

A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Gendered Language Features in the Movie *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days*

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at identifying the types of men's and women's language features used in the movie *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* to determine the predominant features employed by the main characters respectively based on the theories proposed by Lakoff (2004) and Coates (2013). This study adopts a descriptive qualitative method, with data collected through observation and note-taking of the characters' dialogues in the movie. The findings reveal that the female character, Andie Anderson, uses all ten women's language features proposed by Lakoff (2004), with lexical hedges or fillers as the most dominant (17 utterances, 25.37%). The male character, Benjamin Barry, employs all five men's language features proposed by Coates (2013), with swearing and taboo language as the most frequent (12 utterances, 28.57%). In addition, the results show that Benjamin produces 33 utterances categorized as women's language features, while Andie produces 8 utterances categorized as men's language features. These results suggest that language use is flexible and influenced by communicative context rather than by gender alone.

Keywords: *Gender; Men's Language Features; Movie; Women's Language Features*

INTRODUCTION

In daily life, communication plays a crucial role in connecting individuals within society with the language as its primary tools. The language functions as a bridge enabling people to interact and express ideas, emotions, and thoughts. Language does not merely serve as a communication tool. It also reflects social identity, including culture, social status, and an individual's role within a community. In multilingual societies, communication takes place through a range of linguistic codes, including international, national, and local dialects, involving individuals across and within genders.

Language itself is a structured system used by humans to convey meaning. Wardhaugh and Fuller

(2021) define language as a structured and arbitrary system of signs used for communication. This definition highlights that language is governed by rules, including grammar, syntax, and morphology, which allow speakers to form meaningful expressions. In sociolinguistics, language is closely connected to society because it is shaped by social interaction and cultural norms. Megawati (2017) explains that language develops through social institutions, traditions, and beliefs within a community. Therefore, language does not only convey information but also reflects social values and cultural identity. Changes in society may trigger changes in language use, vocabulary, structure, and communicative style.

One important social factor influencing language use is gender. Gender refers to socially

constructed roles, behaviors, and expectations associated with being male or female, which differ from biological sex. Kiesling (2024) states that gender is a system that encompasses identity, behavior, emotions, and worldviews, and influences broader social institutions such as the economic class and social status. Gender is deeply embedded in both personal and collective aspects of life. In sociolinguistic studies, gender has been found to affect communication styles. Holmes and Wilson (2022) argue that men and women communicate differently across communities, including differences in word choice, intonation, and communicative goals. Women are often associated with polite, expressive, and empathetic language use, whereas men are generally characterized by directness, competitiveness, and assertiveness.

Despite extensive research on gender and language, scholarly attention to gender-based language features in romantic comedy films remains relatively limited. Therefore, this research aims to identify and analyze the language features used by the main female and male characters in *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* movie based on Lakoff's (2004) and Coates's (2013) theories. By examining the dialogues of Andie Anderson and Benjamin Barry, this study seeks to advance sociolinguistic research by examining the representation of gender-based communication disparities in popular film media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language is fundamentally a system of arbitrary and structured symbols used for human communication (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021). It operates through verbal and nonverbal elements and is shaped by sociolinguistic conventions that enable meaning-making. From a sociolinguistic perspective, language is closely intertwined with society, reflecting social values, cultural norms, and identity (Megawati, 2017). Consequently, variations in language use often correspond to varied social factors, including gender. Gender, as a socially and culturally constructed concept, influences communication styles and interactional patterns (Kiesling, 2024). Previous research suggests that women are often associated with more polite and supportive language, while men tend to use more direct and assertive forms

(Holmes & Wilson, 2022). However, such tendencies are increasingly viewed as flexible rather than fixed.

Recent empirical studies have demonstrated that gendered language use varies across contexts and media. For example, Anggraeni (2023) found that both male and female characters in film employ linguistic features traditionally associated with both genders, indicating context-dependent usage. Similarly, Izzah (2019) showed that in digital communication, speakers adapt their language styles beyond conventional gender norms, combining expressive and assertive features depending on interactional needs. In written discourse, Utari (2019) identified the dominance of features such as lexical hedges and intensifiers in expressing nuance and politeness, suggesting consistency across modalities. These studies collectively highlight that gendered language practices are dynamic and influenced by communicative context, medium, and purpose.

