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### LANGUAGE STYLE OF MALE AND FEMALE SPEAKERS AT WASHINGTON WOMEN'S MARCH

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#### **ABSTRACT:**

**Background:** In many aspects of life, there are differences between male and female: among them are the different ways in speaking. Male and female talk differently. Their speech may differ in many linguistic aspects such as lexical items, sentence constructions, and semantic preferences.

**Aim:** This study aims to analyze language style of male and female speakers at Washington Women's March.

**Method:** This study used qualitative approach to analyze the phenomenon in a natural setting. With regard to the language style of male and female speakers, the writer analyzed 4 (four) male and 4 (four) female speakers at the Washington Women's March. The analysis was based on the theory of Tannen about points of differences between male and female language style. The points include status vs support, order vs proposal, independence vs intimacy, information vs feeling, advice vs understanding, and conflict vs compromise. It also used Holmes's theory to reveal the social factors and dimensions of the speakers.

**Result:** The study reveals that gender differences affect the language style of male and female speakers. Male speakers tend to show their status by telling others what to do, while female speakers pursue intimacy by looking for support. This is influenced by social factors and social dimensions.

**Conclusion:** Based on the study, it can be concluded that male and female have difference in many linguistic aspects. One of the differences is evident in the style of their speech, which is known through the influence of some social factors and dimensions.

**Keywords:** Male and Female, Language Style, Washington Women's March

## INTRODUCTION

Male and female have preferences that influence their language style while speaking. Style means the way speakers choose to code what they want to say on a particular case (Wardhaugh, 2011). Language style can be influenced by identity, social factors, and social dimensions. Social factors primarily account for the particular variety of language used, while social dimensions are used to analyze factors that relate to the social factors and have been implicit in the discussion (Holmes and Wilson, 2017).

Many studies have analyzed language style (Brownlow, Rosamond, & Parker, 2003; Reichelt, Kammerer, Niegemann, & Zander, 2014). Some studies focused on male language style only, and the other focused on female language style only (Adachi, 2002; Stamou, Maroniti & Dinas, 2012). No study seems to have focused on language style of both male and female. A number of researches (e.g. Talbot, 1998; Tannen, 1990) show that the way a person speaks will affect the language style. Therefore, we have been interested in examining language style through the male and female speeches in a demonstration event.

The event chosen for the investigation male and female language style is Washington Women's March. It is a feminist movement demonstration held annually in the whole world. Each year, the Women's March discusses different issues. It was the most up-to-date demonstration, exemplifying the use of speech in a political protest. Not only coming to protest, many protesters arrived bearing signs suggesting personalized interpretations of the protest march and their opposition to recently inaugurated President Donald Trump (Weber, Dejmanee and Rhode, 2018).

The source of data for this study was the Washington Women's March that occurred on 21<sup>st</sup> of January 2017. The issue currently discussed in the event revolved around Donald Trump's policies on gender discrimination, equality on social status, and illegal abortion. The event became fascinating to analyze because it discusses the refusal of Trump's policy (Fisher, Dow and Ray, 2017). There were many speakers on this event, but this study only focused on eight speakers, who were male and female. They came from the same backgrounds, namely entertainment industry. In addition, they were also Hillary Clinton's supporters at that time.

The study aims to compare the language style used by male and female speakers in their speech. In particular, the study analyzes lexical items and diction used by male and female speakers. It can help to explain the relationship between language style and social factors and dimension during the speeches of male and female speakers at the Washington Women's March.

## METHOD

In examining language style used by male and female speakers in their speeches at the Washington Women's March 2017, the writer utilized qualitative approach which relates to understanding some aspects of social life, and generate words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis (Patton and Cochran, 2002). Qualitative study aims to make sense or interpret a phenomenon by examining it in a natural setting (Denzin and Lincoln, 2002). This approach is characterized by its aim, as stated above, which is closely related to find out social factors and dimensions of the speakers at the Washington Women's March. In this case, the material is a transcription from a downloaded video.

The data of this study is in the form of spoken text contained in a video, which was downloaded from YouTube channel namely *ABC News*. The chosen video contains 32 speakers in total, but eight persons were selected. They are Michael Moore, Bob Alotta, George Gresham, Van Jones, Madonna, Scarlett, Alicia Keys, and Ashley Judd, on a demonstration of women's movement held in Washington. The demonstration was concerned with Trump's presidency and his administration because the day of the demonstration was the day when Trump officially worked at the White House.

