

A SOIOLINGUISTICS ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S LANGUAGE FEATURES AND FUNCTIONS IN THE FILM ELEMENTAL

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the features and functions of women's language used by female characters in the film *Elemental*. The research is based on Lakoff's (2004) framework on women's language features and Pearson's (1985) theory on language functions. Using documentation and note-taking methods, the research analyzes the frequency of women's language features in the characters' speech. The analysis identified eight features of women's language: lexical hedges or fillers, empty adjectives, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super-polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, rising intonation, and emphatic stress, with lexical hedges or fillers appearing most frequently. Four language functions were also found. The lexical hedges helped initiate discussions and express feelings, while intensifiers, emphatic stress, and empty adjectives conveyed emotions. Hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, and avoiding strong swear words functioned to soften speech. These findings indicate that women's language in *Elemental* is predominantly used for emotional expression and interaction politeness, suggesting that the film constructs its female characters through linguistic patterns traditionally associated with femininity. This representation reflects how media discourse can reproduce conventional gendered communication norms, positioning women as emotionally expressive and socially attentive speakers, and thus contributes to broader discussion about how popular media shapes and reinforces gender representation through language.

Keywords: women's language, function, female character



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INTRODUCTION

The film *Elemental* (2023) produced by Pixar Animation Studios, was chosen as the research object because it presents a narrative that prominently features a female protagonist whose interactions and dialogue play a central role in the development of the story. As the main female character, Ember frequently communicates her thoughts, emotions, and attitudes through conversations with other characters, making her speech a valuable source for examining linguistic patterns associated with gender representation.

In sociolinguistics, language and gender describe how language reflects and reinforces ideas of masculinity and femininity in society. These representations can appear through vocabulary choices, speech patterns, or grammatical constructions that are culturally associated with masculine or feminine identities. Although gender is often associated with men and women, sociolinguistic discussions distinguish between gender and sex category. According to Coates (2004), sex categories are based on biological differences between “male” and “female,” although these differences are not always clearly visible in social interaction.

Gender, therefore, is understood as a social and cultural construct that is performed and negotiated through language use. In media discourse, language also plays a significant role in shaping how gender identities are portrayed and interpreted by audiences. Therefore, analyzing the language used by female characters in *Elemental* is relevant to sociolinguistic studies because it provides insight into how popular media represents femininity through speech patterns and contributes to broader gendered discourse in contemporary media.

Gender is not just a sexual category but a style of language that is commonly used in everyday life. Women can use language in ways that come across as more expressive, cooperative, or sympathetic, as suggested by Tannen (1990). Women's language does not show people based on their biological gender; it shows language style or how people communicate. Lakoff (2004) suggested that women's speech was characterized by linguistic features such as lexical hedges, the hedging function of which indicates doubt or confidence in what has been said.

Previous studies have examined gender differences in language use across media and social contexts. Pade and Ntou (2022), in their analysis of *A Haunted House 2*, found that Malcolm frequently uses taboo words, commands, and nonstandard grammar associated with African American Vernacular English (AAVE), reflecting a direct and dominant speech style. In contrast, Megan's speech aligns with Lakoff's framework of women's language, as she uses lexical hedges, fillers, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, and avoids strong swear words, reflecting politeness and emotional expressiveness shaped by social expectations. These differences support longstanding views on gendered communication, including Lakoff's foundational work *Language and Woman's Place* (1975). Similar themes appear in studies of media and education, such as analyses of female language features in *Mulan* and research on student language variation, which highlight how gender norms influence speech patterns. Research has also extended to digital contexts, including Anhar (2019), who examined gendered language in the #MuteRKelliin Twitter hashtag and found that traditional distinctions between men's



and women's language are becoming less rigid. Likewise, Kapitاسari (2023), in a study of *White Chicks*, showed that both female characters and male characters portraying women used features of women's language, suggesting that such features can function as performative social markers rather than fixed gender traits. Together, these studies demonstrate that women's language features are shaped by social roles, media representation, and evolving norms, providing a foundation for the present study's focus on how women's language is represented in film.

According to Coates (2004:4), "gender" refers to socially constructed categories based on sex, while "sex" pertains to biological distinctions. The biological traits typically associated with being male or female, such as reproductive organs and secondary sexual characteristics, represent the physical aspects of gender. Conversely, the roles, actions, expectations, and conventions that society assigns to individuals based on their perceived gender encompass the social dimension of gender. Holmes (2013:159) aligns with this definition by employing the term gender instead of sex, as "sex" has come to refer to categories defined by biological characteristics. In contrast, gender is more fitting for differentiating individuals based on their socio-cultural behaviors, including speech. In summary, gender can be defined as a socially constructed category or behavior that influences people's identities and characteristics, including their manner of speaking.

