



Female Language Features in Women's Twitch App Livestreaming

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between language and gender, focusing on the linguistic features used by two female streamers on the Twitch platform and the functions of those features. A descriptive qualitative method was employed, using the videos from the two female streamers as the primary data. Data collection was conducted through observation and documentation, and the streamers' utterances were analyzed based on Lakoff's theory of women's language features and Holmes and Wilson's theory on the factors that influence the language use. The findings revealed that both streamers employed women's linguistic features, with lexical hedges or fillers being the most frequently used. The frequent use of these features could suggest that the streamers are adapting their language to create a more inclusive or approachable communication style, or to align with gendered speech norms. The findings also revealed that language use is influenced by relational communication, directness, and efficiency, reflecting societal gender norms.

Keywords: *Function; Streamers; Twitch; Utterances; Women language features*

Introduction

Language and gender are interrelated to each other and gender such as male and female speak differently from one another. Different from sex, gender does not focus on the sexes or physical feature of human body and instead on male's and female identity and expression as which include their behavior, thoughts, language style, how they style themselves, and so much more (Ginarti et al., cited from Eckert, 2022). Gender distinguishes male and female by looking at the way they act and speak everyday whether it is in direct or indirect conversation. When studying language and gender through the lens of sociolinguistic, language is seen to have an effect or influence on gender and vice versa (Ginarti et al., cited from Coates,

2022). When it comes to women's language feature, it is believed that women are expectedly to speak more politely by society (Yunita, cited from Trudgill, 2018).

Women are often identified and depicted as a subordinate group in social structure and in which resulted in their way of speaking where they have to be polite and must avoid offending anyone especially those above them (Ayalus et al., cited from Adriani, 2021). Society constructs a high expectation and put more pressure toward women to speak properly and formally. As a result, women have their own linguistic feature which they apply when speaking. Some of women's language feature is reflected in certain perspective like phonology, vocabulary, as well as grammar (Indra et al., 2019). Phonology usually focuses on women's pronunciation, pitch, as well as their tone. Moreover, as for vocabulary, women's linguistic features are in the forms of adjectives, expletives, euphemism, intensifiers, and polite expressions. Lastly, grammar contains hedges, hyper correct grammar, as well as tag questions.

This study applied Lakof's theory (cited from Oktapiani et al., 2017) defining there are ten women's language feature such as lexical hedges or fillers, tag question, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjectives, precise color term, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super polite form, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress. Those language features often appear whenever women are having conversation whether it is a direct or indirect one and are implicitly approved by society that women should speak in that manner or ways (Ayalus et al., cited from Lakoff, 2021). Through this theory, categorizing the way women speak and what word they often use when having a conversation becomes clearer and easier.

Furthermore, Holmes and Wilson (cited from Hendar et al., 2021) stated that there are social factors that influence the use of the language feature when people are speaking. When women are speaking, it is believed that not only that they apply female's language feature because they are seen as subordinate groups in society in which are expected to speak politely at all time, but there are also social factors which influence their way of speaking such as the speakers or participants whom they are having conversation with, social settings or the context of where or when they are speaking at that time, the topic which they discussed in their conversation, and the functions or the reason as to why they use the language feature.

Previously there have been research regarding female language features by Indra (Indra et al., 2019) which focused on Linguistics features of three British female beauty youtubers. Moreover, there is also another study on female's linguistic feature by Yolanda (Ayalus et al., 2021) that focused on woman who masquerades as a man in *Mulan*. Another study regarding female's linguistic features is by Putri (Putri et al., 2021) which focus their study on Netflix series called *Emily in Paris*. Furthermore, there has also been a study regarding women and men's linguistic features by Ginarti (Ginarti et al., 2022) that focus on #saveJohnnyDepp on Instagram and Twitter and result found that men and women

applied same language when speaking, however the frequency is slightly different which are topic and the use of language features. Another study about women's linguistic feature has also been done by Yunita (Yunita, 2018) which focused on Thoraya Maronesy's Youtube videos. Lastly, women language features' study on Eilis Lacey in the *Brooklyn* movie script has also been conducted by Pamikat (Pamikat, 2021).

