Gender Disparities in Utilizing Language Features on YouTube Vlogs

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Abstract: This study delves into gender-specific linguistic variations in YouTube vlogs, analysing language features employed by 30 daily English language video vlogs, evenly split between 15 male and 15 female vloggers. Employing a qualitative research design with content analysis, the study identifies prevalent language features and scrutinizes their typologies and intended functions through a systematic four-step method, encompassing data segmentation, code formulation, category development, and the identification of overarching themes. Taboo and swearing, directive and command language feature prominently among male vloggers. In contrast, female vloggers utilize compliments, hedges, tag questions, and questions to engage with their audience on YouTube. This study offers valuable insights into the distinct language patterns of male and female vloggers, contributing to a nuanced understanding of communication dynamics in online platforms and shedding light on the intersection of gender and language in online contexts.

Keywords: gender-specific linguistic; language features; YouTube vlogs

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mempelajari variasi linguistik spesifik gender dalam vlog YouTube, menganalisis fitur-fitur bahasa yang digunakan oleh 30 video vlog harian berbahasa Inggris, yang terbagi rata antara 15 vlogger pria dan 15 vlogger wanita. Menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif dengan analisis konten, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi fitur-fitur bahasa yang lazim dan meneliti tipologi serta fungsi yang dimaksudkan melalui metode empat langkah sistematis, yang mencakup segmentasi data, perumusan kode, pengembangan kategori, dan identifikasi tema-tema menyeluruh. Bahasa yang tabu dan mengumpat, direktif, dan perintah menonjol di kalangan vlogger pria. Sebaliknya, vlogger perempuan menggunakan pujian, lindung nilai, pertanyaan tag, dan pertanyaan untuk berinteraksi dengan audiens mereka di YouTube. Penelitian ini menawarkan wawasan berharga tentang pola bahasa yang berbeda antara vlogger laki-laki dan perempuan, yang berkontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang dinamika komunikasi di platform online dan menjelaskan persinggungan antara gender dan bahasa dalam konteks online.

Kata Kunci: fitur bahasa; linguistik berdasar gender; vlog YouTube

INTRODUCTION

In the realm of effective human communication, Meyerhoff & Ehrlich (2019) underscores the paramount significance of language as an indispensable medium for articulating nuanced ideas and opinions, thereby emphasizing the intrinsic importance of linguistic expression in facilitating meaningful interpersonal interactions.

The genesis of this argument can be traced back to earlier scholarship, notably exemplified by Bloomfield's (1933) exposition, which fortified the pivotal role of language. Bloomfield's (1933) discourse discusses the pivotal role of language by elucidating its profound impact on shaping our lives and exerting influence over social interactions. His perspective augments the comprehension of language as a dynamic force that transcends mere communication, shaping the very fabric of human existence.

As technological advancements burgeon, communication undergoes a transformative shift, affording connections across expansive geographical distances. Pratiwi (2019) illuminates the internet's instrumental role in enabling global communication through accessible websites and social networking platforms. This technological evolution has significantly altered the landscape of human interaction, underscoring the imperative to comprehend language dynamics in the context of online communication.

Nevertheless, Anggara Putra & Prayudha (2019) research draws attention to potential linguistic variances concerning gender-related online communication. This introduces a nuanced exploration into how gender, a salient determinant influencing language in societal contexts, engenders distinct linguistic differentiations between males and females.

This gender dichotomy in the language is exemplified by the formal and emotionally expressive language employed by females, juxtaposed against the more direct and slang-associated lexicon of males (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021). Holmes (2001) concludes that these linguistic differentials are context-dependent, contingent upon circumstantial nuances and communicative objectives. In essence, a comprehensive understanding of communication dynamics necessitates a thorough exploration of genderrelated linguistic variances in both traditional and online communicative milieus.

The comprehensive understanding of linguistic dynamics and multimedia platforms collectively contributes to a nuanced comprehension of contemporary communication landscapes. In a parallel vein, YouTube has emerged as a versatile subject for academic inquiry within economic, communication, and business realms, facilitating insights into attitudes, behaviours, and the strategies of audio visual content producers (Orduña Malea et al., 2020). This escalating significance of YouTube in academic discourse is mirrored by the platform's exponential growth in social media users, increasing by more than 20 million per year since 2015 (Setiawan & Purwasito, 2020). As the predominant global platform for video content, YouTube stands second only to Google, boasting over one thousand million hours of video played and a staggering 1900 million users per month (González-Neira et al., 2022).

