

## Women's Language In Media: A Study Of Blackpink's Interview On Zach Sang Show Podcast

Nazmi Fawwaziah<sup>1</sup>, Abd. Hannan<sup>1</sup>, Hasbi Assiddiqi<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia

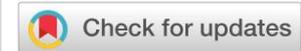
\*Correspondence: [fawwaziahnazmi@gmail.com](mailto:fawwaziahnazmi@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*This study examines women's language features in global media discourse by analyzing Blackpink's interview on the Zach Sang Show podcast. It explores how Lakoff's theory operates in the context of multilingualism and global celebrity status. Using a descriptive qualitative method, data were collected from the transcription of Blackpink's 2019 podcast interview and analyzed using Lakoff's framework, and the stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). The findings show that eight out of ten women's language features were identified in the conversation. Lexical hedges and fillers appeared most frequently (36%), while the second most frequently intensifiers (32%). And rising intonation, empty adjectives, precise color terms, super polite form, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic statement occurred less frequently. These results suggest that women's language features function as strategic linguistic choices shaped by multilingualism and celebrity identity. By integrating Lakoff's theory to global media and celebrity discourse, this study contributes to the development of sociolinguistic research.*

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### 1. Introduction

Language is an important tool for human communication as it reflects a person's social, cultural and psychological identity in addition to serving as a way to convey information. The diversity of language use between men and women has long been a major concern in linguistic studies (Said et al., 2021; Yaumi et al., 2024; Adinda et al., 2025). One of the most well-known theories in this area is the idea of women's language. This idea was first expressed by American linguist Robin Lakoff (1975) in her book "Language and Woman's Place". According to Lakoff (1975), women tend to prioritize politeness and use softer, more indirect language. This is reflected in their frequent use of hedges or fillers such as "just" or "sorry", as well as a tendency to avoid direct confrontation. There is a connection between these traits and society's belief in traditional female roles that focus more on gentleness, care, and humility.

The study of women's language features has been conducted by other several researchers. The first one is "Revealing Women's Language Features in Beauty Tutorials on Vogue Youtube Channel: A Sociolinguistics Study" by Annisa Az-zahra (2025), examines the language used by women in beauty tutorials on the Vogue Youtube channel. 12 female speakers' utterances are analyzed using Lakoff's sociolinguistic theory to discover ten important linguistic elements, including fillers, tag questions, and rising intonation. The study additionally inquire into the social functions of these qualities, such as softening claims and conveying uncertainty. The research demonstrates how these qualities support social interaction and gender identity in digital beauty material by analyzing the content of YouTube transcriptions and finding that all of Lakoff's traits are present, with lexical fillers being the most common. Inspiring more sociolinguistic study on women's language use on digital platforms, the findings advance our understanding of language and gender dynamics in online media. Then the second is "Women's Language Features in the Podcast Stories of the Soul" by Ayu Suhesty and Sriyono (2023), examines women's linguistic traits, emphasizing features such as politeness, emotional expression, and softening speech, particularly in the context of Najwa Zebian's podcasts. They point out important characteristics that are used to show uncertainty, start conversations, and communicate emotions, such as intensifiers, extremely polite forms, empty adjectives, avoiding powerful swear words, and emphatic stress. In line with Lakoff and Pearson's ideas, the study highlights how these characteristics mirror more general social and cultural characteristics linked to women's speech and illustrates how digital media, such as podcasts, function as channels for gendered communication.

Sociolinguistics views that the language used in communication can be influenced by social status, gender, age, and education level. Language and gender have always attracted attention, both in the academic world and in everyday life, especially when it is said that men and women are not the same in the way they use language (Indrasari et al., 2020; Abbas et al., 2023; Muslimat et al., 2025). According to Tannen (1990), one reason why men and women struggle to communicate with each other is that they process communication in essentially different ways. Tannen (1990) found that common areas of conflict between men's and women's ways of communication include differences such as status versus support. Then Lakoff (1975) identified some linguistic features that she believes are used more frequently by women than men. Holmes (2001) states that there are four factors influencing the way a person speaks: participants, setting or social context, topic, and function. Women have a complicated place in using language. According to Lakoff (1975), sometimes women's language shows their powerlessness and weakness. Women have to use certain language to be accepted by their society. For women to be acceptable in their community, they must speak in a specific way (Azis et al., 2022; Abbas et al., 2023; Muchtar et al., 2023). Instead of expressing their masculinity, they frequently employ specific terminology to demonstrate their femininity. Women occasionally choose to speak using specific speech characteristics (Irmayani et al., 2024; Abbas et al., 2024; Andini et al., 2022).

