, transcribing the dialogues, and selecting utterances containing woman's language features. The analysis focuses on identifying and categorizing the features according to Lakoff's framework, followed by an interpretation of the social contexts that influence the use of such features. The findings reveal that the female main character in *The End of the F***ing World* frequently use lexical hedges 16, intensifiers 12, and empty adjective 1, reflecting their efforts to express uncertainty, strengthen meaning, and convey emotions. Super polite forms 1 and rising intonation also found 6, indicating politeness and hesitation. Interestingly, the female characters also employ swear words 14, which contrasts with Lakoff's claim that women tend to avoid them. This suggests that the character language is not only shaped by gender but also by social norms, power relations, cultural expectations, fear of disapproval, and the need to build relationships. In conclusion, woman's language features in the series serve various functions beyond gender identity, highlighting the influence of social and cultural factors on communication. This study is expected to provide insights into the representation of women's language in contemporary media and contribute to further research in sociolinguistics and gender studies.

Keywords: *Women's language Features, TV Series, The End of the F***ing World*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is not only a means of communication but also a reflection of identity, culture and social norms. One of the most significant aspects of language is its relation to gender. Women and men tend to use language differently due to social expectations, cultural roles, and interpersonal purpose. According to Lakoff (1975), women's language is characterized by certain features such as lexical hedges, tag question, intensifier, super polite form, rising

intonation, and avoidance of strong swear words. These linguistic features often mark women as less assertive and more cooperative in conversation. Television series as a form of popular culture often direct and reproduce gendered pattern of language. *The End of The F***ing World* (2017) is a British dark comedy-drama series that portrays the story of James and Alyssa, two teenagers who embark on a dangerous journey. Alyssa, the female protagonist, show a unique way of speaking that presents rebellion, sarcasm, and strong emotions. Her speech provides rich data to analyze women's language features, whether she conforms to or challenges Lakoff theory.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Sociolinguistic

According to Trask (2007), sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that examines the relationship between language and society, emphasizing that the two cannot be separated. Similarly, Trudgill (1983) defines sociolinguistics as the study of how language interacts with social contexts. It seeks to explain why individuals speak differently in various social settings and aims to identify the social functions of language and the ways in which it conveys social meaning. In line with this, Wardhaugh (2006) states that sociolinguistics investigates the relationship between language and society in order to better understand both the structure of language and its function in communication. Supporting this view, Gumperz (as cited in Wardhaugh, 2006) explains that sociolinguistics also attempts to correlate social structure with linguistic structure and to account for changes that may occur. Based on the explanation above, sociolinguistic debates regarding the link between language and society. This pertains to the function of language as a medium of communication in general. Sociolinguistics is typically characterized as the study of the qualities and variations of language, as well as the link between speakers with the characteristic function of language variants. We will use sociolinguistics to help us communicate using show language. When speaking with a particular individual, we should utilize a range of languages or linguistic styles.

2.2 Language

When humans talk or write, language has a magical quality. Language as a social activity encompasses a wide range of complicated and confused social issues. Thus, numerous situations may be addressed philosophically in the media as a whole and in publications in particular. Language is the fundamental mode of communication through which humans communicate nearly limitless varieties of meanings. People can communicate a large amount of meanings in particular communication contexts. Language is the system of human communication based on the systematic organization of voices or their textual presentation to produce larger units, such as morphemes, words, and sentences, Richards (1984:1). It signifies that english is a method of communication utilized by a certain community or country, and it plays a significant role in global communication. According to Owen (2006:1), language can be described as a socially shared combination of symbols and rule-governed communication (language can be defined as a socially acceptable code or conventional system for deliver concept by use of symbols and combinations of desired symbols are governed by the provisions). The author concludes that language is a kind of communication that allows individuals to express their intentions, feelings, and ideas. Humans have the right to understand the fundamentals of a language, such as sound, meaning, and rules, in order to communicate more effectively with one another