Movies, as a form of popular media, provide a valuable site for examining such patterns because they reflect and construct social realities. *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* (2003) presents interactions that illustrate contrasting yet flexible communication styles between male and female characters. As such, the film offers pertinent data for analyzing the representation and negotiation of gendered language features in romantic and professional contexts. Consequently, the film enhances the broader understanding of language, gender, and media representation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in sociolinguistics, with particular focuses on theories of language, gender, and gendered language features, which elucidate how language use reflects social roles and identities. The theoretical framework is constructed to examine the relationships among gender, language features, and their representations in the movie dialogue, underlain by Lakoff's (2004) and Coates' (2013) theories.

At the most general level, language is viewed as a social practice that functions not only as a means of communication but also as a reflection of social identity, including gender. Sociolinguistic perspectives emphasize that language variation is

influenced by social factors such as roles, experiences, and cultural expectations (Wardhaugh & Fuller). Therefore, differences in language use between men and women are understood as socially constructed rather than biologically determined.

The second key concept in this framework is gender. Gender is conceptualized as a social and cultural construct that shapes patterns of interaction, communication styles, and linguistic choices. Men and women are socialized into different communicative norms, which results in systematic differences in how they express ideas, emotions, and interpersonal relations. These differences become observable through recurring linguistic features in spoken discourse.

To explain these gender-based differences, this study adopts two main theoretical models:

1. Lakoff's (2004) Theory of Women's Language Features, which proposes that women's speech tends to include features such as lexical hedges, tag questions, rising intonation, empty adjectives, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress. These features are interpreted as reflecting politeness, emotional expressiveness, supportiveness, and sometimes uncertainty, which are linked to women's social positioning and expectations in society.
2. Coates' (2013) Theory of Men's Language Features, which characterizes men's speech as more direct, assertive, and information-oriented. Men's language features include minimal responses, strategic use of questions, commands and directives, swearing or taboo language, and achievement-focused compliments. These features are associated with dominance, control of interaction, and the construction of masculine identity.

Within this framework, movies are treated as a form of social representation that mirrors real-life communication practices. Movie dialogues are assumed to reflect societal norms and stereotypes related to gendered communication. Therefore, the interactions between Andie Anderson and Benjamin Barry in *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* serve as linguistic data through which gendered language features can be identified and analyzed.

In summary, the theoretical framework of this study can be described as follows: Gender (social construct) influences language use,

which manifests in distinct language features as theorized by Lakoff (women's language) and Coates (men's language). These features are examined through movie dialogue to identify the types and dominance of gendered language features used by the main characters. This framework guides the analysis in addressing the research questions and achieving the objectives of the study.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design to analyze gender-based language features used by female and male characters in the movie *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days*. Qualitative research is chosen because it enables an in-depth understanding of meaning, perspectives, and social interactions rather than relying on numerical data. As noted by Leavy (2023, p. 9), qualitative research explores how individuals construct meaning within social contexts; therefore, this study focuses on interpreting dialogue to reveal patterns of gendered communication.

The analysis is underlain by Lakoff's (2004) theory of women's language features and Coates's (2013) theory of men's language features. A descriptive approach is applied to provide detailed explanations of linguistic features appearing in the movie's dialogues. These frameworks serve as the primary analytical tools for identifying and interpreting differences in language use between female and male characters (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

The data consists of qualitative verbal utterances spoken by the two main characters, Andie Anderson and Benjamin Barry. The data source is the movie *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* (2003), directed by Donald Petrie and produced by Paramount Pictures. The movie was selected due to its intensive male-female interactions, which provide rich conversational data relevant to sociolinguistic analysis of gender-based language use.

Data collection was conducted through an observation method by repeatedly watching the movie and transcribing relevant dialogues. The researcher focused on conversational context, intonation, and delivery style while identifying utterances containing gendered language features.

The movie script was consulted to support transcription; however, spoken dialogue in the film was prioritized when discrepancies occurred. Note-taking was used to document relevant utterances along with contextual information such as speaker, scene, and time stamp.

