

## BANJARESE WOMEN'S LANGUAGE FEATURES: A GENDER STUDY

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**Abstract:** This research is an attempt to describe the language features of Banjarese women that distinguish them from the ones of men. In this study, the researchers aim to explain the features in a broader setting that is not limited to one specific interaction space. This research is qualitative research. The main instrument of this research is the researchers themselves. Data is collected through transcripts of recorded conversations taking places in three different settings. This research is carried out in South Kalimantan context where the Banjarese language is used in the daily interactions of the people. The data is analyzed using the theory of Female Language Features from Lakoff & Bucholtz (2004) as the research protocol. Some findings of this study contradict the general concepts of language and gender which differentiate the language features of women and men. In daily interactions, Banjarese women and men show supportive or competitive interactions in their conversations. Banjar women can also use harsh words in their interactions with other women or with the opposite sex. However, research with a wider context is needed in the future before concluding that Banjar women and men are equivalent in linguistic behavior.

**Keywords:** *gender, language, Sociolinguistics, Banjarese*

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## INTRODUCTION

Born as woman or man does not only decides one's biological role but also social responsibilities and expectations. Virtually, all researchers agree that women and men are bind by different set of rules and limitations when it comes to the language use. Even decades after the study about language and gender gained attention from the researchers, this topic has not been exhausted yet. Researchers do not stop only on identifying how women and men speak differently but the underlying ideology of why it occurs.

In response to the fundamental question of gender and language, "Why do women speak differently than men?", Holmes (2008) offers an explanation based on her observations. There are four reasons that make women's language behavior different from men. The first reason is because of social status. In almost every society around the world, women have a lower social status than men. This is proven by the difference in social sanctions between women and men when violating norms in society. Women will receive tougher social sanctions, for example, being gossiped about or ostracized in society when compared to men.

The second reason has to do with the role of women as guardians of social values. Mothers are expected to be able to teach social values and maintain these values for their children. If the child makes a mistake, the mother is often blamed for not being able to educate

her child. Women are given an unspoken burden to ensure that values in society remain sustainable. So, it is not surprising that mothers reprimand children more when they make mistakes compared to fathers.

The third reason is still related to the first, namely the social status of women in society. In many parts of the world where the society is patriarchal, men are situated in a higher position compared to women (Panuntun & Chusna, 2022). Because women have a *subordinate* or lower status, it is only natural that they are required to be more polite. People at the bottom of the social ladder must be more polite in their language than those at the top. As a result, it is not surprising that women speak more softly and politely than men. The last reason is because vernacular language is associated with masculinity. Therefore, men who speak too formally and politely will be considered feminine. As a result, to show the masculine side, men tend to choose non-standard language or vernacular language in their daily lives.

The study of gender began to gain worldwide attention during the second wave of feminism towards the end of the 1960s because at that time women were more aware of the inequalities they faced in society. The disparity between women and men is not only seen in the general opinion that women are closely related to household chores but is also seen in the use of language by women.

The relationship between language and gender can be manifested in three kinds of relationships according to Graddol and Joan (2003), namely:

1. Language reflects gender division

The use of language is directly tied to behavioral and social tendencies. Language use can be somewhat influenced by the social experiences of men and women. Thus, it is believed that language is a reflection of society. Language distinctions between men and women will persist as long as society regards men and women differently, which is just a reflection of social distinctions.

2. Language creates gender divisions

According to this perspective, language plays a significant part in creating and maintaining gender distinctions. The way we speak in different social circumstances can reflect preconceptions about men and women, and these biases have an impact on how men and women are expected to behave in society. This leads to the belief that social interactions and personality are shaped through language. As a result, speakers who study linguistic distinctions might learn about the differences that are significant in a specific culture.

3. Language and social structure influence each other

This concept demonstrates how language elements in the division of gender promote non-linguistic mechanisms. This is seen by the way language perpetuates the old ideas of femininity and masculinity. However, social theories pertaining to language age are required in order to determine whether these conventional ideas are harmful to women.

