

Conference Paper

Gender Differences in the Use of Personal Pronouns in Television Advertisements

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Abstract

This research aimed to analyze the use of personal pronouns in male and female shampoo television advertisements. This research was conducted qualitatively through three steps of data analysis, namely: data reduction, data display, and conclusion or verification. The data of this research were the utterances transcribed from four male shampoo television advertisements and four female shampoo television advertisements downloaded from YouTube. Based on the data analysis conducted, 50 personal pronouns were found in both male and female shampoo television advertisements. There were 12 (24%) personal pronouns found in the male shampoo television advertisements while there were 38 (76%) personal pronouns found in the female shampoo television advertisements. Based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that personal pronouns are more frequently used in female television advertisements than in male television advertisements. This is in line with Lakoff's theory stating that men and women are different in communicating. This is also consistent with previous studies that have found that women tend to use more pronouns than men.

Keywords: gender, personal pronouns, television advertisements

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1. Introduction

Females and males' differences are related not only to the nature of their psychology and physiology but also to their use of language (Subon, 2013). Lakoff (1973) claims that 'women language' is different from 'men's language'; women and men speak English in different ways. Women have been taught to speak differently since youth, girls should speak in a passive voice and boys should speak what is termed 'rough talk' or active voice. She argued that women's language included features such as the use of polite forms, the use of question tags, rising intonation in declarative, the avoidance of expletives, and the use of more hedges (Subon, 2013). Lakoff's theory leads to two separate views of women's language, namely the 'difference approach' and 'dominance approach'. 'Dominance approach' is the study of power differences

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and focuses on unequal roles as the source difference. This approach sees women's language as the reflection of women's subordinate position in society. According to 'difference' or 'cultural approach', men and women are parts of different subcultures because they are from different social and ethnic background (Subon, 2013). There are some researches which have been conducted to reveal the differences of men and women in using language, for examples: First, Ishikawa (2014), *Gender Differences in Vocabulary Use in Essay Writing by University Students*. The results of this study show that there are indeed gender differences in language use in essay writing, suggesting that male students tend to use more nouns related to social economic activities to convey information or facts about the given topics, whereas female students tend to use more pronouns, more intensifiers and modifiers, and words related to psychological cognitive processes so that they might convey their feelings and develop a good relationship with other people.

Second, Lenard (2016), *Gender differences in the personal pronouns usage on the corpus of congressional speeches*. The quantitative analysis results point to minor statistically significant gender differences in the personal pronouns usage. However, the qualitative analysis shows more subtle gender differences pointing to linguistic changes in stereotypization. Third, Litvinova (2017), *Differences in Type-Token Ratio and Part-of-Speech Frequencies in Male and Female Russian Written Texts*. The results of this study show that there are differences between male and female texts in a number of morphological indices and TTR level. Based on the three previous studies conducted, it is found that most of the data used are in written form. For that reason, in this study the researcher would focus the analysis on the spoken form. The researcher analyzes the use of personal pronouns in male and female shampoo television advertisements. The researcher analyzes the tendency of the two types of advertisements in using personal pronouns based on the utterances used. Pronoun is a word standing for a noun. There are many types of pronouns, namely: personal pronouns, relative pronouns, reflexive pronouns, reciprocal pronouns, and indefinite pronouns. But, this study is focused on the analysis of the use of personal pronouns. There are eight kinds of personal pronouns as subject, namely: I, you, he, she, it, we, you, and they and eight kinds of personal pronouns as object, namely: me, you, him, her, it, us, you, and them.

Advertisement, which is sometimes, refers to an "ad" or "advert" in informal writing, is defined as a notice, picture, or film telling people about a product, job or service (Hornby, 1987). Advertisement is the product of advertising which is used to tell public about products or services in order to encourage people to buy or to use the product being advertised (Sibarani, 2017).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Gender Differences in Language