Women have historically used language that reinforces their subordinate status, effectively 'colluding in their subordination' through their speech. According to Holmes (2013:301), women's language must reflect their societal roles and the ways they

communicate. To be deemed feminine and to adhere to gender norms, women are expected to speak in certain ways. Failing to do so may lead to mockery and criticism. Research supports these stereotypes, showing that women tend to ask more questions and use more polite language. Such speech is often seen as "powerless" due to its association with women's lower social status. Moreover, women are more likely to use standard language linked to social class, which is perceived as formal. This expectation arises from society's view that women should set an example and often act as role models for children. According to Lakoff (2004:77), women's language features include the linguistic aspects of feminine speech. The manner and language uttered by women tend to be 15 different from that of men; ten features such as lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjective, precise color terms, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words and emphatic stress are formulated to identify women's language, which was explained more deeply in this section.

Women use a particular language to deliver something to others, and they usually say it indirectly, thus allowing for misunderstanding. Therefore, we should know the function of women's language to answer the question of the function of using women's language; the author uses the theory according to Pearson (1985). Pearson's five language functions theory by Pearson (1985:187) is to express uncertainty, get responses, soften utterances, start a discussion, and express a feeling. According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003:167), women's speech is frequently seen as hesitancy or reluctance to make a statement. In essence,



women use their language, such as "Really?" to convey any hesitation they may have when speaking. I mistook you for his romantic partner.

Women's language appears in everyday communication and is often reflected in fictional works such as movies. Animated films, particularly those produced by Disney and Pixar, frequently portray characters whose speech reflects certain social and cultural identities, including gender. One example is the film *Elemental* (2023), which features a prominent female protagonist, Ember Lumen, whose interactions with other characters involve various expressions of emotion, politeness, and interpersonal negotiation. Through her dialogue, several linguistic patterns associated with women's language can be observed. These portrayals make the film relevant for examining how gendered language is represented in media narratives.

Based on this background, the researcher is interested in conducting the study. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) What types of women's language features appear in the speech of the female characters in *Elemental*? and (2) What communicative functions do these women's language features perform in the interactions of the female characters in the film?

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to identify and interpret women's language features and their communicative functions in context. The data source was the film *Elemental* (2023), an American animated romantic comedy-drama depicting anthropomorphic natural elements (fire, water, air, and earth) living

in Element City. The primary data consisted of utterances produced by female characters, particularly Ember Lumen and other female figures appearing in the film. The data were collected using documentation and note-taking techniques. First, the researcher watched the film several times to understand the context of the dialogues. Then, the researcher identified and transcribed utterances spoken by female characters that potentially contained women's language features. From this process, a total of 45 utterances were selected as the research data because they clearly demonstrated linguistic characteristics relevant to women's language. The selection criteria included: (1) the utterance was spoken by a female character, (2) the utterance contained linguistic features associated with women's language based on Lakoff's framework, and (3) the utterance occurred in a clear conversational context that allowed the function of the expression to be interpreted. The data were then analyzed qualitatively using Lakoff's theory (2004) to classify the features of women's language and Pearson's (1985) theory to determine their communicative functions. The analysis involved identifying relevant utterances, categorizing them into types of women's language features, such as lexical hedges or fillers, empty adjectives, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super-polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, rising intonation, and emphatic stress examining their communicative functions in context, and interpreting patterns of usage. The findings are presented using an informal descriptive method (Zaim, 2014), in which selected dialogue excerpts are described and explained to illustrate the linguistic features



identified and the functions they perform within the interactions of the characters.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Female characters in *Elemental* produced the utterances analyzed in this study. The results of the analysis are presented in the following section to address the research questions.

Women's Language Features in Elemental Movie

Within the framework of women's language, several key features can be identified, as outlined in Lakoff's (2004) theory. These include the use of lexical hedges like "I think" or "maybe," which soften statements and introduce uncertainty. Rising intonation is often used to express uncertainty or seek confirmation, while empty adjectives like "adorable" convey emotional reactions without strong assertion. Intensifiers such as "really" amplify meaning, and hypercorrect grammar reflects a more formal, polite style. Women's language also often includes super polite forms like "Would you mind if...?" and the avoidance of strong swear words to maintain propriety. Lastly, emphatic stress highlights important words or emotions. These features, often seen in films, illustrate how women's language fosters politeness, emotional engagement, and social harmony, in line with Lakoff's theory.