Data analysis was carried out through classification, coding, and interpretation. Utterances were categorized based on Lakoff's and Coates's language feature classifications and assigned specific codes to facilitate organization. Simple coding assigns the datum its order of presentation in the movie using Arabic numerals. For classifying language features, the datum is assigned to the initial letter of the classification. Subsequently, when a datum is coded 16/LH, it means that the datum appears in order number 16 and belongs to Lexical Hedge. The analysis examined the function of each feature in its conversational contexts and identified the predominant gendered-base features. Conclusions were then drawn based on the overall patterns of gender-based language use observed in the movie.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analyses in this study focused on identifying the types and frequencies of language features used by women and men in the movie and determining the predominant features conveyed by each character.

Type of Women's Language Features

The data analysis shows that there are 67 instances of data found in this movie uttered by the female character, as seen in the table 1.

Table 1 Women's Language Features

No	Women's Language Features	Freq.	Percentage
1.	Lexical Hedges or Fillers (LH)	17	25.37%
2.	Tag Questions (TQ)	6	8.96%
3.	Rising Intonation (RI)	2	2.99%
4.	Empty Adjectives (EA)	4	5.97%
5.	Precise Color Terms (PCT)	1	1.49%
6.	Intensifiers (I)	10	14.93%
7.	Hypercorrect Grammar (HG)	5	7.46%

No	Women's Language Features	Freq.	Percentage
8.	Super Polite Form (SPF)	8	11.94%
9.	Avoidance of Strong Swear Words (ASW)	3	4.48%
10.	Emphatic Stress (ES)	11	16.42%
Total		67	100.00%

The data in the table shows that Andie uses all women's language features. First, Andie uses Lexical Hedge (LH). Evidence can be seen when Andie uses fillers such as "well" and hedges like "kind of" while speaking to her boss about a political article idea, showing hesitation and caution (Datum 16/LH). Similarly, in emotional conversations with Benjamin, Andie uses hedges like "maybe" to soften expectations about their relationship (Datum 115/LH). These examples illustrate how hedges function to reduce assertiveness and maintain politeness.

Secondly, tag questions (TQ) are used by Andie to seek confirmation and involve her interlocutors, as shown in 6 data. For instance, Andie asks Jeannie, "Have you?" when checking on Michelle's whereabouts (Datum 04/TQ), indicating uncertainty and shared responsibility in conversation. Another example appears when Andie says "right?" to confirm Michelle's emotional reaction (Datum 11/TQ), demonstrating how tag questions create space for clarification without sounding confrontational.

Next, although less frequent, rising intonation (RI) appears in 2 utterances and signals emotional uncertainty. One example occurs when Andie says, "Oh, so I suppose your mind is a complete blank," with a rising tone while watching a movie with Benjamin (Datum 50/RI), making the statement sound like a question. Another instance is when Andie asks, "Are you calling me your girlfriend?" with rising intonation (Datum 114/RI), reflecting surprise and emotional conflict.

In addition, Andie also uses empty adjectives (EA) to express admiration and positive emotions, with 4 data identified. For example, she describes an NBA game as "exhilarating" and "artistic" (Datum 03/EA), which conveys emotional appreciation rather than factual detail. Similarly, she calls the game "incredible" and "exciting" after watching it (Datum 44/EA), reinforcing Lakoff's view that

women often use evaluative, affective language.

The feature of precise color terms (PCT) appears only once but still reflects women's language characteristics. In advising Michelle to wear cashmere, Andie says it will make her eyes look "fiercely green" (Datum 07/PCT). This specific and expressive description shows attention to detailed color nuance, which Lakoff associates more closely with women's speech.

Intensifiers (I) are frequently used by Andie, appearing in 10 utterances, to strengthen emotional expression. Evidence includes Andie's statement "I'm so excited!" during a phone call with Benjamin (Datum 46/I), where "so" heightens emotional intensity. Other examples such as "the most powerful thing I've ever seen" (Datum 83/I) and "I really think you have to get over that" (Datum 130/I) show how intensifiers reinforce conviction and emotional involvement.