Gender differences, which are socially and culturally constructed, are one of the interesting phenomena in contemporary society. Their impacts can be seen in political life, where women fight their political rights, or in households, in which women fight to reduce household harassment. Discourse on gender differences, in fact, also exists in the use of language for communication, highlighting that men and women are different in their ways of communication, and therefore they should be treated differently (Mahmud, 2010). This discourse has been hotly and creatively debated since Lakoff and Tannen, in their study on English speaking countries, illuminating the concept of women's language which highlights the existence of men and women differences in communication. One characteristic of women's language is the great tendency of women in using lexical hedges or fillers (e.g. *you know, sort of, well, you see*), tag questions (*she's very nice, isn't she?*), rising intonation on declaratives (*it's really good*), empty adjectives (*divine, charming, cute*), precise colour terms (*magenta, aquama-rine*), intensifiers (*just, so*), hypercorrect grammar (consistent use of standard verb forms), super polite forms (indirect requests, euphemisms), avoidance of strong swear words (*fudge, my goodness*), and emphatic stress (Mahmud, 2010).

2.2. Differences of Men and Women in Language

Xia (2013) examines some differences of men and women in language from the following aspects:

2.2.1. Differences in Pronunciation

Women's pronunciation is usually better than men's, such as the pronunciation of "-ing". It can explain why more girls choose to learn language as their major than boys.

2.2.2. Differences in Intonation

Women often like to speak in a high-pitch voice because of physiological reason. It also associates with women's "timidity" and "emotional instability". As a contrary, men like to use falling intonation to show that they are quite sure of what they are saying, their confidence and sometimes power.

2.2.3. Differences in Vocabulary

The differences in vocabulary can be shown in the following five aspects (Xia, 2013):

1. Color Words

Women are good at using color words to describe things, such as *mauve, lavender aquamarine, azure and magenta*, etc, but most men do not use them.

2. Adjectives

Women like to use many adjective, such as *adorable, charming, lovely, fantastic, heavenly*, but men seldom use them.

3. Adverbs

Women tend to use such adverbs like *awfully, pretty, terribly, vastly, quite, so*; men like to use *very, utterly, really*.

4. Swear words and Expletives

Women usually avoid using swear words and dirty words. They believe that these kinds of words will not only make others uncomfortable and give an impression of “no civilization”, but also destroy the relationship between her and others.

5. Diminutives

Women like to use words that have the meaning of “small”, such as *bookie, hanky, panties* and words that show affections, such as *dearie, sweetie*.

Furthermore, women like to use words that show politeness, such as *please, thanks*, and they use more euphemism, but “slang” is considered to be men’s preference.

6. Pronouns

Women prefer to use first person plural pronouns when they suggest something, even when she suggests the other person, while men tend to use first person singular pronoun, and when he is suggesting the other person, he will directly use the second person pronoun.

Example: Women: We need to be in a hurry.

Men: You need to be quick.

2.2.4. Differences in Syntax

The differences in syntax can be shown in the following five aspects (Xia, 2013):

1. Modulation

When a woman talks, she usually leaves a decision open rather than imposes her own ideas or claims on others. We often hear a woman say “*well, you know..., I think..., I suppose....kind of, maybe I am wrong but..., etc.*”

2. Interrogative sentences

Women use more interrogative sentences than men do. Women look interrogative sentences as a strategy of continuing a good conversation.

3. Imperative sentences

Women prefer to use sentences with modal verbs, such as *can, could, may* but, they seldom use imperative sentences to give orders. To reduce the imperative tone, they use more adverbs like *maybe, perhaps, probably*.

4. Correctness of grammar

Women pay more attention to the correctness of syntax. While expressing her thoughts, she would make her utterance clear by using precise grammar.

2.2.5. Differences in their Attitudes toward Language

Women pay more attention to using standard language than men do, so they are stricter with the rules of the use of language.

2.2.6. Non-verbal Differences: Differences in Manners

We have mentioned that women usually show politeness in their conversation, such as the use of “*would you, please, etc.*” Besides this, women also show that they are reserved when they talk.

Generally speaking, in a conversation involving both sexes, women often play the role of patient listeners. They do not interrupt others often, but encourage others to talk.

2.2.7. Differences in Choosing Topics

In social interaction, men and women have different interests in choosing their topics. When men are talking, they are more likely to choose the topics of politics, economy, stocks, sports, current news. While women have more interest in talking family affairs,

the education of children, clothes, cooking, fashion, etc. Women’s talk is associated with the home and domestic activities, while men’s is associated with the outside world and economic activities (Xia, 2013).

