



Women's Language Features in Billie Eilish and Olivia Rodrigo Interviews

Adelia Yuliana Bakari¹, Usman Pakaya², Jefriyanto Saud³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Negeri Gorontalo

Article Info	Abstract
<p>Received: 2026-05-22 Revised: 2026-06-09 Accepted: 2026-06-10</p> <p>Keywords: Women's Language Features, Sociolinguistics, Language and Gender, Lakoff (1975), Press Line Interview, Media Discourse</p> <p>DOI: 10.24256/ideasv14i1.10222</p> <p>Corresponding Author: Usman Pakaya usman_pakaya@ung.ac. Universitas Negeri Gorontalo</p>	<p><i>This study examines how women's language features are used in press interviews conducted with Billie Eilish and Olivia Rodrigo. This research draws on Lakoff's (1975) theory, which outlines ten characteristics of women's language and seeks to identify the linguistic features that emerge from the spontaneous speech of both artists. The study uses a descriptive qualitative approach by studying statements from six press line interview videos retrieved from YouTube. It then prioritized the data with lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising intonation, empty adjectives, precise color term, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, superpolite form, avoidance of strong words and emphatic stress using Lakoff classification criteria. The findings reveal that several features frequently appear in the interviews, particularly lexical hedges or fillers, intensifiers, empty adjectives, and emphatic stress. These features reflect the spontaneous and natural speaking style of the artists in media settings. The study does not aim to compare the two singers or evaluate which one uses more women's language features; rather, it describes how each artist demonstrates linguistic patterns associated with women's language in unscripted public interactions. The results contribute to sociolinguistic discussions on language and gender, particularly in contemporary media discourse involving young female celebrities.</i></p>

1. Introduction

Language functions as a primary medium of communication that reflects social identity, including gender. In sociolinguistics, gender is viewed as a socio-cultural construct that influences patterns of language use in interaction. Early work by Lakoff (1975) identified features such as hedges, intensifiers, and tag questions as characteristic of women's speech, often associated with politeness,

indirectness, and emotional expression. While this framework remains influential, its applicability in contemporary media contexts—especially among Gen Z speakers—requires further examination.

Recent studies have applied Lakoff's framework across various media settings. Dewi et al. (2023) found that hedges and intensifiers dominate in vlog discourse, while Apridaningrum and Angelina (2019) reported frequent use of empty adjectives in talk shows. Similarly, Oktapiani et al. (2017) identified multiple features in film dialogue. However, these studies share several limitations: they rely largely on structured or semi-structured data, focus on single speakers, and emphasize feature identification rather than contextual function. As a result, they provide limited insight into how women's language operates in spontaneous interaction.

A critical gap remains in the study of **press line interviews**, which are inherently spontaneous, time-constrained, and minimally scripted. Unlike vlogs or films, this format captures natural linguistic behavior under real-time pressure. Moreover, little attention has been given to how **Gen Z identity and media persona** shape the use of women's language features in such contexts.

Therefore, this study addresses the question: *How are women's language features used in the interviews of Billie Eilish and Olivia Rodrigo?* The objective is to identify and interpret these features based on Lakoff's (1975) framework. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on **unscripted media discourse**, its comparison of **two Gen Z female public figures**, and its emphasis on **language as a tool for identity construction** rather than merely a gender marker.

2. Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to analyze women's language features in press line interviews. This approach allows for in-depth exploration of naturally occurring speech within its social and communicative context (Creswell, 2003). The analysis was guided by Lakoff's (1975) framework, which includes ten features of women's language.

Data Source and Selection Criteria

The data consisted of utterances from six YouTube press line interview videos (three featuring Billie Eilish and three featuring Olivia Rodrigo). The videos were selected based on the following criteria:

1. Spontaneity: interviews conducted in press line/red carpet settings
2. Duration: 2–5 minutes to ensure comparable data scope
3. Context consistency: promotional or public media events
4. Clarity: high audio quality and clear speaker turn

Data Collection

Data were collected through observation and transcription. The researcher

watched each video repeatedly, transcribed relevant utterances, and segmented them into analyzable units.

Coding Procedure

The analysis followed these steps:

1. Identifying utterances containing potential features
2. Coding each utterance based on Lakoff's ten categories
3. Classifying features into types
4. Verifying categorization through repeated checking

To enhance trustworthiness, peer checking was conducted by discussing selected data and coding decisions with a colleague familiar with sociolinguistics.