Andie demonstrates hypercorrect grammar (HG) in 5 utterances, particularly in formal or professional contexts. When presenting her article idea in a meeting, she uses long, well-structured sentences that follow standard grammar rules (Datum 21/HG). Another example occurs when she explains her educational background to Benjamin, using grammatically precise sentences such as "I have a master's in journalism from Columbia" (Datum 29/HG), reflecting professionalism and social identity.

The use of super polite forms appears in 8 utterances and highlights Andie's adherence to politeness norms. For instance, she affectionately responds to Benjamin with "Oh, sweetie! I love sharing this with you" while watching a movie (Datum 51/SPF). In a more urgent situation, she politely asks a taxi driver "Sir, excuse me, sir. Can you please pull the car over?" (Datum 143/SPF), showing that politeness is maintained even under stress.

Finally, Andie shows avoidance of strong swear words (3 data) and frequent use of emphatic stress (11 data). She expresses relief using mild expressions like "Oh, my God!" instead of harsh swearing (Datum 56/ASW). Emphatic stress is evident through repetition and vocal emphasis, such as "It's good, it's good, it's good" (Datum 84/ES) and "Please don't tell him" repeated to Phillip (Datum 123/ES). These examples show how Andie emphasizes emotion and urgency without abandoning politeness, reinforcing her dominant use

of women's language features.

The intensive use of lexical hedges or fillers in Andie's speech can also be interpreted in relation to her social positioning and narrative role in the movie. As a journalist who must constantly negotiate professional authority while maintaining interpersonal harmony, Andie's frequent use of hedges such as "well," "maybe," and "kind of" reflects strategic linguistic choices rather than mere uncertainty. These forms allow her to manage face-threatening situations, soften potentially controversial statements, and maintain cooperative interaction, especially when speaking to figures with greater power, such as her boss, or in emotionally sensitive exchanges with Benjamin. In this sense, the high frequency of hedges supports Lakoff's argument that women's language often prioritizes rapport and politeness, but it also suggests that such features can function as pragmatic tools for social navigation.

Furthermore, the consistent appearance of all ten women's language features across Andie's 67 utterances indicates a stable and coherent communication style throughout the film. Rather than appearing randomly, these features emerge in contextually appropriate situations, reinforcing Andie's characterization as empathetic, expressive, and relationally oriented. For example, features such as tag questions, rising intonation, and super polite forms are predominantly used in interpersonal and emotionally charged scenes, while hypercorrect grammar and intensifiers are more prominent in professional or goal-driven contexts. This distribution shows that women's language features are not signs of linguistic weakness, but adaptable resources that Andie employs to achieve different communicative goals.

In addition, the relatively high frequency of emphatic stress and intensifiers complements the dominant use of hedges, creating a balance between emotional expressiveness and conversational caution. While hedges reduce the force of an utterance, emphatic stress and intensifier strengthen emotional meaning, allowing Andie to express enthusiasm, urgency, or sincerity without sounding aggressive. This combination supports the idea that women's language is not simply indirect, but nuanced, enabling speakers to convey strong feelings while preserving politeness and relational harmony.

Overall, Andie's linguistic behavior in *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* reinforces Lakoff's framework

by demonstrating how women's language features operate together as a system rather than in isolation. The dominance of lexical hedges or fillers, supported by other features such as tag questions, intensifiers, and polite forms, illustrates a communication pattern that values diplomacy, emotional engagement, and social sensitivity. Therefore, Andie's speech not only reflects stereotypical women's language characteristics but also highlights the functional and strategic nature of these features within both personal and professional interactions depicted in the movie.

Type of Men's Language Features

The main male character in this film uses five out of eight men's language features. Table 2 presents the features and their frequency.

Table 2 Men's Language Features

No.	Language Features	Number	Percentage
1.	Minimal Response (MR)	10	23.81%
2.	Questions (Q)	5	9.52%
3.	Commands and Directives (CD)	9	21.43 %
4.	Swearing and Taboo Language (STL)	12	28.57%
5.	Compliment (C)	7	16.67%
Total		42	100.00%

Table 2 reveals that there are 42 data points collected. Those data represent five types of language features used by Benjamin. First type is swearing and taboo language. This feature includes the use of harsh words or socially taboo terms such as "shit", "hell", "bitch" and other forms of expressions that are culturally considered impolite. In this movie, Benjamin makes such utterances several times, especially when he is in an emotional, stressful situation, or when he is frustrated with Andie's behavior. Thus, the intensive use of swearing and taboo language features by Benjamin shows that the male communication style in this movie is portrayed as assertive, emotionally honest, and less bound to the norms of verbal politeness.

