Gender Differences in Language Use in *Talks at Google*

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Abstract. This study examines the linguistic features utilised by male and female native English speakers during their *Talks at Google* using Lakoff and Lakoff's framework of women's language. The analysis is conducted on a sample of 14 videos, consisting of seven for each gender, using a mixed-method approach. The quantitative analysis presents the frequencies of the utterances used by the speakers, while the qualitative analysis identifies the language forms employed by each gender. The findings reveal that both genders employed the linguistic features suggested by Lakoff in their talks. Contrary to Lakoff and Lakoff's assumptions, the female speakers utilised fewer linguistic features, accounting for only 47.43% of the features present in the corpus. Specifically, female speakers used intensifiers, tag questions and humour more frequently than male speakers, while male speakers employed empty adjectives, hedges, hypercorrect grammar and super polite forms more often than female speakers. The results provide insights into the language usage patterns of each gender and allude to possible changes in women's use of linguistic patterns.

Keywords: gender differences, women's language, linguistic features, linguistic patterns, *Talks at Google*

Introduction

Language use varies among people due to various factors such as gender, social status and register (Alshboul et al. 2022). Differences between men and women are either biologically programmed or socially established and affect their topics of interest. Sociolinguists such as Lakoff (1973), Tannen (1990; 1993) and Coates (2015) have extensively researched gender differences in language use.

Studies have found that men tend to use more direct language and assert their opinions, while women tend to use more polite language and may hedge their statements to avoid appearing too forceful (Tannen 1990; Lakoff 1973; Rabab'ah and Rabab'ah 2021; Benyakoub et al. 2022; Dawood, Alghazo and Jarrah 2023). Women may also be more likely to use language emphasising social connection and solidarity, while men may use language emphasising independence and competitiveness (Coates 2015). Furthermore, men and women may have different interests and topics of conversation. Women may be more likely to talk about personal experiences and relationships, while men may be more likely to discuss politics, sports and other topics traditionally associated with masculinity (Fishman 1978). These differences in communication styles and topics of conversation may be attributed to socialisation processes that shape gender roles and expectations (Rabab'ah, Rabab'ah and Suleiman 2016; Rabab'ah, Rabab'ah and Naimi 2019; Rabab'ah, Jaser and Altakhaineh 2022). Tannen (1993) notes that language plays a significant role in shaping the social gender of individuals. The language used with children shapes their social behaviours as boys or girls, reinforcing gendered communication styles and expectations. The impact of gender on language use is complex and may vary across cultures. In some cultures, men and women may have similar communication styles, while in others, the differences may be more pronounced (Holmes 1986). The impact of social status on language use may also vary depending on the specific context and situation (Asl 2020).

Language features that differ in use between males and females include (in) directness, which is considered a crucial element in human communication and varies across cultures, potentially leading to misunderstandings (Tannen 1994; Bani Younes et al., 2023). According to Lakoff (1973) and Lakoff and Lakoff (2004), men and women are socialised to use language differently. Men tend to use more decisive language and speak more assertively, while women tend to use more polite and indirect language, making their statements less forceful. Similarly, Alghazo et al. (2021) and Rabab'ah, Idir and Alghazo (2020) suggest that women use more linguistic features than men, such as intensifiers, tag questions and humour. These gendered language differences are observed in both written and spoken communication. Online talk platforms, such as *Talks at Google*, provide a notable example of mediums that represent gender language differences. *Talks at Google* features videos of various speakers, including thinkers and scholars, discussing various topics.

To the best of the researchers' knowledge, no studies have previously been conducted to examine the linguistic features used by male and female speakers in *Talks at Google* based on Lakoff's (1973) and Lakoff and Lakoff (2004) framework characteristics of women's language. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to

contribute to research on gender differences in language use and to test Lakoff and Lakoff's (2004) assumptions about the forms of women's language by analysing 14 videos from *Talks at Google*. More specifically, the study aims to examine the language features used in *Talks at Google* to see how these linguistic features are displayed. It also explores whether there are gender-based differences in the use of linguistic features identified in *Talks at Google*. The research methods used in this study include a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative analyses to provide a comprehensive understanding of the language features used by males and females in *Talks at Google*.

The results of this study will provide valuable insights into the language patterns of males and females in a professional and intellectual setting. By identifying the specific linguistic features used by each gender, the study will shed light on how language is used differently by males and females. This research may have practical implications for improving communication and reducing gender-based misunderstandings in various settings, including professional, academic and social environments. Furthermore, this study builds on previous research on gender differences in language use, providing new insights into the language patterns of males and females in a contemporary online platform.

Literature Review

Various theories investigated gender differences in language use. However, three main theorisations were more prominent in the literature on language and gender (e.g., Lakoff 1973; Tannen 1990; Coates 2015). The first is Lakoff's (1973) theory of "women's language", which refers to the linguistic features used more frequently by women (e.g., lexical hedges, intensifiers, empty adjectives). Her approach towards gender-differentiated language has come to be called the Dominance approach, which stipulates that language differences are related to the imbalance of social roles and power between men and women. The second is the Difference approach developed by Tannen (1990), who argued that gender-related differences in language use are related to the social arrangements of separating gender in childhood and adolescence. The third is Coates' (2015) proposition of conversational language features, including minimal responses, the use of swear and taboo language, complements, commands, questions, hedges and tag questions and stated that men and women use different language features for different purposes when they engage in conversational practice. In this article, we follow Lakoff's (1973) and Lakoff and Lakoff's (2004) theorisation into the connection between gender and language use.