Furthermore, Ishikawa (2014) offers a brief summary of the findings of some previous studies related to gender differences in language.

	Male	Female
Koppel et al.	noun specifiers (<i>that, one</i>)	negation (<i>not</i>), pronouns, prepositions (<i>for, with, in</i>), conjunction (<i>and</i>)
Argamon et al.	determiners (<i>a, the, that, these</i>), quantifiers (<i>one, two, more, some</i>)	pronouns (<i>I, you, she, her, their, myself, yourself, herself</i>)
Newman et al.	numbers, articles, prepositions (<i>on, to, from</i>)	pronouns (<i>I, my, me, she, their, them</i>), social words (<i>sister, friends</i>), psychological processes (<i>mad, uneasy</i>), verbs, negations, references to the home (<i>home, house</i>)

Figure 1: Summary of Gender Differences in Language Revealed by Previous Studies

2.3. Pronouns

Pronoun is a word standing for a noun. There are many types of pronouns, namely: personal pronouns, relative pronouns, reflexive pronouns, reciprocal pronouns, and indefinite pronouns). But, this study is focused on the analysis of the use of personal pronouns.

2.4. Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns refer to

1. The speaker, called the first person

Singular: I

Plural: we (includes the speaker and one or more others)

2. The person spoken to, called the second person. You (singular and plural)

3. The person or thing being spoken of, called the third person

Singular: he (for males), she (for females), it (for things; also for live beings whose sex is unknown or unimportant to the speaker)

Plural: they (for all live beings and for all things)

Personal Pronouns		
Singular	As a Subject	As an Object
	I	Me
	You	You
	He	Him
	She	Her
	It	It
Plural	We	Us
	You	You
	They	Them

Figure 2: Personal Pronouns

2.5. Advertisement

Advertisement, which is sometimes, refers to an “ad” or “advert” in informal writing, is defined as a notice, picture, or film telling people about a product, job or service (Hornby, 1987). Advertisement is the product of advertising which is used to tell public about products or services in order to encourage people to buy or to use the product being advertised (Sibarani, 2017).

There are some types of advertisements, namely: brand advertisement, commercial advertisement, political advertisement, advertisement with a feedback, corporate advertisement, business advertisement, and public or social advertisement (Frolova, 2014).Advertisement which functions to tell the public about products or services is called as commercial advertisement.Commercial advertisement should offer information, stress buyer’s benefit, and build a good brand reputation. Commercial advertisements published on TV try to intrigue the viewers to see the entire commercial. (Sibarani, 2017). In this study, commercial advertisements namely shampoo television advertisements are used as the data source.

3. Research Method

The objective of this study is to analyze the use of personal pronouns in male and female shampoo television advertisements. Therefore, this research is conducted qualitatively. Qualitative research is an umbrella term to refer to several research strategies that share certain characteristics. The data collected have been term soft, which is rich in description of people, places, and conversations, and not easily handled by statistical procedures (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007).

The data of this study are the utterances transcribed from eight English television advertisements, shampoo advertisements, downloaded from YouTube. The researcher chooses shampoo advertisements because many people see television advertisements everyday and shampoo is one of the needs of people nowadays. The researcher analyzes English television advertisements instead of Indonesian advertisements because English has specific personal pronouns compared to Indonesian.

The researcher collected the data by doing observation and documentation. The researcher observed the advertisements on YouTube and then the researcher downloaded them. After that, the researcher did the documentation by transcribing all the utterances produced by the artists in the advertisements.

The researcher analyzed four male shampoo television advertisements and four female shampoo television advertisements to analyze the use of personal pronouns. The four male shampoo advertisements are: 1) Head & Shoulders, 2) Clear Cool Sport Menthol, 3) Dove Men+Care, 4) Clear Men Anti Dandruff Shampoo. The four female shampoo advertisements are: 1) Head and shoulders Conditioners, 2) Clear Scalp & Hair, 3) New Dove Nutritive Solutions, 4) Clear Zero Dandruff. The researchers analyzed only eight television advertisements because there were not so many brands produced products both for male and female.