1. Lexical hedges or fillers

Many lexical hedges or fillers were found in *Elemental* movie uttered by female characters. You know, well, I think, and I guess often added. As proposed by Lakoff (2004) these words are part of lexical hedges or fillers. This feature was the most

frequently used by female characters in this movie.

Different women's language function was presented in each data. The words you know, I think, and I guess functioned to express uncertainty, as stated by Lakoff (2004). Meanwhile well functioned to start a discussion, as stated by Pearson (1985). Some information about lexical hedges or fillers is explained below.

[1] 00:37:27

"Well, let me know when it's done, I guess."

The word *well* was used in Ember's utterance above. It can be seen in the datum [1] that *well* was a part of the lexical hedges of women's language type proposed by Lakoff (2004). This datum took time in the scene when Ember and Wade were at the canal. They were finally found the problem source of why there were water in Fire Town. The door that supposed to bound the canal and Fire Town was broken. Ember and Wade then tried to overcome the problem by covering the door with sandbags. Wade then told Ember that he would report to the city crew. Ember turned her attention to the sands that stuck in Wade's face. After Wade had removed the sand, Ember got back to the discussion by saying "Well, let me know when it's done, I guess." And used the word *well* to start again the main discussion.

[2] 00:47:19

"Well, it won't unless you hold the bag straight!"

As proposed by Lakoff (2004), data [2] was included in lexical hedges performed by the character of Ember. It happened when Ember and Wade were at the beach to fill other sandbags purposed to cover the leak. Within the utterance, the word *well* provides the thought that Ember wants to utter to Wade that the things would not



going to work if Wade still hold the bag wrong. In this context, Ember tried to tell Wade that he has to hold the bag right so she can easily put the sand into the bag and get faster to their purpose.

[3] 00:47:53

“**Maybe** you’re right when you said my temper is me trying to tell me something.”

The expression *maybe* clearly shows in the data [3]. Maybe is a part of lexical hedges of women’s language type proposed by Lakoff (2004). It took times when Ember lower her temper because she felt disappoint to herself for causing all those chaos. Ember remembered when Wade ever told her that her temper might be tried to tell the something. Ember’s utterance shows hesitation of Ember herself because she thought again about what was Wade just said to her before.

2. Empty Adjective

Empty adjectives refer to a category of adjectives that don't provide clear, concrete information by themselves but rely on the context or the speaker's perspective to be understood. These data provide information about how the adjectives are categorized as conveying feelings adjectives.

[4] 01:09:57

“Are you kidding? That was **amazing!** I finally saw a Vivisteria!”

An empty adjective existed in the middle of Ember’s utterance in data [4], which was *amazing*. Lakoff (2004) stated that women convey their feelings without providing any particular details. The data above takes place when Ember and Wade just finally going out from the water at the theme park. Wade need to push the bubble, which Ember was existed in it, hardly to take Ember out from the water. And when they

finally get themselves out, Wade feels guilty and apologize to Ember for what have just happened to them. But, Ember declined his apologize and she happily told Wade that was an amazing experience that happen in her life, because she finally can see the Vivisteria Flower which she has dreamed all this time. In this dialogue, Ember uses the adjective *amazing* to express her mutual attraction and appreciation for Wade.

[5] 00:54:35

“Yeah, it’s **amazing.**”

An empty adjective appears at the end of Ember’s utterance in data [5]. According to Lakoff (2004), women often express their feelings through adjectives that lack specific details, conveying emotion in a more general way. It happened when Ember was at Wade’s family dinner. Wade’s uncle amazed because he thought they were actually speak in different language because they were two different elements, and then Ember was agreeing his thought and clarifying that they certainly speak the same language for her entire life.

[6] 00:54:10

“He’s a **wonderful** painter.”

Based on Lakoff (2004) the word *wonderful* is included to be called an empty adjective because it does not provide measurable or detailed information. The word *wonderful* doesn’t describe a concrete detail about the skill or any style of the painter. This datum was utterance by Brook when Ember came to her place to join the dinner. She introduced her brother to Ember that her brother is a wonderful painter. She told Ember about one of her brother’s painter was exist in the Element City Museum’s as a permanent collection.



3. Intensifier

These features were also used by female characters in this movie. Really, very and so were often added. The following feature is represented to highlight or strengthen words that have distinct meanings. The data are provided to show how intensifier works within utterances.

[7] 00:58:20

“Thank you, Mrs. Ripples. It was...
It was **really** great.”

