EXPLORING GENDERED LANGUAGE USE: MULTILINGUAL FEMALE ADOLESCENTS IN BANDUNG, INDONESIA

Ida Zuraida Supri (Corresponding author)
Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, Widyatama University, Indonesia
Email: ida.zuraida@widyatama.ac.id

Tajudin Nur
Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia
Email: Tajudin.nur@unpad.ac.id

Susi Yuliawati
Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia
Email: susi.yuliawati@unpad.ac.id

Rosaria Mita Amalia
Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia
Email: rosaria.mita.amalia@unpad.ac.id

Abstract: This study focuses on the language characteristics of multilingual female teenagers in Bandung, a city with a diverse ethnic population. The research is based on a small sample of 16-18 year old students from a private high school and uses a descriptive-analytic method to analyze recorded conversations as primary data and interviews as secondary data. The study categorizes and analyzes the language variations and characteristics of the teens' speech, using theories from Lakoff (2017) and Holmes (2022). The results suggest that some, but not all, of the language features proposed by Lakoff are present in the teens' speech. Additionally, the study identifies six language functions used, including lexical hedges, tagging questions, empty adjectives, reinforcers, emphasis stress, and rising intonation. Due to the participants' multilingualism, the conversations often involve a mix of Indonesian, local (Sundanese), and English codes.
Keywords: *features of language; female teenagers; high school; multilinguals.*

INTRODUCTION

Several studies offer a wealth of insights into various aspects of female language use, including multilingualism, language contact, and gender in different contexts (Holmes, 2022; Talib, 2019; Coates, 2018). For instance, Holmes (2022) introductory textbooks on sociolinguistics provide a comprehensive understanding of the sociolinguistic aspects of female language use and identity construction, Talib's (2019) case study on female students' code-switching in Aceh highlights the complex relationship between language, gender, and identity construction, and Coates' (2018) book on women, men, and language examines gender differences in language use, emphasizing the importance of understanding language in relation to social contexts and the role of gender in shaping language practices.

Some authors offer a range of valuable insights into the intersections of language, gender, and culture, with a focus on female language practices (Ozkırımlı, 2018; Nolas et al., 2019; Abdi, 2020; de Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2018). As an example, Ozkırımlı's (2018) research examines the impact of societal expectations on gendered language use among Turkish women. The role of language in shaping gender identities and practices, particularly in the context of young women's negotiations of gender and sexuality norms has also been researched by Nolas et al. (2019). Similarly, Abdi (2020), focuses on Iranian female students' politeness strategies emphasizes the impact of culture and gender on language use. Meahwile, Leimgruber and McKenna's (2020) research examines how gendered language use shapes children's attitudes towards online harassment.

Considering the need for further research of highlighting female language practices and their relationship with culture and identity, de Fina and

Georgakopoulou (2018) conducted a research which explores the complex interplay between stance and gender, highlighting the multidimensional relationship between language and gender.

In other perspectives, Wang's (2020) explores the reinforcement of gender-based stereotypes through language, Garrison and Gottfried's (2020) research explores the intersectionality of gender, race, and class in communication, while Tschirner and Ramirez's (2020) study investigates the impact of gender on language maintenance and loss among heritage speakers of Spanish in the US. Arend, Hennies, and Möller's (2020) comparative study examines gender norms and expectations in male-dominated STEM environments, and Alemán's (2019) study focuses on women's identity negotiation through language use in Puerto Rican transnational families.

Exploring on the highlight of relationship between gender with language, Hill and McElhinny (2019) focuses on the role of language in shaping gender-based power dynamics and professional relationships in the workplace, similar with Gallois and Ogay's (2019) study which investigates gender and communication in the workplace, also provide valuable insights into the impact of gender on language use in different contexts, while Wheatley and Dennis's (2019) research explored feminist of the language of gender difference in healthcare which highlights the reinforcement of gender-based stereotypes and biases. Similarly, Bosch and Gómez's (2019) research investigates gender differences in bilingual language acquisition and dominance, Wodak and Forchtner's (2018) study on the discursive construction of European identities provides a multi-level analysis of the role of language in shaping collective identities and Fisher and Molina's (2018) study emphasizes the significance of language in shaping educational experiences and opportunities in a dual language classroom.