The data analysis was done through several steps. After transcribing the video, the format of the text (.docx) was changed to txt. Txt format was used because it can be read by AntConc, a corpus analysis toolkit for concordancing and text analysis. The researcher used the theory of Tannen on the points of differences between male and female language style (Tannen, 1990). The points include status vs support, order vs proposal, independence vs intimacy, information vs feeling, advice vs understanding, and conflict vs compromise. The study also used Holmes's theory (2013) to reveal the social factors and dimensions of the speakers.

## RESULT

### *Language Style between Male and Female Speakers in Washington Women's March*

#### *Status vs. Support*

The first point is about status vs support, which means that men establish the status by telling others what to do (Tannen, 1990). The way speakers tell others what to do by is using two types of utterances: aggravated directives and mitigated directives. Male speakers tend to use aggravated directives, which is marked by the use of *gimme* and *want* (Goodwin, 1980). However, mitigated directives are used by female speakers that can be identified by looking at remarkable utterances such as *let's* (Goodwin, 1980).

According to the data, the male speakers used three utterances to show aggravated directives. However, the female speakers did not use aggravated directives to ask the audience. This is evidenced by the speech of Michael

Moore as the following:

*Number one this is what I want you to do, I want you to make this part of your new daily routine. I want you to call Congress every single day, every day*

He asked the audiences to do what he wanted to. He mentioned the lists to-do by numbering each. This shows that Michael Moore tried to establish status by asking the audience directly. Besides that, the data showed that male speakers also used four utterances to show mitigated directives, while female speakers only used an utterance to show a mitigated directive. Even though mitigated directives are commonly used by females, males also used them because they wanted the audience aware that they gave an order. In other words, male speakers wanted to do it together. Male speakers used mitigated directives because they knew that most of the audiences of this event were females. Because of that, they tried to encourage the audiences by imitating the language style of females.

In addition, a female speaker, Madonna, also gave an order to show that she has a same right as men, since the topic of this demonstration was about equality. This shows that females tend to ask politely. However, the fact that the male speakers also used mitigated directives at the Washington Women's March indicated that males tried to approach the audiences closer since it would be easier to provoke and give orders to the audience about what the speakers wanted to. Moreover, this event needed support from the audiences to act against Trump's policy on gender equality. Therefore, males still have the tendency to establish their status more frequent than females because the male speakers used seven utterances, both aggravated and mitigated directives. On the other hand, the female speakers used only an utterance in mitigated directive.

Women seek support as a way of confirming. Women tend to support each other by agreeing and adding to what the others say (Tannen, 1990). This can be seen in Ashley Judd's speech. She introduced and clarified what Moore said in the beginning of his speech. Furthermore, this event was about women improvement. It was not surprising that women had the tendency to encourage the audiences' feelings as a form to support each other and invite them to do the same things, which was against Trump's policy. However, men did not seek support in front of the audiences.

The finding of the first point of Tannen's theory suggests that establishing status is not only a part of men, but also women. At the Washington Women's March, the female speakers told others what to do by using mitigated directives. This indicates that females also seek to acquire status through their use of language (Coates, 2013).

### ***Independence vs. Intimacy***

Independence means that men go alone rather than women who seek intimacy, which can be seen at the speakers' speeches. Men speak as

individuals, while women speak as the representative of society. Male speakers frequently say 'I' over and over again to show that he is separate and different (Tannen, 1990). However, female speakers prefer saying 'We' that refer to the audience, and that represent that they are close and the same. The frequent use of 'I' and 'We' can be seen through their occurrences in speech. This indicates that independence is taking freedom of action (Tannen, 1990). Males can freely argue using their point of view in regard to using their status. Hence, men use the word 'I' more often than women.

According to the data, the male speakers have the highest frequency of using the words 'I'. This reveals that the male speakers tended to show the audience that they were individuals who had the same thought and awareness as the audience and tried to tell them about their opinion on what they faced. The frequency of 'I' is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Ratio in Using the Word 'I' between Male and Female Speakers

No.	Gender	Percentage
1.	Female	3.24%
2.	Male	2.54%

As the table shows, even though the occurrences of the words 'I' are high among the male speakers, the female speakers also used 'I' in their speech. The use of 'I' can be seen in Ashley Judd's speech, who had a desire for freedom just like the men but differed in terms of focus and degree.

