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A Sociolinguistic Study of Gender Language Traits in Dickens' *Hard Times*

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my beloved parents, my father, Ahmad, who told me that “English is the key to success” and my sweetheart mother, Hilda, who spent the nights waiting for me until I get home. I am grateful for their unwavering support and encouragement. Their love and guidance have been a constant source of strength and inspiration. Not to mention my beloved brothers and sisters whose presence has also inspired and motivated me throughout the research and writing process.

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Abstract

A Sociolinguistic Study of Gender Language Traits in Dickens' *Hard Times*

This study investigates gender language traits through the application of Lakoff's (1975) theory of gender in Dickens' *Hard Times*. The researcher used mixed-method research to analyze the expressions of the two male and two female main characters. The study has two main aims; firstly, it attempts to look for the most common language traits used in the novel. Secondly, it also aims to see if and how gender inequality is presented in the novel by comparing the language traits of both male and female main characters through the application of Lakoff's (1975) theory of gender. The researcher found eight traits of Lakoff's gender theory that were used by the four main male and female characters; Louisa Gradgrind, Cecelia Jupe, Mr. Gradgrind, and Mr. Bounderby. These eight traits are lexical hedges, tag questions, intensifiers, empty adjectives, super-polite forms, avoiding strong swear words, emphatic stress, and hypercorrect grammar (see Table 12). Additionally, the researcher concluded that 73% of the expressions produced by females are in line with Lakoff's theory while 27% of the expressions were used by men which supports Lakoff's (1975) theory of gender. This indicates the presence of gender inequality in the Victorian era as revealed in this literary work.

المخلص

دراسة لغوية اجتماعية للسمات اللغوية وفق النوع الاجتماعي في رواية ديكنز (أوقات عصيبة)

تبحث هذه الدراسة عن السمات اللغوية وفق النوع الاجتماعي في رواية ديكنز (أوقات عصيبة)، باستخدام نظرية (لاكوف) 1975م. حيث استخدم الباحث المنهج المختلط؛ لتحليل كلام (الشخصيتان الرئيسيتان) لكل من الذكور والإناث، وكان للدراسة هدفان: الأول البحث عن السمات اللغوية المستخدمة والأكثر شيوعاً في الرواية، والهدف الثاني الذي يتمثل فيما إن وجد عدم مساواة بين الجنسين في الرواية من خلال مقارنة السمات اللغوية التي عُثِرَ عليها لكل من الشخصيتين الرئيسيتين للذكور والإناث بتطبيق نظرية (لاكوف) 1975م.

حيث وجد الباحث ثماني سمات لغوية، باستخدام الأربعة شخصيات: (لويزا غراند غرايند، وسيبيليا جوب، والسيد غرادغرايند، والسيد باوندربي). فلُخصت الثماني سمات التي وجدت كالتالي: ملطفات الكلام، والأسئلة الدليلية، والمكثفات، والصفات الفارغة، والأسلوب المهذب، وتجنب الشتائم، والتأكيد، والقواعد النحوية المفرطة (انظر الجدول 12).

بالإضافة إلى ذلك فإن الباحث استنتج أن التعبير المستخدمة في الرواية عند الإناث تشكل نسبة 73% وبالتالي تتوافق مع نظرية (لاكوف) 1975م، بينما التعبير الداعمة لنظرية (لاكوف) التي استخدمها الذكور شكلت نسبة 27%. باختلاف النسب بين الذكور والإناث تُظهر وجود عدم مساواة جنسية في العمل الأدبي الذي قُدِمَ في العصر الفكتوري

Chapter One: Background of the Study

1.1 Introduction

In the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution made a great shift in shaping the social structure and the relationships between either two genders in general and their language in particular. In other words, the relationship between people at that time was only built on business reasons as a macro-effect. To elaborate, marriage was for business purposes without any consideration of emotions. In addition, the role of each member of the family was affected accordingly. Raymond Pahl (1984) and Hannah Barker (2017) stated that the relationship between family members was not strong enough to encourage talks between them. As a result, one of the greatest micro-effects of the industrial revolution (The Victorian era) was the role of women.

Before the Industrial Revolution, males were dominant, but life after the Industrial Revolution has changed in terms of the role of women. As a result, the language between the two genders has been affected in various ways; women can express themselves well due to the power of money and their ability to work in factories as men did. To support, an advertisement asked equally for male and female workers in latest 19th century, specifying them as a man and his wife (Pamela Horn, 1860, p.100). Consequently, the appearance of the term *language and gender* is open to discussion. Hence, many scholars, including Robin Lakoff (1975) contributed to the field of gender.

