Agustin, Wahyuni Fajaria. et al., The Anaysis on Conversational Topics Selected by Men and Women in Legally Bonde's Movie Script Written by Karen McCullah Lutz and Kirsten Smith: A Sociolinguistic Study of Language and Gender.

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THE ANALYSIS ON CONVERSATIONAL TOPICS SELECTED BY MEN AND WOMEN IN *LEGALLY BLONDE'S* MOVIE SCRIPT WRITTEN BY KAREN McCULLAH AND KIRSTEN SMITH: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF LANGUAGE AND GENDER
(ANALISA PADA TOPIK-TOPIK PERCAKAPAN YANG DIPILIH OLEH LAKI-LAKI DAN PEREMPUAN DALAM NASKAH FILM LEGALLY BLONDE DITULIS OLEH KAREN McCULLAH AND KIRSTEN SMITH: STUDI SOSIOLINGUISTIK TENTANG BAHASA DAN GENDER

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Abstract

In the study of language and gender, men and women have different characteristics in the use of language. It creates gender differences in the amount of talk and the topic selections. In reality, most of people know that women tend to talk a lot than men. This phenomenon is not only found in daily life, but also happens in the movie script. This research analyzes the conversational topics selected by men and women in *Legally Blonde's* movie script. This research applies the theory of gender differences in the amount of talk by Talbot (1998) and Tannen (1993) and the theory of gender differences in the topic-selections by Moore (1922), Landis and Burtt (1924), Kramer (1974), Tannen (1993) and Aries (1996). Moreover, this research also applies the Difference theory proposed by Tannen (1990). This research uses quantitative and qualitative methods. The methods of data analysis are selecting the dialogues, counting the number of words and analyzing the dialogues. The results show that there are 7 kinds of conversational topics. It is divided into 3 kinds of conversational topics selected by men, such as job, share activity and legal matter, and 4 kinds of conversational topics selected by women such as talking about themselves and another women, life's trouble and personal feelings. The main reason why men are more talkative than women in talking about particular conversational topics because they want to share information. While the main reason why women are more talkative than men in talking about particular conversational topics because they want to maintain the interpersonal relationship, create closeness and intimacy.

Keywords: Amount of talk, conversational topics, reason, talkative.

Abstrak

Dalam studi bahasa dan gender, laki-laki dan perempuan memiliki karakteristik yang berbeda dalam penggunaan bahasa. Hal tersebut menciptakan perbedaan gender dalam jumlah percakapan dan pemilihan topik-topik. Dalam realita, sebagian besar masyarakat mengetahui bahwa perempuan cenderung banyak berbicara daripada laki-laki. Fenomena ini tidak hanya ditemukan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari, tetapi juga terjadi dalam naskah film. Penelitian ini menganalisa topik-topik percakapan yang dipilih oleh laki-laki dan perempuan dalam naskah film "Legally Blonde". Penelitian ini menerapkan teori perbedaan gender dalam jumlah percakapan oleh Talbot (1998) and Tannen (1993) dan teori perbedaan gender dalam pemilihan topik-topik oleh Moore (1922), Landis and Burtt (1924), Kramer (1974), Tannen (1993) and Aries (1996). Lebih dari itu, penelitian ini juga menerapkan teori perbedaan yang dikemukakan oleh Tannen (1990). Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Metode untuk analisa data yaitu memilih dialog-dialog, menghitung jumlah kata-kata dan menganalisa dialog-dialog. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada 7 macam topik-topik percakapan. Topik tersebut dibagi menjadi 3 macam topik-topik percakapan yang dipilih oleh laki-laki seperti pekerjaan, masalah hukum, dan menceritakan aktifitas, dan 4 macam topik-topik percakapan yang dipilih oleh perempuan seperti menceritakan tentang diri mereka sendiri dan perempuan lain, persoalan hidup dan perasaan pribadi. Alasan utama mengapa laki-laki lebih banyak bicara daripada perempuan dalam membicarakan tentang topik-topik percakapan tertentu karena mereka ingin berbagi informasi. Sedangkan alasan utama mengapa perempuan lebih banyak bicara daripada laki-laki dalam membicarakan tentang topik-topik percakapan tertentu karena mereka ingin membangun hubungan antar pribadi, menciptakan kedekatan dan keakraban.

Kata kunci: Jumlah percakapan, topik-topik percakapan, alasan-alasan, banyak bicara.