Robin Lakoff's theory has been widely used in earlier research on women's language to analyze gendered linguistic characteristics in a variety of digital media environments. According to research by Suhesty and Sriyono (2023) and Az-zahra (2025), women frequently use linguistic elements such as intensifiers, hedges, fillers, tag questions, and politeness techniques to regulate interpersonal interactions, communicate doubt, and preserve harmony. Lakoff's claim that women's language reflects socially created gender roles and communicative expectations is supported by these data. However, the majority of current research focuses on local individuals, non-celebrities, or specific sociocultural contexts; it hardly takes into account the impact of international media exposure, global celebrity status, or multilingual communication on the usage of women's language features. This indicates a research gap in understanding how women's language operates within globalized media discourse. Therefore, this study offers novelty by examining women's language features in Blackpink's interview on the Zach Sang Show podcast, involving global women celebrities in an international media environment. This study extends previous research and provides a broader sociolinguistic understanding of women's language in contemporary global media.

Based on the research gap and novelty discussed above, this study aims to identify and analyze the features of women's language used by Blackpink in the Zach Sang Show podcast. In addition, this study seeks to interpret how multilingualism and celebrity status are reflected in the use of women's language features in global media discourse.

## **2. Methodology**

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the linguistic characteristics of the women in Blackpink's utterances on the Zach Sang Show podcast. A qualitative approach was chosen because the research focuses on interpreting linguistic phenomena in their natural context rather than measuring them statistically (Creswell, 2014).

The data source of this research was a video interview of Blackpink published in 2019 on the Zach Sang Show YouTube channel. The data consist of utterances produced by three members; Rosé, Jennie, and Lisa during the interview. The data were collected followed several steps. First, the researcher searched and download the Zach Sang Show podcast video featuring Blackpink. Second, watching and listening repeatedly to ensure accuracy of transcription. Third, transcribing the relevant parts of the video into written text. Then, highlighting utterances that represent features of women's language according to Lakoff's (1975) framework. And the last, organizing the transcribed utterances into a data sheet for further analysis.

The data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes three main steps: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data condensation stage, the utterances were transcribed and categorized according to Lakoff's classifications the characteristics of women's language. In the data display process, the categorized data were presented in tables to facilitate interpretation. Lastly, in the conclusion drawing stage, the results were interpreted in relation to the research objectives, focusing on how multilingualism and celebrity status influenced the use of women's language features in global media discourse.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

This section presents the findings of the study based on the analysis of three Blackpink members: Rose, Jennie, and Lisa. The researcher identified 25 occurrences of women's language features in the interview. Those are: lexical

hedges (9), rising intonation on declaratives (2), empty adjectives (1), precise color terms (2), intensifiers (8), superpolite forms (1), avoidance of strong swear word (1), emphatic statement (1).

### 3.1 Women’s Language Features

#### a. Lexical Hedges

Lexical hedges typically express women's uneasiness by demonstrating a lack of trust in the speakers' statements. Lexical hedge types are determined by linguistic elements like lexical verbs and fillers. According to Lakoff, women typically employ more hedges than males when expressing uncertainty. Lakoff (1975) distinguishes between four categories of hedges. The first sort uses words like you know, well, and kinda/kind of to convey doubt. The second category consists of hedges like sorta/sort of that are employed for politeness. The next kind is to convey that the speaker is certain of a statement's veracity in order to grab the listener's attention, like you know. The last type is used as a preamble to statements or inquiries, such as I suppose, I wonder, or I think. Women frequently employ these terms to make comments seem less aggressive and more uncertain.

