Constructing Miranda Priestly's Personal Identities through her Complaint Utterances in McKenna's The Devil Wears Prada Movie Script

(Analisis Pembentukan Identitas Pribadi Miranda Priestly melalui Ungkapan-Ungkapan Keluhannya dalam Naskah Film Karya McKenna The Devil Wears Prada)

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini berfokus pada ungkapan-ungkapan keluhan Miranda Priestly dalam naskah film karya McKenna The Devil Wears Prada. Penelitan kualitatif digunakan karena data penelitian yang dipakai dalam bentuk ungkapan.Metode yang digunakan untuk menganalisa data adalah deskriptif dan interpretratif. Analisa deskriptif digunakan untuk menganalisa tindak tutur keluhan dan strategi keluhan yang digunakan Miranda. Selanjutnya metode interpretatif digunakan untuk membentuk identitas pribadi Miranda melalui ungkapan-ungkapan keluhannya. Empat variabel yang lain; identitas master, identitas interaksi, identitas relasi dan altercasting juga berkontribusi dalam pembentukan identitas pribadi Miranda. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Miranda menggunakan keempat strategi keluhan. Sebagian besar ungkapan keluhannya tergolong sebagai strategi keluhan langsung, yaitu blame. Strategi keluhan tidak langsung, yaitu no explicit reproach, mempunyai jumlah paling sedikit daripada tiga strategi keluhan yang lain. Hal tersebut menunjukkan bahwa Miranda adalah seorang wanita yang ceplas-ceplos, kasar, agresif dan tegas.

Kata Kunci: Pragmatik, Tindak Tutur, Keluhan, Bahasa dan Identitas

ABSTRACT

This research focuses on Miranda Priestly's complaint utterances in McKenna's movie script The Devil Wears Prada. Qualitative research is applied since the data are in the form of utterances. The methods that are used to analyze the data are descriptive and interpretative. Descriptive study is used to elaborate the speech act of complaint and Miranda's complaint strategies. Then, interpretative method is used to construct Miranda's personal identities through her complaint utterances. Other four variables; master identity, interactional identity, relational identity and altercasting also contribute in constructing Miranda's personal identities. The results of this research show that Miranda employs all four complaint strategies. Most of her complaint utterances are classified as the most direct complaint strategy, namely blame. The most indirect complaint strategy, namely no explicit reproach, has the least number than other three complaint strategies. Those findings show that Miranda is a direct, abrasive, aggressive and assertive woman.

Keywords: Pragmatics, Speech Act, Complaint, Language and Identity

Introduction

Complaint belongs to expressive speech act which concerns with the act of expressing displeasure or other negative feeling toward a particular condition or what the other people do (Hurford and Heasley, as cited in Arrohman, 2009:13). When an action prevents the favorable event to happen or the unfavorable one happens, it violates one's expectation. The action is seen as an offensive act. Therefore, the speaker expresses his/her dissatisfaction verbally and hands the interlocutor the responsibility.

In stating a complaint, one does not simply express his/her dissatisfaction, but the speaker also makes the hearer do something about what he/she is complaining about. The complaint utterance is set to accomplish the speaker's intention. Performing action through utterances is called as speech act (Yule, 1996:47).

Apart from delivering the displeasure feeling, language also constructs one's identity. Edward states that language is perceived as a 'marker' for an individual because its psycholinguistics pattern is unique (Edwards, 2009: 21). Boneva *et al.*'s (cited in Kraut *et al*. 2006: 640-641) research shows that teenagers tend to shorten their Instant-Message (IM). They shorten "What's up?" to "sup"

and respond the question by "nm u" for "nothing much. You?" The examples show how teenagers use language to construct their age identity. It also proves that "language and identity are ultimately inseparable" (Joseph cited in Edwards, 2009: 20).

The Devil Wears Prada is a workplace-based movie. It tells about the work life of Miranda Priestly, a chief editor of American Runway magazine. She is a truly hard worker and she is obsessed with perfection. Moreover, the magazine is labeled as the bible of fashion. Therefore, she continuously produces complaint utterances to get every issue about the magazine done in her way. Moreover, she and her team face the deadline over and over since it is regularly published magazine. However, the way she utters her speech act and her behavior is widely-known as cruel and aggressive. The main data in this research are limited to complaint utterances spoken by Miranda to her subordinators.