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Introduction

Talkative means someone who tends to talk a lot in conversations. Someone who is talkative will produce more words or sentences. Talbot (1998) states that "men, in conversation between booth gender are relatively talkative and men are more talkative under some occasions." In this case, there is gender differences between men and women in the amount of talk and topic-selections (Ning *et.al*, 2010). Topic refers to the subject matter of the spoken utterance, to what the conversation is about (Haas, 1979:619).

This research is conducted to know the conversational topics between men and women that produce the different amount of talk in mixed interactions. This research employs the movie script of *Legally Blonde* as the object of the study. It is because there are several conversational topics in the movie script that shows gender differences in the amount of talk and topic-selections.

The problems that are discussed are formulated in the following questions:

1. What kinds of conversational topics which are selected by men in mixed sex interactions in which they become talkative than women in *Legally Blonde's* movie script?

2. What kinds of conversational topics which are selected by women in mixed sex interactions in which women become talkative than men in *Legally Blonde's* movie script?

3. Why men are more talkative than women if they discuss particular conversational topics a in mixed sex interactions in *Legally Blonde's* movie script and vice versa?

There are several purposes of conducting this research, namely:

1. to know the kinds of conversational topics selected by men who are more talkative than women in mixed-sex interactions.

2. to know the kinds of conversational topics selected by women who are more talkative than men when they talk in mixed-sex interactions in which the conversations are held by two people or more.

3. to know the reasons why men are more talkative than women or vice versa when they discuss particular conversational topics in *Legally Blonde's* movie script.

The analysis is discussed by using the theory of gender differences in the amount of talk by Talbot (1998) and Tannen (1993) and gender differences in the topic-selections by Moore (1922), Landis and Burtt (1924), Kramer (1974), Tannen (1993), and Aries (1996). There are 11 dialogues spoken by men and women in mixed sex interaction are analyzed. The conversations are taken from the dialogues spoken by three women and six men. The women are Elle, Enid and Brooke. The men are Warner, Donovan, Emmett, David, Ivan, and Dewey. To know the

reasons of selecting particular conversational topics this research reviews the Difference theory proposed by Tannen (1990) especially about the theory of rapport and report.

Research Method

This research is conducted by using both types of research namely quantitative research and qualitative research. According to Mackey and Gass (2005: 2), quantitative research generally starts with an experimental design in which a hypothesis is followed by the quantification of data and some sort of numerical analysis is carried out. This research uses quantitative data to count the amount of talk in the form of words based on particular conversational topics that are spoken by men or women in *Legally Blonde's* movie script. According to Mackey and Gass (2005:162), qualitative research is research that is based on descriptive data that do not make (regular) use of statistical procedures. The qualitative research is used to describe the kinds of conversational topics selected by men and women in the *Legally Blonde's* movie script.

To collect the data, this study uses *Legally Blonde's* movie script as the data to analyse the conversational topics. The movie script was written by Lutz and Smith (2000).The data are collected by using purposive sampling. According to Denscombe (2007:17), Purposive sampling is the term which is applied to those situations where the researcher already knows something about the specific people or events and deliberately selects particular ones because they are seen as instances that are likely to produce the most valuable data. There are 47 scenes in movie script, but only 11 dialogues that consist of 1.595 words are analysed. The specific dialogues in the movie script are going to be analysed because they are relevant with the topic of the investigation. This means that the data produces particular conversational topics in which the conversations are spoken by men and women in mixed sex interaction. Then, the dialogues spoken by 6 men and 3 women are selected. The men are Warner, Donovan, Emmett, Dewey, David, and Ivan and three women namely Elle, Enid, and Brooke. They are selected because they produce dialogues that represent the conversational topics in mixed sex interactions.

The methods of data processing are; 1) After selecting the dialogues in particular conversational topics, next is giving highlights in bold type to the utterances spoken by men if men produce more words than women in mixed sex interaction. 2) Gives highlights in bold type also to the utterances spoken by women if women produce more words in mixed sex interaction, and 3) Calculates the number of words which are produced by men and women when they discuss particular conversational topics.

The method of data analysis in this research is classifying, counting, and analysing. The data are classified based on conversational topics spoken by men and women by using the theory of gender differences in the topic-selection by Tannen (1993), Aries (1996), Moore (1992), Landis and Burtt (1924), and Kramer (1974). Then, the data are presented in the table that contain of the dialogues and the number of words spoken by men and women. The

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number of words are analysed by using the theory of gender differences in the amount of talk by Tannen (1993) and Talbot (1998) to know that men or women sometimes become talkative in particular conversations. The last, explains the reasons why men are more talkative than women and vice versa in particular conversational topics by using the Difference theory proposed by Tannen (1990) especially about the theory of rapport and report.