Lakoff (2004) stated that *really* is a part of intensifiers, datum [7] has a word that belonged to an intensifier, *really* in utterances spoken by Ember, the datum also placed before the adjective great. It can be seen that the word *so* in data belonged to the intensifier. This datum was taken on the scene after Ember finished the dinner with Wade’s family. It was her new experience and she felt impressed. Ember then said thank you and utter her feeling to Brook that she was really happy for the dinner.

[8] 00:52:41

“Ember! I’m **so** excited to finally meet you. Do we hug, or wave, or...?”

This datum was uttered by Brook on the scene where she met Ember for the first time. She felt really excited because Wade had told her about Ember all this time since they were meet at the first time. Lakoff (2004) stated that *so* is a part of intensifiers, datum [8] has a word that belonged to an intensifier *so* in utterances spoken by Brook, the data are also placed before the adjective excited. It can be seen that the word *so* in data belonged to the intensifier.

[9] 00:58:38

“I just didn’t know she’d be **so** smoky.”

According to Lakoff (2004), women address attention by emphasizing or bolstering words that have specific

meanings or are more difficult to convey. In the datum [9] above, the word *so* is the part of intensifiers. This datum was uttered by Brook. This datum was taken when Brook met Ember for the first time and she never expected that the girl who had been told by Wade all this time was Ember the fire element that she meant smoky. But Brook was kept welcoming Ember with pleasure.

4. Hypercorrect grammar

The following feature is carefully represented to illustrate the grammatical context of the main character, providing insight into their language use and communication style. The data presented serve as evidence to demonstrate how hypercorrect grammar is subtly implied in the character's speech, reflecting patterns of linguistic precision. Lakoff (2004) stated that women are more likely than men to use proper grammar in their speech, as a way to maintain politeness and demonstrate respect toward the people they interact with in various social settings. Additionally, some data are explained below to further elaborate on how this concept is applied and analyzed within the given context

[10] 00:58:50

Brook: It’s a long way from the city, but **it would** be an incredible start.

According to Lakoff (2004), *it would* be indicated as hypercorrect grammar, this datum [10] showed Brook’s use of *it would* instead of “it’d” is an example of hypercorrect grammar. It existed on Brook’s utterance when she showed her support to Ember about her talent and the opportunity that she has told Ember. This shows women’s language tends to use more formal or polite constructions, particularly in sensitive or important contexts. Using ***it would*** instead of the contracted “**it’d**” adds a layer of formality and politeness, making



the statement sound more measured or considerate. This reflects a tendency in women's speech to avoid sounding too abrupt or casual in serious or encouraging contexts.

[11] 00:10:13

“Sorry, **got to** grab some stuff. Going for Dad’s record.”

[12] 00:11:14

“Nice try, Mom. **Got to** go.”

An example in the data of hypercorrect grammar is shown in these data [11] and [12] the *got to* phrase was rarely spoken clearly. It was pronounced as *gotta*. It can be seen in the data that Ember was still trying to speak clearly, which is related to hypercorrect grammar as proposed by Lakoff (2004). The data provided information about Ember when she was disturbing her mom while doing a reading to her client. And Cinder then told Ember to find herself a partner as what Cinder’s mother has requested to her when she’s dying.

5. Super polite form

The following feature is represented to show how politeness in the main character’s dialogue. The data is provided to show the politeness of the main character in the movie and her femininity. Women tend to know more about the right thing to say rather than men as stated by Lakoff (2004).

[13] 00:27:56

“Some game? This is the playoffs. So, **forgive me** if I don’t want to hear a sob story about the problems of some little shop.”

As stated by Lakoff (2004) a super polite form in the datum [13], *forgive me*, was shown in the data. It was uttered by Gale when she felt angry for Ember in the playoffs stadium. Ember at first was tried to communicate to Gale about the citations.

But turned out Gale get mad because she thought it was not the time to discuss it but Ember kept trying which made Gale felt disturb and caused a little conflict between Ember and Gale.

[14] 00:31:22

“**Please** take all that off.”

A form of *Please* was uttered by Ember, the datum [14] can be identified as a super polite form as the one proposed by Lakoff (2004). The datum [14] was taken from the scene where Wade has bought some merchandises and Ember thought that he looks really weird in wearing those things. Turned out, she told Wade to take those things he just bought out from him.

6. Avoidance of strong swear words

In Lakoff’s theory, women’s avoidance of strong swear words is shaped by societal expectations, which encourage women to speak in ways that are polite, indirect, and in alignment with their prescribed gender roles. These roles demand that women maintain emotional control, adhere to social norms of politeness, and avoid language that could be seen as crude or aggressive. Therefore, women tend to steer clear of using strong swear words, particularly in public or formal contexts, as doing so would be viewed as inappropriate or unladylike. The following feature shows how the main character tries to avoid strong swear words in her dialogue. The data is provided to show the politeness of the main character in the movie and her femininity.