2.3 Language and Gender

The concepts of sex and gender are frequently confused, yet researchers generally recognize a distinction between them. As Litosseliti (2006:10) explains, sex is a biological characteristic, whereas gender is shaped by cultural and social factors. In the Cambridge Dictionary, gender is defined as the physical and social condition of being male or female. This binary perspective is evident at birth when a child is identified as either a boy or a girl, situating individuals within a two-gender framework. Gender has become a central topic in sociolinguistics, particularly in examining how linguistic structures, vocabularies, and patterns of use relate to the social roles of men and women. These distinctions are often expressed through language. Eckert (2003:12) argues that biological differences between men and women can influence gender, which in turn shapes their tendencies and abilities. For instance, men are often described as having higher levels of testosterone, which is associated with greater aggression, as well as stronger reliance on left brain activity, making them more rational than women. Although men and women share the same linguistic community and frequently interact, their language behavior differs in observable ways. While the differences may sometimes be subtle and unnoticed, men and women often vary in their speech styles, gestures, and facial expressions. They do not speak entirely separate languages but rather different varieties of the same language. According to Wardhaugh (2010:330), linguistic behavior is not innate but largely learned, as men and women acquire patterns of speech consistent with their gender roles. These social roles influence how language is used, and the sharper the role distinctions in a given society, the more noticeable the linguistic differences become. In fact, the greatest contrasts are found in societies where male and female roles are clearly separated.

2.4 Women's Language Features

Lakoff (1975, 2018) proposed ten features that characterize women's language: lexical hedges/fillers, tag questions, empty adjectives, precise color terms, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, superpolite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, emphatic stress, and rising intonation. She argued that these features reflect women's subordinate status in society, which she later referred to as "powerless language." Holmes (2008) and Eckert (2003) also emphasize that such features function both as strategies of politeness and as markers of social position.

2.5 Previous Study

Aini (2016) analyzed women's language in *Mockingjay* and found frequent use of hedges, intensifiers, and tag questions. Aryani (2016) examined miscommunication in *He's Just Not That Into You* and identified differences in conversational styles between men and women. Ibkar (2018) studied online discourse and found that men also adopted features traditionally considered "women's language." These studies demonstrate the relevance of Lakoff's theory but also highlight the need to explore more contemporary and varied contexts, such as television series.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research applies a descriptive qualitative method because it focuses on analyzing Alyssa's speech without statistical measurement. The qualitative design enables the researcher to produce detailed descriptions rather than numerical measurements. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state that qualitative research employs an interpretive and naturalistic perspective, meaning that researchers observe phenomena in their natural contexts and attempt to interpret them according to the meanings participants assign. This method is suitable for the present study, since the analysis is descriptive and does not rely on statistical calculation.

The data in this research were taken from the utterances of the female main character Alyssa in *The End of the F***ing World* TV series, adapted from Charles Forsman's graphic novel and available on Netflix. The study specifically focused on the linguistic features used by Alyssa and the factors that influenced. The data consisted of words, phrases, and sentences spoken by Alyssa within different conversational contexts. Both seasons of the series, along with the script, served as the primary sources of data.

The research was carried out by the author using qualitative methodology. After collecting data the researcher did some step to analyze the data. First, the researcher watch Alyssa's conversation in the Tv series *The End of The F***ing World*. Then, the researcher classified them. In conclusion, in analyzing the data the procedures are also conducted as follow: (1) In order to collect the data, the researcher watched the entire *The End of the F***ing World* TV series and simultaneously referred to the official script. This method ensured accuracy in identifying, transcribing, and analyzing the utterances of the female characters that represent women's language features. <https://8flix.com/the-end-of-the-fucking-world/scripts/>, (2) following the viewing of the TV series, the researcher carefully examined the consistency Alyssa's utterances and the written script. This step was taken to confirm the accuracy and reliability of the data before further analysis. (3) After verifying the accuracy of the utterances, the researcher carefully reviewed and interpreted the conversations in both the script and the TV series. This step was essential to grasp the broader context of the dialogues and to identify how Alyssa employed specific language features.

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study analyzed 57 data of women's language features, especially lexical hedge, tag question, intensifier, empty adjective, super polite form, avoidance of strong swear word, emphatic stress and rising intonation found across two seasons tv series *The End of The F***ing World*. The most dominant language features used by Alyssa's 16 lexical hedges, 13 using swear word, and 12 intensifiers from 2 season.