In the latest nineteenth century, Robin Lakoff is a scholar who put this term to controversy, supporting her ideas with the Theory of Gender. She published *Language and Women's Place* which shows the different styles of women speech that emerge as one aspect, in addition to the theory of gender that represents gender inequality as another aspect which concerns and relates to the 21st century's characteristics according to Wrede (2015).

As a consequence, literature is one of greatest resources that could be used to identify, analyze, and put to discussion the social structure in the nineteenth century and its effects on gender inequality. One of the literary works which represents that era is *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens. This study will adopt Lakoff's (1975) theory of gender for the purpose of data analysis.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Gender (in)equality has been one of the global issues that concern people all around the world. According to the UN (2014), "gender inequality is a characteristic of most societies, with males on average better positioned in social, economic, and political hierarchies". Furthermore, gender inequality nowadays holds back the growth of individuals and the development of countries; it might destroy the relationships between both genders and prevent the progress of a certain culture. To add, every culture has its own experience in considering such a concept due to the changes that happen during a specific era and the social structure of a certain society.

To the best of my humble knowledge, this research is going to be the first to study women language traits in Dickens' *Hard Times*. Lakoff's (1975) theory of gender is going to be adopted for the purposes of data analysis. Hence, the speech contributions of two male characters and two female characters will be investigated and compared to see how gender (in)equality is represented in that era as well as the main themes represented in the novel.

1.3 The Significance of the Study

According to the *Global Gender Gap Report* (2011), gender equality has not been achieved in all countries. However, after reviewing some of the related literature about the subject, the researcher found that this subject was not given enough attention especially in *Hard Times*.

Up to my humble knowledge, few papers studies investigated gender inequality in *Hard Times* in particular as a main theme to reveal and manifest how relationships are constructed

between genders and how gender inequality and insecurity are represented. In addition, this study will reveal the features of the era through analyzing Dickens' *Hard Times* in an attempt to develop a better understanding of how language was used as well as revealing the main themes of the novel.

1.4 Limitation of the Study

The presented literary work in this study is one of too many Charles Dickens' writings which merely investigates the presence of gender inequality and don't fully reveal Dickens' ideology and concept of gender. In addition, two female and two male characters and their speech contribution will be analyzed and compared to answer the research questions although other characters may contribute to this field of research.

However, these four characters were chosen for they are the four main characters who might represent the Victorian women and men at that time. However, other female characters will not be considered in the analysis for they are considered as secondary characters. Moreover, some language traits limit the application of Lakoff's (1975) theory of gender to some extent. For example, the intonation trait of each character is hard to be determined; as a result, this trait will not be considered in analyzing this literary work for it is based on a written literary work and not based on a movie or a play.

1.5 The Purpose of the Study

The novel as a literary genre has many themes. One main theme is the subtle representation of gender. Hence, this paper aims to:

1. Reveal the most common language traits of two main female characters and two main male characters in *Hard Times* based on Lakoff's theory of gender (1975)
2. Find out how gender inequality and insecurity is presented in Dickens' *Hard Times*.

Chapter Two: Theoretical framework and Review of Literature

2.1. Introduction

This study aims to pinpoint the linguistic traits that Dickens' female and male characters in the novel *Hard Times* use in line with Lakoff's theory (1975). This chapter will discuss relevant literature and prior studies. It also discusses some gender theories, explores how women were treated during the Victorian era, and offers a summary of Dickens' *Hard Times*. To further illustrate the study's goal, a number of prior studies that are methodologically and conceptually related to the current study will be reviewed, summarized, and discussed.

2.2. Gender and Language Theories

Men and women have always had significant distinctions. They dress differently, act differently, have different beliefs, and, more interestingly, they communicate differently. First, there is a distinction in the usage of standard language. Mohammad (2019) noted that women talk in a more standardized form of the language, whilst males speak in the vernacular. Additionally, they use the standard language's pronunciation more than males do. To add, there are many issues that interest men. For example, men enjoy talking about sports, politics, and money. Women, on the other hand, tend to focus on fashion, dress, and gossip (Andrew, 2013). Although men enjoy chatting, they never claim to be gossiping as much as women; instead, they simply converse (Yu, 2010).

According to Holmes (2013), men have a much more difficult time expressing their thoughts than women. They are thought to be strong, and expressing their sentiments is seen as a sign of weakness. In the same way, women rarely use directives and imperatives to demonstrate their power, and they are generally softened. Similarly, males often interrupt and dominate the debate, demonstrating their authority by controlling the subject. Women, on the other hand, ask

more questions to ensure that the discussion goes smoothly and to make sure that their listeners are actively listening to them (Zhao, 2010, p.41). However, it is not easy to make a distinction between class and social standing.