[15] 00:16:50

“**Dang!**”

The first datum [15] of this part showed that *dang* word which refers to damn that was uttered by Ember. It belonged to the avoidance of strong swear words as the one proposed by Lakoff (2004). The datum was existed in the scene where Wade showed



himself for the first time in the Fire shop. He was get sucked by the leak on the pipe and found out himself in the Fire shop. He sucked some waters which causing his body shape turned to look more athletic. Ember got shocked by the existance of Wade. She choosed more polite words even though she had the chance to use strong swear words, which is coherent with women's language features theory about the avoidance of strong swear words.

[16] 00:52:18

“Oh my gosh!”

Another datum [16] found demonstrated that Ember used the expression "*oh my gosh*" in utterance. This choice aligns with the avoidance of strong swear words, as proposed by Lakoff (2004). Even though Ember had the opportunity to use stronger language, she opted for a more polite alternative. This scene took the moment when Ember for the first time visit Wade mom's place. She visited Wade because she needed to know if Gale has to call Wade or not yet. Wade then asked Ember to join his family dinner while waiting Gale's call. Ember then agreed to Wade and he brought her in. She was got shocked by the huge building and said "oh my gosh!" This behavior reflects women's language features theory, which suggests that women tend to avoid using harsh swear words in favor of softer, more socially acceptable language.

7. Emphatic Stress

Lakoff (2004: 81) found that women tend to speak in italics more than men, meaning they frequently use emphatic stress to highlight certain words or phrases in their speech. This stylistic choice allows the hearer to immediately grasp the speaker's intended meaning with greater clarity and emotional depth, making communication

more expressive and engaging. Moreover, this linguistic tendency aligns with the women's language function proposed by Pearson (1985), which emphasizes the role of language in expressing emotions and personal feelings. According to this theory, women are more likely to verbalize their emotions as a way to foster intimacy, strengthen social bonds, and create a sense of understanding between themselves and the listener. One key strategy they employ is stressing specific words to enhance the meaning of their utterances, ensuring that their emotions and intentions are effectively communicated. To illustrate this phenomenon in real-life interactions, some relevant data are provided and analyzed below.

[17] 00:34:40

“I was *so* excited.”

In this datum [17], it showed a woman's language according to Lakoff (2004). Word stress can be identified from the datum [17] above, word *so* was stressed in the data. The word *so* was uttered by Ember to express her feeling. She told Wade that she was really wants to see a Vivisteria flower since she was a kid. Until that time she was so excited when her father brought her to Garden Central Station to see Vivisteria Flower.

[18] 00:35:08

“My dad was *so* angry and embarrassed.”

This datum [18] was connected to the previous datum [17]. According to Lakoff (2004), women like to stress some words, which makes it one of the women's language types, emphatic stress. In this scene, Ember explained to Wade that when her father brought her to Garden Central Station to see Vivisteria Flower, turned out failed because the security was not allowed Fires to come in. She told Wade that her



father was so angry because the information said fire was included but the crowd wasn't support them.

[19] 1:01:13

"If your father finds out... Fire and water cannot be **together**."

Lakoff (2004) theory of women's language emphasizes emotional expression, politeness, and social cohesion. Emphatic stress, in this theory, is used to convey emotional intensity or to highlight an important word or concept within a sentence. Cinder was caught Ember and Wade together. She was so angry. That is why she emotionally told ember that fire and water cannot be together because they were opposite elements. In this sentence, "fire and water" are the key concepts. These two elements symbolize opposition or conflict (they cannot coexist). Thus, stressing the word *together* would add meaning to the statement and convey the severity of the situation.

[20] 1:13:18

"I cannot throw all of that away just for **you**."

Emphasis on the word you on data [20], stress on the word *you* which emphasizing Ember's meaning that Wade, despite his importance, is not enough to outweigh her family's sacrifices. This scene happened after Wade finally can took Ember to see Vivisteria Flower at the Garden Central Station. After they finally can touch each other for the first time, Wade and Ember had a conflict. It was because, Wade told Ember to follow what she wanted herself to be and try to be honest to her dad. Ember was really mad and still stubborn that what she wants wasn't a matter, but what her parent's have sacrificed for was. She tried to tell Wade that she would not sacrifice anything from her life just to keeping Wade in her side. Refers to Lakoff (2004) theory,

stressing you would emphasize the personal nature of the conflict and highlight the tension between individual desires and family loyalty.