4.1 Lexical Hedges/Fillers

According to Lakoff, women tend to employ more lexical hedges than men, including expressions such as I think, you know, well, sort of, and perhaps. These forms may simultaneously convey hesitation, certainty, or a strategy to mitigate the force of an assertion. Their use, however, often suggests that the speaker has less authority or confidence in the statement being made. In the context of *The End of the F***ing World*, one example of lexical hedges can be identified in the following dialogue.

Data 1

Alyssa: "I think we live in the most boring town on the planet"

In this excerpt, Alyssa uses the phrase "I think" before expressing her opinion about where she lives. Without the guardrail, her sentence would read, "*We live in the most boring city on the planet,*" which sounds very emphatic and absolute. By adding "I think," Alyssa softens her statement, changing it from an absolute claim to a personal opinion. This demonstrates the subjectivity of the sentence, not an objective fact but rather a result of her perception. With the guardrail, the speaker doesn't feel pressured to agree.

Data 2

"Well, kind of makes sense, doesn't it?"

The hedge makes her opinion less direct. Despite her usual bluntness, Alyssa occasionally tempers her speech to avoid confrontation.

4.2 Tag Question

Robin Lakoff listed tag questions as one of the eleven women's languages in her (1975) book *Language and Woman's Place*. Lakoff claims that because women are indoctrinated to avoid being very assertive or combative in their conversation, they employ tag questions more frequently than men.

Data 3

Alyssa: “Did you bring money with you? Didn’t you?”

Here, Alyssa uses the tag question "Didn't you?" after the main question. The first question, "Did you bring money with you?" is clear and straightforward. The addition of "Didn't you?" functions as a tag question, a short question at the end of a sentence used to ask for confirmation from the other person.

Data 4

“We’ll be fine, right?”

Indicates uncertainty and asks for reassurance. Alyssa expresses hidden anxiety, relying on interaction to share responsibility on interaction to share responsibility for the statement.

4.3 Empty Adjective

According to Lakoff in his book *Language and Woman's Place* (1975), an empty adjective is a type of adjective that expresses an emotional or evaluative reaction without providing factual or objective information about what is being discussed.

Data 5

Alyssa: “She’s cute, though, ain’t she?”

The word "cute," falls into the empty adjective category, which is an adjective often used by women to express feelings or subjective judgments without providing a specific description. According to Lakoff (1975), words like "cute," "adorable," "sweet," and "lovely" are more often used by women because they are considered feminine and emphasize emotion or affection rather than objective details. In this context, "cute" does not mean a factual description, but rather Alyssa's emotional expression of someone.

Data 6

“That’s just brilliant”

“Brilliant” is also empty adjective. Alyssa isn’t literally saying something shines or glows, she uses it to express strong approval in an exaggerated, emotional way.

4.4 Intensifier

In Lakoff's theory, particularly in his book *Language and Women's Place* (1975), intensifiers are one of the linguistic features that mark women's language is the frequent use of intensifiers, such as so, very, really, just, and such. These words function to strengthen the meaning of an utterance but when used excessively, they may paradoxically weaken the force of the statement.

Data 7

“Sometimes, I think I feel more like myself with James than I do on my own.”

In the sentence "*more like myself*," the word "*more*" functions as an intensifier. An intensifier is a word used to strengthen or enhance the meaning of a statement.

Data 8

"That was so stupid."

The word "so" adds emphasis to her criticism, Alyssa's use of so reflects her tendency to exaggerate feelings to make her point more impactful.

4.5 Super Polite form

In Lakoff's theory, super-polite form is a characteristic of language used by women, which is considered to reflect linguistic powerlessness. This theory was first put forward in his book "Language and Women's Place" (1975). Super polite form is a form of language that is very polite and careful in speaking. This involves the use of subtler, more formal, and more careful forms of language than are necessary in ordinary contexts.

Data 9

"Excuse me do you know where the bathroom is?"