According to Sadiqi (2003), there are five theories related to gender and language. The five theories are as follows:

a) Deficit Theory

This hypothesis contends that women's verbal skills fall short of those of men. As a result, it is believed that women imitate men's language, despite the fact that men are largely responsible for language creation. Women cannot convey their feelings and thoughts through language as effectively as men can, hence their language can never be as good as that of males.

Lakoff & Bucholtz (2004) disputes this notion, arguing that the difference in how men and women communicate is caused by the social marginalization of women, which forces women to speak in ways that might convey their lower status than males. Women cannot express themselves as effectively as men do as a result.

b) Domination Theory

According to this dominance theory, there are discrepancies between how men and women communicate as a result of their unequal power relationships. Because they hold more political and cultural sway than women, men predominate in language. Men have the capacity to manipulate a variety of things with this capability, including language.

Given that some people concur with it while others disagree, this hypothesis is still up for debate. The concept of power as it is presented in this theory, in the opinion of those who reject it, is oversimplified. In actuality, the speaker's experience and social standing are more significant in the communication process than their gender. This implies that women with higher social rank in society are more likely than men to be able to use language more effectively.

c) Radical Theory

This theory is based on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis as well as Orwell's idea that language shapes how people perceive the outside world. Women are only viewed as adopters of what has been developed by males because it is believed that men are the ones who create language and with which the world may be reasoned with. As a result of their limited linguistic expression, women have limited experiences and perceptions.

d) Difference Theory

According to this view, men and women have different sociolinguistic cultures since they do not interact in the same way. Feminists contend that women are superior than males in several linguistic fields. This hypothesis has drawn a lot of flak for focusing more on the contributions of women to language while ignoring sociological data pertaining to gender disparities in society.

e) Reformist Theory

Reformist feminists condemn sexist terminology in this theory. They claim that this sexist rhetoric is unfair and prejudiced. By refraining from using sexist language and favoring neutral

terms, feminists call for language to change. Even though this idea is widely popular, it has not been immune from criticism because it is difficult to transform society as feminists demand because we have no control over what others think and mean.

It is important to know some of the terminology used to directly represent men and women in language. There are four terms as stated in Hellinger and Bubmann (2002):

## 1. Gender in the grammatical system

The gender category in the grammatical system is a key topic in linguistics. This category may include three gender classes in various languages, such as feminine, masculine, or neutral. The basic portion of a noun that governs the kind of agreement, such as articles, adjectives, verbs, numerals, or prepositions that might follow nouns, is referred to as gender in grammatical systems.

Kramer (2020) further explained how grammatical gender assigned to nouns. There are two systems of gender classification. The first is semantic gender assignment. Semantic properties, affixes, or noun's discourse referent are used to classified nouns by using this system. The second system is used for nonsemantic gender. In this case, the gender is assigned arbitrarily or according to a morphological or phonological property.

## 2. Gender in Lexical

Gender is typically employed in linguistics as an extralinguistic characteristic to denote feminine or masculine properties. In certain languages, nouns have a definite gender (for women or for men). Neuter nouns can be found in a wide variety of words, though. Citizens, patients, and individuals are some examples of neutral nouns. Lexical gender is crucial for shaping the style of terminology, terms of address, and pronouns in all languages.

In many different languages, lexical gender is particularly an important parameter in the structure of kinship terminologies, address terms, and many basic frequently-used personal nouns. Lexical gender may or may not be morphologically marked. In English, most human nouns are not formally marked for lexical gender, except certain nouns such as widow–widower or steward–stewardess.

## 3. Gender for Reference

It is possible to think of referential gender as a language expression that draws on extralinguistic reality. This indicates that when colloquial expressions are used, a word can alter its core grammatical and lexical function to become feminine, masculine, or neutral.