8. Rising intonation

In Lakoff's (2004) theory on women's language features, rising intonation is an important characteristic that reflects social norms around politeness, indirectness and deference in communication. Rising intonation refers to the way the pitch of the speaker's voice rises towards the end of a sentence or phrase, making it sound more like a question than a statement. According to Lakoff, this feature is often used in women's speech and serves multiple purposes within the context of gendered language use.

[21] 00:51:56

"**Your family?** (nervously) Um, okay. I'll come up for a bit."

The rising intonation could be found in the phrase "*your family?*" uttered by Ember. Started when Ember came to Wade's mom's place to get information about Gale. Because at that time Gale have not confirm anything to Wade yet, Wade then asked Ember to join his family dinner while waiting a call from Gale. When he suggested that to Ember, she felt hesitant to meet Wade's family. Therefore, her action to add a rising intonation in the "*your family?*" dialogue was to express her uncertainty to join the dinner and to meet Wade's family.

Woman's Language Function in Elemental Movie

Within the framework, women's language can be categorized into several distinct types or functions based on the theoretical framework established by Pearson (1985). According to this theory, the writer



explained that there are five functions of woman's language features, those are to start discussion, to express uncertainty, get responses, soften the utterance, and express feeling. This theory provides a detailed approach to understanding how women's language differs from other forms of communication, with a particular focus on the unique linguistic features and patterns that emerge in their speech. In the following section, this paper had explored how these classifications are structured, offering a comprehensive look at the various linguistic functions that are commonly associated with women's language, along with the specific features that define each category based on the datum that found in Elemental movie.

1. To start discussion

To start discussion function of woman's language based on the theory of Pearson (1985) is how that the typical of woman's language features has exist to start a conversation between people. The feature that commonly used to start discussion is lexical hedges. The words such as "well", "anyway", "so", and "I think" are those lexical hedges that commonly used to start a discussion. The datum below which found in the Elemental Movie are the implementation example.

[22] 00:27:21

Ember : "Yeah, **so**, uh, gale. My name is Ember lumen. My family runs a fire shop. Wade wrote us a bunch of tickets yesterday..."

Gale : "Oh, lumen? Yeah, a fire shop with 30 citations."

[23] 00:27:26

Ember : "Thirty? **Anyway**, friend, I was hoping we could work something out."

Gale : "Come on, ref! are your eyes in the back of your head?" (shouting the game, and still ignoring Ember)

[24] 00:27:31

Ember : "Yeah, bummer. Oh, yeah. Okay, **so**, the 30 citations."

Gale : "Do you mind? There's a game going on."

In this conversation, there are existed 3 connected data. This scene takes time when Ember and Wade had to playoffs stadium to meet Gale aimed to discuss about the citations of her Fire shop that Wade had wrote yesterday. In datum [22] there is a lexical hedge which is the word *so*. In this datum, the word *so* was used by Ember to start the discussion with Gale by introducing herself first. She was directly introduced that she was who owned the Fire Place.

The second lexical hedged that found in datum [23] is the word *anyway* which also used to start another discussion that related to the citations. She started the discussion slowly by saying *anyway* and she move to her purpose to ask Gale if the citations of her dad's Fire shop can be canceled.

The last datum found in the conversation above is datum [24] which contain a lexical hedge *so*. Ember added this lexical hedge because Gale still kept her focus on the playoffs game. Ember kept trying to start the discussion about the citations with Gale. And she did get Gale's bad respond. Gale considered that Ember was disturbing her to watch the thing she really liked which is the playoffs. It was coherent with the woman's language function purposed by Pearson (1985) that one of the functions of woman's language features is to start a discussion.

[25] 00:27:31

Ember : "**Well**, that little shop matters way more than a bunch of



overpaid cloud puffs blowing
some ball around.”
Gale : “I dare you to say cloud puffs
one more time.”

As also written in datum [25], the word *well* was also a lexical hedge that added by Ember in order to start a discussion. In this scene Ember was trying to talk to Gale about the citations. This data was coherent with the woman’s language function purposed by Pearson (1985).

2. To express feeling

To express feeling function of woman’s language based on the theory of Pearson (1985) is how that the typical of woman’s language features has exist to express the speaker’s feeling. The features that commonly used to express feeling are empty adjective, intensifier, hypercorrect grammar, and emphatic stress.