In order to obtain the intimacy, the females tend to speak on behalf of someone else or some organization. Therefore, they often use the plural pronoun 'We'. In the data, it can be seen in Alicia Keys' speech who claimed that she was standing at the stage because she refused the government to control women's body on behalf of the audience by mentioning the occupancy and status of the audiences.

#### ***Advice vs. Understanding***

Advice means that the speakers see language as problem solving in which they suggest, recommend, or give solutions to problems. Advice tends to be done by men. According to the data, the male speakers gave many solutions as advice for the audience to face their problems. For instance, in Michael Moore's speech, he gave some solutions as the right of the citizens who have representatives in the White House and help to fix the environment by joining Planned Parenthood.

On the other hand, no female speakers gave a solution or advice while they were speaking. All female speakers had a tendency to show their understanding of what the audience felt, indicated by the use of more general words in their speeches. The understanding aimed to obtain empathy, which

can be seen by the high percentage of general words used by the speakers (West, 1953). The use of general words by the female speakers can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. General Words by Female and Male Speakers

No.	Gender	Percentage
1.	Female	33.3%
2.	Male	21.9%

Table 2 above shows that the female speakers used general words more often than the male speakers. The result suggests that, sometimes, in a particular occasion like Washington Women's March, males can be a problem-solver and understandable-person, while femalestry to build a situation where the audience may feel understood and comfortable. This findings is in line with Tannen's argument that females are more understanding and males give more advice rather than being understanding individuals.

#### ***Information vs. Feeling***

The fourth point deals with information vs. feeling in which men tend to speak about a fact and share information, while women tend to speak using their feelings. Based on the data, the male speakers gave 10 facts that they shared as the information for the audiences, while the female speakers only shared three facts that could be used as information. The men mentioned facts more frequently than the women. In other words, males are associated with instrumental talk (Bernard, 1973), which also means men tend to be conveyors of information.

In contrast, even though the female speakers also shared information, the frequency was less than the male speakers. This might be due to the common knowledge of females being different that of male as Landis and Burt stated female tend to talk about clothing, decoration, and life style (Haas, 1979). The female speakers tended to use feelings while they were speaking at the Washington Women's March. The way female speakers used their feeling can be identified from the number of adjectives they used while speaking (Lakoff, 1973).

Based on the data, both the male and female speakers used the same number of adjective types but with a different number of tokens or occurrences. The number of tokens of adjectives used by the male speakers was higher than that of female speakers because the male speakers had longer duration while speaking rather than the female speakers. The longer the speakers are talking, the more tokens are counted.

These results suggest that female speakers do not always talk about their feelings even though they have to encourage and touch the audience heart.

On the other hand, male speakers are talking with their feelings to show the audiences that they are the one who care about them and the one who can make them safer. The way speakers talk is also influenced by who the audiences are. Since the audiences of the Washington Women's March were females, the male speakers tried to focus more on the condition of the audiences, topics, and aim related to this event. On the other hand, female speakers tend to speak by considering how people (the audience) feel and behave. Females tend to talk from heart to heart to make the audiences have sympathy and empathy. In conclusion, the male speakers tried to encourage the audiences by sharing information and giving clues to be done by the audiences in order to make them believe and have sympathy, while the female speakers tried to encourage the audiences by touching their heart.

### ***Orders vs. Proposals***

This point reveals that men tend to use sentences in imperative form, while women tend to use imperative in hidden directive. A study done by Jacqueline Sachs and her colleagues as cited in Tannen (1990) showed that the use of *Let's* is found more among girls to propose something than boys. Boys have a tendency to give a command directly to each other without any idiosyncrasy. This point is closely related to the point of status vs support, since status can be seen from how often the speakers give orders or commands.

One example can be found in Moore's speech in which he asked the audiences to follow what he said. The way he invited the audiences was by giving a direct command to do exactly what he wanted and also repeated the words he said:

***This is what I want you to do, I want you to make this part of your daily routine. I want you to call Congress every single day.***

***Repeat that with me.***

These two sentences are examples of a command that Moore gave to the audiences. In contrast, in giving a command, Ashley Judd did not use a directive. Instead, she used a proposal as a form of command towards the audiences.