Table 1. Examples of Lexical Hedges

Data	Speaker	Utterance
1	Rosé	<u>I think</u> it's but like you know how people say after you go on a stage...
2	Rosé	Like, where you're <u>kind of</u> nervous or when you're not totally connected with the crowd...
3	Rosé	Like what do I have to do more to like <u>you know</u> interact with them more...
4	Jennie	We didn't expect <u>you know</u> such a big crowd
5	Rosé	And <u>I think</u> best things come when it's unexpected
6	Rosé	I literally I was in bed and I <u>kind of</u> to be honest was thinking
7	Rosé	<u>I think</u> we are closer than like out like family
8	Rosé	<u>I think</u> my dad was okay
9	Lisa	I want to be K-pop artist <u>you know</u> , and then thankfully to YG

In Data 1–9, utterances such as “I think,” “you know,” and “kind of” appear repeatedly. For instance, in data 1, the phrase “I think” functions as a hedge, indicating that Rose is expressing her opinion cautiously and that she feels what she is said is not absolute, after Zach asks how they feel when they are on stage and see so many people around them. Meanwhile, the phrases “you know” and “kind of” function as fillers, which, according to Lakoff, are often used by women to maintain smooth interaction and avoid coming across as too assertive.

#### b. Rising intonation on declaratives

When the speaker needs confirmation and is the only one with the necessary information, they typically utilize rising intonation on declaratives. A declarative response turns into an inquiry when it is given in a high rising tone. Lakoff discovers that women in English have a common pattern of phrase intonation. In addition to having a declarative response, this question also appears to be very skeptical and has the rising tone of a yes-or-no question. This results in the speaker seeking confirmation from the listener, even though they may already possess the necessary information (Lakoff, 2004, p. 50).

**Table 2. Examples of Rising Intonation**

Data	Speaker	Utterance
10	Rosé	Is that even question like, <i>can I?</i>
11	Rosé	Like <i>am I allowed to?</i>

In data 10 and 11, Rose uses declarative sentences, but they are spoken with a rising intonation at the end of the sentence, so that what she says sounds like a question. “Is that even a question, like, can I?” and “Like, am I allowed to?”, even though what she said was not an official question, but the way she said it showed that she was seeking confirmation or approval from the other speaker.

### c. Empty Adjectives

When describing emotional reactions, women tend to employ empty adjectives. For instance, ladies utilize an empty adjective to convey their feelings when they are pleased or amazed by something. According to Lakoff (1975), a large number of adjectives employed to convey appreciation or approbation are firmly designated as feminine. Lakoff (1975) provides examples of adjectives that convey both literal and evaluative meanings, such as “divine”, “adorable”, and “lovely”, which are often associated with women’s speech.

**Table 3. Examples of Empty Adjectives**

Data	Speaker	Utterance
12	Rosé	It’s so <i>beautiful</i> and everybody is just <i>amazing</i>

In data 12, Rose says, “It’s so beautiful and everybody is just amazing.” The words *beautiful* and *amazing* are emotional. This statement is Rose’s expression when she sees the crowd watching Blackpink at Coachella. Rose shows her positive feelings.

### d. Precise color terms

Lakoff (1975) asserts that women are significantly more accurate than men in recognizing terms when expressing specifics about color. In women’s language, there is only one specific color term. Examples of common words in the active vocabulary of women are beige (light greyish-brown), lavender (pale purple), and maroon (red to dark brownish), which are not included in the majority of men’s vocabulary. Discrimination based on race is acceptable for women in our society, but not for men. This could be due to the way males think about ‘unworldly’ things like high culture.

**Table 4. Examples of Precise Color Terms**

Data	Speaker	Utterance
13	Lisa	It’s <i>ash brown</i> I think it’s kind of gray
14	Rosé	This kind of be more like <i>blue tone</i>

Data 13 and 14 shows the use of precise color terms, which are more specific color terms. For instance, Lisa and Rose did not just mention general colors, but used terms such as “ash brown,” “kind of gray,” and “blue tone.” As mentioned

earlier, according to Lakoff, women tend to have a more detailed color vocabulary than men, especially in aesthetic contexts such as appearance or style.