## 4. Social Gender

The social division between the genders of men and women is known as social gender. This indicates that nouns only develop in social contexts where there are no grammatical or lexical distinctions between feminine and masculine terms. For instance, the male pronoun *he* is used in several higher-class occupational titles in English, such as *lawyer*, *surgeon*, and *scientist*. Meanwhile, *she* would be used to allude to lower-level occupations like *secretary*, *nurse*, or *educator*.

5. “False generics”: Generic masculines and male generics

Grammatically feminine personal nouns mostly refer to female-specific (with only few exceptions). On the other hand, grammatically masculine nouns refer to broader lexical and referential potential. Meanwhile, in languages without grammatical gender male generic usage is the traditional androcentric practice in cases of gender-indefinite reference. The concept of “generic masculines” or “male generics” has long been the center of debates about linguistic sexism in English as well as other languages. The asymmetries involved, such as the choice of male or masculine expressions as the normal which resulted on invisibility of female or feminine expressions are reflections of an underlying gender belief system. As the result, it creates expectations about appropriate female and male behavior.

Many notable works about language and gender have been published during the last few decades and have greatly influenced the current studies. Zimmerman & West (1975), for example, mentioned that men used interruptions to dominate the conversation more often than women because men perceive conversations as competition. On the other hand, women build solidarity through conversation and tend to be more affectionate during talks (Holmes, 1995; Tannen, 1992). Women used interruptions to show support or being empathetic to their counterparts.

Are women and men now equal in society? More studies about language and gender are conducted, not only in Western context but also in Asian context. Observing the Chinese speakers, Chan (1997) mentioned that women’s and men’s language are different. Chinese women should talk politely, refrain themselves from showing their emotion, and should not use taboo language. Similarly, speaking in a language with complex linguistics form and pattern, Thai women need to consider many different aspects before deciding the language they are going to use in formal or informal situation. An inappropriate choice of language may result in negative response (Attaviriyapap, 2015).

Nevertheless, language is unique and diverse. Thus, it is important to note that there is no such thing as one size fits all when it comes to theories in language. New study about language will always bring fresh perspectives and contribute to better understanding towards the diversity of language. A different angle is also expected in the more recent study about language and gender. Thus, this study offers another context to the already established frame of language and gender. Observing the language use of Banjarese people in South Kalimantan, this study is conducted to find out how Banjar women are positioned in society, which can be seen from the way they speak. As previously explained, the use of language can be a powerful tool for expressing what is happening in society. Therefore, in this study, the researcher intends to analyze cross-gender spoken interactions that occur in Banjar society.

In the context of the Banjar community, research related to gender and language issues has been studied by many researchers in different scopes. Analyzing the use of language on ‘*Baantaran Jujuran*’ (a ceremonial event prior to wedding reception) in Banjarmasin, Huda (2016) found that the advice given by elders were gender biased. During this event, some elders would give marriage advice to the bride-to-be and groom-to-be. However, the study found that

most advised were addressed to the bride-to-be, highlighting the expectation of society to women as the ones responsible to keep their marriage.

Similar conclusion regarding women's role in Banjarese society is drawn by Lestary and Mubarraq (2019). Observing the swearing words used by men and women, they noted that Banjarese women used words related to vegetables for cursing, which was uncommon for men. This phenomenon is mostly related to the domestic roles of women, such as doing chores and taking care of husbands and children. The submissive roles of women and dominant roles of men are also highlighted by Vidiadari (2017). She mentioned that the gender relation in Banjarese society is rooted from the patriarchal ideology and legitimated by Islam Banjar.

Although research related to language and gender in Banjar society is not something that can be said to be new, the focus of previous research has been very limited and segmented. Therefore, this research tries to look at issues of gender and language in the Banjar community in a wider context, namely the context of daily interactions. Thus, the data obtained will be more authentic.