Holmes (2013) stated that men from the working class often engage in informal conversations using nonstandard forms, while women from the middle-class use more conventional forms. Males, however, usually use non-standard forms all the time, while women almost never do. Although they vary in various areas of the social order, those discrepancies are not real. They are mostly found in the lowest, medium, and upper working classes. (P.170).

2.2.1. Deborah Tannen's Theory of Gender (1990)

Deborah Tannen is one of Robin Lakoff's students. Tannen is an American author and a professor of linguistics. She wrote thirteen books, including *You Just Don't Understand* (1990). In her book, Tannen focused in the language between men and women by exploring different conversational styles that could be included in six different opposing points that aim for a deeper understanding of the text and reveal the traits of each gender as follows:

1. Status Vs. Support

According to Tannen (1990), every discussion between men is a competitive one, either to gain an advantage or to prevent others from bullying them. Conversely, women commonly use the conversation to express support and affirmation. The purpose of communication for men is to earn and defend status, while communication for women is to build relationships of support and consensus.

2. Independence vs. Intimacy

According to Tannen's difference theory (1990), males choose independence over intimacy. In other words, Tannen uses the example of a husband making a decision without consulting his wife. The reason he does so, she believes, is to avoid feeling as if he has lost his independence if he were to say, *Let me consult with my wife first*. Women, on the other hand, want to show that they need to consult with their spouse, as that is a sign of their closeness.

3. Advice vs. Understanding

Women want sympathy and compassion for their issues and they show understanding, whereas males seek a solution for their issues. In other words, "To many men, a complaint is a challenge to come up with a solution. But often women are looking for emotional support, not solutions" (Juniana, 2011)

4. Information vs. Feelings

According to Tannen (1990), men's discourse is message-oriented, or focuses on transmitting information. Conversation is far more significant for women in terms of developing connections and sustaining social bonds. Juniana (2011) also summarized the differences or report talk between males and females. Women talk too much, speak in private contexts, overlap, and speak symmetrically. However, men tend to get more air time, speak in public, speak once at a time, and speak asymmetrically.

5. Orders vs. Proposals

Direct imperatives are frequently used by men in communication as *close the door*, and *turn on the light*. It is commonly believed that women encourage the use of super polite forms. For

example, *let's*, and *would you mind if...?*. Additionally, women frequently suggest doing things indirectly. For instance, *why don't we?* or *wouldn't it be nice if...* .

6. Conflict vs. Compromise

To maintain positive rapport and connection, Tannen argues that women tend to avoid language conflicts at all costs. Men, on the other hand, are more willing to engage in conflict to settle disagreements and so negotiate status.

2.2.2 Robin Lakoff's Theory of Gender (1975)

Robin Lakoff 's most notable work was on the issue of women's language; she felt that women's speech may be identified by specific characteristics. Lakoff is one of the first professional linguists to investigate the social consequences of gender disparities in speech usage. In her book *Language and Women's Place*, she examines the relationships between language, gender, and power, questioning who has power and how they utilize it. Lakoff (1975) contended that language is crucial to gender inequality and that it might contribute to women's lack of power. According to Lakoff, women usually have the following language traits:

1. Lexical hedges and fillers

Lexical Hedges and fillers are used as a trait according to Lakoff (1975) to analyze females' speech in order to show a distinctive trait compared to males. In addition, hedges are usually used to express uncertainty (Ibkar, 2018). For example, *I think*, *I suppose*, *I feel*, and *I don't know* are subjective phrases that are used to give personal opinions and used to determine whether the speaker is certain or not.

2. Tag questions

Tag questions are questions used at the end of a sentence in order to ask for agreement, new information, or ask for new things and favors (Lukácsi, 2009). For example, in the sentence *Your father is a doctor, isn't he?* the tag question “*isn't he*”, is produced to ask for agreement for it is a negation form of a question while using the positive form shows that the speaker wants new information. In other words, Lakoff (1975) proposed that women use tag questions in a positive response to wait for confirmation from the other speaker.

1a: It is going to rain.

1b: It is going to rain, isn't it? (My own example)

Four of the sixteen sentences that Siegler and Siegler (1976) gave the class were statements with tag questions like (1b). The students were asked to determine whether a male or a woman initially created each sentence after being informed that they were taken from talks between college students. The findings of this experiment reinforced Lakoff's theory: sentences with tag questions were more frequently ascribed to women than the sentences with forceful statements, such as (1a). However, it does not fully approve the women use more tag questions.