### e. Intensifiers

Women prefer to use language with a hint of story and persuasive emphasis to give the other person confidence in their remarks. This is because women's communication has an emotional component that is thought to be a feature of their speech. Intensifiers such as so, just, very, really, such, or quite more indicate women language characteristics than men. It is supposed to have an enduringly feminine quality. Compared to men, women are more likely to pause before finishing a sentence because they begin speaking without planning what they will say (Lakoff, 2004: 54).

**Table 5. Examples of Intensifiers**

Data	Speaker	Utterance
15	Rosé	You feel like you're <u>really interacted</u> with the crowd...
16	Rosé	It lasts for a long time and it's <u>really addictive</u>
17	Rosé	It's <u>really really surreal</u> , it's so life-changing
18	Rosé	I <u>just really enjoyed</u> myself
19	Rosé	But in the end they decided to be really <u>really support</u>
20	Rosé	And they <u>really really</u> stuck by me
21	Jennie	Have <u>such a big crowd</u> , and they were <u>really singing</u> their lungs, like they were singing with us  It <u>just only annyeonghaseyo</u>
22	Lisa	

In data 15 to 22, there were many uses of intensifiers such as so, really, and just. For instance, in data 15, Rose said “really interacted with the crowd.” The use of the word “really” shows that Rose wanted to emphasize how strong her feelings were. Also, in data 16-18, Rose mentioned ‘really’ several times and “so” when Zach asked about their feelings when they were on stage and surrounded by many people watching them. Then, in data 21, Jennie said “such a big crowd” and “they were really singing their lungs out.” She wanted to emphasize the intensity of her experience when performing in front of the audience. From her statement, Jennie emphasized how strong and enthusiastic the audience was in singing along. Lastly, in data 22, Lisa said “it just only annyeonghaseyo”. In the previous conversation, Zach asked if it was true that Lisa was the first non-Korean idol at YG Entertainment and how Lisa was able to audition. Lisa then recounted her story and said that the first time she went to Korea, she only knew how to say *annyeonghaseyo* which means “hi” in English.

### f. Super polite form

Super polite forms show how women must protect their words in front of the person to whom they are speaking and the people around them. This is partly due to women's desire to maintain their representation. Super polite forms might take the shape of hidden requests, praising others, or just avoiding an ignorant image (Widyasari et al., 2023).

**Table 6. Examples of Super Polite Form**

Data	Speaker	Utterance
23	Rosé	We had a lot of fun so <u>please check it out</u>

In data 23, Rose said, "so please check it out." She said this when opening the podcast with their introduction and asking the audience to watch their podcast. The word "please" shows a polite and non-forceful request.

#### g. Avoidance of strong swear words

The phrase "avoidance of strong swear words" is used to highlight communication and serves as a justification for being courteous while disparaging something or someone. Swearing is a strong emotional declaration. According to Lakoff (1975), both males and females have a different preference for use of verbal words. Men often use abusive and forbidden words such as damn, bloody, hell and shit are often found in the language of men. While men use strong rant words, women use more polite versions like oh dear, my dear, my goodness, goodness and good heavens (Yunita, 2019).

**Table 7. Examples of Avoidance of Strong Swear Words**

Data	Speaker	Utterance
24	Rosé	And then the music came on, and I'm like <u>oh my gosh</u>

Lakoff (1975) stated that women tend to avoid harsh words and prefer to use more subtle forms. In data 24, Rose said "oh my gosh" to express her emotions. This expression is considered mild and does not contain harsh swear words.

#### h. Emphatic statement

Emphatic statement is the specific emphasis that speakers give to some words in a statement, usually in order to choose, contrast, correct, convince, or clarify something. Women like to use language that emphasizes or reaffirms the importance of what they are saying.

**Table 8. Examples of Emphatic Statement**

Data	Speaker	Utterance
25	Rosé	That was <u>the best feeling</u> I've ever felt in my 22 years of existence

In data 25, Rose said "the best feeling I've ever felt". She said this when Zach asked about their feelings when they were on stage at Coachella surrounded by many people. She used the word "best" because Rose wanted to emphasize her feelings and convey that the experience was important, showing that she had intense emotions.

