

The Comparison of the Use of Lexical Hedges, Intensifiers and Super Polite Forms in CLT Approach

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ABSTRACT: *This research aims to compare the use of lexical hedges, intensifiers, and super polite forms in the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. The study is grounded in two theories: Lakoff's (2004) women's language features and Larsen-Freeman and Anderson's (2013) CLT. The data collection method includes documentation and note-taking techniques. The analysis is qualitative, focusing on the frequency and context of the language features used by both male and female students. The findings reveal that in average, female student and lecturer use more lexical hedges or filler compared to male students. In the other hand, male students more to use the intensifiers and super polite forms in average in debating class. This research contributes to the understanding of how these language features are used in the CLT context and their potential implications for language learning and communication.*

KEYWORDS –*Lexical Hedges, Intensifiers, Super Polite Forms, Debate, CLT*

I. INTRODUCTION

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a widely adopted approach in language education that emphasizes the development of communicative competence, including the ability to use language effectively in real-life situations (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson 2013). One of the key components of CLT is the use of authentic language materials and activities that simulate real-life interaction. In this context, the use of lexical hedges, intensifiers and super polite forms can play a significant role in shaping the way students communicate and interact with each other.

Lexical hedges, such as “in my opinion”, “I believe” and “We think” are used to soften or weaken the force of a statement, making it less definitive or certain. Intensifiers, on the other hand, are used to emphasize or intensify the meaning of a word or phrase, making it more forceful or emphatic. Super polite forms, such as “please”, “would like”, and “have to” are used to express politeness and respect in communication.

Previous research has shown that there are gender differences in the use of these language features in various contexts. Lakoff (2004) argued that women’s language features tend to be more tentative and polite while men’s language features are more assertive and direct.

This research aimed to explore the use of lexical hedges, intensifiers, and super polite forms in the CLT approach by male and female student in debating class. The data in this research was collected using documentation method and note taking technique. The data in this research is in the form of audio recorded from the debating class consisting of both male and female student. The data is then transcribed into text. The data is qualitatively analysed using Lakoff (2004) women’s language theory and Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2013)

communicative language teaching theory focusing on the frequency and context of the language features used by both male and female student.

The findings of this research will contribute to the understanding of how these language features are used in the CLT context and their potential implications for language learning and communication. By comparing the use of lexical hedges, intensifiers, and super polite forms by male and female students, we can gain insights into the gender differences in language use and their impact on communicative competence in debating.

II. METHOD AND THEORY

2.1 Research Method

This research employed a qualitative approach to analyse the use of lexical hedges, intensifiers, and super polite forms in the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach by male and female students in a debating class. Data was collected using documentation methods, including audio recordings and note-taking, as well as non-participatory observation, note-taking techniques, and checklists. The data was analysed qualitatively, and the results were presented in an informal and descriptive manner.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Lexical Hedges or Fillers

Lexical hedges are linguistics devices that individuals, include women, can use to soften their word, express uncertainty, or indicate a lack of confidence (Lakoff, 2004). Lexical hedges can be grammatically constructions such as “I think”, “I’m sure”, “you know”, and “maybe”. Hedges function as expression that reduces or lessens the assertiveness or firmness of a statement. Fillers are considered “meaningless particle” in the sense that they do not contribute directly to the propositional content of a sentence.

2.2.2 Intensifiers

Intensifiers are words or phrases used to strengthen or clarify the meaning or impact of an utterance (Lakoff, 2004). Lakoff (2004) argue that women tend to use more intensifiers compare to men, and she attributes this linguistics pattern to social and cultural factor. By using these linguistic devices, they can communicate enthusiasm, passion, or a strong stance on a matter. Intensifiers can serve as a tool for assertiveness. Women can use intensifiers to strengthen their statements and increase their impact or perceived conviction.

2.2.3 Super Polite Forms

Lakoff (2004) introduced the concept of super polite form as one of the linguistic features associated with female speech. The super polite form refers to a particular speech pattern characterized by excessive use of politeness markers and self-deprecating language. Lakoff (2004) argues that women, more than men, tend to use the super polite form to conform to societal expectations of feminine behaviour and to reduce the potential for conflict or assertiveness in their communication.