Instead of asking directly "*where is the bathroom?*" he used "*excuse me*" as a form of high politeness. Although Alyssa is often portrayed as rude, blunt, and sarcastic, there are times when she still uses super-polite forms, usually when the situation demands politeness, for example when speaking to adults or strangers.

4.6 Using Swear Word

Lakoff explains that one characteristic of female language is the avoidance of harsh swear words. Women tend to use softer versions of "*oh dear, godness, damn*" rather than the harsher forms "*fuck, shit*." Therefore, when women frequently use harsh swear words, it is seen as a rejection of feminine language norms. Alyssa is known for being vulgar, rude, and outspoken. She frequently uses swear words, particularly "*f*ck*," "*shit*," "*bitch*," and others.

Data 10

"What the f*ck are you doing?"

Alyssa immediately said "*f*ck*" to show her anger and disbelief. This demonstrates her impulsive and aggressive nature. This context emphasizes sarcasm and a disregard for norms of politeness. Alyssa often uses it as a spontaneous reaction.

Data 11

"Sh*t, what now?"

She uses strong language to express frustration. This reveals Alyssa's rebellious nature, resisting traditional feminine speech norms.

4.7 Emphatic Stress

The use of emphatic stress serves to indicate that the speaker wants the listener to take their words seriously. Women tend to employ words or expressions that emphasize their utterances, thereby strengthening the meaning or impact of what they are saying.

Data 12

"I should never have kissed him"

The word "*never*" is pronounced with extra emphasis. Without the emphasis, this sentence would be a normal statement. With the emphasis, Alyssa emphasizes her strong disagreement

or regret. The function of emphatic stress is to increase the emotional power of the utterance, making its meaning sound more dramatic and emphatic.

Data 13

"I need painkillers. The STRONGEST ones"

Alyssa emphasizes the word strongest through emphatic stress. This stress serves to intensify her demand and highlight the urgency of her physical condition. In Lakoff's framework (1975), emphatic stress reflects how women sometimes exaggerate expression to show their emotions or seriousness. By stressing strongest, Alyssa makes her request sound more pressing and forceful, leaving little room for negotiation.

4.8 Rising Intonation

A unique intonation pattern in English, predominantly observed in women's speech, involves delivering a declarative statement with a rising pitch similar to that of a yes/no question. This pattern often signals caution, creating the impression that the speaker is seeking confirmation, even when they are the sole possessor of the relevant information.

Data 14

"No more than six 24 hours, and you need to eat before you take them, you'll be sick."

This sentence is structurally a declarative statement, but Alyssa utters it with a rising intonation at the end. Rising intonation is typically used in questions (yes/no questions), but in women's language theory (Lakoff, 1975), women often use it even in statements, making it sound like a request for agreement. As a result, her statement sounds less assertive and more like a request for confirmation than an absolute command.

Data 16

"Who rules is that?"

Here, the rising intonation indicates Alyssa's disbelief and challenge authority indirectly. Rather than a firm statement, the rising tone softens the confrontation, illustrating women's tendency to avoid overt conflict.

5. Factors that Influence Alyssa's Language Features

A closer look at *The End of the F***ing World's* usage of women's language may be gained by considering a number of contributing elements, including relationship development, power dynamics, societal conventions, fear of rejection, and cultural expectations.

5.1 Social Norms

Social Norm had a big part in Alyssa's speech. The assumption that women should sound kind and non-confrontational still influences her vocabulary, despite the fact that she is portrayed as rebellious and opinionated. In Season 1, for instance, she states, *"I think we should go,"* without explicitly saying so. Her claim is undermined by the addition of *"I think,"* demonstrating how societal standards continue to influence her language choices even though she has a propensity to defy authority.

5.2 Power Relation

Power Relations are visible in the talks as well. Alyssa's stepmother, Leslie, uses strong and commanding language when she says, *"You need to listen to me."* Her lack of hedges in her

speech conveys authority and control, which is indicative of her higher position of authority in the household. Conversely, while speaking with adults, Alyssa becomes more reserved and less direct, demonstrating how women's language is impacted by unequal power dynamics.