Moore (1992), Landis and Burtt (1924), and Kramer (1974). Furthermore, selecting conversational topics can influence the number of words produced by men or women in mixed sex interactions. Therefore, it can be concluded that men become more talkative than women if they discuss particular conversational topics and women become more talkative than men if they discuss particular conversational topic as well.

Result

The analysis are taken from 11 dialogues which produce 7 kinds of conversational topics. There are 3 kinds of conversational topics selected by men and 4 kinds of conversational topics selected by women in mixed sex interactions. Those conversational topics are presented as follows:

No.	Conversational topics	Participants in mixed sex interactions	Amount of talk (in words)
		Conversational topics selected by men	
1	Job	Warner (man) → Elle (woman)	Warner: 233 Elle: 139
2	Share activity	Emmett (man) → Elle (woman)	Emmett: 128 Elle: 44
3	Legal matter (comes twice in dialogue 3 and 4)	a. Donovan (man) → Elle (woman)	Donovan: 127 Elle: 87
		b. Donovan (man) → Elle (woman)	Donovan: 68 Elle: 44
		Conversational topics selected by women	
4	Talk about themselves (comes twice in dialogue 5 and 7)	a. Elle and Enid (women) → David and Ivan (men)	Elle and Enid: 85 David and Ivan: 65
		b. Warner (man) → Elle (woman)	Warner: 54 Elle: 66
5	Talk about another woman (comes twice in dialogue 6 and 10)	a. Warner (man) → Elle (woman)	Warner: 9 Elle: 26
		b. Emmett (man) → Elle (woman)	Emmett: 43 Elle: 47
6	Life's trouble	a. Dewey (man) → Elle (woman)	Dewey: 6 Elle: 65
		b. Donovan (man) → Brooke(woman)	Donovan: 66 Brooke: 73
7	Personal feeling	Emmett (man) → Elle (woman)	Emmett: 27 Elle: 93

The table shows that the participants discuss particular conversational topics. The conversational topics are found by using the theory of gender differences in the topic selections proposed by Tannen (1993), Aries (1996),

Discussion

1. The conversational topic about job selected by man in mixed sex interaction

The conversations are conducted by man (Warner) and woman (Elle) presented as follows:

Warner: **The reason I wanted to come here tonight was to discuss our future. (1)**

Ellle : I'm fully amenable to that discussion. (2)

Warner: **I mean, we're having a lot of fun now —but things are gonnabe different when I'm at Harvard Law school is a completely different world. I need to be serious. (3)**

Elle : Of course. (4)

Warner:: **My family expects a lot from me. And I expect a lot from you. I plan running for office someday. (5)**

Elle : And I fully support that. (6)

Warner:: **But the thing is, if I'm gonna be a senator by the time I'm thirty — I can't keep dicking around.(7)**

Elle : I completely agree. (8)

Warner: **That's why I think it's time for us to. I think we should break up. (9)**

Elle : What? (10)

Warner: I'm sorry, Elle, I just — (11)

Elle : You're breaking up with me?! I thought you were proposing. (12)

Warner: **Proposing?! Elle, if I'm going to be a politician, I need to marry a Jackie, not a Marilyn. (13)**

Elle : You're breaking up with me because I ' m too blonde?(14)

Warner : That's not entirely – (15)

Elle : Then what? My boobs are too big? (16)

Warner : Elle — no, your boobs are fine. (17)

Elle : So when you said you'd always love me, you were just "dicking around"? (18)

Warner : I **do love you, Elle. I just can't marry you. You have no idea the pressure I'm under. My family has five generations of senators. My brother is in the top three at Yale Law. He just got engaged to a Vanderbilt, for Christ's sake. It's not like I have a choice, sweetheart. Elle, believe me, I never expected to be doing this, but I think it's the right thing to do. (19)**

Elle : How can it be the right thing if we're not together? (20)

Warner : **I have to think about my future. And what people expect from me. (21)**

Elle : So you're breaking up with me because you're afraid your family won't like me? Everybody likes me! (22)

Warner: East coast people are different. (23)