In most contemporary societies, there is no longer barrier to women's participation in politics, but woman continue to be under-represented in positions of political leadership. Seeing this imbalance, Faltýnková (2018) conducted a research of comparative analysis of the linguistic representation of female politicians provides insights into the gendered nature of political discourse and identity.

Gendered language which is used to distinct sex-based categories also has been research by Unger and Campbell's (2018) which discussed of its effects towards occupational stereotypes and job prestige. highlighting on the influence of language on perceptions and attitudes. Other research, Pons-Sanz and Venuti's (2018) study on gender in dialects highlights the role of regional variation in the intersection of language and gender. Larsson and Lundmark's (2019) research on sharenting and mothers' language use on social media provides insights into the role of language in constructing and performing maternal identities in online spaces. Overall, these studies offer valuable insights into the complex and multifaceted relationship between language and gender, highlighting the need for further research in this area.

Several studies also provide a diverse range of insights into the relationship between language and gender (Zhang's, 2018, Betti & Cappelletti, 2018; El-Akri & Abouchadi, 2020; Talbot, 2020; Manal, 2021; Schmerling & Schiltz, 2021). Zhang (2018) for instance, focuses on the representation of gender and identity in English language textbooks in China, highlighting the role of language in shaping cultural norms and expectations. Betti and Cappelletti's (2018) demonstrates the complex ways in which gender identity intersects with language and discourse in Italia. Meanwhile, a study of El-Akri and Abouchadi's (2020) study on the language attitudes of Moroccan women towards Moroccan Arabic highlights the complex interplay between language, culture, and identity.

According to Talbot (2020), gender interpretation is influenced by various economic, political, cultural, and social factors. Studies in fields such as language, psychology, anthropology, art, and sociology contribute to our understanding of gender and human behavior. In Manal's (2021) research on language dynamics, it was found that Arab women tend to use vernacular language while Arab men tend to speak using standard Arabic. Other studies, Schmerling and Schiltz's (2021) analysis of creaky voice use by female speakers in Luxembourg. Despite the relevance of language features, social factors play a significant role in language use.

Some other researchers also investigated the variation of language use. For instance, a study of Handika et al. (2019) which found that Balinese elementary students predominantly use casual verbal communication, with direct, interaction, and transaction communication patterns, Supri and Nur's (2021) research on language variation which indicates that Indonesian teenagers often use slang in social media comments, while Priska et al.'s (2020) research which identified the characteristics

of women's language in movies, such as the frequent use of intensifiers and avoidance of swear words.

Equally important, the language use on social media also has already been investigated, such as Purba et al. (2021) who found that 57% of teenage Instagram users use a casual style of language in their comments, Widyastuti and Yusuf (2021) who concluded that Sundanese is actively used by 34.2 million people in Indonesia for daily communication, including in social media business, city information, and influencer accounts, Weinstein's (2018) research on the social media see-saw examines the positive and negative influences of social media on adolescents' affective well-being, and Hamzah and Indra (2022) who investigated teenagers' language use on social media platform Facebook.

The intersection of language, media, and popular culture is explored in Situmorang and Herman's (2021) analysis of slang language in the Charlie's Angels movie. Stroud's (2016) work delves deeper into the connection between language and identity, creativity, and performance in young women's writing.

The impact of gender on language use and power relations is explored in Varnhagen and McLeod's (2018) feminist perspective on language and gender and Wiriaatmadja's (2020) sociolinguistic study of Indonesian teenagers, while Tsimpli's (2014) chapter on multilingualism and language contact and Suryadi et al.'s (2019) case study on adolescent language choices in multilingual settings offer insights into the complex interplay between language, identity, and culture. Another research by Zentella (2019) entitled Growing Up Bilingual: Puerto Rican Children in New York provides a compelling ethnographic study of the linguistic and cultural practices of Puerto Rican children in a multilingual setting. Together, these references provide a broad and diverse range of perspectives on the study of language and society.

The studies by Chua and Wee (2019) and Ismail (2021) emphasize the importance of considering sociolinguistic contexts when examining language use, while Higgins' (2014) research highlights the contribution of language to gender identity construction. Similarly, Labov's (1991) work on sociolinguistic patterns and McConnell-Ginet's (2013) research on language and gender provide theoretical frameworks for analyzing language variation and change.