The use of minimal responses, the second in order, is evident in Benjamin's interactions with Andie, especially during conversations where Andie speaks at length. For example, when Andie talks about her favorite movie and ideal man, Benjamin responds briefly with "Yeah, me too" (Datum 47/MR). Similarly, when Andie enthusiastically

describes their imagined future through a photo album, Benjamin repeatedly replies with "Yeah" (Datum 81/MR). These short responses show that Benjamin is listening but not emotionally engaging, aligning with Coates' (2013) explanation that men use minimal responses to acknowledge information rather than provide emotional support.

Benjamin also uses questions as a way to manage and direct conversations. In his interaction with his coworker Spears, he asks, "What are you reading?" and "Are you catching up on your current events?" (Datum 06/Q), which functions not only to seek information but also to control the flow of interaction in a casual and teasing manner. Likewise, when getting to know Andie, Benjamin asks, "What about you?" and "Have I seen your work?" (Datum 29/Q), effectively shifting the conversational focus and demonstrating how men strategically use questions to guide discussions.

The features of commands and directives, as well as swearing and taboo language, strongly highlight Benjamin's direct and assertive communication style. Commands appear in utterances such as "Stripes" when choosing a shirt (Datum 09/CD) and "Pull over, we need to talk!" when chasing Andie's taxi (Datum 141/CD), showing his tendency to take control of situations. Swearing and taboo language are used most frequently, as seen in expressions like "Son of a... bitch" after being hit (Datum 54/STL) and "This is the shit I'm talking about" during an argument with Andie (Datum 102/STL). These utterances function as spontaneous emotional releases that reflect frustration, anger, and dominance.

Finally, Benjamin uses compliments in ways that align with male language patterns, focusing on skills, performance, or achievements rather than appearance. For instance, he says "You're driving like a pro" after Andie successfully rides his motorcycle (Datum 111/CO), acknowledging her ability. He also compliments Michelle with "Good job, though" for her role in resolving the conflict (Datum 139/CO). These examples show that although men use compliments less frequently, they still employ them to recognize competence and accomplishment in a straightforward and concise manner.

The intensive use of swearing and taboo language in Benjamin's speech can be further understood as a reflection of masculine identity construction within the movie. According to Coates

(2013), men's language often emphasizes toughness, emotional control, and authority, and the use of taboo expressions can function as a marker of solidarity, authenticity, and power. In *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days*, Benjamin's frequent swearing does not merely indicate impoliteness, but rather serves as a linguistic strategy to express strong emotions openly without engaging in lengthy emotional explanation. This reinforces the portrayal of male communication as more confrontational and emotionally explicit, particularly in moments of conflict or stress.

Moreover, the interaction between swearing and commands in Benjamin's speech strengthens his assertive communication style. When Benjamin uses directives alongside taboo language, his utterances often carry a sense of urgency and dominance, positioning him as an active decision-maker in the interaction. For example, in emotionally charged scenes with Andie, swearing amplifies the force of his commands, making them sound more decisive and less negotiable. This supports Coates' view that men's language tends to prioritize action and control over emotional negotiation, especially in high-pressure situations.

In addition, the use of minimal responses and questions complements Benjamin's overall communication pattern by limiting emotional elaboration. While Andie frequently uses hedges and expressive language to build rapport, Benjamin's short responses and strategic questions keep conversations efficient and goal oriented. This contrast highlights a clear gendered communication dynamic in the movie, where male language is associated with brevity and control, and female language with emotional nuance and relational sensitivity. The imbalance between expressive features and minimal responses also contributes to moments of misunderstanding between the characters, driving the plot forward.