Diverse perspectives have been applied, ranging from participatory culture (Burgess & Green, 2018) to political economy considerations (Abuljadail et al., 2018; Cunningham & Craig, 2017). Studies have explored on algorithmic analyses (Bishop, 2018), and explored audience uses and gratifications (Steiner & Xu, 2020). Formal aspects of YouTube content have been scrutinized by various authors, examining features contributing to video popularity and characteristics of the most-viewed videos (Altman & Jiménez, 2019; Bentley et al., 2019). Rachmijati (2019) elucidated the widespread acceptance of vlogs as a social networking platform, appealing to diverse age groups and socioeconomic backgrounds. In our case, understanding of gendered language patterns can be extended to the diverse user base of social networking platforms like YouTube, where people of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds engage in vlogging.

Expanding on this topic, investigating the language used in diverse YouTube vlogs, especially noting gender differences, could provide valuable insights into how gender intersects with language in online communication. This research scrutinizes how males and

females deploy language features on YouTube applications, particularly within vlogs. Drawing upon (Coates' (2015) theoretical framework, encompassing seven distinct aspects demarcating male and female language features, this study addresses incongruities in language utilization by males and females in YouTube vlogs.

METHODS

Content analysis stands out as a primary research technique employed to analyse data in the realm of communication sciences (Gómez-Escalonilla, 2020). This method of data analysis holds significance across various academic disciplines, including linguistics (Zidane & Mehiri, 2021).

In essence, content analysis is a research method characterized by specific procedures aimed at deriving valid inferences from textual material (Weber, 1990). In other words, it involves analysing content to produce replicable and valid outcomes. (Cohen et al., 2002) assert that this research technique serves the purpose of summarizing and interpreting data, constituting a strict and systematic set of procedures for the rigorous analysis, examination, and verification of content. In simpler terms, content analysis is employed to handle textual data, ensuring the generation of reliable results. Within this analytical technique, extensive texts can be encapsulated by a concise set of expressions, facilitating a streamlined analysis and discussion (Zidane & Mehiri, 2021).

Thus, this research design adopts a qualitative research methodology grounded in the content analysis paradigm. The researcher systematically processes data gleaned from transcribing the vlogger's utterances on YouTube, drawing upon the theoretical framework articulated by Coats (1986). Subsequently, an exhaustive analysis of the vlogger's utterances ensues, probing the data for a thorough examination. The resultant data statements are then condensed to enhance overall comprehensibility.

The research focal point pertains to the utterances within YouTube vlogs and the intricate array of language features deployed by vloggers. The dataset encompasses phrases, words, and utterances meticulously culled from 30 daily English language video vlogs authored by native English speakers, encompassing both young adults and adults. Specifically, 15 video vlogs from male vloggers emanating from 5 distinct channels and another 15 from female vloggers, all sharing analogous content, were judiciously selected.

For the purposes of data analysis, words, clauses, and sentences extracted from the vloggers' utterances serve as the foundational components. The entire corpus of the utterances is employed to address both research questions. In response to the first inquiry, the cumulative tally of language features is meticulously ascertained, integrating words, clauses, phrases, and sentences. Subsequently, the same lexical components undergo scrutiny to discern the various typologies and intended functions of language features employed by both male and female vloggers on the YouTube platform.

Researchers, while employing varied approaches to content analysis (Moule et al., 2016), typically follow a method comprising four fundamental steps: (1) data segmentation, (2) code formulation, (3) category development, and (4) identification of main themes, culminating in drawing conclusions (Cohen et al., 2002; Dörnyei, 2007; Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). To furnish the data for this study, the researcher systematically engaged with YouTube vlogs. In the pursuit of data collection and analysis, the researcher assumed the role of an active participant, functioning as a human investigator. The data acquisition process was conducted through meticulous document analysis, adhering to the following methodological steps:

1. The researcher curated a selection of English vlogs from YouTube.

- 2. For research purposes, the vlog scripts or transcriptions were downloaded by the researcher from YouTube.
- 3. In an effort to discern differential speech patterns between males and females, the researcher attentively viewed the vlogs. Notations were made concerning language features.
- 4. The researcher compiled utterances, words, clauses, or phrases embodying the linguistic disparities proposed by Coates in male and female language. This involved the identification of utterances, words, and phrases indicative of specific language features. Each identified feature was meticulously highlighted and assigned a distinct numerical identifier to facilitate subsequent analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

YouTube, launched in late 2005, stands out for its popularity among these platforms. It enables registered users to share videos publicly; each featured on a dedicated page with interactive elements, including a comment section. YouTube uniquely allows users to upload videos exceeding 10 minutes, incorporating a transcript feature. This study analysed transcripts from a curated selection of YouTube videos, as outlined in the following list:

| Table 1. YouTub Vlogger | Publication | Title |
|----------------------------|-------------|---|
| | Year | |
| Amber | 2020 | Day in my life at home |
| Alexander | 2023 | First day of *my last semester of college*!!! |
| = | 2020 | Most productive day in my life vlog!!! *w/siblings* |
| Taylor Bell | 2022 | I left NYC for Italy |
| - | 2022 | NCY VLOG: Snowy weekend day in the life |
| - | 2022 | NYC VLOG: A few days in my life |
| Emmaxolouise | 2023 | Life as a student at Edinburgh university |
| | 2021 | Realistic spring day in my life |
| | 2023 | Uni vlog, studying in cafés, wardrobe declutter, food |
| | | shopping |
| Moritz Hau | 2019 | A Full Day of Eating - My Daily Routine |
| | 2019 | Hongkong Vlog - A Day in My Life |
| | 2019 | My Daily Routine (Cold Shower, Meditation, |
| | | Workouts) |
| Gavin | 2022 | First day of school GRWM + vlog *sophomore year* |
| Holcombe | 2022 | High School Day in My Life *9th grade* |
| | 2021 | School Day in My Life Vlog *freshman year* |
| Kai - | 2023 | *realistic* Study Vlog, Nursing Midterms, Test Anxiety, |
| | | Distractions(NYC) |
| | 2023 | Day in The Life of a Male Nursing Student in NYC |
| | 2023 | My 5am *productive* NYC College morning routine |
| Kylie Jenner | 2019 | Kylie Jenner: A day in my life |
| | 2019 | VLOG: My 2019 Christmas decoration |
| | 2019 | VLOG: Taking the kylie truck to the San Fernando |
| | | Valley Rescue Mission |

Table 1. YouTube Vlog video

| Vlogger | Publication | Title |
|----------------|-------------|--|
| | Year | |
| With Love | 2023 | Day in my life, Family time, House updates, Lasagne |
| Leena | | soup recipe |
| | 2023 | First week of Ramadhan Vlog! Make Iftar with me & |
| | | my family |
| - | 2023 | Spend the first Ramadhan with me |
| Sebatian Pirie | 2021 | A Productive Day in Medical School, Ward Rounds, |
| | | Hospital Clinics & Free food |
| | 2019 | Day in the life of a Sydney University Medical student |
| - | 2020 | Productive Day in The Life of a Medical Student, |
| | | Endocrine Block |
| Sturniolo | 2022 | Halloweekend vlog |
| Triplets | 2021 | Our first time in LA- Sturniolo Triplets |
| - | 2022 | We adventure Catalina island vlog |

This section delves into the analysis of language features employed by male and female YouTube vloggers, with data classification guided by Coates' (1986) theoretical framework. Certain characteristics are commonly shared by both genders when engaging in speech, encompassing seven distinct categories: taboo and swearing, directives and commands, compliments, hedges, tag questions, minimal responses, and questions. Following a thorough examination of the data, distinctive features emerge in the utterances of male and female vloggers on YouTube, each feature differentiated through meticulous data counting. The subsequent findings and discussions are presented separately for both male and female YouTube vlogs.