Other studies also shed light on the challenges of examining gendered language features (Ningrum & Crosthwaite, 2020; Krijnen & Van Bauwel, 2021; Coates, 2016, Gounder and Sankaran, 2017; Khazaeenezhad & Hashemian, 2016; Mori, 2020). Ningrum and Crosthwaite's (2020) study for instance, explored the notion of binary distinctions of gendered language features, suggesting that language use is more complex and Krijnen and Van Bauwel's (2021) book explores the representation, production, and consumption of gender in various forms of media.

Coates (2016) provides a thorough examination of the role of various factors such as socialization, power dynamics, and linguistic ideologies in shaping gender differences in language. However, it may not reflect the latest advancements in the field of gender and language research. Gounder and Sankaran (2017) conduct a unique study of Fiji Hindi and shed light on the connection between language, gender, and identity in a globalized world, highlighting the impact of both local and global factors on gendered language use.

While Khazaeenezhad and Hashemian (2016) compare gender differences in linguistic forms between Persian and English, uncovering both similarities and differences between the two languages. However, its applicability to other languages or cultures is unclear. Mills and Mullany (2018) provide a theoretical and methodological framework for examining language, gender, and feminism, laying the foundation for a critical understanding of gender and language, but without presenting specific findings or linguistic data analysis.

In similar vein, Mori (2020) examines gendered language use in Japanese adolescent text messages, offering a contemporary perspective on the relationship between gender and language in digital communication. Although the study is limited to a specific context and age group, it highlights the importance of studying gendered language use in various communication channels. Pichler (2016) also addresses common misunderstandings about gender and language and provides a nuanced and well-balanced view of the subject, serving as a correction to oversimplified or incorrect beliefs about gender differences in language use.

The reviewed sources contribute to a deeper understanding of gender differences in language use, highlighting the diverse factors that shape these differences. However, it is important to note that these studies also have limitations, including the context-specific nature of some research, the potential lack of generalizability, and the possible

incompleteness of some works in capturing the most recent developments in the field.

METHOD

The research methodology for the study "Female Language: A Case Study on Adolescents' Multilingualism in Bandung, Indonesia" can be described as follows:

The study is qualitative in nature and focuses on exploring the language practices of multilingual teenage girls in Bandung, Indonesia. It has a descriptive-analytic method and aims to provide a contextual understanding of the subject matter (Creswell, 2017).

The sample consists of eight female students aged 16 to 18 who were raised in mixed ethnic families and use multiple languages, including Sundanese, Javanese, and Arabic. The sample was selected based on the criteria of being multilingual and raised in mixed ethnic families.

The primary data was collected through the recording and analysis of conversations that took place in various settings, including homes, restaurants, coffee shops, and private vehicles. The focus was on language use in friendship. The data collection process also involved transcribing, categorizing, and analyzing the conversations to identify language characteristics and variations.

To supplement the primary data, the researchers conducted interviews with the participants to obtain additional information that was not available through the recorded conversations.

The recorded conversations were transcribed and analyzed to identify language characteristics and variations. The researchers used a descriptive-analytic method to categorize and analyze the data, focusing on language use in friendship.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, the researchers used multiple data collection methods and triangulated the data by supplementing the recorded conversations with interviews.

The study adheres to ethical principles such as informed consent, confidentiality, and data protection. Participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study and how the data would be used, and they were given the option to withdraw from the study at any time.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study focuses on eight teenagers who attend a private school in Bandung and come from Sundanese and Javanese families. The participants are multilingual, with some speaking their local language and others using Indonesian at home. It is important to note that this research aims to provide insight into the language practices of female senior high school students in Bandung, rather than making generalizations based on a small sample size. The language domain studied in this research is friendship, and the conversations took place in various settings, such as homes, restaurants, cafes, and vehicles. The topics of the conversations varied and included school-related topics, friends, teachers, school subjects, music, and concerts.