This study aims to explain the differences in the language features of Banjarese women and men in their daily interactions. Through this research, it is hoped that the socio-cultural situation of the Banjarese people, which is the background to the differences in the language features of the population based on gender, can be scientifically explained.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research is a qualitative study. The purpose of this study is to describe the language features of Banjarese women that differentiate them from the language features of men from the same community. Because this is a qualitative study, the researchers are more concerned with the quality of the data found in the field rather than the quantity of data. The Banjar people of both genders—men and women—who interact naturally in their daily lives served as research subjects.

Data was obtained in several places: classroom, food stall, and cafe. The participants of the conversation taking place in the classroom consisted of two male students and three female students. The participants of the conversation happening in the food stall were two male students and two female students who were enrolled as the fourth semester students at STKIP PGRI Banjarmasin. Furthermore, there were four participants consisting of two females and two males involved in the conversation taking place at the café. In total, the participants of this research were six men and seven women in their 20s.

The main instrument for this study was the researchers themselves as this study relied on the researchers' skills in processing the qualitative data collected. This is in line with Creswell (2009) and Denzin and Lincoln (2018) who argued that the researcher is an instrument in qualitative studies because the researcher plays a major role in data collection, data interpretation, and data presentation. The cross-gender interactions, which were the source from which the data was collected in this study, were recorded to be then transcribed.

The analysis was carried out by using the theory of language features by Lakoff & Bucholtz (2004) to see the language features of Banjar women that differentiate them from the language features of men in this society. Despite the criticism directed to these language features as the features are established based on the language used by white women, these features are still widely used by many researchers.

There are ten language features of women identified by Lakoff & Bucholtz. The first feature is lexical hedges. Hedges are used by women to avoid taking full responsibility for their speech. Hedges are also intended to reduce threats that may arise in women's speech. There are some examples of hedges used by women such as: 1) *not ..., but ...* 2) *I am not the only one saying this*. The second feature is tag questions. Women tend to end their speech with questions to seek approval from the other person. This is intended to make the interlocutor feel involved in women's conversations and opinions as well to seek support. Questions at the end of statements that are often used by women include: 1) *..., right?* 2) *..., isn't?* and others.

The third feature of women's language is rising intonation when making statement. Women tend to raise their intonation to emphasize and express feeling, for example: *It's so delicious!* (with rising intonation). The fourth feature is empty adjectives. Women have a tendency to use adjectives that do not actually contribute significantly to a speech or adjectives with no specific meaning, such as *tiny*, *charming*, and *cute*. The fifth feature is precise color terminology. Compared to men, women have a more precise ability to distinguish colors. Women know specific colors such as *magenta*, *salmon*, and *navy blue* which many men may not know. It might be because most women have interest in fashion.

The sixth feature is the use of emphasis. Women tend to use words to show emphasis, such as *only* and *right*. The seventh feature is hypercorrect grammar. Closely related to the role of women as the guardian, women tend to prefer more standardized and organized tenses than men. Therefore, women's language seems more formal. The eighth feature is very polite form of language. Due to the social expectation of being polite, women tend to use very polite forms of language such as using indirect requests and euphemisms.

The ninth feature is avoiding the use of harsh words. Compared to men, women tend to avoid swear words that sound too harsh by choosing other words or phrases to lighten the swear words. In Indonesian language, for example, women tend to use the word *anjay* instead of *anjing* (dog) which sounds quite rude. The tenth feature of women's language is emphatic emphasis. Women tend to be more expressive in conveying their emotions when speaking. Therefore, women like to use emphasis on words to show empathy. For example: *Wow! You dress look GREAT*.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The following is a description of the findings from the observed conversations. Among the ten language features of women (lexical hedges, tag questions, rising intonations, empty adjectives, color terminology, use of emphasis, hypercorrect grammar, very polite form of

language, avoidance of swearing words, and emphatic emphasis), the researchers only focused the results presentation on the most prominent language features occurred in the data.

Lexical hedges, tag question, and the use of harsh words are the most prominent linguistic features found in conversation when contrasting the language features of women and men. The authors present a discussion of the findings and then compare them with the findings of previous studies.