- 1. Types of Language Features in Male YouTube Vlogs
 - a. Taboo and Swearing

In the exploration of male vlogs, it was observed that a significant number of vloggers utilized taboo and swearing words. For instance, in the Sturniolo Triplets' vlog "We Adventure Catalina Island" (2:59-17:43), the vlogger exclaimed, "This is fucking nuts, look at that," employing taboo language to express admiration for the scenery. Similarly, Kai's vlog "My 5am Productive NYC College Morning Routine, Nursing School + Work + Eating" (4:11-11:03) featured the vlogger expressing frustration, stating, "My house was all the way at the bottom of Manhattan which is really annoying because my train sometimes gets on delays and then I'm just fuck." In both instances, male vloggers employed taboo and swearing to convey either admiration or frustration towards a situation or object.

Coates (1986) posits that swearing and taboo words are prevalent elements in everyday conversation, often used to express strong emotions. Such language, characterized by abusive or swear words, is deemed offensive. Consistent with prior research suggesting that men tend to use more offensive language than women, the current findings align with this trend.

b. Directive and Command

This investigation reveals a frequent utilization of directive and command features in the language of male vloggers. In the Sturniolo Triplets' vlog "Our First Time in LA" (7:09-11:31), a notable instance is observed where the vlogger asserted, "Nick, shut up!" This sentence exemplifies a directive and command, where the vlogger issues an explicit order for his brother to cease talking. Coats (1986) asserts that males consistently exhibit a direct and straightforward expression

of their thoughts. This aligns with the broader observation that males typically assert more dominance in conversation and various aspects of daily life, establishing congruence with the findings of this study.

- 2. Types of Language Features in Female YouTube Vlogs
 - a. Compliment

The examination of female vloggers in this study unveiled a prevalent utilization of compliment language in their daily conversational discourse. This aligns with Coats' theory (2013), which posits that research in the United States, Britain, and New Zealand indicates females both receive and give more compliments than males. A pertinent illustration from this study is observed in Emmaxolouise's vlog "Realistic Spring Day in My Life" (9:34-11:58). Upon reviewing photos taken with friends, the vlogger, dissatisfied with the results, comments, "I don't know why, I think it was on the wrong setting which is very annoying because I would have been so cute." Here, the vlogger openly compliments herself, reflecting the proclivity of female vloggers to employ the compliment feature extensively in everyday conversations, whether directed towards individuals, objects, places, or themselves.

b. Hedges

Female vloggers use the hedges feature in their daily conversations, consistent with Coats' (2013) assertion that females tend to communicate in a "tentative" manner, employing more hedges than their male counterparts. This signifies a greater likelihood for females to incorporate hedging words, such as "you know," "I mean," "I'm sure," "kind of," and similar expressions. A case in point is discerned in Amber Alexander's vlog "Day in My Life at Home" (3:22-7:44). Here, the vlogger states, "I said my face feels weird right now because I was crying last night, and quarantine a little rough, we're all on the same boat right now, you know." The use of the hedges feature, exemplified by "you know," is employed to convey assurance that the audience comprehends the vlogger's emotional state at that particular moment.

c. Tag Question

The tag question feature surfaced in the language of female vloggers, exemplified in Talor Bell's vlog "NYC VLOG: Weekend Day in the Life" (2:25-13:13). Here, the vlogger asserts, "My brother gave it to me, this is spiced apple toddy, I also got it for Christmas, pretty neat, huh?" The vlogger employs the tag question "huh?" to affirm the certainty of her statements while inviting validation from her subscribers.

d. Minimal Response

Evidently, there is a minimal response features in the expressions of female vloggers. This deviation does not correspond with Coats' (1986) theory, which, despite recognizing the difficulties in identifying minimal response usage in YouTube vlog utterances, suggests that vloggers primarily communicate personal thoughts, ideas, experiences, and interests, with viewers taking on a passive role. As a result, encountering minimal responses in this particular context poses challenges due to the vlogger's emphasis being on self-expression rather than active engagement in discourse.

e. Questions

The prevalence of question features in female vloggers is relatively limited in this study, corresponding with Coats' (1986) assertion that females deploy questions more frequently than males. Females often prefer employing interrogative forms to foster interaction, as observed in Taylor Bell's vlog "NYC VLOG: Snowy Weekend Day in the Life" (3:43-13:13). The vlogger utilizes the question feature by prompting, "Please let me know in the comments below what you guys are watching right now?" This strategic use of questions enables vloggers to elicit responses and sustain conversations with their subscribers via the comments section on their YouTube channels.