While previous studies have explored women's linguistic features in various contexts, such as YouTubers, Netflix series, Instagram and Twitter, there remains a notable gap in research on real-time, interactive digital spaces such as Twitch. a popular live-streaming platform primarily focused on gaming but also encompassing a wide range of content, including lifestyle, music, and discussions. Twitch provides a unique, interactive environment where streamers engage directly with their audiences in real-time, making it a rich site for studying language use in spontaneous, informal settings. Unlike pre-recorded content or scripted media, Twitch streaming involves spontaneous and dynamic interactions between streamers and viewers, which may influence linguistic choices in unique ways. Additionally, previous studies have focused largely on premeditated content or fictional representations, whereas Twitch provides an opportunity to observe natural, unscripted language use in a live setting. This study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the use of women's linguistic features by female streamers on Twitch, contributing to an understanding of why gendered language functions are used in this emergent digital space.

Method

This research employed a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the linguistic features used by two female streamers on Twitch. The study focused on two English-speaking streamers, Pokimane and Armorra, who were selected based on criteria such as streaming frequency, subscriber count, viewer interaction, and channel verification. Both streamers speak fluent English, stream on almost daily basis, has over than 10000 subscribers, have more than 100 viewers for almost all the streaming or live, and have channels that have been verified, they also often interact with their viewers who commented in chat, and both have sort of a different ambience. Pokimane has more of a girly style such as pink-themed headphone and bedroom whereas the Armorra has a neutral tone of her streaming room with white and black background and black headphone. The data consisted of two recent gaming streams, each about 1.5 hours long, with only 30-40 minutes of interactive segments analyzed. Observations and documentation were used to collect utterances, which were categorized according to Lakoff's theory of women's language features (e.g., lexical hedges, intensifiers, super polite forms). Holmes and Wilson's theory on social factors was applied to explain the functions of these features. The streamers' speech patterns were compared, with analysis focusing on how they interacted with viewers.

Results

In this section, the analysis of the utterances from videos in which contained of two female gaming streaming will be presented using the theory of Lakoff regarding woman’s language features as well as Holmes and Wilson’s theory of social factors that influence the way someone is speaking.

Pokimane’s Language Features

From the analysis, the researchers found 30 utterances that was classified into 8 types of woman language features. Table 1 presents the language features used by Pokimane in her utterances.

Table 1. Pokimane’s Language Features

Women’s language Features	Utterances
1. Lexical Hedges or Fillers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I mean it’s not that bad 2. I feel like I sweat all my make up today 3. I think everybody is really good though 4. Yeah, I feel like it might be a little bit like 5. Yeah, I feel like it might be a little bit like 6. Yeah, I feel like it might be a little bit like 7. I actually, listen I might double in ASMR with umm vlogs, like an ASMR vlog sounds really fun 8. I actually, listen I might double in ASMR with umm vlogs, like an ASMR vlog sounds really fun 9. But probably not full-on videos, that’s a lot 10. I think it’s not easy for guys to step into a very not traditional role 11. I hate adjusting the camera when its full cam like this; hold on; I hate it because it looks like I’m grabbing you, you know
2. Tag question	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I don’t hear sub sound, do I?
3. Rising Intonation on Declarative	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. But do you know what I mean?
4. Empty Adjectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I saw this trend and I thought it was so cute 2. But I think it’s such a cute trend
5. Intensifiers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I like that a lot 2. I saw this trend, and I thought it was so cute 3. Aw..that was so cute

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. I think that would be so lame 5. I think it's not easy for guys to step into a very not traditional role 6. I am so on the internet; I don't know how else to say it 7. I am just so so on the internet like I'm really really on the internet right now.
6. Hypercorrect Grammar	1. I have a question for women in the chat
7. Avoidance of strong swear words	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dang it, this is how we're starting the stream, no... 2. Dang, ey I got three, I did all that I could 3. What in the world?
8. Emphatic Stress	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I think everybody is really good though 2. Like Wendy not only was she really good, but she was really good teacher 3. I actually, listen I might double in ASMR with umm vlogs, like an ASMR vlog sounds really fun 4. Like Wendy not only was she really good, but she was really good teacher

The findings indicate that lexical hedges or fillers are the most frequently used language feature by the streamer, Pokimane. The utterances show frequent use of phrases like "I feel like," "I think," and "I mean." These hedges appear to soften statements, express uncertainty, or introduce personal opinions. The repeated use of "I feel like" indicates an emphasis on subjective perception, while "I think" and "I mean" serve to mitigate assertiveness. Additionally, fillers such as "umm" and "actually" appear in informal contexts, helping to manage the flow of speech and maintain conversational fluidity. These features suggest the streamers' attempt to engage with their audience in a more relatable and less authoritative manner.