As noted, the connection between gender and language use has been the concern of several investigations for over five decades. For example, Zimmermann and West (1996) contended that the language of communication used by both genders differs. In the same vein, McMillan et al. (1977) concluded that as a result of having a subsidiary role in society (at that time) and being more emotional and sensitive, women were found to make more use of linguistic features of uncertainty as compared to men. In particular, the study—upon analysing the videos of 18 problem-solving groups—showed that of the four syntactic categories examined (i.e., tag questions, intensifiers, modal constructions and imperative constructions in question forms), women were found to make more use of tag questions and modal constructions indicating uncertainty. Similarly, Haas (1979) found that women are generally more polite,[1] supportive and tentative than men and tend to talk more about home, family and emotions. On the other hand, men were found to be more directive, using language to debate, argue, command and generally talk about sports and business.

Carli (1990) supports the claim that females use hedges and tag questions more frequently than males; however, this tentative language views women as hesitant, less knowledgeable and competent. In their analysis of the linguistic features used by males and females in unscripted TV interviews, Brownlow, Rosamond and Parker (2003) found that women tend to use more straightforward, emotional language. In contrast, men tend to use more complex constructions. In the same vein, Sheridan (2007) investigated gendered language in workplace meetings and found that females tend to use hedges and tag questions more often than males, which shows that they are more hesitant than males in certain situations. Leaper and Robnett (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of studies on gender differences in language use. They found that, compared to men, women used tentative language more likely, including hedges, tag questions, intensifiers and expressions of uncertainty. Moreover, Ahmad (2014) conducted qualitative research involving 418 Emirati participants (218 males and 200 females) to identify the differences in communication at the workplace between genders. He found that men were more able to convince others, but they were not good listeners. It was also found that women tend to talk about their interests, fashion, and beauty, with a tendency to share their problems with others.

Using Lakoff's (1973) framework of women's language, Khoirot, Rohmah and Puspitasari (2016) investigated the linguistic features used by female characters in two dramas. It found that both characters used lexical hedges, intensifiers and tag questions more frequently than male characters, which indicates uncertainty and politeness. Supporting the results of previous studies, Banikalef (2019) analysed the differences in the use of speech acts used by Jordanian male and female Facebook users using Searle's (1979) taxonomy and found that assertives were

more frequently used by males. In contrast, expressives were used more frequently by females. The researcher argued that these differences show that males want to boost social dominance, and females want to enhance social relations. In addition, Rahmawati and Indrayani (2019) analysed gender differences in language use by examining speeches by Hillary Clinton and Emily Steel at RECODE World's Technology Conferences. The researchers concluded that differences in men's and women's language are evident as six linguistic features identified by Lakoff were discovered, including hedges, intensifiers, empty adjectives, super polite forms, emphatic stress and avoidance of using swear words.

Even though previous research provided evidence that supports gender differences (e.g., Carli 1990; Sheridan 2007; Khoirot, Rohmah and Puspitasari 2016; Banikalef 2019), some researchers did not find significant differences due to gender. For example, Nemati and Bayer (2007) analysed the language features used by males and females in 14 family and social films in Persian and English, focusing on intensifiers, hedges and tag questions, using Lakoff's (1973) framework of women's language. The researchers found no significant differences in language use between males and females, contradicting Lakoff's theory. By examining over thirty relevant linguistic variables, such as interruptions and intensifiers, in fifteen empirical studies, Plug et al. (2021) found few significant differences in the use of these variables between men and women in spoken interactions. However, women were found to engage more in supportive turn-taking.

Previous research has shown that there has been considerable interest in investigating the differences in language use by both men and women. Many studies explored the language features used by both genders, and most showed that they use language differently (e.g., Zimmermann and West 1996; Haas 1979; Sheridan 2007; Holmes 2013; Li and Li 2020; and many others). However, the nature of these differences regarding the specific linguistic features used by each gender in online forums (e.g., *Talks at Google*) has not yet received its due attention. This study attempts to fill this gap by examining the linguistic features used by both genders in *Talks at Google* online platform.

Methodology

Corpus

The corpus comprises 14 videos selected from *Talks at Google*: seven for male native English speakers and seven for female native English speakers. The average duration of each video was 50 minutes. The selected videos were all published in 2017. Because these videos had little interaction with the audience, the sound quality was good and a similar video duration was available for both genders.