3. Rising intonation on declaratives

Rising intonation on declaratives is the use of a high-rising tone at the end of a sentence (Eckert and Ginet, 2003, p.173). This trait has a main function which is expressing uncertainty (Lakoff, 2004, p.77). When women are uncertain, they use a rising tone to make sure that the intended message is conveyed. For example,

2a: Where do you want to go?

2b: Hmm,, to the beach,,? (My own example)

Although (2a) is offering (2b) a chance to decide for a place to go, (2b) shows a kind of uncertainty (Lai, 2010) since it attempts to make sure of the accuracy of the information and the acceptance of (2a). It is important to mention that this trait will not be explored in this study since the researcher will not focus on supra-segmental or prosodic features during the analysis of data.

4. Empty adjectives

Empty adjectives are adjectives that seem devoid of all but a vague positive emotive sense, and they are usually used to amplify or exaggerate something and have no particular meaning (Lakoff, 1973). Words such as *sweet*, *divine*, *charming*, and *cute* don't show any particular meaning but are only used to show exaggerations and vagueness. This trait is not only female preserve, but also males as well.

5. Precise color terms

The color terms *magenta*, *lavender*, and *mauve* are not fundamental colors; their meanings derive and reinforce the subordinate position of women. In other words, Lakoff (1973) stated that due to the fact that women are not expected to make critical decisions, such as what job to hold, they are relegated to non-crucial decisions as a compromise.

6. Intensifiers

According to Cambridge Dictionary, a modifier or an intensifier is an adverb that emphasizes and exaggerates the meaning of another expression. The most common intensifiers that we use are *absolutely*, *completely*, *extremely*, *highly*, *rather*, *really*, *too*, *totally*, *utterly*, and *very*. However, Lakoff (1973) claims that women use intensifiers more than men.

7. Hypercorrect grammar

It is a text or speech that was incorrectly corrected in an effort to avoid non-standard pronunciation or grammar (Holmes, 2013); using it shows and reveals the class of people. For example, between *you and I* is a hypercorrection of *between you and me*. In other words, women use their language to show their higher social status and hypercorrect grammar is the result of their mistakes when they want to show superiority.

8. Super polite forms

According to Lakoff (1973), women's speech generally sounds more polite than men. Politeness includes the following: leaving a decision open, not introducing your views, or claims to anyone else. To elaborate, women's language is polite and provides the idea that women are weaker and less assured than men, therefore, justifying women's low position and men's treatment of women. To support, Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that polite forms are used when a speaker wants to be indirect in a conversation and remain anonymous. It includes using hedges, challenging arguments, and disagreeing with a given opinion.

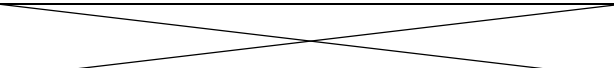
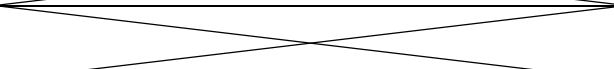
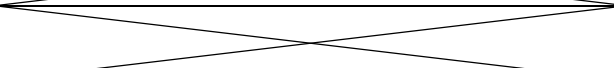
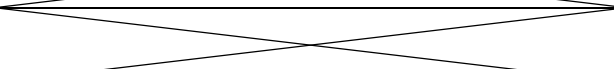
9. Avoidance of using strong swear words

Swear words are used for number of reasons, including expressing anger, provoking laughter, insulting someone, or strengthening or exaggerating a statement. Most women, however, avoid using swear words. In support of this, Gati (2015) stated that women swear less than men but more when they are with their own gender. In contrast, men's conversations and dialogues include more swear words than women. In conclusion, women's linguistic traits seem to be more polite, and prestigious, while men are the opposite.