Elle : Just because I ' m not a Vanderbilt, all of a sudden I'm white trash? I grew up in Bel Air, Warner! Across the street from Aaron Spelling! I think most people would agree that's way better than a Vanderbilt. (24)
Warner : I told you, Elle. I need someone serious. (25)
Elle : I'm seriously in love with you. Isn't that enough? (26)
Warner : I'm sorry. (27)

In the dialogue above, Warner says that he wants to reach his idea to be a senator. He suddenly breaks up his relationship with his girlfriend because he needs someone who becomes his serious partner. Elle is very emotional girl. It can be seen from the language spoken by Elle. She shares her feeling and tries to convince that she is really serious in running the relationship with Warner. Actually, she hopes that Warner will propose her and marry her. But she is very disappointed with Warner's decision to break up their relationship and she says "*So you're breaking up with me because you're afraid your family won't like me? Everybody likes me!*" Her emotional feeling also can be seen from her utterances "*So when you said you'd always love me, you were just "dicking around"? "Just because I ' m not a Vanderbilt, all of a sudden I'm white trash? I grew up in Bel Air, Warner! Across the street from Aaron Spelling! I think most people would agree that's way better than a Vanderbilt.*" From her statements, it can be seen that she really loves him very much. But Warner doesn't respect her.

Based on the dialogue 1, Warner talks about the job for his future career. The topic can be drawn from his utterances in the number 1, 3, 5, 7, 13, 19, and 21. From the dialogues spoken by Warner, it can be concluded that Warner thinks about his future and he discusses it with his girlfriend. He expresses his idea by talking a lot in order to make Elle understand why he should break up his relationship. From his utterances, it is found that the word like *future*, *running for office*, *senator* and *politician* have correlation with job. Therefore, it can be concluded that the conversational topic is about job for the future career. According to Kramer (1974:83):

> "Men hold forth with authority on business, politics, legal matters, taxes, age, household expenses, electronic bugging, church collection, kissings, baseball, human relations, health and –women's speech. Women discuss social life, books, food and drink, pornography, life's troubles, caring for a husband, social work, age, life-style. Several of the students who rated the cartoon captions said they considered all statements about economics, business or jobs to be male."

In the dialogue, Warner produces more words than Elle. The total number of words in dialogue 1 is 372 words. Warner produces 233 words while Elle only produces 139 words. In this case, the theory of gender differences in the amount of talk is applied which is proposed by Talbot (1998) and Tannen (1993). Talbot (1998) states that "Men, in conversation between both gender are relatively talkative and men are more talkative under some occasions." Tannen (1993:301) also states that "An alternative approach to explaining gender differences in amount of talk has focused on the idea that women and men are socialized to have different goals in interactions and to use talk in different ways in order to attain these goals" Therefore, men will talk more than women if men talk to women about job.

2. The conversational topic about life's trouble selected by women in mixed sex interaction
The conversations are conducted by Dewey (man) and Elle (woman) presented as follows:
Elle : Dewey Newcomb?(1)
Dewey : Who's as kin' (2)
Elle : **I'm Elle Woods. Ms. Bonafante's attorney. Under state law, you and Ms. Bonafante had a common law marriage which entitles her to the benefits of property law and an equitable division of assets.** (3)
Dewey : Come again? (4)
Elle : **Due to the fact that you retained the residence, Ms. Bonafante is entitled to full ownership of the canine property in question and we will be enforcing said ownership immediately.** (5)
Dewey : Huh? (6)

In the dialogue above, Elle is an attorney of Ms. Bonafante. Elle (woman) discusses life's trouble between Dewey and Ms. Bonafante. Elle helps Ms. Bonafante to overcome her problem with her ex-boyfriend. In utterances number 3 and 5, she states that Ms. Bonafante had a common law marriage which entitles her to the benefits of property law and an equitable division of assets. By analyzing the statements in number 3 and 5, it can be concluded that the conversational topic is about life's trouble which is faced by her client. The result of the analysis is based on the theory by Kramer (1974:83) "Women discuss social life, books, food and drink, pornography, life's troubles, caring for a husband, social work, age, life-style."

The total number of words in dialogue 8 is 71 words. In the dialogue above, Elle is more talkative than Dewey. In this case, woman produces more words than man which are 65 words, while man only produces 6 words. Woman tends to talk a lot than man, when she talks about life's trouble. This research applies the theory proposed by Tannen (1993:301) states that "An alternative approach to explaining gender differences in amount of talk has focused on the idea that women and men are socialized to have different goals in interactions and to use talk in different ways in order to attain these goals". Therefore, when women talk about life's trouble, they are more talkative than men.