Table 1. List of the selected videos for the male and female speakers

No.	Topic	Speaker	Published	Duration (minutes)	Category
Male Speakers					
1	Effective Altruism	Adriano Mannino	25th August 2017	48	Leaders
2	Innovations That Pushed Boundaries	Slava Vakarchuk	10th May 2017	59	Leaders
3	The Ideas Industry	Daniel Drezner	14th July 2017	48	Politics
4	Restoring Humanity in the Criminal Justice System	Jon Rapping	12th May 2017	41	Politics
5	The Art of Meaningful Conversation	Andrew Horn	20th June 2017	49	Business and entrepreneurs
6	Stretch: Unlock the Power of Less – and Achieve More Than You Ever Imagined	Scott Sonenshein	28th February 2017	42	Business and entrepreneurs
7	The Finite and Infinite Games of Leadership	Simon Sinek	19th June 2017	56	Business and entrepreneurs
Female Speakers					
1	Our Untold Stories	Jennie Magiera	14th August 2017	45	Leaders
2	The Bridge to Brilliance: How One Principal in a Tough Community Is Inspiring the World	Nadia Lopez	13th April 2017	58	Leaders
3	The Genetics of Politics	Rose McDermott	25th January 2017	56	Politics
4	My House in Damascus	Diana Darke	17th May 2017	50	Politics
5	Living Well on the Road: Business Travel	Linden Schaffer	6th July 2017	43	Business and entrepreneurs

Table 1. (*Continued*)

No.	Topic	Speaker	Published	Duration (minutes)	Category
6	Building An Unconventional Company	Zim Ugochukwu	30th June 2017	44	Business and entrepreneurs
7	Extreme You: Step Up. Stand Out. Kick Ass. Repeat	Sarah Robb O'Hagan	18th May 2017	51	Business and entrepreneurs

These videos were selected based on their duration category (focusing on three categories: leaders, politics and business entrepreneurs). In some selected videos, there was a brief interaction with the audience (not more than 10%); these other speakers' interactions were excluded from the analysis. Table 1 presents a list of the selected videos in the present article with the speaker's name, published date, duration, the category of the talk and the links to each video (the first seven are the male speakers and the last seven are the female speakers).

These videos were downloaded and uploaded on *Otter.ai* (https://otter.ai/) to get the transcripts of the videos. This website provides a transcription service using artificial intelligence, allowing users to import audios and videos from different platforms and generate written transcriptions. It also summarises keywords and speaker name identification and allows users to edit the text, play the videos with the synced text, and make the desired changes. The reason for using a transcription generator program instead of just searching and downloading the subtitles is that such a program would give us the exact words and utterances used by the speaker without autocorrections. After selecting the videos and generating the transcripts, these transcripts were read carefully, and the videos were re-watched to find out if there were any missing words or mistakes.

Talks at Google

Talks at Google (https://talksat.withgoogle.com/) is a platform that combines many influential thinkers and creators in one room. It was established in 2006 and it is hosted monthly with 12 Googler volunteers' speakers. This platform covers different topics in different genres, e.g., economics, health, environment, politics, leaders, history, science, business and entrepreneurs. The talks published range from inspirational and informative talks to simple talks about how to use a specific tool or to do better in a job.

Data analysis

To address the aims of the present research, a mixed-method approach was adopted to analyse the collected data quantitatively and qualitatively. After selecting the videos and extracting the transcriptions, they were classified based on gender and analysed using Lakoff and Lakoff's (2004) forms of women's language as a main framework of analysis. The quantitative analysis aims to present the frequencies of these utterances to answer the first research question. In contrast, the qualitative analysis aims to find the gender differences and show how and why specific utterances were used. The analysis of Lakoff's forms of women's language is applied first to the male speakers and then to the female speakers. Finally, a comparison between both genders is presented. The analysis was done manually using the find tool in Microsoft Word to look for Lakoff's language features and count the number of utterances. After that, the researchers explained the language features and presented examples from the selected videos. The video number follows each example in square brackets, as follows: [M01] refers to the first video in the list of male speakers, [F02] refers to the second video in the list of female speakers in Table 1, and so on.

Results

This section presents the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the data based on Lakoff and Lakoff's (2004) forms of women's language. By so doing, it answers the research questions and shows the language features found in the selected videos by each gender based on their occurrences, percentages and ranks. Table 2 shows the frequencies and percentages of use of the linguistic features by males and females in *Talks at Google*.

Table 2. Frequencies and percentages of the language features used by males and females

Language features	Frequency	%	Rank
Hedges	1,676	52.75	1
Intensifiers	644	20.28	2
Hypercorrect grammar	595	18.72	3
Tag questions	130	4.10	4
Empty adjectives	58	1.83	5
Super polite forms	57	1.80	6
Sense of humour	17	0.54	7
Specialised vocabulary	–	–	–
Speaking in italics	–	–	–
Total	3,177	100.00	

Table 2 shows that the total number of linguistic features Lakoff and Lakoff (2004) identified in the corpus is 3,177. It also demonstrates that "hedging" was ranked first, with 52.75% of the total language features found in the corpus. Intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar and tag questions were ranked second, third and fourth, with 20.28%, 18.72% and 4.10%, respectively. The least frequent language features used by speakers of both genders were empty adjectives, super polite forms and a sense of humour. As shown in Table 3, the language features Lakoff and Lakoff (2004) identified as characteristic of women's language were evident in male talks. The male speakers used empty adjectives, super polite forms, hypercorrect grammar and hedges more often than the female speakers did. The analysis also revealed that both genders did not employ some linguistic features, such as specialised vocabulary and speaking in italics.