The second most frequently used language feature is intensifiers. The streamer's utterances demonstrate frequent use of words such as "so" and "a lot" to amplify their statements. Examples like "I like that a lot" and "that was so cute" indicate a stronger emotional reaction or approval. The repetition of "so" in "I am just so so on the internet" and "really really" emphasizes the speaker's strong engagement or presence online. These intensifiers serve to convey heightened emotions, enhance expressiveness, and create a more engaging and relatable interaction with their audience.

The emphatic stress is the third frequently used by the streamer. The utterances reveal the use of stress to highlight key points or emotions. For instance, in "really good," the word "really" is stressed to emphasize the level of skill or

quality being described. Similarly, the repetition in "she was really good, but she was really good teacher" serves to reinforce the positive evaluation of Wendy's teaching abilities. The use of "actually" and "listen" in "I actually, listen..." suggests a strong intention or importance placed on the following statement. These examples indicate that emphatic stress is used by the streamers to convey enthusiasm, emphasis, and to engage the audience more effectively.

The fourth most commonly observed feature is the avoidance of strong swear words. This reveals their preference for milder alternatives such as "Dang it" and "What in the world?" These expressions serve as substitutes for stronger expletives, allowing the streamers to express frustration or surprise without using harsh language. This practice aligns with maintaining a more neutral or family-friendly tone during their streams, potentially catering to a wider audience and keeping interactions respectful and less abrasive.

In addition, empty adjectives appear only twice in the streamers' utterances showing the use of terms like "cute" in non-specific, subjective ways. In both examples, "cute" serves to express a positive, emotional reaction but lacks a precise description of the quality being referenced. These adjectives are often used in informal, conversational settings and contribute to a softer, more expressive tone in the streamers' speech. Their frequent use helps create a casual and friendly atmosphere during interactions.

The features of tag questions, rising intonation on declaratives, and hypercorrect grammar are the least used, each appearing only once in Pokimane's utterances. The tag question ("I don't hear sub sound, do I?") and rising intonation on declaratives reflect a need for confirmation or engagement from the audience, fostering a more interactive conversation. Meanwhile, hypercorrect grammar demonstrates attention to precision and correctness in language use, which may indicate a more formal or careful speech approach in certain situations. These features, though infrequent, still contribute to Pokimane's overall communication style by signaling moments of interaction or linguistic attentiveness.

The use of women's language features by the streamer serves to engage their audience, express emotions, maintain a polite and friendly tone, and demonstrate care in communication. Lexical hedges, fillers, intensifiers, and tag questions create a conversational and interactive atmosphere, while emphatic stress and intensifiers amplify emotional reactions. The avoidance of strong swear words and use of empty adjectives contribute to a softer, family-friendly tone, and hypercorrect grammar shows attention to precision in certain situations. These features help streamers build a relatable, expressive, and respectful connection with their viewers.

Armorra's Language Features

Table 2 shows Armorra's language features that were identified into 4 categories namely lexical hedges or fillers, empty adjectives, intensifiers, emphatic stress.

Table 2. Armorra's Language Features

Women's language Features	Armorra Stream
1. Lexical Hedges or Fillers	1. You know , I'm proud of them, really proud of them 2. Dude that like irritated me so much today, cause I was like , I'm pretty sure I almost threw up during that part of the game and I had like 50 views 3. I uh ..don't think we're gonna finish resident evil today. I did a little sneak peek ah ..how much longer the game is supposed to take 4. I think I've got at least 10 hours in my time 5. No I actually have some pretty fun goals I've come up with, so we might do something 6. And then, you know of course dark and darker is coming out soon
2. Empty Adjectives	1. Well, you're looking so pretty
3. Intensifiers	1. Well, you're looking so pretty
4. Emphatic Stress	1. Really proud of them 2. But I wanna wait until like there's something to play that I'm really into and like we can like have really good time, so not doing now

The analysis of Armorra's language features in her stream reveals a frequent use of lexical hedges or fillers, such as "you know," "like," and "I think." These hedges soften her statements, express uncertainty, or help maintain the flow of conversation, reflecting an informal, conversational tone aimed at engaging her audience in a relatable way. The streamer also uses empty adjectives and intensifiers, as seen in the phrase "you're looking so pretty," where "pretty" is an empty adjective expressing a positive but vague emotional reaction, while "so" amplifies the compliment. This suggests a casual, friendly interaction style that emphasizes emotional expressiveness without delving into specifics. In addition, the presence of emphatic stress in her speech, such as in "Really proud of them" and "really into," highlights key emotions and intentions, adding emphasis to her statements to engage the audience more strongly. These features collectively indicate that Armorra's speech aims to create a relaxed, engaging, and emotionally expressive atmosphere during her stream, fostering connection with her viewers.