Reasons of Selecting Conversational Topics

There are several conversational topics in *Legally Blonde's* movie script which shows that gender differences

in the topic of selection and the amount of talk. The theory which is used to find out the reasons of selecting conversational topics is proposed by Tannen (1993:301) who states that:

> "An alternative approach to explaining gender differences in amount of talk has focused on the idea that women and men are socialized to have different goals in interactions and to use talk in different ways in order to attain these goals"

From the theory above, the conversational topic have correlation with the amount of talk. The conversational topics spoken by men and women can produce the different amount of talk. It is because men and women have different goals when they make conversation.

Moreover, to find out the main reasons why men and women have different functions in selecting conversational topic that influence the production of words, this research applies the theory of report and rapport proposed by Tanenn (1990). Tannen (1990:36) states that:

> "For most women, the language of conversation is primarily a language of rapport: a way of establishing connections and negotiating relationships. For most men, talk is primarily a means to preserve independence and negotiate and maintain status in a hierarchical social order. This is done by exhibiting knowledge and skill, and by holding center stage through verbal performance such as storytelling, joking, or imparting information."

From the theory above, the language for women in conversations is used to establish or maintain the relationship with hearer, create intimacy and closeness. While the language for men is to preserve independence and negotiate, and maintain status. Those indicate that the language of men is report-talk, while the language of women is rapport-talk.

In correlation with *Legally Blonde's* movie script, from the theory above, the language of men indicates report-talk. It can be seen from the selected conversational topics by men such as job, legal matter and share activities that purpose to share information. Moreover, it is true that men hold the authority on job, it is because men become the leader of the family who has responsibility to seek for money. In addition, men talk a lot about legal matter because men as the leader in the discussion have higher status than women, therefore men are more poweful in speaking than women. Therefore, they tend to dominate the conversation. Men also talk a lot about sharing activity. It is because men have more experiences then women. The language of men are regarded to give information or message (Tannen, 1990). In the movie script, men give information in terms of giving advices or solutions by sharing activities. On the other hand, the language of women indicates rapport-talk which is a way of establishing connection and maintain interpersonal relationship. It can be seen from the selected conversational topics such as talk

about themselves and another woman, life's trouble and personal feeling. Women discuss life's trouble because the language of women tends to build connection and support. Moreover women's language is used to express or give sympathy for the problem (Tannen, 1990). In the movie script, woman tries to help her friend to solve life's trouble with her ex-boyfreind. In this case, woman shows that she really supports her friend to get back her own property that was stolen by her ex-boyfriend. In addition, Tannen also (1993:302) states that:

> "Women, to a greater extent than men, are expected to talk, and do talk, simply in order to keep the interaction flowing smoothly and to show good will toward others, and they are expected to talk, and do talk, about personal feelings and other socio emotional matters relevant to interpersonal relationships to a greater extent than do men."

From the theory above, it can be concluded that women's language is self oriented. This means that, women use language to talk about themselves and another women, life's trouble and personal feelings. All the statements deliverd by women in mixed sex interactions are related to express about emotional matter or feelings. Therefore, it can be concluded that women use talk to build connection, support, create intimacy and closenesswith others.

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that there are 7 kinds of conversational topics in mixed sex interactions in *Legally Blonde's* movie script. There are three kinds of conversational topics selected by men in which men become more talkative than women, such as when men talk to women about job, share activity and legal matter. Second, there are four kinds of conversational topics selected by women in which they become more talkative than men, such as when women talk to men about themselves and another woman, life's trouble and personal feeling. The main reason why men are more talkative than women in particular conversational topics because men use words to share information or message. It indicates that the language for men is used to maintain status in a hierarchical social order and impart information called as report-talk (Tannen, 1990: 36). Whereas, the main reason why women are more talkative than men in particular conversational topics because women use words to create intimacy and closeness. It indicates that the language for women is used to establish interpersonal relationship which is called as rapport-talk (Tannen, 1990:36). By understanding gender differences between men and women in the amount of talk and topic-selections base on *Legally Blonde's* movie script, it can be concluded that women are not always more talkative than men, but sometimes men are also more talkative if the conversations are conducted in mixed sex interaction and particular conversational topics.

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