Table 3. Frequencies and percentages of linguistic features used according to gender

Linguistic features	Male frequency (%)	Female frequency (%)
Hedges	944 (56.32)	732 (43.68)
Intensifiers	300 (46.58)	344 (53.42)
Hypercorrect grammar	301 (50.59)	294 (49.42)
Tag questions	56 (43.08)	74 (56.92)
Empty adjectives	33 (56.90)	25 (43.10)
Super polite forms	29 (50.88)	28 (49.12)
Sense of humour	7 (41.18)	10 (58.82)
Total	1,670	1,507

Table 3 indicates that the male speakers used some linguistic features more frequently than the female speakers, namely hedges, empty adjectives and super polite forms. In total, males used 1,670 linguistic features in their talks while the female speakers used 1,507 linguistic features. Intensifiers, tag questions and a sense of humour were used by the female speakers more frequently than the male speakers did. In the following sub-sections, some examples of the use of these linguistic features by the male and female speakers are presented and analysed.

Hedges

Lakoff and Lakoff (2004) states that women use hedges more often since asserting themselves is not considered ladylike and feminine. Women tend to avoid making strong statements by using hedges such as "I guess", "I think" or "I wonder" to reduce the power of their statements (Lakoff 1973, 54). Hedges refer to phrases and words used to decrease a speaker's saying and to show hesitancy. They include linguistic expressions that convey impression, uncertainty or possibility. Usually, hedges have the function of minimising unfriendliness and reducing the force of certain expressions. Coates (2015, 88) describes women's speech as "tentative" since they often use hedges such as "you know", "sort of" and "perhaps", which express the certainty or uncertainty of the speaker. Table (4) lists the hedges found in this study.

Table 4. List of hedging devices found in the study

Type	Examples	Males (Freq.)	Females (Freq.)
Modal auxiliaries	will, should, could, may	277	182
Modal adverbs	perhaps, probably, possibly, usually	72	38
Discourse markers	you know, well, I think, kind of, I guess, yeah, I believe	553	424
Fillers	hmm, uhm, uhh, oh, huh	42	88

Table 4 shows the occurrences of lexical hedges used by both males and females in the videos. It shows that the males used hedges 944 times, with 56.32% of the hedges used. The data revealed that the male speakers used modal auxiliaries more often than the female speakers did. This type of hedging was used 277 times by the males and 182 times by the females. The most frequent type of hedging used by both genders was discourse markers, with 424 occurrences in the female speakers' videos and 553 occurrences in the male speakers' videos. The most frequent discourse marker used by the male speakers was "you know"; it occurred 328 times in the selected videos. It was mainly used to boost their statement and show self-confidence, as in the following examples.

Example 1:

  a. But this is a case where technology, of course, <u>you know</u>, through the advancement of medicine has already brought us huge benefits. [M01]

  b. So that's definitely also an important consideration your interests, your skills, your motivation, of course, <u>you know</u>, if if you're an effective altruists, a core thing. [M01]

"Well" was used by the female speakers less often than the male speakers. The use of "well" in the selected data showed that the females used it to reduce the power of their statements and, in some cases, to answer a question. Some examples of "well" found in female talks are as follows:

Example 2:

    a.   And the process of writing my book led me to say, <u>well</u>, what does this actually mean for individuals as well and leaders… [F07]

    b.   Now, does anyone wanna guess? <u>Well</u>, let's first say this, the National Enquirer sells three times the number of copies every year as the Atlantic. [F01]

Based on our analysis, "I think" was less frequently used by the female speakers, with 68 instances; the male speakers used it 85 times. Some examples from the speech of male speakers using "I think" are as follows:

Example 3:

    a.   So <u>I think</u> you need both and I'm uncomfortable by the fact but <u>I think</u> you need adversaries. [M07]

    b.   And so if we're being altruistic, <u>I think</u> we should not, we should not assume that there are they mean that there's diminishing marginal utility there. [M01]

The use of "I think" and hypercorrect grammar (*we should not*) in Example 3(b) made the statement stronger. As for the use of "I think" by the female speakers, Example 3(a) shows that the female speaker began her sentence with "for sure", and then immediately she became uncertain and wanted to reduce the power of her statement by using I think.

Example 4:

    a.   But for sure, <u>I think</u> that's what we all need to do. That's what our consumers want us to do is help them get a more holistic picture. [F07]

    b.   Same with peloton like <u>I think,</u> I actually believe all of us are bringing tons of energy and all the boats are rising. So <u>I think</u> and what's really interesting is… [F07]

In Example 4(b), though the female speaker was uncertain about her statement by using I think first, she boosted her statement. She used "I actually believe", transforming her statement from uncertain to confident. The use of fillers, often described as "pause fillers", was more frequent by the female speakers. There were 88 occurrences of fillers in the female speakers' videos, and only 42 occurrences of fillers were found in the male speakers' videos. The use of fillers such as "um" by both genders was to take some time to think of the appropriate phrase to use. In the following examples, the male speakers used "um" before answering a certain question.

Example 5:

    a.   What what you wanna know. I mean, like I stubbed my toe that was really bad. Um. So my whole journey… [M07]

    b.   But if we have, um if in fact, might the story I'm telling you based on the data I have is true. [F03]

In Examples 5(a) and 5(b), the female speakers used "um" to take more time to think of the most appropriate phrase or word to use and, in some cases, to correct themselves, as in Example 5(b).

Example 6:

    a.   So um, I was really excited when they Chicago public schools had announced a grant for iPads and I was like, Whoa… [F01]

    b.   have children in this kind of way, in this sort of, um you know, bifurcated way, you're getting a pulling apart of ideology… [F03]

In Examples 6(a) and 6(b), the use of "you know" along with the filler "um" showed the speaker's uncertainty. She uses "um" to take some time to think of the best phrase to use. The use of "you know", as a filler, reduced the power of her statement.