Lexical hedges or fillers

Lexical hedges occur quite frequently in the conversations. Following are data 13 of lexical hedges containing *Eh, kayaknya, Da, sih, tuh, ai, the, kok,* and *kan*: (1) Eh, *Kamu… kamu besok udah bawa motor sendiri*? (Eh, You will you ride your motorbike by yourself tomorrow?). (2) Eh *tapi denahnya ngga jelas*. (Eh, but the floor plan is not clear). (2) *Anjir* dia lagi *healing* ke Malaysia. (Anjir he is now healing to Malaysia.) (3) *Dia kayaknya ambis banget.* (He seems very ambitious). (4) *Nah,* setiap kelompok harus menjual makanan. (Nah, each group must sell food). (5) *Da ngga ada apa-apa.* (There is nothing). (6) *Iya ngga sih*. (Isn't it?). (7*) Waktu ujian, aku* tuh *udah selesai duluan*. (I already finished the exam first). (8) *Bisa aja ai kamu*. (It is possible, you know). (9) *Siapa nama dia teh? (What is her/his name*?). (10) *Kayaknya dalam seminggu ini kita bakal masuk sampe jam 10*. (It seemed we'll be at class until 10 o'clock this week.). (11) *Kita teh nanti belajarnya kayak hari biasa*. (We will study as usual). (12) *Kok bisa sih?* (How come?)

Lexical hedges or fillers in the utterances above are used in the communication, indicating a less-than-full commitment to the precision of what is said. The functions of using hedging or fillers are to avoid conflict, minimize face-threatening actions, or reduce coercion. It is interesting to see that most of the hedging or fillers significantly used are using their local language or Sundanese. Fillers *Eh, Da, sih, tuh, ai (from the word ari), teh, anjir* are fillers used in Sundanese*; while kan, kok,* and *kayaknya* are Bahasa Indonesia. *Anjir* is a slang word for *anjing* (dog) is also used. It was rare to hear this word in the past because it is considered rude. Nowadays, it is pretty frequent to encounter female teenagers using variations of the word *anjing*, such as *anjir, anjis, anjim, jir,* or *jis*. They use *anjir* as a filler to show high solidarity. They tend to use the fillers in Sundanese rather than Bahasa Indonesia or English with their peers. They casually communicate with their peers

because the use of the language domain is friendship.

Tag questions

Following are data from 14, 15, 16, and 17 of the tag questions: (14) *Hari Sabtu ini ada kegiatan ekskul jurnalis, gitu,* Bil? (Are there any journalists' extracurricular activities this Saturday, Bil?). (15) *Konser Pensi menurut aku kemahalan, gak sih?* (I think the Pensi concert is too expensive, isn't it?). (16) *Kamu jadi pergi, gak?* (You are leaving, aren't you?). (17) *Menurut aku sih Pak Adi orangnya baik, kan?* (I think Pak Adi is a good person, right?). (18) *Dia kenal sama kita, gak ya*? (He knows us, doesn't he?)

The above data (14, 15, 16, 17, and 18) show that the tag question is used whenever the speaker is not particular about what is spoken. Teenagers casually use the tag question. The objective of using tag questions is to maintain communication by confirming what is said earlier to the hearer. Data 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 show different tag words employed in the conversation. Data 14 uses the tag question *gitu*, and data 17 uses the tag *kan* showing that the statements are positive. However, the speaker needs confirmation that what she knows is accurate.

Data 15 and 16 show that the word *gak* means negation. The word *gak* is the informal word for the word *tidak* which means no (negation). The structure is different from the English tag question structure; a positive statement, negative tag, or negative statement followed by positive tag questions.

Empty adjectives

Girls tend to use adjectives to express their feelings. These adjectives may have a deep meaning in specific contexts and situations, and in other situations, they may not have a strong meaning. For example, empty adjectives used in the conversations below do not have strong meanings: (19) *Pengen nonton* Tulus *yang beneran* Tulus *gitu.* (I want to watch Tulus the real Tulus). (20) *Tim acara tuh yang paling cape di hari* H *acara*. *Beneran.* (The event team is the most tired on the D-day of the event). (21) *Tadi dia nge SG in gitu, gemes*. (He took an Insta Story post, how adorable). (22) *Ih, lucu banget*! (So cute!)

The words *beneran* in data 19, *Beneran* in data 20, *gemes* in data 21, and *lucu* in data 22 are the empty adjectives used in the conversation. The adjective *beneran* means a real one or a real concert. This is used to refer to a real solo concert

of Tulus (a famous singer). In data 20, the word *beneran* is an adjective. It does not refer to a noun in the utterance. It is merely an empty adjective. Data 21 shows the word *gemes* which means adorable, does not refer to any nouns used in the utterance. It is a simply empty adjective. The word *lucu* (cute) in data 22 is another data showing an empty adjective.