Data Analysis

The analysis combined categorization and contextual interpretation. In addition to identifying features, the study examined how and why they were used in interaction, particularly in relation to spontaneity, media context, and speaker identity.

3. Result

The findings indicate that not all ten features proposed by Lakoff (1975) appear in the data. Billie Eilish uses five features, while Olivia Rodrigo uses eight.

Feature	Billie Eilish	Olivia Rodrigo
Hedges/Fillers	High (45%)	High (38%)
Intensifiers	Moderate	High
Empty Adjectives	Low	Moderate

Feature	Billie Eilish	Olivia Rodrigo
Rising Intonation	Limited	Present
Emphatic Stress	Present	Present
Superpolite Forms	Rare	Present
Avoidance of Strong Words	Present	Present

Example Evidence

Hedges / Fillers

- Billie: *"I think it's like... kind of crazy, you know?"*
- Olivia: *"I just feel like it's really special."*

Intensifiers

- Olivia: *"I'm really, really proud of this."*
- Billie: *"It's so cool, honestly."*

Empty Adjectives

- Olivia: *"That's so cute!"*

Key Findings

- **Hedges/fillers are dominant**, especially "like," "I think," and "you know"
- Billie uses **more repetitive fillers**, indicating a relaxed style
- Olivia shows **greater variation**, including expressive features

Overall, the results demonstrate that these features are integral to spontaneous speech in media contexts. In addition, the findings show that not all ten women's language features proposed by Robin Lakoff (1975) were found in the interviews of Billie Eilish and Olivia Rodrigo. Based on the analysis of six interview videos, Billie Eilish uses only five features, while Olivia Rodrigo uses eight features.

The most dominant feature used by both speakers is lexical hedges or fillers, especially words such as "like," "kind of," "I think," "just," "um," "I mean," and "you know," which frequently appear in their spontaneous speech. In addition, intensifiers such as "really," "very," and "for real" are also commonly used to emphasize feelings and statements. Other features identified include empty adjectives (e.g., "cute," "sweet," "love"), rising intonation, emphatic stress, superpolite forms, and avoidance of strong words, although their occurrences are more limited.

The data also indicate that Billie tends to use fillers more frequently across all videos, while Olivia shows a wider variation of features, including more expressive and emotional language.

4. Discussion

The findings support Lakoff's (1975) framework, particularly the dominance of hedges and fillers. These features function not only to express uncertainty but also to manage real-time speech production and maintain conversational flow in spontaneous settings.

However, the high frequency of fillers among both speakers—especially Billie Eilish—can also be explained through a **Gen Z communication style**, which tends to favor informality, authenticity, and conversational relatability. In this context, fillers are not signs of weakness but markers of **naturalness and media authenticity**.

This aligns with modern sociolinguistic perspectives (Holmes, 1994), which argue that language features are **context-dependent and socially constructed**,

rather than fixed gender traits. Compared to previous studies (e.g., Dewi et al., 2023; Apridaningrum & Angelina, 2019), this study confirms the dominance of hedges and intensifiers but extends the analysis by showing their **interactional function in spontaneous discourse**.

Moreover, the differences between Billie and Olivia highlight the role of **individual identity and media persona**. Billie's frequent fillers reflect a casual and unfiltered persona, while Olivia's varied features suggest a more expressive and emotionally engaged style. This indicates that women's language features serve as **strategic resources for identity construction**, not merely reflections of gender norms.

Therefore, this study contributes to sociolinguistic research by demonstrating that women's language features in media discourse function as **tools for constructing authenticity, managing interaction, and shaping public identity**, particularly among Gen Z speakers.

5. Conclusion

This study reveals that women's language features as proposed by Lakoff (1975) are present in the interview performances of Billie Eilish and Olivia Rodrigo. The identified features include lexical hedges or fillers, intensifiers, empty adjectives, rising intonation, superpolite forms, hypercorrect grammar, emphatic stress, and avoidance of strong swear words. The findings indicate that lexical hedges/fillers and intensifiers are the most dominant features. These features function to express attitudes, soften statements, and create rapport with the interviewer within the context of public interviews. The results suggest that the use of these linguistic features should not be interpreted as a sign of weakness; rather, they reflect strategic language use in media communication settings.