### Lexical Hedges

Lexical hedges are used to show caution and indecisiveness so that the speakers can avoid taking a full responsibility over the utterances. In this case, lexical hedges are usually uttered as fillers to indicate the speakers' uncertainty over the given messages. Using these fillers are a good strategy to avoid being blamed when the information given by the speakers is invalid. To provide an overview of how Banjar men and women speak, the following excerpt of conversation is taken from the data:

- (1) Din : *Bisalah kita esok datangnya jam 12 aja?*  
(Can we come at 12 tomorrow?)
- (2) Wid : *Maka janjiannya jam 11?*  
(We have agreed to come at 11, aren't we?)
- (3) And : *Hiih maka jam 11 semalam*  
(Yes we have agreed to meet at 11)
- (4) Din : *Bah buhannya ni. **Kada pang menyambat**, tapi mun janjiian lawan inya tuh banyak ngaretnya pada on timenya?*  
(protesting) I don't want to say it, but she/he is always late)
- (5) And : *Aku sarah ja pang kan aku nebeng km*  
(I am fine either way because you give me a ride anyway)

The conversation above was recorded in a food stall. In the conversation above, the woman in utterance 1 made a suggestion in form of a question related to their appointment tomorrow. She suggested that they should come to the appointed place at 12 instead of at 11. The suggestion was addressed to all participants of the conversation, consisting of a man (And) and two women (Din and Wid). In the utterance 2, Wid tried to seek the reason why Din made the suggestion when the fact was the previously agreed to meet at 11. And agreed to Wid's information and repeating the information about their plan to meet at 11.

However, in the utterance 4, Din indicated that they should agree with her by uttering her reason. Instead of bluntly stated her reason, Din used lexical hedges to minimize the impact of her utterance by saying *kada pang menyambat, tapi...* translated as *I don't want to say it, but...* these lexical choices are hedges or fillers used by Din to her strategy not to state the fact directly. She tried to make her information more cautious by inserting the lexical hedges in her utterance.



The finding above is in line with Albaqami (2017) who stated that the difference between men and women hedges is obvious. Women use hedges to avoid expressing their ideas directly because they feel insecure and lack of power in the conversation. Meanwhile, Albaqami (2017) added that men use hedges mainly for specific purposes such as strengthening their position to control the debate happening within the conversation.

Hedges are a complete opposite of boosters. Boosters are uttered to show certainty or to indicate speakers' confidence regarding the given messages. Based on the data in this research, the researchers found that lexical hedges or fillers are more commonly found in women's speech when compare to the ones of men. However, despite being more frequently found in the language features of women, it is not impossible to also find lexical hedges in men's conversations. The except below shows the example of that fact.

- (1) Ron : *Bisa inya ni anu kada turun hari ini ni karena kada menggawi tugas Bu Hidya semalam tu.*  
(He (a classmate who is absent) may not go to the campus today because he did not do the assignment in Mrs. Hidya's class)
- (2) Ind : *Bisa ai. Soalnya inya takutan disangiti sidin.*  
(He probably is. He is afraid if she (Mrs. Hidya) is angry)
- (3) Ron : *((laughing))*
- (4) Teg : *Kadanya ah. Kandal dah muhanya mun soal tugas-tugas tu.*  
(I don't think so. He does not really care about that (the consequences of not finishing the task))

In the conversation recorded in the classroom above, there are three participants involved. Ron and Teg are men and Ind is a woman. In utterance 1, Ron used the word *bisa*, translated as *maybe* or *probably*, to indicate his uncertainty. This means that Ron was not sure about the exact reason why his classmate was absent in the class. From the conversation above, we can clearly see that it is not taboo for Banjarese men to utter hedges although women use them more frequently in daily conversations.