The problems to discuss in this research are:
1. What are types of complaint strategies employed by Miranda Priestly?
2. How do complaints expressed by Miranda construct her personal identities?

Research Methodology

This research applies qualitative research. Qualitative research is applied to analyze the types of complaint strategies based on Trosborg's (cited in Mayouf, 2004: 85) theory of complaint strategies uttered by Miranda Priestly which are in form of words. It is also applied in constructing her personal identity by using four kinds of identities theory through her complaint utterances proposed by Tracy (as cited in Young, 2007: 108-112). In this research, the data are collected from McKenna's movie script that is downloaded from http://www.dailyscript.com/script/ devil_wears_prada.p df. This research only collects Miranda Priestly's complaint utterances as the data. First, the speech act of complaint utterances in the movie script are collected by highlighting the utterances. Second, the collected data are examined by using the complaint strategies along with the explanation how each complaint utterances belong to its respective group. Next, the complaint utterances are investigated thoroughly to gather every linguistic aspect that projects Miranda Priestly's identities. It also involves four kinds of identities theory. Finally, interpretative method is applied to answer the research problems.

Result
From the analysis of the data, here are the results. Miranda Priestly uttered 45 complaint utterances. There are 3 utterances that belong to no explicit reproach complaint strategy. Next, 15 utterances are classified as dissatisfaction complaint strategy; 12 utterances employed annoyance complaint sub-strategy and 3 utterances are grouped into ill consequences complaint sub-strategy. Afterward, 6 utterances are classified as accusation complaint strategy; 5

utterances applied direct accusation complaint sub-strategy and 1 utterance applied indirect accusation complaint sub-strategy. Finally, 21 complaint utterances belong to blame strategy; 5 utterances employed modified blame complaint sub-strategy, 9 utterances are explicit blame (behavior) and 7 utterances are explicit blame (person). Miranda Priestly's personal identities that are constructed from her complaint utterances are direct, abrasive, aggressive and assertive.

Discussion

a. Miranda Priestly's Speech Act of Complaint
There are three types of speech act proposed by Austin. First, it is locutionary act; the act of saying something in full normal sense (Austin, 1969:94). Second, illocutionary act; it is a performance of an act in saying something (Austin, 1969:99). Third, perlocutionary act; it is the effect upon the feeling, though or action of the audience or of the speaker (Austin, 1969:101).

Each complaint utterances that exemplify each complaint strategy will be taken into a speech act analysis.

1. No explicit reproach
Context: Miranda has Andrea buy the new Harry Potter book for her daughters which is unpublished yet.
Complaint Utterance: "*Did you fall down and smack your little head on the pavement?*"
Types of Speech Act
1. Locutionary act : The utterance that is stated by Miranda which has literal meaning refers to Andrea's statement.
2. Illocutionary act : Miranda complains Andrea's answer because the latest Harry Potter book isn't available yet in any bookstore. Miranda expresses her dissatisfaction and she wants Andrea to find another way to get the latest copy.
3. Perlocutionary act : The effect of the utterance is that Andrea calls every publishing to let her has one copy.
Interpretation:
Miranda asks Andrea to get the latest copy of Harry Potter. Through the utterance, Miranda complains about Andrea's reply because it is unpublished yet. She expresses her dissatisfaction and hands the responsibility to get a copy to Andrea. Thus, Andrea makes several calls to every publishing company for a copy.

2. Disapproval
Context: Emily asks Andrea to pick Miranda's coffees on Andrea's way to the office. There are four coffees that she needs to be purchased.
Utterance: "*Is there some reasons that my coffee isn't here?*"
Types of Speech Acts:
1. Locutionary act : The utterance that is stated by Miranda which has literal meaning refers to complain about her late morning coffee.
2. Illocutionary act: She complains about her late coffee to Emily and she wants Emily to do something about it.
3. Perlocutionary act : The effect of the utterance is Emily dials Andrea's number to ask Andrea's whereabouts and tell her to hurry.