[26] 00:47:12

Wade : “It might be time to tell him.”
Ember : “Yeah, right. And then tell him what? that I got us shut down and destroyed his dream? **Huh!**”

The woman’s language features emphatic stress was found in the word “huh” in datum [26]. This feature added to express the dialogue clearer. The feature was used by Ember to express her emotion. This datum took time when Ember and Wade was at the beach to fill more sandbags. Because Wade thought that that thing not going to happen, Wade told Ember to be honest to her Ashfa. Ember then answered it emotionally by adding the stress on “huh” which made it clearly means that Ember was angry. This datum is related to the theory of Pearson (1985) about the functions of woman’s language features.

[27] (01:16:55 – 01:17:05)

Wade : “I love you, Ember Lumen. And I’m pretty sure you love me too.”
Ember : “No, Wade, I don’t.”
Bernie : “That’s not true. I did the reading. Bernie, It’s true love.”
Ember : “No, mom, you’re wrong, Wade, go.”
Wade : “But, Ember...”
Ember : “I don’t **love** you.”

The emphatic stress that was added by Ember in datum [27] was exist in the word love. This scene was happened when it was in the celebration of Bernie’s retirement. After a huge conflict between Ember and Wade yesterday, Wade got back to meet Ember to beg to say to her father about what she actually wants to do and wants to be. Wade then expressed his feeling to Ember that he loved her. Cinder also approved that they were true love. In front of the crowd, Ember firmly disagreed Wade’s and Cinder thought by saying “I don’t love you.”. This related to Pearson (1985) that one of the functions of woman’s language features is to express feeling. The stress that Ember put in the word love made the utterance really clear that she didn’t feel the same as Wade.

[28] 00:27:31

Bernie : “I don’t understand. What’s going on?”
Cinder : “Just say something to make the Water guy cry, okay?”
Bernie : “Um... Uh... You are no longer panned.”
Wade : “Banned.”
Bernie : “Banned.”
Ember : “I **want to** explore the world with you, Wade Ripple. I **want to** have you with me in my life.”

As seen from datum [28] above, Ember was uttered hypercorrect grammar form. According to Pearson (1985) woman oftentimes used this feature to express their



feeling. This datum was found when Wade and Ember were got trapped in the Fire Shop. Because of the high temperature the Water guy got vaporized. Ember thought he will not able to be back. But then when Ember hugged with her family, she heard the water dripped. Ember remembered that she could make him back by making him cry. Ember then told some sad story that Wade used to uttered to Ember which made him cry himself. Cinder told Bernie to did the same. When Ember said she want to explore the world, and want to be with Wade in her life, she told it with an hypercorrect grammar which means she really meant what she said.

3. To soften the utterance

According to Pearson's (1985) theory on women's language, one of the primary functions of women's language is to soften utterances, making them more polite and indirect. This softening is a key aspect of the way women often communicate, especially in maintaining social harmony and avoiding conflict.

Pearson suggests that women tend to use language to convey politeness, emotional warmth, and to manage relationships in a non-threatening way. These examples of the application below are the datum found in Elemental Movie.

[29] 00:38:22

Wade : "He doesn't have to know. We can meet in the city. I promised nothing weird. Maybe a little pruning?"
Ember : (chuckles) "**Sorry**, that's not going to happen."

The following data [29] was also categorized as the function of women's language to soften the utterance, as proposed by Pearson (1985). The dialogue above shows Ember was talking to Wade in

the place of the water problem source. Wade then asked Ember before she got back home if tomorrow she has time to meet him. Ember intended to decline Wade's invitation by saying the word sorry to make her thought uttered politely since Wade was also asked her nicely. According to Pearson (1985) theory, woman's language features in this context is primarily used to soften the utterance, making it less direct and more polite.

[30] 00:31:55

Gale : "You got until Friday. If you can find the leak and get a crew to fix it by then, those tickets are forgiven. If not, your dad's shop gets shut down."

Ember : "**Thank you!**"

It can be said that the super polite form of woman's language used in the data [29] has a function that is related to the women's language function purposed by Pearson (1985) to soften an utterance. This data had taken on the scene after Ember, Gale, and Wade watched the playoffs game. Gale finally gave Ember chance to cancel those citations that had written by Wade the day before with some conditions. Ember and Wade agreed the Gale's offer, that is why her utterance "thank you" belongs to woman's language feature to soften the utterance.

[30] 00:20:37

Ember : "So, it's time to hand them over."
Wade : "Oh, boy, I'm sorry. This is gonna be really disappointing for you."
Ember : "Oh, no, no, no, no, no."
Wade : "Sorry."
Ember : "**Please**, no."

The function of woman's language feature to soften the utterance also showed



in the datum [30]. It happened when Ember and Wade just arrived to Wade's office to send the citations of Ember's Fire shop. Ember had been seeking for Wade not to send the citations. According to Pearson (1985), instead of Ember saying a harsh "No!", Ember's "Please, no" sounds more pleading and less aggressive.