Intensifiers

Lakoff (1973) asserts that women use the intensifier more frequently than men, though men might use it. Due to social pressures on women to speak more ladylike, they tend to use more intensifiers. This study found eight intensifiers used by both genders in the corpus: "so", "very", "really", "too", "super", "quite", "such" and "totally". The number of occurrences of these intensifiers in the females' videos

was 344, while 300 occurrences were in the males' videos. The most frequent intensifiers used by both genders were "very" and "so", and the least frequently used were "such" and "super". The female speakers used more intensifiers than the males to sound more ladylike and strengthen their statements. They used the intensifier "so" 77 times and "very" 150 times. In counting the utterances of the intensifier "so", the one which has the meaning of "very" was calculated, as in the following examples:

Example 7:

a.   I'm <u>so</u> embarrassed and I didn't wanna talk about it. [F01]

b.   And so I think that rest is <u>so</u> important because Who are you without rest. [F02]

c.   But and so I grew up living a very different life. Like I, I was this like one… [F06]

The intensifier "too" has the meaning of very and many; the instances where "too" was used with the meaning "also" were not counted. It was noticed that the male speakers tend to use "too" more often, with 18 utterances occurrences. For example, one speaker said, "… essentially, the barriers to entry are <u>too</u> high. Critics are <u>too</u> powerful" [M03]. Moreover, the male speakers used intensifiers to emphasise their proposition and insist on their ideas and opinions, for instance:

Example 8:

a.   It's it's <u>so</u> messy, and it's unclear whether your campaign will… [M01]

b.   That's <u>really</u> ridiculous. [M02]

The intensifier "super" was more frequently used in the males' videos, with eight occurrences. For example, a male speaker, Adriano Mannino, said, "… is not <u>super</u> relevant for for moral status…, …<u>super</u> intelligences emerge…, …on the <u>super</u> intelligences than…, …is <u>super</u> low…, …that <u>super</u> intelligence". Another intensifier that was used more frequently by male speakers was "too", e.g., "Critics are <u>too</u> powerful" [M03], "…procedure are just <u>too</u> complicated…" [M04], "…the company is <u>too</u> afraid to break the rule" [M07].

Hypercorrect grammar

Hypercorrect grammar refers to the use of standard forms of a language rather than slang and vernacular expressions. It involves the use of standard pronunciation and forms of verbs. According to Lakoff and Lakoff (2004), women tend to use standard forms of language more often than men. Based on the definition of "hypercorrect grammar", the researchers searched for standard pronunciation forms; for instance, she searched for the use of standard pronunciation of a word, e.g., "going to" not "gonna", to check if the speaker did not drop the "g" at the end of it. The researchers randomly selected the following verbs: "going", "doing", "want to", "got to", "should", "could have past participle", "has/have been + verb", "do not", "does not", "is not", "are not", "had not", "would not" and "may not" to search for their utterances in the selected videos. It was found that the female speakers used hypercorrect grammar in their talks 294 times; they used the standard form of the verbs, as shown in Examples. The use of standard forms of language is either to emphasise their statements, e.g., "I did create a really epic video about volume of a rectangular pyramid" [F01], or to be polite and to reduce tension with the audience, as when female speakers avoid using slang words and opt to use the standard form of the word, for instance, the use of the standard pronunciation of going, 85 times, without dropping the sound "g" at the end of it. Other examples of using hypercorrect grammar by female speakers are highlighted as follows.

Example 9:

    a.   I did create a really epic video about volume of a rectangular pyramid. [F01]

    b.   Atlanta should have won by the numbers. [F02]

    c.   And I should have said that backwards, but I'm trying to do it. [F03]

    d.   And they were like, well, we could have done that. [F07]

    e.   the Syrian army itself has been so weakened, it's really, really weak, it would have fallen. [F04]

Furthermore, there were instances of hypercorrect grammar found in the male speakers' videos. 301 instances were found, more than the number in the female speakers' videos. This linguistic feature is used to boost the speaker's statement and show self-confidence. The following is an example:

Example 10:

> <u>I did mention</u> Give Well, the charity research Think, mainly focusing on the cause area of world poverty and global health. [M01]

It was noticed that there were some differences between males and females in the use of hypercorrect grammar; however, the difference is a small one. Both genders used hypercorrect grammar; they would use slang language in their talks. The female speakers opted for non-standard forms of language 175 times. Some of the examples found in the selected videos are:

Example 11:

a. And I shared with my friends and family that, that we were having a hard time and that we were <u>gonna</u> try something new, and that I was scared. [F01]

b. Mind your business, <u>don't</u> talk to anybody call us when you get home, we <u>didn't</u> have cell phones, you <u>gotta</u> be in the house at 3:30, when we call you, right… [F02]

Though female speakers used "wanna" in some cases, the standard form "want to" was more frequently used. In some cases, the female speakers were inconsistent in the use of forms of verbs used in the same sentence; they would start a sentence with the hypercorrect grammar of a verb and then opt for the abbreviated form of it, e.g., "But one that stood out was in China when <u>I would go</u> into a store, and <u>I'd asked</u> for facewash" [F06]. In addition, 124 occurrences of nonstandard forms of pronunciation and grammar were found in the male speakers' talks. "Gonna" and "wannna" instead of "going to" and "want to" were also used as shown as follows.