**Table 9. Women's Language Features of the Three Blackpink Member's Utterances**

Women's language features	Frequency	Percentage
Lexical hedges or fillers	9	36%
Tag questions	0	0%
	2	8%

Rising intonation on declaratives	1	4%
Empty adjectives	2	8%
Precise color terms	8	32%
Intensifiers	0	0%
Hypercorrect grammar	1	4%
Superpolite forms	1	4%
Avoidance of strong swear words	1	4%
Emphatic stress	1	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 9 shows the overall distribution of women’s language features used by the Blackpink members during the interview. The result indicates that lexical hedges or fillers are the most dominant feature with 36%, followed by intensifiers with 32%. This pattern suggest that the speakers frequently soften their statement and emphasize emotional expressions while interacting in the interview. These characteristics aid in developing a welcoming and captivating communication style appropriate for viewers in global media.

### 3.2 Women’s Language Features in The Context of Celebrity Status and Multilingualism

The results show that Blackpink members in the Zach Sang Show podcast frequently use the women’s language characteristics proposed by Lakoff (1975). The dominance of lexical hedges and intensifiers is consistent in previous studies such as Az-zahra (2025) and Suhesty and Sriyono (2023). However, this study expands on these findings by placing the use of women’s language in the context of global celebrity discourse and multilingualism. As speakers of Korean and English, Blackpink members often use simple, expressive language features that are easily understood by audiences around the world, such as women’s language features stated by Lakoff (1975); intensifiers, empty adjectives, and lexical hedges. Words such as really, very, beautiful, amazing, can convey emotions directly without using complex language structures.

The data frequently contains a number of characteristics, including lexical hedges, intensifiers, and empty adjectives. In addition to highlighting emotional participation, the use of intensifiers (e.g., really, so, and really) fosters a warm and interesting conversation with listeners. Unlike previous studies that focused mainly on local speakers or non-celebrity figures, this research highlights how celebrity identity shapes linguistic behavior. The frequent use of hedges and intensifiers not only reflects gendered speech patterns but also serves as a strategic tool for constructing a friendly, relatable, and authentic public persona. This result bolsters the claim made by Valentinsson (2018) that celebrities use particular language techniques to present themselves in public as likable and relatable individuals.

Another notable finding is the absence or minimal use of strong swear words. This aligns with Lakoff’s (1975) claim that women tend to avoid strong expletives. However, this study also shows that celebrity status has a significant impact

on such avoidance. Members of Blackpink are expected to retain a courteous and upbeat public persona as international celebrities. Refraining from using derogatory language guarantees acceptability in many cultural situations and helps safeguard their reputation. This supports previous research suggesting that celebrities strategically regulate their language to maintain a favorable public image and align with audience expectations (Moreno Sandoval et al., 2021).

Moreover, this study also adds to the conversation of gendered language use and multilingualism. This study demonstrates that the features like hedges, fillers, and intensifiers also serve as pragmatic techniques for second language users, whereas earlier research mostly focused on women's language monolingual environments. As Holmes (2013) states that these features serve interactional purposes beyond gender, especially in multilingual communication.

Overall, this study supports and expands Lakoff's framework by showing that women's language is not only influenced by gender stigma but also by their identities as celebrities and multilingualism. These findings suggest that women's language in contemporary media cannot be understood solely as a marker of gender difference but must also be analyzed as a strategic resource in constructing public identities in a global context.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that all three Blackpink members exhibit various characteristics of women's language. Specifically, eight out of ten characteristics of women's language features were found in Blackpink's conversation on the Zach Sang Show podcast. In short, the most frequently found feature is lexical hedges or fillers, with a percentage of 36%. And the lowest is found in empty adjectives, superpolite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress. To be acceptable and approachable to a diverse worldwide audience, Blackpink members modify their vocabulary to maintain civility, emotional expressiveness, and clarity. This demonstrates that the vocabulary they employ is shaped not just by gender, but also function as linguistic strategies shaped by their multilingual background and celebrity status.

By expanding Lakoff's framework into the context of global media discourse, this research contributes to sociolinguistic and gender studies by showing that women's language characteristics function at the intersection of celebrity identity, gender, and multilingualism. Pedagogically, these findings can be used as teaching materials in sociolinguistics and gender studies courses to show how social roles and media contexts influence language use in modern communication.

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