*They're for reminding you that our Falls are stronger than America's ever will be our pussies are for our pleasure they are for birthing new generations of filthy vulgar nasty proud Christian Muslim Buddhist sink, you name it for new generation of nasty women, so if you a nasty woman or you loved one who is let me hear you say hell yeah, hell yeah, hell yeah. I love you thank you!*

In seeking for the audience support to have the same thought and opinion, she preferred to invite the audience by saying "hell yeah" like what she did previously in front of them and begin with "let me" as a form of invitation. Hence, the distribution of the uses of utterances that indicate orders vs

proposals is different. Even though the male speakers had more utterances to show imperative directives straightforwardly, only two of them who used an order to tell what others should do. On the other hand, there was also a female speaker that produced an utterance to show what she wanted others should do. This may reflect that the boundaries between male and female language style gradually have become thinner. Since this event was about a feminist movement that discussed gender equality, the speakers wanted to show that everyone had the same right, no matter what their gender is.

### ***Conflict vs. Compromise***

This comparative notion of women and men style means that men tend to convey their arguments directly, while women tend to find a middle ground. The females tend to avoid a conflict by compromising, while the males more often do not escape a conflict because they tend to use more insistence and threats of physical violence (Tannen, 1990). According to the data of this study, the male speakers produced more sentences (9 sentences) that directly convey their argument. In contrast, the female speakers produced only one sentence with the same aim of the male speakers. This can be seen in the speech of George Gresham who tended to show his dislike and claim that all of the people would do the same thing as he would. He directly stated to act against the discrimination of women's rights or workers' rights. Bob Alott spoke in the same way as George Gresham. He asked the audiences not to be afraid of being unsafe to love anyone, whether they are gay, lesbian, or transgender.

Different from the male speakers, the female speakers tended to avoid confrontation. According to the data, the female speakers produced seven utterances indicating that they avoided any confrontation. However, the male speakers also tried to avoid a conflict by saying three utterances to show their compromise. At the Washington Women's March, the female speakers preferred to compromise. Alicia Keys, for instance, encouraged the audiences to do these protests consistently rather than directly calling the senators every day (Rose-Redwood and Rose-Redwood, 2017).

### ***Social Factors and Dimensions Portrayed in the Speech of Male and Female Speakers in Washington Women's March***

#### ***Social Factors***

To explain about the relationship between language and society, social factors are necessary to analyze the language style of the speakers. These social factors are important to help in describing and analyzing all kinds of interaction between the speakers and listeners. They are the basic components to gain information why people tend to talk differently and why that can happen.

The first factor relate to participants. In verbal interaction, participants include who the speaker is and who the listener is. At the Washington Women's March, most speakers were activists and came from the

entertainment world. The following is the profile (Garfield 2017) of the speakers as the subjects of this study.

1. Michael Moore      Documentary Film Maker
2. Van Jones          Political Commentator and Author
3. Bob Alotta         Astraea Lesbian Foundation for  
Justice's Executive Director, Activist, and Film Maker
4. George Gresham    Labor Organizer
5. Ashley Judd        Actress and Activist
6. Scarlet Johansson   Actress
7. Madonna            Singer
8. Alicia Keys         Singer

The listeners or audiences of the event were women who came from different professions and status. There were approximately more than the 500,000 people attending this event (Hartocollis and Alcindor, 2017). Not only women, but also men supported women, against Trump's policy, supporter of Hillary Clinton, and even the children also came to attend this event.

Being public figures, the speakers spoke well. Even though they were educated or having high position in their jobs, they tried to understand the condition of the audiences while delivering their message in the speech of demonstration event at the Washington Women's March. They had to maintain their language in such a way that the audience would understand what they were talking about.

This event was joined by mostly women and focused on the refusal of Donald Trump's policies. Thus, this event functioned as a women movement that aimed to fight for women's rights and to eliminate discrimination and inequality. Since the function was to protest, the speakers tended to speak as clearly as possible to ensure that the audiences could receive their messages and to offer solutions to solve their problems. Therefore, social factors that include participants, setting, topic, and function connect with each other in influencing the language style of the speakers.

### ***Social Dimensions***

Social dimensions help to analyze the relationship between language and society by looking at the speaker and listener since they also relate to social factors. In other words, social dimensions are additional components for explaining the relationship between language and society. They include social distance scale, status scale, formality scale, and two functional scales (Holmes, 2013).