10. Emphatic stress

According to Opeifa (2018), emphatic stress can be used to support comparisons, connections, or clarifications. When emphatic stress is used, it is usually used to emphasize the word that the speaker thinks is the most important, and in this case, it might even be a function word. The stressed words are usually referred to with capitalization. For example, *last week's football match was very EXCITING!*

Table 1: A comparison between Lakoff's (1975) and Tannen's (1990) theories of gender language traits speech.

| Robin Lakoff's Theory of Gender | Deborah Tannen's Difference Model Theory |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Lexical Hedges and Fillers | Status Vs Support |
| Tag Questions | Independence Vs Intimacy |
| Rising Intonations on Declaratives | Advice Vs Understanding |
| Empty Adjectives | Information Vs Feelings |
| Precise Color Terms | Orders Vs Proposals |
| Intensifiers | Conflict Vs Compromise |
| Hypercorrect Grammar |  |
| Super Polite Forms |  |
| Avoidance of Using Strong Swear Words |  |
| Emphatic Stress |  |

2.3. About the Novel

Charles Dickens is one of the most famous writers in the world. His novels are still read and loved by many people. One of his most famous novels is *Hard Times*. It was published in 1854 and it tells the story of a man named Thomas Gradgrind who lives during the industrial revolution. The novel is set in Coketown, a fictional town based on Manchester, England. The industrial revolution has just started and it has brought many changes to society, including new jobs for women.

The industrial revolution had a profound impact on society, including the way women were treated. The shift from relying on subsistence farming to manufacturing jobs increased women's participation in the workforce and helped shape gender roles. The industrial revolution also brought about the onset of capitalism, which changed the way business was conducted and affected women's lives in a variety of ways. Industrialization had many impacts on society, including the way women were treated. Women are now working as factory workers or teachers but they are not treated equally to men because they don't have any rights or power over their own lives.

Mr. Thomas Gradgrind is a main character in Charles Dickens' novel *Hard Times*. He is the headmaster of Coketown's Union School and a proponent of utilitarianism. Mr. Gradgrind is portrayed as an unsympathetic, strict, and humorless man who believes that education should be used to teach facts and promote industrialism for it is believed that "Education gives the male characters a prestigious position inside the community and among their comrades" (Eshreteh & Al-Qeeq, 2023). He has no patience for imaginative literature or any other subject that is not related to practical matters. Mr. Gradgrind, guidelines his own circle of relatives and his faculty in keeping with Utilitarianism, the philosophy of the time, which has as its intention the finest viable happiness for the finest viable range of people.

Bounderby is a major figure in *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens. He is a rich, self-made man who is also the antagonist of the novel. Bounderby's relevance to the novel is his eagerness to make money and be successful. He sees himself as superior because of his wealth and power, which he uses to oppress other people. Regardless of his social status, Bounderby would never let go to his power or wealth. Bounderby's business of buying and selling horses is based on the idea that he can control them better than their true owners. Stephen Blackpool is one of many other Bounderby's workers. He is a hard-running man and has many existing obstacles. To illustrate, he has an alcoholic spouse who left him, however, he can't divorce her. On the alternative hand, he loves Rachel. After a strike broke out, Blackpool wasn't inclined to sign up for the exchange union and he became fired. Tom Gradgrind begins working in Bounderby's bank.

Bounderby's housekeeper Mrs. Sparsit is jealous. However, Louisa's marriage is unhappy, and James Harthouse, a politician, attempts to seduce her, and then they are separated after a while. However, Bounderby's bank is robbed by Tom, and Blackpool is suspected; however, Gradgrind came to realization that Tom has robbed the bank. Eventually, Tom dies, and Mr. Gradgrind lives old rejecting his ideas on Facts, but now he believes in Hope and Faith.

2.4. Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution first began in Britain in the 18th century and took place throughout the centuries that followed. The Industrial Revolution led to many changes in the social structure, the role of women, and the appearance of the capitalist system. Froide (2018) claimed that before the Industrial Revolution, males were dominant, but life after the Industrial Revolution has changed in terms of women's roles. Women can express themselves due to the power of money and work as such as men in factories or Textile mills as represented in *Hard Times*.

The evolution of the industrial system concentrated labor in a single area, resulting in an increase in labor specialization. As a result, new social classes emerged, such as the middle and industrial working classes. Abuzahra and Imraish (2017) claim that “British society, turned to move around power, money and nothing else.” And according to Petry (2017), the industrial revolution gave the high-class people the space to exploit the low-class people. So, in examining Bounderby's character, we can infer that Dickens attributes Bounderby's mistreatment to his workers to the industrial revolution which allowed the high-class people to behave the way they like with people of low-class.

Moreover, as a result of industrialization, family relationships, gender roles, and demography altered. According to August (2009) on a review of Burnette's (2008) *Gender, work and wages in industrial revolution Britain*, the industrial revolution resulted in the domestication of women, as they migrated to professions in different domains, and women were expected to nurture children. Women acquired increased freedoms and eventually suffrage when they began working in factories and interacting with revolutionaries in the early 19th century.