Interpretation:
Miranda is annoyed because her morning coffee is late. Through the utterance, she complains about it to Emily. She expresses her annoyance to Emily and she wants Emily to deal with it. Thus, Emily calls Andrea to tell her to hurry.

3. Accusation
Context: When a run-through is in progress, Miranda needs the belts for the accessory. Then one of the female subordinate directly runs across Miranda to get the belts.
Utterance: "*Why is no one ready?"*
Types of Speech Acts:
1. Locutionary act : The utterance that is stated by Miranda refers to her female subordinator who is not ready for the belts yet.
2. Illocutionary act : Miranda complains to her subordinates and she wants them to be well-prepared for the run-through.
3. Perlocutionary act : The effect of the utterance is one of the female subordinates runs quickly to get the belts.
Interpretation:
Miranda as the chief editor is responsible for every thing in the magazine. Through the utterance, she complains about her subordinates' work in preparing the run-through. She expresses her disappointment to her subordinates so that they work better next time.

4. Blame
Context: Miranda has Andrea get some skirts from Calvin Klein.
Utterance: "*Please bore someone else with your questions"*
Types of Speech Acts:
1. Locutionary act : The utterance that is stated by Miranda refers to complain about Andrea's question .
2. Illocutionary act : Miranda complains to Andrea that she does not like to be asked and she wants Andrea to ask about it to others
3. Perlocutionary act : The effect of the utterance is Andrea tells Emily that Miranda wants her to get some skirts which Andrea does not know it Emily then deals with it.
Interpretation:
Miranda deals with every fashion term and items in her daily as a chief editor of Runway. Through the utterance, she complains to Andrea because Andrea questions her about which skirt she wants. Miranda expects Andrea ask about it to others rather than her.

b. Miranda Priestly's Complaint Strategies
No explicit reproach is the most indirect complaint strategy. This category has one sub-strategy, namely hints. This strategy is employed when the complainer wants to avoid a conflict with complainee (Mayouf, 2004: 85). Thus the complainer stated his complaint indirectly. Further, this strategy is also used as a strategy to state more intense complaints (Noisiri, 2002:4). Miranda employed this strategy both for soft complaint and preceding strategy to deliver more intense complaint, e.g:

- *This ... stuff?* (Miranda to Andrea)
- *I had hope.* (Miranda to Andrea)
- *Did you fall down and smack your little head on the pavement?* (Miranda to Andrea)
Disapproval strategy is the second complaint strategy applied by Miranda Priestly. When a complainer states the negative judgment of the complainee's act, it is called disapproval (Noisiri, 2002: 4). There are two sub-strategies, namely annoyance and ill consequences. Annoyance is applied when the complainer states her/his complaint explicitly but does not hand the responsibility directly to the complainee (Mayouf, 2004: 86). Miranda wants the complainees to know that she is displeasure with an action but she holds the responsibility, e.g:
- *Is there some reasons that my coffee is not here?* (Miranda to Emily)
- *I do not see my breakfast here.* (Miranda to Andrea)
- *Because, sadly, I was not there* (Miranda to Andrea)
In ill consequence the complainer also clearly states the complaint but avoid to hand the responsibility directly (Mayouf, 2004: 86). The difference between annoyance and ill consequences is that in ill consequence is, the complainer also informs the consequences resulted from the problem the complainee has made. Miranda means to let the complainees know the consequences from their action by applying this strategy, e.g:
- *By all means, move at a glacial pace.* You know how that thrills me. (Miranda to Andrea)
- I do not really care what anybody writes about me. But my … my girls, I just … *It's just so unfair to the girls.* (Miranda to Andrea)
- *Do I smell fressias?* If I see fressias anywhere… I will be very disappointed. (Miranda to Andrea)