A social distance scale can be seen through the words that the speakers choose while they speak, how close they are or how intimate they are, and how language works while the speakers speak. The closer the speakers and the listener, the more informal they speak. On the other hand, social distance scale cannot be found in terms of low solidarity in which there is a space between the speaker and listener. At the Washington Women's March, the

speakers tried to get closer to the audiences as a form that they cared about what happened at that time and they were facing the same problems. In addition, the way speakers talk can also be determined by analyzing the status scale of both speakers and listeners, whether they are of high status (superior) or of low status (subordinate).

Most of the speakers at the event were females. There were only four male speakers out of 32 speakers in total, but all speakers had a tendency to show their status through the language they used. This is because male and female speakers did not show a significant difference since the topic of this event was equality. Furthermore, the speakers, both male and female, were activists in organizations, so they must have had basic knowledge in delivering a speech in an event concerned with a movement against Donald Trump's policy.

The formality scale is helpful in analyzing the relationship between participants and setting. As this event occurred outdoors where everyone can come and join, the language that the speakers used depended on the topic and participants. The topic was about gender discrimination, equality of social status, and illegal abortion, and the audiences came from different age, profession, and status. Therefore, the speakers tended to use both the formal and informal styles while they were speaking.

The formal and informal styles can be influenced by the relationship of the speakers and listeners. Moreover, the styles can affect the message that the speakers want to deliver. Both the formal and informal styles can be used to manipulate the audience mind. It is because the closer the speakers are with the audiences, the more informal the way speakers speak, and so on. The audiences process the language style of the speakers to get the same thought and be able to support each other, or even offer a solution. Therefore, formality scale happens depending on the status and social distance scale, which is also related to social factors.

The last dimension concerns two functional scales, which are the referential and affective function scales (Holmes, 2013). These scales can be seen through the aim or purposes of the conversation. Since this event concerned a movement against Donald Trump's policy, the aim was to confront or show a refusal of his policy. This means that the speakers had to encourage or provoke the audience to agree with or follow their opinions. Therefore, the affective function was quite dominant in the utterances of the speakers. This can be seen, for instance, in Madonna's speech that contained more adjectives than that of the male speakers.

*We're not just women are in **danger** but all marginalized people. We're being **uniquely** different right now, might truly be considered a crime. It took this **horrific** moment of darkness to wake us the up*

The excerpt above suggest that Madonnawas upset, knowing that there was racism and inequality in gender and social status. There was a terrifying discrimination but she tried to use different words like 'danger' and 'uniquely' so as not to make the audiencesfeel unhappier.

The male speakers were also using adjectives to build anappealof the audiences and make them confident about what they wanted to do. This was the same as the female speakers did, but the male speakers had a different aim in doing that. The males tended to share information that they had to gain the trust,whichcould make it easier to ask the audiences to do what they wanted to do. Moreover, if the male speakers could also manipulate the audience's feelings, it would be much easier. In contrast, the female speakers tended to encourage the audiences by sharing their feelings. They wanted to make the audiences agree with them and could do a better movement for women's rights or any gender equality issues together.

The discussion indicates that social factors and social dimensions are related to each other. The relationspertainin social factors and each scale in social dimensions. In other words, theway people talk is influenced by the social factors and social dimensions concerned with participants, the setting and purposes of interaction. People can possibly talk in the same way if social factors and dimensions allow. These social factors and dimensions help analyze and describe the relationship between language and society. Social dimensions are useful in identifying language style in the social context of different speech and in discussing the ways in which language is used.

## CONCLUSION

According to the result of analysis, it can be concluded that all points of Tannen's theory are found in the speech of both male and female speakers. The male speakers tend to establish status to show their independence by sharing information and offering suggestions. They also use aggravated directives to tell others what to do and have a tendency to confront an issue. However, the female speakers tend to seek support by showing intimacy to the audiences and have a tendency to say something by considering the feelings of the audience. The female speakers also tend to give an order indirectly and try to compromise as a way to solve problems. Moreover, since this event took place outdoors where it was opened for different people, thespeakers tended to seek attention by touching the heart of the audiences. Thus, both male and female speakers were giving a speech to gain sympathy and empathy from the audiences. While the male speakers tried to get attention by giving facts, the female speakers tried to seek attention by telling their experiences that may be relevantto the audiences.

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