Compliments, although less dominant, play a significant role in softening Benjamin's otherwise assertive language style. By complimenting skills or performance rather than appearance, Benjamin aligns with stereotypical male values such as competence and achievement. These compliments often occur after moments of tension, functioning as a subtle form of reconciliation without requiring over emotional disclosure. This suggests that even within a masculine communication framework,

positive evaluation is present but expressed in a restrained and functional manner.

Overall, Benjamin's use of men's language features in *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* illustrates how linguistic patterns contribute to the construction of gendered identities in film. The dominance of swearing and taboo language, supported by commands, minimal responses, and strategic questions, reinforces a portrayal of male communication as direct, assertive, and emotionally unfiltered. When contrasted with Andie's diplomatic and relational speech style, Benjamin's language highlights gender-based differences in communication that not only reflect sociolinguistic theories but also serve narrative and character development purposes within the movie.

Dominant Language Features and Gender Representation

This section analyzes the most dominant language features used by the two main characters after identifying the types of women's and men's language features in the movie *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days*.

Based on Table 1, a total of 67 data were found in women's language features, with lexical hedges or fillers being the most dominant feature at 25.37% (17 data). Andie frequently uses these features in interpersonal interactions, particularly when speaking with Benjamin, her friends, or her boss. The dominance of lexical hedges or fillers indicates that Andie's communication style is more careful, diplomatic, and relationship-oriented, reflecting a tendency to avoid sounding too assertive or confrontational.

In contrast, Table 2 shows that 42 data were identified in men's language features, with swearing and taboo language emerging as the most dominant feature at 28.57% (12 data). This category includes the use of harsh or socially impolite expressions such as "shit," "hell," and "bitch," which Benjamin frequently uses in moments of emotional tension, frustration, or stress. The frequent use of this feature highlights a male communication style that is portrayed as more direct, expressive of strong emotions, and less constrained by politeness norms. Overall, the contrast between Andie's and Benjamin's dominant language features emphasizes gender-based differences in communication styles, with women leaning toward relational and cautious speech, while men exhibit a more assertive and

emotionally explicit manner of expression.

This contrast in dominant language features not only reflects gendered communication patterns proposed by Lakoff and Coates but also plays a significant role in shaping the dynamics of interaction between the two characters. Andie's frequent use of lexical hedges or fillers often functions to mitigate potential conflict and maintain conversational harmony, particularly in situations where emotional stakes are high. By softening her statements, Andie can navigate sensitive topics—such as expectations in a relationship or professional disagreements—without directly challenging others. This suggests that her linguistic choices are strategic and context-sensitive, aimed at preserving relationships and managing face in both personal and professional domains.

On the other hand, Benjamin's dominant use of swearing and taboo language serves as a marker of emotional intensity and masculine assertiveness. Rather than softening his speech, Benjamin's language often amplifies the force of his emotions, allowing him to express anger, frustration, or excitement in an unfiltered way. This linguistic pattern aligns with the portrayal of masculinity in the movie, where emotional honesty is communicated through bluntness rather than careful phrasing. As a result, Benjamin's speech tends to escalate interactions, especially when contrasted with Andie's more cautious and mitigated style.

The interaction between these two dominant features also helps explain moments of misunderstanding and conflict in the narrative. While Andie's hedging may be interpreted by Benjamin as uncertainty or lack of commitment, Benjamin's use of taboo language may appear aggressive or insensitive to Andie. These differing interpretations highlight how gendered language styles can influence perceptions of intention and emotion, even when both speakers are attempting to communicate sincerely. Thus, language becomes a central mechanism through which relational tension and character development are constructed in the film.

Furthermore, the dominance of these features reinforces broader sociolinguistic assumptions about gender and communication. Andie's reliance on hedges supports the view that women's language is often associated with politeness, emotional labor, and relational maintenance, whereas Benjamin's

frequent swearing reflects a norm in which men are permitted greater linguistic freedom to express strong emotions without social sanction. However, the movie also subtly shows that these patterns are not absolute; both characters occasionally step outside stereotypical norms, suggesting that gendered language use is fluid and context dependent.

Overall, the comparison of dominant language features in *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* demonstrates how gendered communication styles are constructed and reinforced through dialogue. The contrast between Andie's diplomatic use of lexical hedges and Benjamin's emotionally charged use of swearing and taboo language not only reflects established sociolinguistic theories but also serves narrative purposes, driving conflict, and eventual character growth within the film.