Accusation is the third rank of complaint strategy used by Miranda. This strategy is intended to deliver certain complaint messages in various ways (Noisiri, 2002:4). It has two sub-strategies namely direct accusations and indirect accusations. Direct accusations are usually straight statements. The complainer directly accuses the complainee of having committed the problem (Mayouf, 2004: 87). Rather than accusing the negative act, Miranda employed this strategy to accuse the complainee, e.g:
- *Because the last two you sent me were completely inadequate.* (Miranda to Emily)
- *How many times do I have to scream your name?* (Miranda to Andrea)
- *Why is no one ready?* (Miranda to female subordinate)
When the complainer asks the hearer a question about the situation because she/he believes the complainee is in some way connected with the problem, it is called indirect accusation (Mayouf, 2004: 86). There is only a complaint utterance employed this strategy, e.g:
- *Has she died or something?* (Miranda to Emily)

Blame is the highest level of complaint strategy. The speaker complains directly and aggressively (Noisiri, 2002: 5). There are three sub-strategies, namely modified blame, explicit blame (behavior) and explicit blame

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(person). Modified blame is applied when the complainer wants to express a modified disapproval for an action that the complainee is responsible (Mayouf: 2004: 87). Miranda employed this strategy to get the complainees know that the action is different from what she expects to happen and the complainees have to be responsible, eg:
- *It is impossible to find a lovely, slender female paratrooper?* (Miranda to Richard)
- *Why is it so impossible to put together a decent run-through?* (Miranda to her subordinates)
- *I thought you would be different.* (Miranda to Andrea)

Explicit blame (behavior) is applied when complainer directly states the action that the complainee has to take responsibility of (Mayouf: 2004: 87). The complainer blames the action rather than the person. Miranda employed this strategy to the complinees' action that is unfavourable to her, e.g:
- *I do not understand why it's so difficult to confirm an appointment.* (Miranda to Emily)
- *Please bore someone else with your questions*. (Miranda to Andrea)
- *You people have had hours and hours to prepare. It's just so confusing to me.* (Miranda to her subordinates)

Explicit blame (person) is applied when the complainer explicitly states the blame to the person (Mayouf: 2004: 88). Miranda employed this strategy to blame the complainee directly for the unfavorable action that happened, e.g:
- *Details of your incompetence do not interest me.* (Miranda to Emily)
- *Anyway, you ended up disappointing me more than, um… more than any of the other silly girls.* (Miranda to Andrea)
- *Do not be ridiculous*. (Miranda to Andrea)

c. Constructing Miranda Priestly's Personal Identities

According to Tracy (as cited in Young, 2008: 108-112), there are four kinds of identities; they are master identities, personal identities, interactional identities and relational identities. The other variable also makes its contribution in constructing Miranda's personal identities, namely altercasting. It is a help in creating ones' identity (Young, 2008:155).

The first is master identity. It is the most stable identity because it covers any identity that one individual born with. Tracy defined it as "those aspects of personhood that are relatively stable and unchanging" (cited in Young, 2008:109). The categories are gender, race or ethnicity, age, profession, religion, physical ability, nation of origin and so on. In other word, any identity that is written on the census form belongs to this category (Young, 2008: 108). However, this identity often gets challenges because many people claim they know what these categories represent.

Miranda Priestly's master identities aspect that gets challenge is gender. Best et al (cited in Edward, 2009: 130) says "that women were gentle, affectionate and emotional, and that men were strong, aggressive and dominant". However, Miranda's way of talk and her behavior are a way different from that. Miranda's way of stating her complaint shows the opposite. She dominantly employs blame, the

most direct complaint strategy. The speaker usually complains directly and aggressively (Trosborg, as cited in Noisiri, 2002: 5). Miranda's behavior is more like men's since she adopts masculine leadership style (Lui's, 2009: 33-44). She tends to use imperative and direct way of speaking. It proves that Miranda is an example that gender does not always define one's talk and behavior.

Miranda Priestly's master identities are concluded as follows. She is a middle-aged woman who works as the chief editor of American Runway; she was born in London's East End to an Orthodox Jewish family; she is a British woman who is married to Stephen; and she lives in New York with her husband and her twin daughters.

The second identity is personal identity. It is also categorized as a stable identity. Tracy defines it as "attributed to people on the basis of their attitudes and behavior toward some issues and also those aspects of people that index the way they talk and usually conduct themselves" (cited in Young, 2007: 110). In short this identity "defines the uniqueness of each human being" (Edwards, 2009: 19). The categories are mostly adjectives that describe either their personal identity based on the way an individual's talk or an individual's personal identity based on his or her routine behavior. An individual's behavior toward some issues is also described by this identity.