Example 12:

a. I said, You know what, <u>I'm gonna</u> go ahead, and <u>I'm gonna</u> say, <u>I'm gonna</u> call on you, and you and you and you and I maybe pick five or six different people… [M06]

b. There's no doubt in my mind that man <u>didn't</u> come out of law school 30 years ago saying you know what I <u>wanna</u> do with my life. I think I <u>wanna</u> help process 800 people a year into prison cells… [M04]

Also, the speakers dropped the sound "g" at the end of continuous verbs, as in the following examples:

Example 13:

    a.   But I would suggest to you that <u>lookin</u> at that case that way is too narrow. [M04]

    b.   Going through the necessities of what, what elements are required to play an infinite game, right. <u>It's</u> what <u>I'm</u> <u>workin</u> on right now. [M07]

Tag questions

Tag questions are questions that usually show the uncertainty of the speaker. They are questions such as "right?", "isn't it?", "ok?" where the speaker is doubtful, uncertain about something, or s/he is seeking confirmation of something. Lakoff and Lakoff (2004) states that tag questions are one of the linguistic features used frequently by women. Tag questions are sometimes used by speakers even when both know the answer, and there is no need for any confirmation, but they would use it to start a conversation, e.g., "Sure is hot here, isn't it?" (Lakoff 1973, 55). By analysing the selected videos, the only tag question found was "right?" It was noticed that tag questions were used 130 times by both genders and that the female speakers used tag questions more often than the male speakers did, with 74 instances for the female speakers and 56 for the male ones. In some cases, they used this linguistic feature because they were seeking confirmation for something, as in the following example:

Example 14:

    You're not going to go into the school, the principal's not gonna listen to you. It's not gonna make but those people hold them accountable. So you continue to follow up, <u>right?</u> [F02]

Female speakers might use tag questions when uncertain about something, as in Example 15, while some examples of using tag questions by male speakers are shown in Example 16.

Example 15:

    I would love to know what everybody in this room does, but I don't know what you do. Right? So I need you to come and tell. [F02]

Example 16:

    a.   So this gets me thinking, let's look at business. The game of business is an infinite game, <u>right?</u> It obeys all the rules. [M07]

    b.   And what I learned is that courage is not this deep down internal fortitude, <u>right?</u> It comes externally. [M07]

Empty adjectives

For Lakoff (2004, 78), the use of empty adjectives such as "cute", "charming", "divine", etc., is more associated with women's language. These adjectives, apart from their literal meaning, express the emotional disposition of the speaker. Women use these adjectives as an act of admiration towards someone or something. In this study, these adjectives were found: "cool", "gorgeous", "scary", "lovely", "adorable", "delightful", "divine", "cute", "charming", "awful", "pretty", "wonderful" and "fantastic". Empty adjectives were used 33 times by the male speakers and 25 times by the female speakers. The male speakers used some adjectives (e.g., "divine" and "cute"), which were considered by Lakoff (1973) "unmasculine" and characteristic of women's language. The following examples show the use of "divine" and "cute" by the male speakers:

Example 17:

    a.   And Newton laws were the first time when we could predict exactly without any <u>divine</u> force, that if the ball is in his a point eight, now… [M02]

    b.   Not even a <u>cute</u> little cry, but like a big ugly, like massive drops coming down one of those cries. [M05]

The adjective "lovely" was only used once by a female speaker as in Example 18. As for "pretty", it was used by the male speakers more than the female speakers, with 21 times, to stress their statements which shown in Example 19.

Example 18:

    All right. Thank you. I really appreciate it. It was lovely to be here. [F06]

Example 19:

> With that kind of interventions, that's pretty amazing …, I think a pretty good case can be made here for going for risk… But that seems I mean, climate change seems pretty bad. [M01]

The adjectives "cool", "scary", "awful" were used by the female speakers more than male speakers. The following are some examples retrieved from male speakers' videos:

Example 20:

a. You say, "Hey, where are you goin?" And he says, "vacation". You go. Cool. [M07]

b. And the way I could use it, it was intuitive. It was absolutely fantastic. [M07]

Other examples from the female speakers' videos are as follows:

Example 21:

a. And we direct people where we want to go which has been really, which has been really cool. [F06]

b. And I was like, no, I want to bury the iPads in the back of the school and pretend they got lost. Like, it was awful. [F01]

Super polite forms

Lakoff and Lakoff (2004) explains that women are supposed to talk more politely than men and that this is related to the use of hypercorrect grammar in their conversation. Women are supposed to use indelicate expressions and avoid using swear and taboo words. They must be careful and use expressions such as "please" and "thank you" in their conversations. Some of the super polite forms that were found in the selected videos are represented in the following table.