2.5 Women in the Victorian Era

According to Barker (2017), women were considered as belonging to the domestic sphere in the Victorian era, at least by the middle classes, and this stereotype required them to create a clean home for their husbands, to put food on the table, and to take care of their children. Barker (2017) also suggested that women's rights were severely restricted during this time period, with women losing ownership of their salaries. When a Victorian man and woman married, the lady's rights were legally transferred to her spouse. The married pair became one entity under the law, represented by the husband, giving him power over all property, wages, and money

According to Rajput (2019) the Victorian era “is a male-dominated society“. In other words, Victorian ladies became property to their husbands and marriage eliminated a woman's right to agree to any emotional or sensual relations with her husband. To support, Stephen Blackpool family in *Hard Times* represents the working-class. Stephen is one of the Hands in Bounderby’s factories that illustrates the proletarian type of people. However, women's rights organizations battled for equality and gradually gained rights and benefits. In the mid and late of the era women were able to work, vote, and support their family as an active member of the society. As a consequence, Stephen Blackpool seems to be struggling with his life as a “Hand” which eventually turns his beloved wife into a bedridden, alcoholic wife due to the monotonous life. To support, Mukanzi and Senaji (2017) stated that if the work and family roles are not given appropriate attention, conflict between them can lead to higher workplace clashes, which can in turn cause low employee morale and limits in work productivity.

Women were also believed that they should stay at home and learn “accomplishments” (P.12) at home. However, there were reforms, unions, and religious institutions that helped women to expand their chances of learning in the mid of the era, and as a result, other private schools were established to teach different social classes for the sake of money. To support, one great example is shown in *Hard Times* is Mr. Thomas Gradgrind and his fascination with teaching facts over imagination or creative activities. The school system was designed to teach children facts and skills that would be useful in their future careers. The curriculum was very strict, with no time for play or creativity.

This is all reflected in Mr. Gradgrind’s private school and the material he imposes on the children. Mr. Gradgrind exclaimed that “*In this life, we want nothing but Facts,*” (P.2). This educational system was implied in the private school and Mrs. Gradgrind’s home- Stone Lodge-

with his two children, Tom, and Louisa Gradgrind. These two places depict only hard facts at the expense of compassion, love, and imagination or creativity. As an illustration, the eternal atmosphere in the family is cold, emotionless, and compassionless. Mrs. Gradgrind tells her children to study their “ologies” (P.228). This embodies the mechanized and monotonous life they are living through which, upward mobility is reflected on Luisa Gradgrind. She wants to play, have fun, and to be more of a creative person rather than just be restricted to facts.

2.6 Previous Studies

Several studies have been conducted with regards to gender linguistic traits. These studies shed the light on the linguistic theories, examined their traits, and demonstrate their functions. In this section, previous gender-related theories are going to be presented, summarized, and linked to the current study.

Putri, Adam, and Hafsa (2021) examined women's language traits in the novel *Love Rosie* to demonstrate the roles of these traits. It also sought to determine which female linguistic trait, according to Lakoff's theory, promotes communication style. The research method is qualitative, which implies that the researcher gathered data through reading and analyzing the novel's script. The novel under consideration was chosen because it is about how women deal with significant and common feminine problems, how they are treated, and how they can react to the society. The most noteworthy findings revealed that the novel implies eight aspects of Lakoff's theory. Super polite forms, tag inquiries, and empty adjectives were the most often occurring traits.

Tayefi (2021) showed the differences between female and male language speech in novels. *Nights of Tehran* was used as reference to be applied for gender theories. Female and male language (speech) in grammar was examined in terms of the following variations: swear words, color terms, and sentences, including modifiers. The findings show that the author's gender has

influenced the language, and assumptions of feminine language appear more frequently in these works. In some instances, there is no correlation between language and gender, particularly in female characters. However, the paper showed that the writer's intention and his perception of gender (in)equality plays a huge role in presenting female characters who were shown as against the patriarchal society.

Mahalleh and Ansari (2018) in a paper titled "Reflection of gender in the feminine and masculine styles of speech in the eyes of Robin Lakoff", carried out an analysis of the ways in which gender is reflected in language use, specifically in the feminine and masculine styles of speech. The authors begin by summarizing Lakoff's theory, which argues that women's language use is characterized by certain features such as hedging, tag questions, and politeness markers, while men's language use is more direct and assertive.

The authors then examine a sample of language use from both men and women in order to identify whether Lakoff's observations hold true. Their analysis reveals that, in general, women do use more hedging and politeness markers than men, and that men are more likely to use direct and assertive language. However, the authors also note that there is significant variation in language use among both men and women, and that not all women use feminine speech styles, nor do all men use masculine speech styles.