The fact that women uttered more lexical hedges than men solidified the finding of previous researchers from time to time since Lakoff first investigation on the matter (1975). Observing the use of hedges by women in Japan, Lauwereyns (2002) also found that women, especially the young ones, used the hedges more often than Japanese men. Further, McMillan *et al.* (1977) mentioned that women expressed uncertainty and vagueness in conversations that involve men. Further, they explained that women's minority status and their supportive behavior played significant role in their choice of words or expressions. These findings indicated that submissive role is given to women in different cultures.

## Tag question

Similar to lexical hedges, tag questions are also common features found in the crossed-gendered conversations in Banjarese society. *Lah, lo, kan* are three examples of words used as tag questions in Banjarese language. Tag questions are usually used to indicate uncertainty and obtain confirmation of assumptions.

The example of the occurrences of tag questions in crossed-gender conversations in Banjarese language can be observed in the following excerpt.

- (1) And : *Kayanya aku kada jadi minggu depan tuh. Lagi musim hujan kaya ini mending di rumah deh kayanya.*  
(It seems like I need to cancel my plan for next week. It's better to stay home in this rainy season)
- (2) Din : *Handak kemana km semalam? Ke Tahura ya lo?*  
(Where are you planning to go again? Tahura, isn't it?)
- (3) Wid : *Ke bukit Teletubbies rasanya*  
(He is going to Teletubbies hill, if I am not mistaken)
- (4) Din : *Oooh kukira ke Tahura*  
(Oooh I thought he is going to Tahura)
- (5) And : *Mending di rumah ja lo musim kyani ni?*  
(It is better to just stay home, isn't it?)

The conversation above took place in a food stall near participants' university. And uttered his thought about the possibility of him not going somewhere next week due to the weather. The utterance 1 by And was responded by Din in the utterance 2 by asking where And would plan to go. Din had the assumption that And would go to Tahura, but she was not sure about it. That was why Din ended her utterance by inserting tag question *ya lo* to confirm her assumption about the place.

Different from the tag question uttered by Din that was aimed to get confirmation of her assumption, the tag question *lo* by Andi in the utterance 5 was intended to seek for support of his idea to stay home instead of going somewhere next week. Other functions of tag questions are depicted in the following excerpt.

- (1) Luk : *Aku lawan Mar kada tapi suka lawan kopi di Janji Jiwa tu, ya lo Mar?*  
(Mar and I don't like the coffee from Janji Jiwa, do we, Mar?)

- (2) Mar : *Hiih. Kemanisan,*  
(Yes. (the coffee) is too sweet)
- (3) Dif : *Aku fine-fine aja ngopi disana*  
(I am fine having coffee there (at Janji Jiwa))
- (4) Nik : *Eh kita lawas kada ngethrift bareng kan?*  
(Eh it's been a while since the last time we did thrift shopping together, right?)
- (5) Luk : *Kadada duit ah*  
(I don't have money)

In the conversation taken in a café above, there participants are friends from the same university. Mar and Dif are women in their early 20s while Luke and Nik are men of the same age. In utterance 1, Luk used tag question *ya lo* to show common ground he shared with Mar about the taste of coffee from a coffee shop named Janji Jiwa. This function of tag question uttered by Luk was completely different from what was shown by Nik's tag question *kan* in the utterance 4. In Nik's utterance, the tag question served the function of initiating a new topic. After Nik uttered the information followed by the tag question *kan*, the topic shifted from coffee to thrift shopping.

As shown in two excerpts above, tag question is not always related to power domination or politeness. It serves the various functions in the conversations. In the data, the researchers found that both genders uttered tag questions frequently in their utterances. Therefore, the researchers argued that both Banjarese women and men make use of tag questions for different purposes. The linguistic differences in both genders' language in relation to tag questions are not found. The differences are more of personal purposes than gender reasons.

The similar concern regarding tag questions is also presented by Calnan & Davidson (1998) who mentioned that the tag questions may not exclusively used by women. They also suggested that tag questions in conversations were more about individual differences instead of gender differences. Similarly, Leaper & Robnet (2011) also concluded that the use of tentative language (such as tag questions) by women reflected their interpersonal sensitivity rather than their lack of assertiveness. This means that tag questions used by women do not necessarily represent their submissive roles in many cultures.