The findings of this study diverge from certain earlier investigations. A relevant study by Thuffailah et al., (2020) titled "The language features used by Indonesian food-vloggers of different genders" explores linguistic features and utterance functions among Indonesian food vloggers. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative method and a differential language analysis, the study identifies six shared features—lexical hedges, compliments, commands, directives, swearing, taboo words, questions, and tag questions. Despite commonalities, the study observes a higher frequency of these features in male expressions, suggesting societal expectations influencing their language use. Consequently, male food vloggers strategically leverage these features to align with viewer expectations and enhance audience interaction.

In the study conducted by Anggara Putra & Prayudha (2019), titled "The Analysis of Women and Men Language Features on America's Got Talent," the objective was to discern language characteristics exhibited by female and male judges on America's Got Talent 2018. The study revealed distinct language patterns among female judges, encompassing lexical hedges, rising intonation on declaratives, empty adjectives, intensifiers, super polite forms, and emphatic stress. Conversely, male judges exhibited three language characteristics: direct forms, interruptions, and the use of swear words. The outcomes of the data analysis were presented in a descriptive format, contributing to our understanding of gender-specific language features in the context of America's Got Talent.

Rachmijati (2019) conducted the third study, titled "Language Features Utilized by Female Students' Vloggers in Articulating Their Daily Life," with the primary objective of scrutinizing the linguistic characteristics, frequency of usage, and potential motivations intrinsic to women's vlogging. Employing a descriptive qualitative methodology, the investigation applied Lakoff's (1975) foundational theory during the data analysis, leveraging three vlogs from Indonesian vlogger Nayla. J, Skannete, and Mari Bokki are the central data corpus.

In summarizing prior research, the initial study investigates language features in Indonesian food vloggers of diverse genders. The second delves into language features employed by female student vloggers in narrating their daily lives. At the same time, the third examines the language features exhibited by women and men participating in America's Got Talent. These studies exhibit divergence in content; the first focuses on Indonesian food vloggers, the second centres on America's Got Talent event, and the third scrutinizes language features in women's everyday vlogs.

In comparison, the findings of this study reveal a dichotomy in language features between male and female YouTube vloggers. Specifically, two features are identified as characteristic of male language—taboo and swearing, and directive and command. In contrast, female language features encompass compliments, hedges, tag questions, and questions, amounting to a total of four identified features.

This study not only contributes to current discourse but also anticipates informing subsequent researchers about the linguistic disparities between male and female vloggers. It sets the stage for future investigations wherein researchers may compare Coates' theory with alternative linguistic frameworks. By conducting similar analyses and scrutinizing language features in the context of dialogues involving both genders, scholars can deepen our understanding of linguistic dynamics and contribute to the broader field of language studies.

CONCLUSION

In the realm of male language features, instances of profanity, including both strong and mild expressions, are discernible in YouTube vlogs featuring Sturniolo Triplets, Sebastian Pirie, and Kai. Similarly, the directive and command language feature is prevalent among YouTube vloggers such as Sturniolo Triplets, Gavin Holcombe, Moritz Hau, and Sebastian Pirie.

Conversely, within the domain of female language features, expressions of commendation are evident in the content of various YouTube vloggers, including Emmaxolouise, Taylor Bell, Kylie Jenner, With Love Leena, and Amber Alexander. This compliment feature is extensively employed by female vloggers on YouTube to extol individuals, objects, places, or even themselves. The hedges language feature is also discerned in the discourse of female YouTube vloggers such as Emmaxolouise, Taylor Bell, Kylie Jenner, With Love Leena, and Amber Alexander. The vloggers utilize hedging to convey either confidence or hesitancy in relation to their statements.

However, the tag question feature is identified in only one female YouTube vlogger, while the minimal response feature is notably absent in this study. Given that the data is sourced from utterances in YouTube vlogs, the identification of minimal response usage proves challenging. Many vloggers predominantly focus on self-expression when discussing specific subjects like thoughts, ideas, experiences, and interests, with viewers serving as passive recipients. Consequently, pinpointing limited use of responses on a YouTube vlog is a challenging task. Therefore, the vlogger was unable to respond with a minimal response in this context. Lastly, the question feature is employed by female vloggers on YouTube as a means to engage in communication with their audience through comments on their YouTube channel

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