The previous discussion reveals that Miranda only employs no explicit reproach strategy in her 3 complaint utterances. It is the most indirect complaint strategy. These data show that Miranda is a direct woman. Direct is understood as "saying exactly what you mean in a way that no one can pretend not to understand" (http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com). Miranda prefers to say her complaint in a straightforward and clear way rather than hinting at her complainee because she wants her complainee to do something about his/her mistake right after she complained. Miranda's preference in stating her complaint can't be accomodated by no explicit reproach complaint strategy because it delivers a complaint in the most direct way. Therefore, this strategy is employed three times only.

Next, Miranda applied disapproval strategy in her 15 utterances. By employing this strategy means that Miranda only states her annoyance toward an unpleasant event or situation without handing the complainee a responsibility directly. It is counted as abrasive executive behavior. This behavior happens when "an individual with managerial authority whose interpersonal behavior causes emotional distress" (Crawshaw, 2010: 18) in a company. Miranda's direct complaints in interpersonal context put her complainees into an emotional distress state. When Miranda only performs her annoyance without holding her complainee a responsibility directly, she indirectly "injures relationships" (cited in Crawshaw, 2005: 20) because her clear complaint utterance is often perceived negatively by the complainee eventhough she does not "intend to cause harm, minimize the impact of their behavior, and view their action as the products of rationality" (Crawshaw, 2010: 21).

Afterward, Miranda employs accusation strategy in her 6 complaint utterances. In accusation, the complaint is usually stated in a straight statement and the complainer accuses the complainee for the committed problem directly (Mayouf, 2004:87). When Miranda "expresses her thought, feelings and beliefs in a way that usually inappropriate and always violates the rights of the person" (Michel and Fursland, 2008:4), then she is labeled as an aggressive woman. She employs this strategy to stand up for her personal right about her need. Miranda's verbal interaction which is "unpleasant or offensive stimuli to maintain her right" is another feature of an aggressive person (Ganesan *et al*, 2011: 84).

Finally, Miranda applies the most direct complaint strategy, namely blame, in her 21 utterances. Those facts show that Miranda is an assertive woman. The remarkable point of assertive is "direct expression of feelings, desires and thoughts in interpersonal context" (Eskin, 2003: 7). She prefers stating her disappointment directly. According to the definitions, Miranda's preference in delivering her complaints is seen as an assertive behavior. She always expresses her unfavorable feeling and thought in a direct way. She knows what the subordinates think about something, but she wants it in her way.

Miranda's assertive behavior is contradictory to Eskin's (2003:8) saying that women are less assertive than men, woman are more assertive in interpersonal context rather in public context (Mathison and Tucker, as cited in Ganesan *et al*, 2011: 84). The dominant occurrences of Miranda's direct complaint in public setting indicate that she is an assertive woman in public context, too. Miranda is also "hard to reconcile with other qualities" (Jeffery, as cited in Edwards, 2009:140) and she "speak(s) more like men" because she wants "to be taken seriously" in industrial world (Edwards, 2009: 139).

In conclusion, Miranda's adjective series of her personal identities that are constructed from her complaint utterances are direct, abrasive, aggressive and assertive.

Similar to master identity, personal identity also often gets challenge because it involves other people to construct one's identity. This is what Young (2008: 115) called altercasting. There are four ways to help creating one's identity. They are naming practices, honorifics, telling story and obituary. However, obituary will be omitted from the analysis because Miranda is still alive till the end of the story.

Naming practice is the most common way in altercasting one's identity. The way people address an individual is influenced by the relationship they have (Young, 2007: 115). People with business relationship with Miranda named her as *The Dragon Lady* and *Snow Queen*. The first naming is meant to describe Miranda personality; smart, cruel, harsh, aggressive, arrogant and quick-anger, just like Western's dragon features is described (UK essays, 2013: 3). The second naming characterizes Miranda as a scary woman made of ice, just like Snow Queen in Andresen's novel. (http://www.shmoop.com/hans-christian-andersen/gerda-kai-snow-queen.html). Miranda's

utterances are scary because mostly they are direct and her personality is as cold as the snow.