Moreover, here are the results between the two streaming videos in direct comparison in forms of table as well as the explanation in summary:

Table 3. Women's language Features of Streamers in Twitch App

Women's language Features	Pokimane	Armorra
1. Lexical Hedges or Fillers	11	6
2. Tag question	1	-
3. Rising Intonation on Declarative	1	-
4. Empty Adjectives	2	1
5. Precise Color Term	-	-
6. Intensifiers	7	1
7. Hypercorrect Grammar	1	-
8. Super Polite Form	-	-
9. Avoidance of strong swear words	3	-
10. Emphatic Stress	4	2

The findings reveal notable differences and similarities in the streamers' linguistic styles. Both streamers make use of lexical hedges or fillers, with Pokimane using them more frequently (11 instances) compared to Armorra (6 instances). This suggests that both streamers tend to soften their statements or express uncertainty, though Pokimane does so more often. Similarly, both streamers use empty adjectives to express subjective emotional responses, with Pokimane employing them twice and Armorra once. The use of intensifiers is also present in both streamers' language, though Pokimane uses them far more frequently (7 instances), indicating a stronger emphasis on amplifying her emotional reactions or evaluations.

In terms of differences, Pokimane employs features such as tag questions and rising intonation on declaratives, while Armorra does not use these features. These patterns suggest that Pokimane engages in more confirmatory language, seeking validation or agreement from her audience, which could reflect a more interactive or inclusive communication style. Additionally, Pokimane demonstrates the use of hypercorrect grammar, showing attention to grammatical precision, whereas this feature is absent in Armorra's speech. Pokimane also avoids strong swear words more often (3 instances), while Armorra does not exhibit this behavior.

Both streamers avoid using precise color terms and super polite forms, suggesting that these features are less relevant in their Twitch interactions. Overall, Pokimane exhibits a broader and more frequent use of women's language features, particularly in her use of hedges, intensifiers, and moderated speech, indicating a more cautious and perhaps more socially sensitive communicative style. In contrast, Armorra's language is less marked by these features, suggesting a slightly different, more straightforward approach to her interactions.

Discussion

The linguistic styles of streamers Pokimane and Armorra exhibit both notable similarities particularly in their use of lexical hedges, empty adjectives, and intensifiers. Lexical hedges, which serve to soften statements or express uncertainty, are employed by both streamers, with Pokimane using them more frequently (11 instances) compared to Armorra's 6 instances. This frequency suggests that Pokimane's communication style may be more tentative or nuanced, aligning with findings that women often utilize hedges to convey politeness and emotional engagement in their speech (Utami et al., 2022). Such patterns are consistent with broader gendered communication styles, where women are typically characterized as more relational and expressive in their language use (Utami et al., 2022). In addition to hedges, both streamers utilize empty adjectives to convey subjective emotional responses, with Pokimane using them twice and Armorra once.

The use of empty adjectives, such as "amazing" or "awesome," can reflect a desire to connect emotionally with their audience, a strategy that has been noted in various communication contexts, including live streaming (Gandhi et al., 2021). This aligns with the notion that streamers often cultivate a persona that resonates with their viewers, utilizing language that fosters a sense of community and engagement (Gandhi et al., 2021). Moreover, the use of intensifiers is significantly more pronounced in Pokimane's language, with 7 instances compared to Armorra's lesser frequency. This suggests that Pokimane places a stronger emphasis on amplifying her emotional reactions or evaluations, which can enhance viewer engagement and emotional connection (Gandhi et al., 2021). The role of intensifiers in live streaming has been highlighted as a means of enhancing expressiveness and relatability, contributing to the overall performance aspect of streaming (Gandhi et al., 2021).

In examining the differences in communication styles between Pokimane and Armorra, it is evident that Pokimane employs specific linguistic features that enhance her interactive and inclusive communication approach. One of the most prominent features is her use of tag questions, which serve to engage her audience and elicit confirmation or agreement. Research indicates that tag questions are effective in creating a sense of involvement and soliciting feedback from listeners, as they imply a need for the hearer's validation of the statement made (Aldosari, 2023). This aligns with findings that suggest tag questions can enhance conversational dynamics by making the speaker appear more approachable and inclusive (Tabidi, 2017).