### Harsh words

Holmes (2008) stated that not all harsh words can be classified as 'disturbing' or 'impolite' as it is also important to consider the situation and context of the speech. Take this conversation as an example.

- (1) Mar : *Bahapal lalu nginih. Mana ada kaitu.*  
(You did not speak the truth. It is not like that)
- (2) Luk : *Bungul// kada percayanya ti*  
(What a fool! Why don't you just trust me?)
- (3) Nik : *Bujur jarnya. Kadada salahnya mencoba yalo?*  
(He is right. It won't hurt trying, right?)
- (4) Dif : *Waluh! ya gak gitu juga konsepnya*  
(What the... it is not how you supposed to mean it)

This is another excerpt found in Mar, Luk, Nik, and Dif conversation. The topic of their conversation is about a woman confessing her feeling first. Previously, Luk mentioned about it is better for a woman to be a bit blunt and direct so that she can easily get noticed by her crush. Then Mar uttered her rejection of the idea as seen in utterance 1. Luk then used strong swear word *bungul*, meaning *fool* or *stupid*, followed by his reaction towards Mar's utterance. By the end of this excerpt, Dif also uttered Banjarese swear word *waluh*, which literal meaning is *pumpkin* in English, to indicate her rejection of the idea.

In the conversation above, the harsh words uttered by both man and woman were not aimed to curse or to voice their anger. Instead, they are uttered to show intimacy or close relationship among speakers. The harsh words found in the conversation above told us that the participants had close social relationship that they were not hesitant to tease each other using harsh words. This proved their social intimacy as people with social distant will not utter such words in the conversations unless they want to be regarded as impolite. However, the excerpt above shows the fact that politeness may have nothing to do with harsh words when the relationship between participants are close.

Based on the collected data, it was found that swearing is not considered taboo by Banjarese women. Both of Banjarese men and women could swear by using words related to animals, brain function, madness, and sexuality. In addition, the researchers found that Banjarese women used a vegetable name to swear such as *waluh*, while the same swear word was not found in men's utterances. The findings of this study confirm the category of swear words, some of which involve bodily functions, body parts, sex, and religion (Vingerhoets et al., 2013).

Furthermore, both Banjarese men and women showed a tendency to use words related to brain function when swearing. Some words that men use overlap with those that women use. In other words, both Banjarese men and women uttered mostly similar words when cursing. However, women used a wider variety of words related to brain functions in cursing than men. For examples, to say the word *fool*, Banjarese women used *gonggong*, *bungul*, *tambuk*, *lengo*, and *bangang* while the variety of words used by men is more limited.

Moreover, Banjarese women also used a wider variety of words to curse using animal names. The research findings showed that animal-related words are used by men and women are pretty different. While men chose to use words like *warik* (translated as *monkey*) and

*kambing* (translated as *goat*), and *anjing* (translated as *dog*), women used different words such as *anjay*, *anjrit* and *anjret*. The later three words are related to *anjing* but in different pronunciations. In short, even when curse, Banjarese women tend to avoid a literal word of a certain animal; they rather used other words with a similar meaning.

However, when describing men's bad trait as a playboy – which was highly related to women's feeling towards the trait, Banjarese women used literal words such as *buaya* and *baung* instead of their look-alike words. The word *buaya*, literally translated as crocodile, has further meaning. The crocodile, in Indonesian context, is an animal that represent playboy acts. Similar to crocodile, the word *baung*, which is a kind of fish, also has the same meaning. In this case, when dealing with opinion related to feelings, Banjarese women became more direct.

Furthermore, in using words that express obscenity, both men and women tend to use words that are similar, namely *kijil* and *lanji* (meaning *pervert* or *bitchy* in English). However, men and women use different words to describe the act of playing. While men tended to swear using the word *miyang*, which is closest to the meaning of *bitchy*, women used the word *baung*, which is closest to the meaning to *being playboy* or *perverted*. The former refers to act performed by women, while the latter can apply to both sexes.