6. Suggetions

This study is limited in terms of data scope, as it focuses on two public figures and relies primarily on a single theoretical framework. Future researchers are encouraged to expand the data sources, include different subjects or communication contexts, and possibly integrate Lakoff's theory with other discourse analysis or sociolinguistic approaches. Such developments may provide a more comprehensive understanding of language variation and gender representation in media discourse.

7. References

- Anggara Putra, B., & Prayudha. (2020). *The analysis of women and men language features on America's Got Talent*. Universitas Ahmad Dahlan. Retrieved from <http://eprints.uad.ac.id/id/eprint/14761>
- Apridaningrum, M. C. G., & Angelina, P. (2019). Women's language features used by Sarah Sechan in her talk show. *English Language Teaching and Research, 3*(2), 89–98. Retrieved from

- <https://apsppi.or.id/eltr/index.php/eltr/article/view/76>
- Darihastining, S. (2021). Women's language features in media discourse. **ISLLAC: Journal of Intensive Studies on Language, Literature, Art, and Culture*, 7*(1), 73-85.
- Dewi, N. K. I. P. S., Putri, I. G. A. V. W., & Ayomi, P. N. (2023). An analysis of women's language features in Emma Chamberlain's vlogs. **Elysian Journal*, 3*(1). Retrieved from <https://e-journal.unmas.ac.id/index.php/elysian/article/view/4388/4554>
- Fakih, M. (2008). **Analisis gender dan transformasi sosial**. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Firmansyah, A. R. (2023). **An analysis of women's language features used by an American transgender woman actress Nicole Maines in YouTube podcasts* (Undergraduate thesis)*. Universitas Negeri Gorontalo.
- Herman, H., Sinurat, V. L., Marpaung, T. I., & Sihombing, P. S. R. (2021). An analysis on women's language feature used by Jacinda Arden in speech about Covid-19. **Edu-Ling: Journal of English Education and Linguistics*, 4*(2), 20. doi:10.32663/edu-ling.v4i2.1727
- Hijriah, U. (2017). Bahasa dan gender. Retrieved from <http://ariabayusetiajiii.blogspot.com/2017/04/bahasa-dan-gender-sosiolinguistik.html>
- Holmes, J. (1994). **An introduction to sociolinguistics**. London: Longman.
- Lakoff, R. (1975). **Language and woman's place**. New York: Harper & Row.
- Masruddin, M., Amir, F., Langaji, A., & Rusdiansyah, R. (2023). Conceptualizing linguistic politeness in light of age. *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language*, 11(3), 41-55.
- Mulkan, D. (2007). **Panduan bagi mahasiswa peserta mata kuliah wawancara media cetak dan wawancara media elektronik**.
- Nugraha, D. D., & Prasetyo, A. B. (2021). Karakteristik fitur-fitur kebahasaan tokoh. 29-35.
- Oktapiani, T., Natsir, M., & Setyowati, R. (2017). Women's language feature found in female character's utterances in **The Devil Wears Prada** movie. 1, 207-220. doi:10.30872/jbssb.v1i3.672
- Pendidikan, T. (2022). Jelaskan pengertian wawancara, berikut jenis, ciri-ciri, bentuk, fungsi, dan tujuannya. Retrieved from <https://www.tamanpendidikan.com>
- Rahma Salbiah, & Sumardi. (2021). Bahasa dan gender dalam film: Athirah (sebuah kajian sosiolinguistik). **An-Nahdah Al-'Arabiyah*, 1*(2), 56-69. doi:10.22373/nahdah.v1i2.1231
- Saptari, R., & Holzner, B. (1997). **Perempuan, kerja, dan perubahan sosial: Sebuah pengantar studi perempuan**. Jakarta: Pustaka Utama Grafiti.
- Setiawan, E. I., Masruddin, M., & Zainuddin, Z. (2023). Semiotic Analysis and Ethnography Study on the Implementation of Local Wisdom in Economic Field

- at Luwu Society. IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature, 11(2), 1912-1925.
- Spielberger, D. (2022). How to shoot a red-carpet event. Retrieved from <https://www.shutterstock.com/blog/shoot-red-carpet-event>
- Suciati, N. K. (2022). An analysis of language features used by English language education (ELE) students through WhatsApp group. Retrieved from <https://jurnal.stkipahsingaraja.ac.id>
- Toyoda, S. (n.d.). Persona. Retrieved from [<https://iaap.org/jung-analytical-psychology>]
- Ungvarksy, J. (2024). Interviewing in journalism. In *EBSCO Research Starters*.