Table 5. Occurrences of super polite forms in *Talks at Google*

Super polite forms	Male	Female
Excuse me	1	–
Sorry	4	6
Please	2	6
Thank you	13	13
Thanks	9	3

The female speakers used super polite forms 28 times, whereas the male speakers used them 29 times. The super polite forms "thank you" and "thanks" were used by both genders either at the beginning of their videos or at the end to be polite with their audience and express their gratitude for being there listening to them. Some examples of using "thank you" are:

Example 22:

    a.   Good afternoon. Thank you, Jillian, so much for hosting me. Thanks to Google. Thank you guys for spending your lunch time with me. [F05]

    b.   Thank you very much for taking your time out to come and have a chat today about genetics and politics. [F03]

Moreover, "please" was used by both genders: two times by the male speakers and six times by the female speakers to reduce the tension of being rude and rough, as in the following example:

Example 23:

    a.   I haven't called your group, please step aside and wait till I called your group. [M07]

    b.   Yes, please. So let's start with social. And this is something that I've had to come to… [M05]

As shown in the examples above, the use of "please" followed by the imperative verb is to request and command someone politely. In addition, there was only one occurrence of "excuse me" which was used by a male speaker to express a contrasting point and to clarify a point to the listeners: "We just talked about what happiness are, excuse me, what relationships do for our happiness" [M05]. In addition, Lakoff (1973) states that men tend to use stronger expletives, such as "damn" and "shit" whereas women tend to avoid swear words, and when they

have to, they will use weaker expletives such as "oh dear" and "goodness". In the analysis, there was only one instance of using swear words by a female speaker:

Example 24:

>   And a lot of people were like, oh, shoot, okay, like, you're not paying me. [F06]

As noticed in Example 24, females tend to use weak expletives, as Lakoff and Lakoff (2004) stated, whereas the male speakers used stronger expletives, as in the following examples:

Example 25:

a.   So you're <u>damn</u> right. I want to have more freedom this month than I had last… [M07]

b.   They say that all the science they knew before was completely <u>bullshit</u>. [M02]

The use of specialised words related to interests

Lakoff (1973, 49) states that "women … make far more precise discriminations in naming colours than do men". They use precise colour terms like "lavender", "beige", "mauve", etc. Women tend to use specialised vocabulary related to their interests, e.g., "beauty", "cooking", "sewing", etc. Some of the specialised words found in the selected videos of female speakers are grouped into the following topics:

1.   Talking about pregnancy and starting a family

>   And so the more and the longer that we were struggling to have a family I was like everyone around me was <u>pregnant</u> constantly. … And we're not the <u>baby</u> making people I guess, … finally we decided to go to the next step for treatment. [F01]

2.   Talking about beauty and fashion

a.   Mullets are not the most popular <u>hairstyle</u> anymore. …apparently <u>80s hairstyles</u> and that people like Billy Ray Cyrus, are always <u>dreamy to teenage girls</u>. [F01]

    b.   Paying attention to the <u>jewelry</u> and the <u>hair</u>, … that <u>necklace</u> and … <u>do her hair</u>? … the <u>boobs</u> and the <u>lip gloss lip gloss</u>… becomes much more important than <u>physical attractiveness</u> and recent. [F03]

3.   Talking about home décor and style

    This is <u>hand painted wood lacquer work</u>. …that <u>gold acanthus leaf</u> up in the corner there is straight off the sort of Hellenistic blocks …<u>gardens, flowers, little little birds hidden in the trees</u>. [F04]

Moreover, it was noticed that the male speakers also used specialised words related to their work and interests. Relevant topics include the following:

1.   Talking about sports and competing with each other

    A finite <u>game</u> is defined as known <u>players</u>, fixed <u>rules</u> , and an agreed upon … has more <u>runs at the end of nine innings is the winner</u>, and the game ends and we all go home. [M07]

2.   Talking about wars, military and politics

    People who were <u>wounded</u> and <u>injured</u> during <u>wars</u>. And they began, you know, then in <u>First World War</u>, which Americans or Irish or British. [M02]

3.   Talking about economics

    If you look at the Dow index of 30, something odd companies that make up the Dow index, something like 70% or 80% of those companies are 35 years or younger. [M07]

Sense of humour

Lakoff and Lakoff (2004) states that women lack a sense of humour; they do not tell or get jokes. However, through the analysis of the female speakers' videos, it was found that they tell jokes and they do not lack humour. There were ten jokes told by the female speakers, who were attempting to reduce the tension with the audience and to get closer to them. Some examples of humour found in the videos of the female speakers are as follows:

Example 26:

> Oh, it's so great. So what I'd like for all of you to do is I'm just going to get off and take the next 18 minutes to watch this. I'll be right back. JK. [F01]

Here, the speaker was asking the audience if they knew a TED Talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and she was joking that she would leave and let them watch it.

Example 27:

> Metaphorically, I walked into the staff room, and they looked at me they're like, oh, no, it's the iPad lady and they all walked out the back door. [F01]

Here, the speaker was talking about other teachers and how they would react when they saw them: They would run away and refuse to hang with her because she used to talk much about using the iPad in the classroom, and they used to call her "The iPad lady".

Example 28:

> Now, according to this fake mom back story, there was a village at the bottom of this mountain. [F01]

Here, the speaker was joking about a story her mother would tell her daily at bedtime, and when she grew up and visited the place mentioned in this story, she found it did not exist, and her mother made up this story. In addition, the sense of humour was evident in the male speakers' videos: seven instances of humour were found. An example is as follows:

Example 29:

> My mom telling me how proud of me she is… Not even a cute little cry, but like a big ugly, like massive drops coming down one of those cries. [M05]

Here, the speaker was making fun of his reaction to the surprise and how his face looked when he cried with joy.