In contrast, Armorra's speech lacks these confirmatory linguistic features, which may suggest a more unilateral communication style. The absence of tag questions in Armorra's discourse could indicate a preference for assertive statements rather than interactive dialogue. This distinction is crucial, as the use of tag questions has been shown to correlate with social variables such as gender and

age, which can influence conversational strategies and the degree of engagement in dialogue (Wilson et al., 2017). Thus, Pokimane's frequent use of tag questions may reflect a conscious effort to foster a more collaborative environment in her interactions. Moreover, Pokimane's speech is characterized by hypercorrect grammar, demonstrating a heightened awareness of grammatical precision. This feature is notably absent in Armorra's communication style, which may suggest a more relaxed approach to language use. The emphasis on grammatical accuracy can enhance the speaker's credibility and authority in a conversation, as it reflects a commitment to clarity and professionalism (Lebedeva, 2022). In contrast, Armorra's lack of attention to grammatical norms may contribute to a perception of informality or casualness in her communication style.

Additionally, Pokimane's avoidance of strong swear words further distinguishes her from Armorra. Research indicates that the use of swear words can vary significantly between genders, with women often employing less aggressive language in public discourse (Fullwood et al., 2012). Pokimane's choice to limit her use of strong language may not only align with societal expectations of female communicators but also serve to maintain a more welcoming atmosphere for her audience. This contrasts sharply with Armorra's communication, which does not exhibit the same restraint, potentially alienating certain audience segments.

In analyzing the linguistic styles of Twitch streamers Pokimane and Armorra, it becomes evident that their language use reflects distinct gendered communication patterns, particularly in the context of women's language features. Pokimane's interactions are characterized by a more frequent and varied use of women's language features, such as hedges, intensifiers, and moderated speech. This aligns with the findings of Lakoff's theory of women's language, which posits that women tend to employ linguistic strategies that convey politeness and social sensitivity, such as hedging and using intensifiers to soften statements ("Women's Language Features on Bridgerton Cast Youtube Interview by Netflix", 2023). The presence of these features in Pokimane's speech suggests a communicative style that is more cautious and socially aware, potentially reflecting her awareness of the audience dynamics on Twitch, where gendered expectations can influence interactions (Nakandala et al., 2017).

In contrast, Armorra's language appears to be less marked by these features, indicating a more straightforward and assertive approach to communication. This difference may be attributed to varying socialization experiences and the contexts in which these streamers operate. Research indicates that women often utilize more tentative language as a means of fostering connection and inclusivity, while men may adopt a more direct style that emphasizes assertiveness (Kristy, 2022; Park et al., 2016). The absence of hedges and intensifiers in Armorra's speech could suggest a preference for clarity and decisiveness, which may resonate differently with their respective audiences.

Moreover, the interactive nature of Twitch as a platform enhances the significance of these linguistic choices. The platform fosters a strong sense of community and presence, which can amplify the impact of language features on audience engagement (Navarro, 2023). Streamers like Pokimane, who utilize more hedging and moderated speech, may cultivate a more inclusive atmosphere, inviting broader participation from viewers. Conversely, Armorra's straightforward style may appeal to audiences seeking directness and efficiency in communication. The implications of these linguistic differences extend beyond mere stylistic preferences; they reflect broader societal norms and expectations surrounding gender and communication. Studies have shown that women are often socialized to prioritize relational aspects of communication, leading to a greater use of language features that promote social harmony (Marjanovič-Umek & Fekonja-Peklaj, 2017; Meier et al., 2020). This socialization process may explain why Pokimane's language aligns more closely with these expectations, while Armorra's style diverges from them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the linguistic styles of streamers Pokimane and Armorra reflect distinct gendered communication patterns, with Pokimane employing a more cautious, inclusive, and socially aware approach through frequent use of lexical hedges, intensifiers, tag questions, and hypercorrect grammar. These features align with societal expectations of women's language, fostering emotional engagement and inclusivity with her audience. Armorra, on the other hand, demonstrates a more straightforward, assertive communication style, using fewer hedges and intensifiers, and lacking confirmatory features like tag questions. This divergence suggests that while Pokimane emphasizes relational aspects of communication, Armorra's style prioritizes directness and efficiency. These linguistic choices not only shape how each streamer interacts with their audience but also reflect broader societal norms and expectations regarding gender and communication in digital spaces like Twitch. Additionally, future research could explore the influence of gender dynamics on language use in live streaming further, considering a wider range of streamers across different genres to gain a deeper understanding of how these linguistic features affect audience perceptions and engagement.

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