2.2.4 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach to language education that places communication at its core. In CLT approach, the primary goal of language learning is to enable students to communicate effectively in real-life situations, shifting the focus from rote memorization of vocabulary and grammar rules (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). The model of CLT approach is grounded in principles that prioritize authentic language use within meaningful contexts, with a strong emphasis on interactive learning. Students engage in active communication with students and lecturers, often participating in task-based activities that mimic practical scenarios, such as debate. Debate is considered a constructive learning activity that improves learner’s critical thinking skills. It is also a potentially effective pedagogical tool for developing skills in second language education. English debate has been used as a rule in university to improve communicative language teaching (CLT) approach.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The following section will delve into a comprehensive examination of the linguistics strategies employed by female student, male student and lecturers in the “debating on recent issues” class of the English Department of Udayana University, specifically focusing on the use of lexical hedges, intensifiers and super polite forms, in order to gain a deeper understanding of how language is utilized in academic discourse especially in the context of debating class.

3.1 The Comparison of The Usage of Lexical Hedges or Filler

The table below are the comparison of the usage of the lexical hedges or filler during the “debating on recent issues” class of the English Department of Udayana University.

Table 1.1
The Comparison of The Usage of Lexical Hedges or Filler

No	Feature of Lexical Hedges or Filler	Frequency use of Female	Frequency use of Male
1.	We Think	2	0
2.	I Believe	4	0
3.	In My Opinion	1	0
	Total	7	0
	Average	0,22	0

In the provided table above, it is evident that the utilization of lexical hedges or filler was predominantly observed among female student, with a notable frequency of up to seven instances, in contrast to male students who did not exhibit this feature at all. The primary form of lexical hedges among female student in “debating on recent issues” class was the phrase “I believe”, which was recurrently employed up to four times. Additionally, other variations such as the phrase “we think” were utilized twice, while “in my opinion” was expressed once.

The prevalence of lexical hedges or fillers among female student compared to their male counterparts can be attributed to various factor. Based on the research conducted by Ajmal (2023) women use lexical hedges to create a welcoming environment, facilitating dialogue, and encourage participation in many settings, and debate is one of the settings. Socialization and cultural expectation, play as a role, as women feel pressure to be polite and considerate in their communication style, leading them to utilize more hedging expression.

Women tend to use more lexical hedges than men during debates, particularly in creating welcoming atmosphere, encouraging participation, and facilitating dialogue. Cultural norms and social expectations contribute to this trend, as women feel pressured to be polite and considerate in their communication style, leading them to utilize more hedging expression. The differences in confidence levels between genders contribute to the disparity, with women potentially using hedges to express uncertainty and lack of confidence more frequently than men. Women used lexical hedges to avoid appearing too assertive or confrontational.

3.2 The Comparison of The Usage of Intensifiers

The table below are the comparison of the usage of the intensifiers during the “debating on recent issues” class of the English Department of Udayana University.

Table 1.2
The Comparison of The Usage of Intensifiers

No	Feature of Intensifiers	Frequency of Female	Frequency of Male
1.	Inherently	8	11

2.	Very	10	4
3.	Actively	4	8
4.	Strongly	4	4
5.	Overly	4	3
6.	Highly	5	1
7.	Deeply	3	1
8.	Too	1	3
9.	Enough	2	2
10.	Really	2	1
11.	Completely	3	0
12.	Constantly	3	0
13.	Excessively	2	1
14.	Vehemently	3	0
15.	So	2	0
16.	Slightly	2	0
17.	Significantly	1	1
18.	Closely	1	1
19.	Ultimately	2	0
20.	Critically	1	1
21.	Exceptionally	2	0
22.	Culturally	1	1
23.	Quite	1	0
24.	Extremely	0	1
25.	Truly	1	0
26.	Disproportionately	0	1
27.	Heavily	1	0
28.	Severely	0	1
29.	Vastly	0	1
30.	Dramatically	0	1
31.	Typically	1	0
32.	Insanely	1	0
33.	Rapidly	0	1
34.	Strictly	1	0
35.	Regularly	1	0
36.	Commonly	1	0
37.	Persistently	1	0
38.	Emphatically	0	1
39.	Unabashedly	1	0
40.	Undeniably	1	0
41.	Adequately	0	1
Total		77	51
Average		2,48	3