Overall, the paper provides support for Lakoff's theory that gender is reflected in language use, but also highlights the importance of recognizing the diversity of language use among individuals of all genders. The authors suggest that future research should focus on exploring the social and cultural factors that shape language use, as well as the ways in which language use can be used to challenge or reinforce gender stereotypes.

Based on Lakoff's theory (1975), Priska, Candra, and Utami (2020) detected female language traits in the film *The Fault in Our Stars*. The study used the mixed-method approach. The study's most noteworthy findings were that the female lead character utilized nine out of ten categories of women's linguistic traits. The results demonstrate that intensifiers were the predominate type of female language characteristics used in this film because the female main character was a stereotypically feminine girl who constantly attempted to communicate her emotion or feeling to the listeners through a sentence.

Svendsen's (2019) article is a critical evaluation of the empirical evidence for the thesis put forth by Robin Lakoff in her book "*Language and Woman's Place*." Lakoff's thesis suggests that women use language differently from men as a result of their socialization and that this contributes to their subordinate position in society. Svendsen reviews several studies that support Lakoff's thesis and concludes that there is some evidence to suggest that women's language does exhibit certain features such as hedging, tag questions, and indirectness. However, the author also notes that these features are not unique to women's language and that men also use them.

Additionally, Svendsen criticized some of the studies that support Lakoff's theory, arguing that they suffer from methodological limitations and may not accurately reflect how women use language in real-life situations. Overall, the author concludes that while there is some evidence to support Lakoff's thesis, it is not conclusive and that further research is needed to fully understand the complexities of gender and language use. The paper provides a useful overview of the debate surrounding Lakoff's thesis and highlights the need for more nuanced approaches to studying language and gender.

The purpose of Tanaka's (2009) research is to investigate the communicative tactics used by Japanese men and females in gender-mixed formal encounters. It includes quantitative and

qualitative examinations of broadcast conversations. Female and male hosts use polite methods, but female guests are more assertive than male guests, according to quantitative findings. However, the qualitative findings show a much more complicated image, with both male and female individuals employing domineering and cooperative tactics. Most significantly, the quantitative analysis shows that communicative strategies are multi-functional, and thus linguistic, pragmatic, or turn-sequential expressions do not always correlate to a specific attitude.

Ibkar (2018) revealed the characteristics of female written speech in social media comparing them to male speech characteristics with the application of Lakoff's theory of gender. The data were collected using purposive sampling and the participatory-observation method. The research showed that the conversation boundaries between males and females in the online world are different from real life conversations. Although the study applied Lakoff's theory, the results did not fully advocate Lakoff's (1973) theory of gender. Males use hedges, empty adjectives as females in social media conversations. As a matter of fact, mixed group genders may affect the way of conversation between both genders besides the method of conversation which is not fully applicable to Lakoff's (1975) theory of gender.

Nemati (2017) studied gender differences through the application of Lakoff's (1973) theory of gender and the use of linguistic forms in the speech of both genders. In other words, the aim of the research was to determine if men and women differ in their use of intensifiers, hedges, and tags in English and Persian. To maintain the validity of the study, 6 random English and 8 Persian film scripts were collected, taking into consideration Lakoff's theory of gender (1973) and its linguistic traits produced by women. However, the findings of the study show that some of the features do not fully confirm to Lakoff's theory at least in three traits; the use of intensifiers, lexical hedges and tag questions.

Jan (2017) discussed the theories of gender and power differences. The researcher used a qualitative method of research; he collected data from previous studies (Tannen, 1990; Coates, 1986; Uchida, 1992) and others. According to all of the studies conducted in a variety of contexts, male speakers generated more competitive features than female speakers, while female speakers generated more attractive features. The female speakers displayed more cooperative traits. According to these findings, women and men have measurable differences in the ways in which they speak in certain situations, with women's speech being more cooperative than men. To add, they tend to use them differently for different purposes to show their social status and other goals.

Edward and Hamilton (2004) explored and empirically tests the model of gender and communication proposed by Deborah Tannen. Tannen's model suggests that men and women have distinct communication styles rooted in their respective gender roles. The authors conducted a study to examine whether Tannen's model holds true in a real-world context. They collected data through surveys and interviews from a diverse sample of participants, comprised of both men and women. The participants were asked questions about their communication preferences, strategies, and perceptions of gender roles. After analyzing the collected data, the authors found mixed results regarding the validity of Tannen's model. While they observe some differences in communication styles between men and women, these differences do not consistently align with Tannen's proposed model. The authors noted that individual variation, context, and other factors may influence communication patterns more significantly than gender alone.