There were some techniques performed by the researcher to analyze the data:

1. Identifying, the researcher identified and determined the data analyzed.
2. Transcribing, the researcher transcribed all the utterances produced by the artists in both male and female shampoo television advertisements.
3. Drawing percentages, the researcher drew the percentages of the use of personal pronouns.
4. Drawing conclusions, the researcher drew conclusions of the findings.

These steps of data were data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification.

4. Result and Discussion

The first step that the researcher conducted was identifying the data. The data in this study were the utterances produced by the artists in both male and female shampoo television advertisements. The data were downloaded from YouTube, observed, and then transcribed.

The utterances produced then were analyzed to draw the percentages and conclusions in order to answer the research problem. The analysis of the use of personal pronouns can be seen in the following table.

TABLE 1: The Analysis of the Use of Personal Pronouns in Male Shampoo Television Advertisements

No.	Products	Utterances	Personal pronouns			
			As Subject	f	As Object	f
1.	Head & Shoulders	For this tournament, <u>we</u> need to be prepared. And Head and Shoulders will give <u>us</u> the confidence <u>we</u> need to join together and celebrate each goal with 100% flake-free hair guaranteed. So when the time comes, nothing will get in the way, not even dandruff. With Head and Shoulders <u>we</u> can play on.	I		Me	
			You		You	
			He		Him	
			She		Her	
			It		It	
			We	3	Us	1
			You		You	
			They		Them	
2.	Clear Cool Sport Menthol	I like to feel cool and fresh all day but dirt, sweat, and wax build up can lead to dandruff. Not cool! That's why I use Clear! It has Bio-Nutrium 10 that removes dandruff and cooling menthol to keep <u>you</u> fresh! All day Unstoppable Dandruff-Free Freshness with Clear. I have nothing to hide!	I	3	Me	
			You		You	1
			He		Him	
			She		Her	
			It		It	
			We		Us	
			You		You	
			They		Them	
3.	Dove Men+Care	Men's hair goes through a lot so make sure <u>it's</u> ready for anything. Dove men plus care fortifying shampoo infused with caffeine makes your hair up to five times stronger plus less hair fall dove men plus care test your strength	I		Me	
			You		You	
			He		Him	

No.	Products	Utterances	Personal pronouns			
			As Subject	f	As Object	f
			She		Her	
			It	1	It	
			We		Us	
			You		You	
			They		Them	
4.	Clear Men Anti Dandruff Shampoo	At the clear technology center, <u>we</u> understand the difference between a male and a female scalp. A male scalp is oilier, is more prone to have dandruff, and is more prone to have hair loss. That's why <u>we</u> 've created new clear men clear first ever specialized anti dandruff shampoo range for men that gives <u>you</u> dandruff free hair. New clear men no dandruff from unilever	I		Me	
			You		You	
			He		Him	
			She		Her	
			It		It	
			We	2	Us	
			You		You	1
			They		Them	

TABLE 2: The Analysis of the Use of Personal Pronouns in Female Shampoo Television Advertisements

No.	Products	Sentences	Personal pronouns			
			As Subject	f	As Object	f
1.	Head and Shoulders Conditioners	When modeling, <u>I</u> forced from head to toe and when <u>it</u> comes to my smooth hair, guess what? <u>I</u> have a new conditioner that moisturizes from scalp to temp. Introducing new Head & Shoulders conditioners, unlike others <u>it</u> works on the scalp to keep dandruff out for hair so irresistibly smooth. Have <u>you</u> moisturized from your scalp to tip yet? New Head & Shoulders conditioners.	I	2	Me	
			You	1	You	
			He		Him	
			She		Her	
			It	2	It	
			We		Us	
			You		You	