Based on the data provided in the table above, although female students used intensifiers more frequently up to 77 times compare to male students only up to 51 times, the average use of intensifiers per student was higher among male students. Male students had an average of 3 uses of intensifiers per student, while female students had an average of 2.5 uses per student. This discrepancy in averages suggests that while female students may

have a higher overall count of intensifier usage, on average, male students tend to use intensifiers more frequently in their utterances during debates.

The discrepancy between the total number of intensifiers used by female and male students, as well as the difference in average usage per student, can be further explained by considering various factors. One of the factors was communication style. Male and female student adopted different communication style during debates. Male student used intensifiers strategically to assert dominance or emphasize their points more forcefully, leading to a higher average use per student.

The influence of societal expectations and gender roles on language use, particularly in male students feeling pressured to demonstrate confidence and assertiveness through a higher frequency of intensifier usage, can be further elucidated by considering the nature of debates and the role of intensifiers as rhetorical devices. In debates, which often involve argumentation and persuasion, language becomes a powerful tool for conveying ideas effectively. Male students use intensifiers strategically as rhetorical devices to strengthen their arguments or appeal to the audience. By employing intensifiers more frequently, male students aim to emphasize key points, add emphasis to their arguments, and create a sense of conviction in their speech. This aligns with traditional gender norms associating assertiveness with masculinity, where the use of intensifiers can serve as a linguistic strategy to project confidence and authority in communication settings. The competitive nature of debates may further amplify the use of intensifiers among male students. In a debate scenario where individuals strive to persuade and outperform their opponents, the strategic deployment of intensifiers can enhance the persuasiveness and impact of their arguments. By utilizing intensifiers as linguistic tools to underscore their positions forcefully, male students can effectively engage with the audience and assert their viewpoints.

The higher average use of intensifiers by male students compared to female students, despite a lower total count, reflects a complex interplay of factors such as communication styles, societal norms, debate strategies, and individual differences. These nuances highlight the multifaceted nature of language use in debates and the diverse ways in which gender can influence linguistic patterns.

3.3The Comparison of The Usage of Super Polite Forms

The table below are the comparison of the usage of the super polite forms during the “debating on recent issues” class of the English Department of Udayana University.

Table 1.3
The Comparison of The Usage of Super Polite Forms

No	Feature of Intensifiers	Frequency use of Female	Frequency use of Male
1.	Please	7	0
2.	Would like	6	2
3.	Have to	6	2
4.	Could	5	3
5.	Thank you	11	21
Total		35	28
Average		1,1	1,6

The table shows that female students and lecturer use super polite forms that male students. The female students and lecturer use this feature up to 35 times, while male students use it only 28 times. But when comparing the average use of this feature, interestingly, male student has a higher average use up to 1,6 features per student compared to female student and lecturer only up to 1,1 feature per student.

Furthermore, the table shows that the use of super polite forms by female student and lecturer is slightly higher than the use by male student. The difference in the number of times the feature is used is 7 which is not a substantial gap. This indicates that there is not a clear gender difference in the use of polite language in the classroom setting.

In the other hand, the average use of super polite forms by male student is higher than the average use by female student and lecturer. The difference in the average use is 0,4, which is a notable difference. This shows that male students are more to use polite language.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research highlights the differences in language use between female students and lecturers and male students in a debating class setting. The study reveals that female students and lecturers tend to use more lexical hedges or filler, while male students use more intensifiers and super polite forms. These findings demonstrate that gender plays a significant role in shaping language use, with female students and lecturers employing more polite and tentative language, and male students using more assertive and forceful language. This difference in language use could potentially impact the dynamics of the debating class, as it may contribute to a more hierarchical or less inclusive environment.

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