Intensifiers

An *intensifier* is a textual feature that can emphasize a message or make it more sensational. The following is data on the use of intensifiers: (23) *Tim acara tuh yang* paling *cape di hari H acara*. (The event team was the most tired on D Day). (24) *Kayak ngeremehin banget*. (Like really underestimate). (25) *Ayamnya* juicy *banget*. (The chicken is so juicy). (26) *Kelas maneh* pastinya *gak akan bener.* (Your class will definitely not good). (27) 3G *nya jelek banget anjir.* (The 3G is really bad, *anjir*). (28) *Sedih banget ya lagunya*. (The song is really sad). (29) *Macet banget yah.* (very heavy traffic). (30) *Jadi KM tuh paling ribet kalau ngga ada jadwal ngajar wali kelas.* (The most complicated time becoming a head of the class is when there's no homeroom teaching schedule).

Intensifiers are frequently used in conversation. Data 23 to data 30 show the use of an intensifier. The word banget is the most frequently used intensifier. Banget is an intensifier from Betawi dialect. Bahasa Indonesia is the national language. It has several dialects as the influence of the local language. The word *banget* originated from the word *sangat* (very) is a standard Bahasa Indonesia. *Banget* is a Betawi dialect of the word *sangat*. It has other variations, like *amat* or *bingit*. Intensifier pastinya (definitely) in data 27 is a word of Bahasa Indonesia. *Paling* (superlative form) in data 23 and 30 are used to intensify the adjectives *cape* (tired) and ribet (complicated). Another intensifier used in the data above is *pastinya* (definitely), as in data 26. So, most of the intensifiers used are from Bahasa Indonesia, and the dialect of Bahasa Betawi is also used. The use of casual vocabulary deriving from local languages, such as Sundanese and Betawi are used. Variation of words or allomorph are also encountered, such as the swear word of anjir, which is originated from the word anjing (dog). There at least five allomorps to refer to the word anjing; anjis, anjir, anjim, njis, njir.

Rising intonation on declarative

Below are data on rising intonation on declarative.

(31) *Acaranya seru*. (The program is fun). (32) *Ayamnya enak.* (the chicken is delicious).

Language feature of rising intonation on declarative is found. Data 31 *Acaranya seru* and data 32 *Ayamnya enak*, are expressed using rising intonation. The rising intonation on declaration utterance is used to show uncertainty. girls tend to use certain patterns related to surprise and politeness or answer questions instead of assertive statements with low intonation. Rising intonation is attributed to uncertainty. Thus, data 31 *Acaranya seru* (the program is interesting) and 32 *Ayamnya enak* (the chicken is delicious) are stated using rising intonation even though the utterance is expressed in a declarative.

Emphatic stress
Data 34 and 35 the use of emphatic stress. (34) *Kamu BISA bawa motor?* (You can ride a motorbike?). (35) Kamu *BISA* ngerjain Matwa BAB II? (You can solve Chapter II of Math problems?)

Teenagers use empathic stress to emphasize a word in their utterances with more power, energy, or loudness. Empathic emphasis also indicates that what the speaker understands is the opposite of the facts. Data 34 *Kamu BISA bawa motor?* (You CAN ride a motorbike?) and Data 35 *Kamu BISA ngerjain Matwa BAB II?* (You CAN solve Chapter II of Math problems?). Those utterances are spoken to express surprise at the statement uttered by her interlocuter because her understanding is opposite to the facts.

CONCLUSION
The respondents only mentioned a few aspects of the language. Lexical hedges, tag questions, empty adjectives, intensifier, emphatic stress, and rising intonation are all used. Because the topic of which color terms can be used is not found, the use of precise color terms must be identified. Topic about fashion, which color terms are possible to use, appears outside the recorded conversation. Hyper-correct grammar, Super polite forms are not identified. The absence may be due to the conversation's participants being friends. Those two features are not used because they tend to use casual language with their peers. Avoidance of strong swear words is not found. The respondents seem casual in using words that are considered rude, taboo, or slangy. For instance, some pronouns are used when addressing self or other speakers, *maneh* dan *aing*. Those words are the least used when there is an absent adult. The use of code-mixing is frequently encountered. Code mixing of Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Sunda and Bahasa Indonesia and English is quite frequent. So, being multilingual, teenagers are more creative in language use.

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