Additional Finding: Overlapping Gendered Language Features

An important additional finding is the overlap of gendered language features between the two characters. Benjamin frequently used features traditionally associated with women's language, particularly super polite forms and emphatic stress, especially in romantic or emotionally intimate contexts. This suggests that male speakers may adopt more affective and polite language strategies when relational goals are foregrounded, as shown by table 3.

Table 2. Women's Language Used by Benjamin

No	Language Feature	Number	Percentage
1.	Lexical Hedges or Fillers	6	18.18%
2.	Tag Questions	4	12.12%
3.	Intensifiers	3	9.09%
4.	Hypercorrect Grammar	2	6.06%
5.	Super Polite Form	9	27.27%
6.	Emphatic Stress	9	27.27%
Total		33	100.00%

Based on the table 3, six out of ten of the women's language features were also used by Benjamin. Benjamin as the male character in the movie shows the use of women's language features in several communication situations, especially when building a relationship with Andie. In addition, Benjamin also shows a tendency to use super polite form and emphatic stress quite often, the data shows

that his utterances appear 9 times with a percentage of 27.27%. This shows that in some situations Benjamin can also refine his communication style and be more expressive in airing his emotions.

Conversely, Andie also employed several men's language features, including swearing, minimal responses, and directives, albeit less frequently. These instances occurred primarily in moments of conflict or emotional intensity, indicating that Andie could shift toward a more assertive or aggressive style when required.

Table 4 Men's Language Used by Andie

No.	Language Features	Number	Percentage
1.	Minimal Response	3	37.50%
2.	Questions	1	12.50%
3.	Command and Directives	1	12.50%
4.	Swearing and Taboo Language	3	37.50%
Total		8	100.00%

Based on the table 4, it can be seen that Andie as the main female character in the movie does not only use language associated with women but also shows the use of some men's language features, although the frequency is less. The use of these features shows that in certain situation Andie is also able to be assertive, directive, and even aggressive. The existence of these men's language features in Andie's utterances indicates that the female character in the movie is not completely bound to gender stereotypes in language.

This finding strengthens the researcher's understanding that language use based on gender is not absolute. Female and male characters in the movie *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* are not completely bound by language patterns that are in accordance with their gender. Characters can adapt their language style to the conditions they face, the emotion they feel, or the role they are playing. Thus, gendered language features in practice are not always limited, but can overlap.

Discussion

This study discusses the language features used by the main characters, Andie and Benjamin, in *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* by relating the findings to Lakoff's (2004) theory of women's language and Coates' (2013) theory of men's language, as well as to previous studies. From 150 utterances analyzed (75

from each character), the findings show that both characters dominantly use language features traditionally associated with their respective genders, while also displaying cross-gender language features.

Andie, as the female character, predominantly uses women's language features. All ten features proposed by Lakoff (2004) appear in her utterances, with lexical hedges or fillers being the most dominant. This indicates her tendency to speak carefully, indirectly, and thoughtfully, aligning with Lakoff's theory and supported by previous studies such as Anggraeni (2023) and Utari (2019). Other frequently used features, such as emphatic stress and intensifiers, highlight Andie's emotional expressiveness and dramatic personality. Less frequent features—such as precise color terms, rising intonation, and avoidance of strong swear words—appear due to contextual limitations of the movie's dialogue but still reinforce her overall women's language style.

Benjamin, as the male character, dominantly uses men's language features as described by Coates (2013). All five men's language features are found in his utterances, with swearing and taboo language being the most frequent. This reflects his outspoken, assertive, and emotionally direct personality. Other prominent features, such as minimal responses and commands or directives, show his tendency to maintain conversational control and emotional restraint. Compliments and questions appear less frequently and are often oriented toward achievement rather than emotional support.

An important additional finding of this study is the presence of cross-gender language features. Benjamin uses six women's language features, including super polite forms, emphatic stress, and lexical hedges, particularly in formal or emotionally charged contexts. This demonstrates that his language use is flexible and context-dependent rather than rigidly masculine. Similarly, Andie uses four men's language features, such as minimal responses, commands, and swearing, especially when expressing strong emotions or asserting dominance. This challenges traditional expectations that women should always use polite and indirect language.