Despite the fact that women, like men, are quite free to express their feelings and emotions, Banjarese *women* are still bound to certain submissive roles, such as dealing with serving meals to the family. Thus, the word *waluh* – a vegetable, is used more by women than by men. Moreover, women are also more unconsciously aware of their social roles as subordinate part of the society when compared to men. Therefore, they tried to mitigate their curse words by using alternative words such as *anjrit*, *anjay*, or *njir* to mitigate the impact of their harsh words.

The findings of this study contradict the work of McEnery (2005) who suggested that men know and use swear words more than women. Similarly, (Mehl & Pennebaker, 2003) also identified the high prevalence of angry utterances by men in everyday conversations. A quite contradictive yet interesting result is presented by Thelwall (2008) while investigating the use of harsh words by MySpace users in two different countries, US and UK. While gender differences was prominent in US, the differences was not that clear in UK. This means that the men in US used harsh worse more often than the women, meanwhile both the men and the women in UK could swear as much.

The findings of this study is similar to the conclusion drawn by Lestary and Mubarraq (2019) who concluded that Banjarese women could use profanity like the men. Further, Johnson & Lewis (2010) regarding gender and profanity usage. They explained that the social expectations towards women had slowly changed, allowing women to also use swearing in their talks. Again, however, it is important to note that these changes may not apply across the globe. Methven (2020) mentioned that the use of harsh words were still regarded as 'unladylike' and rude in Australian legal and media discourse.

All in all, the findings of this study suggested that Banjarese women used swear words as many as men did. In fact, the variation of harsh words used by Banjarese women are wider than it is of men. However, to quantify which gender swear more in Banjarese society is not for this study to answer. A further investigation needs to be conducted to address that issue.

## CONCLUSIONS

Language and gender have been explored by many researchers over the last decades. Many different approaches have been applied to understand how men and women use languages and why these genders speak differently. Yet, the bubble of language and gender study will not burst in the near future. There will always be new area to explore within the topic of language and gender, just as many language as spoken out there.

By employing the women language features of Lakoff, this study tried to bring yet another new context to the study of language and gender. Existing since centuries ago in South Kalimantan, Indonesia, Banjarese language and the complexity of its society represented by the language is the area still uncharted. There has been very little research conducted related to the language use by Banjarese people. Thus, this study is conducted to provide more insight towards the language use of Banjarese people and the underlying ideology.

This study observed mixed-gender casual conversations in classroom, food stall, and cafe. The participants were young adults in their 20s. They were all students and spoke Banjarese. Ten features of women's language were used to identify the language use. However, this study focused the discussion only on the most prominent features found. Some related theories were also discussed along with the findings.

Based on the findings, it can be seen that Banjarese women used lexical hedges in their talks to show tentativeness. This situation is also identified by another study in Japan where the young women could not express assertiveness in their talks. This study, however, also indicated that Banjarese women were still allowed to express themselves since they could use swearing words.

From this study, the researchers concluded that regardless of their social status, Banjarese men and women can both support and tease in the conversations. The differences of language features of both genders exist but not prominent. It means that the inequality of both genders is not significantly portrayed although it is found in some parts of the analyzed data. The investigated crossed-gendered interactions show that Banjarese women can also use harsh words just like men do. However, the researchers admit that a more extended investigation is still needed to find other linguistic features used by Banjarese women and men.

The result of this study might be regarded as a good indicator of the changing in society. As it has been mentioned in some previous studies, there might be shifting in social expectations towards women. However, more studies in different context are still required to prove this.

In addition, the researchers also realize the limitation of this study which only focused on the interactions among peers with pretty similar social status. Therefore, the findings of this research do not wish to generalize other findings of similar research conducted within different social constructions. The rooms are still there for other researchers to explore linguistic gender-based differences in Banjarese society.

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