Sounding more ladylike and feminine

Lakoff and Lakoff (2004) states that women speak in italics to sound more feminine and ladylike. They tend to make strong assertions and express their emotions more often. They tend to use intensifiers like "really", "very", "so", and "quite", as was explained above. The following examples are taken from the female speakers' videos. In Example 30(a), "really" was used twice to strengthen the meaning of weak. The use of "really" in Example 30(b) is to emphasise that she is going to a far place indeed.

Example 30:

    a.   The Syrian army itself has been so weakened, it's <u>really</u>, <u>really</u> weak, it would have fallen. [F04]

    b.   And I extend it I extend it to 48 hours if I'm going away for a long time or if I'm going <u>really</u> far. [F05]

In contrast to Lakoff's claim that women use intensifiers and super polite forms to sound more ladylike, throughout the analysis, it was found that male speakers also used intensifiers, super polite forms and hypercorrect grammar to make their statements stronger and show self-confidence. Female speakers can use linguistic features to assert their statements in some cases.

Discussion

The analysis presented has shown that there are some differences in the use of linguistic features by both genders in the videos selected from *Talks at Google.* The results showed that Lakoff and Lakoff's (2004) women's language was used in the male and female speakers' videos, namely hedges, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, tag questions, empty adjectives, super polite forms, sense of humour and specialised vocabulary. However, there are differences in their usage. Male speakers, for example, preferred using hedges in the first place, then hypercorrecting grammar and intensifiers, respectively.

The most frequent type of hedges used by the male speakers was discourse markers such as "you know", "I think" and "well" to boost their statements. Using hedges along with hypercorrect grammar made their statements stronger. Moreover, it was noticed that the male speakers preferred to use modal auxiliaries as hedges more often than the female speakers did. The male speakers used intensifiers less frequently than the females did. They used intensifiers such as "really" and

"super" to stress their statements and opinions. In addition, even though Lakoff and Lakoff (2004) states that the use of empty adjectives, super polite forms, hypercorrect grammar and hedges are often associated with women's language to sound ladylike. The results of this article showed the opposite: male speakers used these four features more frequently than females. In general, male speakers use linguistic features more than female speakers.

Furthermore, female speakers in *Talks at Google* tend to use hedges more frequently, followed by intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, tag questions, empty adjectives, super polite forms and the least frequently used feature was humour. It was noticed that female speakers talked frequently about their feelings, family and beauty; they tend to focus on details in describing, for instance, the style or décor of a building. In contrast to Lakoff and Lakoff's (2004) framework of women's language, female speakers have a sense of humour, and there were instances of jokes used by female speakers. Even though the topics were formal, talking about politics and business, they managed to tell jokes and talk about their emotions and personal lives. Lakoff and Lakoff (2004) believes that women use hedges more than men, which was not found in the selected videos of female speakers. The most frequent types of hedges used by female speakers were discourse markers, similar to male speakers. Moreover, female speakers tend to use fillers and discourse markers together, which shows uncertainty. The use of fillers by female speakers was twice its use by male speakers, and they tend to use them more frequently because they doubt themselves and need some time to select the appropriate word to use. Uncertainty in female language was also evident in the frequent use of tag questions more than the other gender.

In addition, the results of this study showed that female speakers used empty adjectives less than males; they tend to use them to express their intense emotions towards something. Lakoff and Lakoff (2004) states that women are not supposed to speak in slang, and they should use hypercorrect grammar. However, the results of this study showed that in some cases, female speakers used the abbreviation forms of verbs and slang language by using "gotta" and "kinda" instead of the full form in their talks.

Conclusion

The findings of this study shed light on the gender differences in language use in *Talks at Google*. The linguistic features used by male and female speakers were identified, and the frequency of use was analysed. The results showed that both male and female speakers tend to utilise the linguistic features identified by Lakoff and Lakoff (2004). However, there were significant differences in the frequency

of use of these features between the two genders. Male speakers were found to use more empty adjectives, hedges, hypercorrect grammar and super polite forms. These features indicate tentative or indirect speech, which may suggest that male speakers are less confident or assertive in their communication style. On the other hand, female speakers tended to use intensifiers, tag questions and humour more frequently than male speakers. These linguistic features are often associated with emotional expressiveness and rapport building, which may suggest that female speakers tend to be more sensitive and attuned to social dynamics in their communication style. The differences in language use between male and female speakers can be attributed to various factors, including societal expectations and gender roles, upbringing and socialisation, and individual differences in personality and communication style. It is important to note that gender is just one of many factors that can influence language use, and other factors such as age, educational level and culture may also play a significant role.

The limitations of this study should also be acknowledged. The sample size was small, and the analysis was limited to only three topics. Future research should aim to replicate these findings in a more extensive and diverse sample of videos, covering a more comprehensive range of topics. Additionally, further investigations should explore the functions of these linguistic features in different contexts and examine how they relate to gendered power dynamics and social relations.

This study contributes to our understanding of the similarities and differences in language use by males and females in *Talks at Google*. The findings provide insights into the linguistic features utilised by each gender and highlight the importance of examining gender-based language patterns in various forms of discourse. Understanding these patterns can enhance our communication skills and foster greater understanding and appreciation of diverse perspectives.

Notes

1. However, Hobbs (2003) found that males used politeness markers equally to women, and that positive politeness strategies were used exclusively for male attorneys.

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