Overall, these findings support the sociolinguistic view that language use is influenced not only by gender but also by context, social roles, and communicative goals. While Lakoff's (2004) and

Coates' (2013) theories remain useful frameworks for identifying dominant patterns, the results show that language practices are dynamic and not strictly bound to gender stereotypes. Comparisons with previous studies by Anggraeni (2023), Izzah (2019), and Utari (2019) further confirm that cross-gender language use is common across different media and contexts. Thus, this research reinforces the idea that gendered language features function as flexible resources that speakers employ strategically rather than as fixed indicators of gender identity.

In addition, the findings suggest that the use of gendered language features in *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* serves important narrative and character-development functions. The dominance of women's language features in Andie's speech helps construct her identity as emotionally intelligent, socially aware, and professionally competent, which aligns with her role as a columnist whose success depends on understanding relationships and human behavior. Her frequent use of hedges, intensifiers, and emphatic stress not only reflects gendered linguistic norms but also enhances the dramatic and comedic elements of the film, making her interactions appear expressive and relatable to the audience.

Similarly, Benjamin's dominant use of men's language features contributes to the portrayal of his masculinity and competitive nature, particularly in professional settings. His reliance on swearing, commands, and minimal responses emphasizes confidence, emotional bluntness, and decisiveness, traits often associated with male characters in romantic comedy genres. These linguistic choices reinforce power dynamics between characters, especially in moments of conflict, and highlight the contrast between emotional expression and emotional control that drives much of the film's tension.

The presence of cross-gender language features further strengthen the argument that language use in the movie is shaped by situational demands rather than gender alone. When Benjamin adopts women's language features such as super polite forms or hedges, it often occurs in moments that require vulnerability, persuasion, or emotional negotiation. Likewise, Andie's use of men's language features emerges in contexts where authority, urgency, or emotional intensity is required. These shifts illustrate how both characters strategically adapt their speech to achieve communicative goals, such as resolving

conflict, asserting power, or expressing sincerity.

Moreover, these findings align with contemporary sociolinguistic perspectives that critique early gender-language theories for being overly binary. While Lakoff's and Coates' frameworks are effective for identifying patterns, the data from this study demonstrate that real language use—even in scripted dialogue—reflects fluidity and overlap between so-called "male" and "female" styles. This supports more recent arguments that gendered language features should be viewed as stylistic resources available to all speakers, rather than fixed traits tied to biological sex.

In conclusion, this study not only confirms the relevance of Lakoff's (2004) and Coates' (2013) theories in analyzing gendered language in film but also highlights their limitations when applied to dynamic communicative contexts. The analysis of Andie's and Benjamin's utterances shows that gendered language features are employed flexibly, shaped by emotion, power relations, and social context. Therefore, the findings contribute to a broader understanding of gender and language by demonstrating that communication styles in media representations are complex, adaptive, and strategically constructed rather than rigidly determined by gender alone.

CONCLUSION

This study examined gendered language features used by the main characters in *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* based on Lakoff's (2004) theory of women's language and Coates's (2013) theory of men's language. The findings show that the characters' language use generally aligns with gendered linguistic patterns proposed in these frameworks, while also demonstrating flexibility influenced by context. Andie Anderson employs all ten women's language features, with lexical hedges or fillers as the most dominant, indicating a tendency to soften speech and maintain interpersonal harmony. Other features, such as intensifiers, emphatic stress, super polite forms, and hypercorrect grammar, highlight emotional expressiveness and awareness of social and professional norms.

In contrast, Benjamin Barry uses all five men's language features, with swearing and taboo language as the most frequent, followed by minimal responses

and commands or directives. This reflects a direct and assertive communication style, particularly in emotionally charged situations. Importantly, the study also identifies cross-gender language use by both characters: Benjamin adopts women's language features in emotionally intimate contexts, while Andie employs men's language features when asserting authority or expressing frustration. These findings support the view that gendered language use is dynamic and context-dependent, functioning as a flexible communicative resource rather than a fixed reflection of gender.

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