4. To express uncertainty

According to Pearson (1985), one of the key functions of women's language features is to express uncertainty. This function is closely tied to the social expectations and roles that women are often expected to fulfill, such as being more emotionally attuned, considerate, and non-confrontational in their communication. The use of uncertainty in language allows women to maintain a more indirect, tentative, and polite way of speaking, avoiding the imposition of authority and reducing potential conflict in conversations.

[31] 00:58:20

Brook : "And I mean what I said about your talent. I have a friend who runs the best glassmaking firm in the world. During dinner, I slipped out and I made a call and I told her about you. They're looking for an intern. It could be an amazing opportunity."
Ember : "**For real?**" (slightly smile and eyebrows down)

Based on the datum [31] found in Elemental movie, the rising intonation that ember created on the dialog "for real?" was to express her uncertainty. Started when Brook told her friend about Ember's talent. Brook then thought to offer Ember a chance to go a little far from the city to join an

internship. With the facial expression that happened on Ember that time, she was at the between on she needed to respect and response politely to Brook offer, and she was disappointed about Brook's thought because she was thinking that she could not do anything out from continuing her dad's Fire shop. This data could approve that rising intonation on woman's language feature could express uncertainty as discussed on Pearson (1985) theory.

[32] 00:43:20

Courier : "Ember Lumen. Delivery for Ember Lumen."
Cinder : "**Flowers for Ember?**"

Another function of woman's language also could be found in the datum [32]. The rising intonation that uttered by Cinder was related to the theory of Pearson (1985) which the function of woman's language features was to express the uncertainty. This datum was found in the scene when Wade need to bring news to Ember, he slipped in the flowers vase so he won't be discovered by Cinder and Bernie. Cinder as the mother of Ember felt shocked and hesitant because she knew that her daughter, Ember, didn't have a partner yet. But at the same time Cinder also felt happy because she knew that Ember has been sent some flowers by someone which means she already has her own partner. But ss just knew by Ember, she directly took all the vases and brought them down.

[33] 00:31:55

Ember : "Oh, flame. My temper caused this. So, **we're searching for water somewhere in a canal?** Those canals go everywhere."

In this datum [33] it existed rising intonation of woman's language feature. According to Pearson (1985), this feature was commonly used to express uncertainty



as what the dialog has showed. This datum was taken when Ember and Wade finally got the chance from Gale to reduce the citations. But they needed to found out the leaks source. Wade then told Ember how he could ended up in Ember's place, he started from the canals. When Ember got to heard it, she got confused. The canals were too wide to be Explored within days. It went everywhere in the Fire city. Woman would rather to raised her intonation to express their uncertainty as what Ember did when she felt not sure to explore the huge canals to find the source of the leak.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results above, it can be concluded that the female characters in the *Elemental* movie employ several features and functions of women's language. The features identified in the data include lexical hedges or fillers, empty adjectives, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super-polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, rising intonation, and emphatic stress. Among these, lexical hedges or fillers appear most frequently in the utterances of the female characters. This frequent use indicates that hedging plays an important role in shaping the communicative style of the female characters, particularly in expressing uncertainty and maintaining interpersonal politeness. Four communicative functions were also identified. Lexical hedges function to initiate discussion and express uncertainty, while intensifiers, emphatic stress, and empty adjectives function to express feelings. Meanwhile, hypercorrect grammar, super-polite forms, and the avoidance of strong swear words function to soften utterances and maintain politeness in interaction. Overall, the findings show that the use of women's language in the film

is strongly oriented toward emotional expression and interpersonal harmony.

Theoretically, these findings support Lakoff's perspective that women's language tends to emphasize politeness, emotional expression, and cooperative interaction. The study also highlights how media discourse, particularly animated films, can reproduce and normalize gendered linguistic patterns that align with traditional representations of femininity. This suggests that fictional narratives not only reflect sociolinguistic theories of gendered speech but also participate in shaping audience perceptions of how women are expected to communicate. Therefore, the results contribute to sociolinguistic discussions on gender representation in media by demonstrating how linguistic features associated with women's language are embedded in character construction and storytelling. For future research, scholars are encouraged to examine women's language across different media genres or compare the language of male and female characters to explore broader patterns of gender representation. In addition, further studies could analyze authentic spoken interactions in real-life contexts, such as workplace communication, tourism services, classroom discourse, or political debates to investigate whether similar linguistic patterns occur in natural conversations. Such studies would deepen the understanding of how gendered language operates both in mediated discourse and in everyday communication.

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