5.3 Fear of Disapproval

Fear of disapproval is demonstrated by the way Alyssa frequently uses tag questions, like *"It's okay, isn't it?"* Her desire for reassurance, especially from James, is evident in this linguistic form. The tag query implies that she is unsure of her assertion and is looking to the listener for confirmation. This bolsters Lakoff's assertion that women frequently use tempered language to prevent rejection or unfavorable assessment.

5.4 Relationship Building

Alyssa's exchanges with James demonstrate how language may be used to establish relationships. She tries to soften her suggestions rather than make demands, such as *"Maybe we could just keep going for a bit."* By using the hedging *"maybe,"* she lessens the impact of her idea and makes it clear that she wants to keep their shaky relationship harmonious and intimate. Likewise, Gwen's efforts to mend their tense mother-daughter relationship are evident in her courteousness toward Alyssa.

5.5 Cultural Expectation

Cultural Expectation is also influence the language use of the female characters. In order to fit the stereotype of women being less assertive and more self-conscious, Alyssa frequently employs hedges like *"I guess I'll be okay."* She exhibits a conflict between compliance and rebellion, nevertheless, as evidenced by her frequent use of profanity, which shows her opposition to the traditional ideal of femininity. Bonnie, on the other hand, embodies the other extreme; she hardly uses any hedges in her direct, menacing discourse. She is identified as socially deviant and her unstable psychological state is highlighted by this departure from typical feminine speech.

This study analyzes Alyssa's speech in the TV series *The End of the F***ing World* based on Lakoff's (1975) theory of the characteristics of women's language. Data collected from Seasons 1 and 2 reveal that Alyssa's speech exhibits several characteristics typically associated with women's language. such as lexical hedging, tag questions, intensifiers, empty adjectives, super-polite forms, strong use of expletives, swear words, emphatic stress, and as a rebellious teenage girl who often challenges conventional gender norms. After analyzing Alyssa's language features, the writer found that the language features most frequently used by Alyssa were lexical hedging with 16, the second using swear words with 13, and the third Intensifier with 12, the fourth rising intonation with 6, and the fifth tag question with 5. Emphatic stress 2 and while empty adjectives and super polite forms 1.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the conclusion of this study addresses the research problem concerning women's language in the TV series *The End of the F***ing World*. The results of this study were obtained through the analysis of Alyssa's Language features across several episodes of the series. By examining these episodes, the researcher was able to identify and analyze the features and characteristics of women's language. Using Lakoff's theory (1998) as a framework, the researcher identified numerous features of women's language and demonstrated how each feature is represented in the series. This study highlights the significance of these features and provides an analysis of their occurrence and function within the dialogue of the TV series.

In short, Alyssa's linguistic behavior simultaneously supports and challenges Lakoff's theory. On the one hand, she demonstrates many features that Lakoff describes as typical of women's speech, such as hedges, intensifiers, and polite forms. On the other hand, her frequent use of direct and confrontational language complicates this stereotype, suggesting that women's language cannot be fully explained by Lakoff's model alone. Instead, Alyssa's character illustrates how individual personality and context interact with gendered language norms.

The writer hopes that readers will gain a deeper understanding of the various types of women's language, particularly as they appear in TV series like those analyzed in this thesis. By examining language in this context, the study aims to highlight aspects of women's speech that are often overlooked in previous research. Since many journals and scholarly papers have not focused on the use of women's language in TV series, this study provides new insights and perspectives that may inspire further research in this area. Moreover, the author believes that the findings will be valuable for other researchers, educators, and students who are interested in sociolinguistics, gender studies, or media language, as they offer both theoretical and practical contributions to understanding how women's language functions in media contexts.

In addition, Alyssa's speech in the television series *The End of the F***ing World* explicitly contradicts Lakoff's theories, which suggest that women use language to show uncertainty and seek affirmation. Her use of profanity, directness, and assertiveness is a prime example of how nuanced, nonstereotypical female identities are increasingly portrayed through language in modern culture. This illustrates how various, dynamic gender performances can be reflected in women's language on television, transcending conventional boundaries.

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