No.	Products	Sentences	Personal pronouns			
			As Subject	f	As Object	f
			They		Them	
2.	Clear Scalp & Hair	I work on my call because <u>it</u> makes <u>me</u> stronger the same goes for my hair for resilient hair that feels stronger. I started my scalp I use clear scalp and hair. Clear is our first beauty hair care range with nutrium ten that deeply nourishes your scalp and also gives <u>you</u> resilient beautiful hair. The hair that's ten times more resilient strong and beautiful. I use clear scalp and hair.	I	4	Me	1
			You		You	1
			He		Him	
			She		Her	
			It	1	It	
			We		Us	
			You		You	
			They		Them	
3.	New Dove Nutritive Solutions	New dove intense repair gives unbeatable damage repair. Dove won't let damage hold <u>you</u> back. I curl <u>it</u> because <u>it</u> expresses my personality. I straighten <u>it</u> because <u>it's</u> my decision. I braid <u>it</u> because that's how I feel beautiful. I color <u>it</u> because <u>it</u> makes <u>me</u> unique. I leave <u>it</u> because <u>it's</u> my own journey because my hair is <u>me</u> . For <u>you</u> to carry on, bring <u>you</u> new dove intense repair, nourishes deep down and gives unbeatable damage repair because your hair expresses who <u>you</u> are. New dove fugitive solutions.	I	6	Me	2
			You	1	You	3
			He		Him	
			She		Her	
			It	4	It	5
			We		Us	
			You		You	
			They		Them	

No.	Products	Sentences	Personal pronouns			
			As Subject	f	As Object	f
4.	Clear Zero Dandruff	When the clear expert said I'll never see a flake of dandruff again, I was like seriously. The next minute I'm having this high tech scale test. Oh my god, my scalp is so dry and dandruff is coming back. Your dry scalp makes you more prone to dandruff. Try clear its nutrium 10, nourishes scalp deeply preventing dandruff. It works, here's proof. Clear nourish your scalp zero dandruff	I	3	Me	
			You		You	1
			He		Him	
			She		Her	
			It	1	It	
			We		Us	
			You		You	
			They		Them	

TABLE 3: The Comparison of the Use of Personal Pronouns in Male and Female Shampoo Television Advertisements

Male Advertisements	Personal Pronouns		Female Advertisements	Personal Pronouns	
	As Subject	As Object		As Subject	As Object
Head & Shoulders	3	1	Head and shoulders Conditioners	5	0
Clear Cool Sport Menthol	3	1	Clear Scalp & Hair	5	2
Dove Men+Care	1	0	New Dove Nutritive Solutions	11	10
Clear Men Anti Dandruff Shampoo	2	1	Clear Zero Dandruff	4	1

TABLE 4: The Percentages of the Use of Personal Pronouns in Male and Female Shampoo Television Advertisements

Advertisements	Personal Pronouns	
	f	%
Male Television Advertisements	12	24
Female Television Advertisements	38	76

Based on the data above, it was found that there was a difference between men and women in communicating. It is in line with some theories proposed by Lakoff and Tannen in which they illuminate the concept of women's language which highlights the existence of men and women differences in communication.

Moreover, it was found that there were more personal pronouns realized in female shampoo television advertisements (76%) than in male shampoo television advertisements (24%). Pronouns are used when the identity of the “thing” involved is known to the reader. It implied that women tend to focus on people involved in the given topics rather than the minute information about the topic (Ishikawa, 2014).

From the 16 kinds of personal pronouns (8 kinds as subject and 8 kinds as object), it is found that there are only 9 kinds of personal pronouns realized. The four kinds of personal pronouns (as subject) realized are: I, you, it, and we. The five kinds of personal pronouns (as object) realized are: me, you (singular), it, us, and you (plural).

Based on the researcher’s analysis, it occurs because advertisement is used to promote a product, so that personal pronoun “it” often occurs as the reference of the product being advertised. Then personal pronouns “I, me, you, we, and us” occur as the references of the artists “the senders” and the audiences “the listeners”.

5. Conclusion

The objective of this study is to analyze the use of personal pronouns in male and female shampoo television advertisements. The data of this study are the utterances transcribed from four male shampoo television advertisements and four female shampoo television advertisements downloaded from YouTube. Based on the data analysis conducted, it is found that there is a difference between men and women in communicating in which women tend to use more personal pronouns than men. It is because women tend to focus on people involved in the given topics rather than the information about the topic. The results of this study also confirm the previous theories and some related studies. So, it is necessary for other researchers to conduct a study in the same field to reveal other unique phenomena related to language and gender.

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