Honorifics are the way the speaker addresses the hearer with different pronoun based on their relative status (Young, 2008: 116). There is no honorifics term found that people address Miranda. Even with different relative status, social scale and familiarity, people address her Miranda.

One's identity can also be constructed by telling a story about them (Young, 2008: 115). Other characters tell various stories that project Miranda's identities. Emily tells about who Miranda is. Nigel tells about Miranda's professionalism. Andrea tells about how great Miranda is in doing her job. Irv tells about Miranda's power in fashion industry. James tells about Miranda's perfectionist. Christian tells about Miranda's fast pace in working. Stephen tells about Miranda's greediness in work. Nate tells about Miranda's men-like behavior. Doug tells about Miranda's great role in fashion industry.

The result shows that the altercasting support Miranda's personal identities. The naming practices and people's story about Miranda reflect Miranda's great power, rudeness, viciousness, perfection, and efficiency.

The third is interactional identity. This identity is different from two previous identities that are stable, interactional identities are fairly dynamic. Tracy defines it as "specific roles that people take on interaction with specific people" (cited in Young, 2008: 111). The individual will play several roles and shapes different framework of identity according to the interlocutor. Then, he/she needs to adjust his or her dictions, what to talk (register), way of talk, modes of meaning, modes of repairing and organizing the turn-taking in speech to each of his or her interlocutor (Young, 2008: 111).

Miranda's identities in interaction with other people are: boss in interaction with her subordinates; wife in interaction with Stephen, her husband; and a mother in interaction with her twin daughters.

As the chief editor of Runway, Miranda mostly talks about the magazine issues with her subordinates. Her register and the subordinates are all about fashion brand names, the famous designer names, celebrities and any technical terms of materials, fabric and style (Lui, 2009: 35). She employs the most direct form for her speech acts and often interrupts the subordinates' speech. Her diction is precise and efficient.

As a wife, Miranda speaks nicer to her husband eventhough they are quarreling. They talk about the household problem. Miranda also organizes her turn-taking in her conversation with her husband neatly.

As a mother, Miranda plays an affectionate mother for her twins. She adjusts her dictions and even calls the twins "*baby*". They talk about what the twins want and the way she talks is really nice.

These findings show that an individual's interaction in various context shape her or his role-relationship establishment with others (Hall, 2002: 31). In other word, Miranda's different roles with different interlocutor affect her interactional identity.

The fourth is relational identities. Tracy defines it as "the kind of relationship that a person enacts with a particular conversational partner in a specific situation" (as cited in Young, 2008: 111). This identity is more dynamic than interactional identity because one will create various relational identities with various agents or with the same agent but different conversation and situation.

There are two agents that make Miranda creates new identities in a certain conversation with them. They are her husband and her twin daughters.

Miranda's husband makes her speak nicer. She organizes her turn-taking in a conversation neatly. Her words are precise but she provides explanation. She even repeats her saying. Miranda's daughters make her speak even nicer by calling them "bobbsey" and "baby". Her feminine side is showing. She portrays herself as an affectionate mother. Those facts show that Miranda uses strategies in constructing her relational identities both with her husband and daughters.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis, Miranda chooses and prefers to employ direct speech act in stating her complaint. The most strategy applied is blame. Then, Miranda applies disapproval strategy. Next, she employs accusation strategy. Miranda hardly applies indirect complaint strategy. It is showed by the finding that no explicit reproach complaint strategy has the least number. Miranda's direct complaint utterances construct her personal identity. The utterances prove that Miranda is a direct, abrasive, aggressive and assertive woman. Those series of adjectives are also derived from other four variables; they are master identity, interactional identity, relational identity and altercasting.

This study is expected to give contribution in constructing an individual's personal identities with the occurrence of stating complaint utterances. Hopefully this study is useful to base other researches who attempt to conduct a research about speech act of complaint which deals with language and identity and also can help the further research on related subject.

Acknowledgments

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