Zimmerman and West (1975) explored the dynamics of conversation, particularly focusing on the role of interruptions and silences and how they relate to gender. The study examined the patterns and frequencies of interruptions in conversations between men and women, aiming to shed light on the power dynamics and social expectations within these interactions. The results

showed that men tend to interrupt women more often than they interrupt other men, suggesting a potential dominance or power assertion. On the other hand, women were interrupted more frequently and tend to experience longer interruptions compared to men. These findings suggest a gender-based imbalance in conversational dynamics.

Herring (2015) in his paper entitled, *Teens, Gender, and Self-Presentation in Social Media*, examined how teenage boys and girls use social media. According to the findings, teenage boys and young adults spend most of their time on social media than adults. Teenage girls, on the other hand, spend more time using social media than teenagers in general. This study gathered data from several articles and journals. In the study, Herring compared and contrasted the uses of social media between boys and girls. Almost everything is included in the results, including pictures posted and words used by both genders.

The purpose of this study was to examine what items are common among teenage boys and girls to differentiate them. According to the study, young females have a higher incidence of using emoticons in social media. While men are more likely to use explicit language than women. However, men tend to use stronger swear words, which is indicative of their gender roles.

Conclusion

From the previous studies, it is clear that linguistic analysis of a literary work is crucial for improving our comprehension of people from diverse cultures and different intervals. By addressing the summarized related studies, the most crucial finding is that each character shows a particular trait although men and women might share the same traits.

However, the researcher found that some of the previous studies do not fully confirm to Lakoff's theory of gender (1975). For example, Ansari (2020) and Ibkar (2018) revealed in

common that the use of lexical hedges and empty adjectives in men's speeches is similar to women's language. In addition, Nematı (2017) claimed that males used intensifiers, lexical hedges, and tag questions equally as women do. These studies conclude that there is a gap in this area of research which weakens Robin Lakoff's claims of gender language traits and inequality in their language. Thus, Lakoff's theory was applied and explored in *Hard Times*.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher describes the approach undertaken to investigate the research questions and achieve the research objectives. This section also presents the methodology employed to address these research objectives, participants, data collection procedures, and analytical techniques utilized in this study.

3.2 The Study Questions

This paper will answer the following questions:

1. What are the most common language traits of female and male main characters in *Hard Times* based on Lakoff's (1957) theory of gender?
2. How is gender (in)equality presented in *Hard Times*?

3.3 Hypotheses

1. The analysis of the language traits of the two main female and male characters in the novel will reveal significant differences in their communication patterns.
2. The analysis of characters' speeches in the novel will uncover evidence of gender inequality, manifested through variations in language use and communication styles.

3.4. Participants

The participants are from the novel *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens. The researcher chose two main female and two male characters for their importance in shaping the course of the novel as well as they represent the typical intended characters of the Victorian era as follows:

3.4.1. Mr. Thomas Gradgrind

The first character to encounter in *Hard Times* is Thomas Gradgrind; he is one of the primary protagonists through whom Dickens constructs a network of highly interrelated plotlines and characters. Dickens introduces us to this man by describing his most distinguishing features: his robotic, monotonous and attitude. Mr. Gradgrind's speech to a gathering of young pupils is described in the novel's opening scene, and it is fitting that Gradgrind physically symbolizes harsh truths that he tries to put into his students' minds. Gradgrind's "square coat, square legs, square shoulders,"(Ch.1, p.22) as the narrator points out, all reflect Gradgrind's intense rigidity.

Mr. Gradgrind's philosophy of believing in facts and self-interest has brought him a financial and social success. On the social aspect, he receives a high gratitude from people he knows; in addition, he becomes a member of the Parliament. Furthermore, Petry (2017) argues that Gradgrind believes that children must be taught to cast out speculation and creativity and that they must focus only on logic, facts, and statistics. Moreover, Gradgrind's rigid philosophy made him criticize whatever that relates to fables and fairy tales (Tomaiuolo, 2015).

3.4.2 Mr. Josiah Bounderby

Despite being Mr. Gradgrind's greatest friend, Josiah Bounderby seems to be more concerned with money and power than with truth. He is "usually explicit and plain in his assertions" (Tomaiuolo, 2015). Bounderby's arrogance is exemplified by his oft-repeated remark, "*I am Josiah Bounderby of Coketown*" (Ch.16) This phrase often precedes the account of Bounderby's childhood poverty and hardship. The mentality of Bounderby exemplifies the societal changes brought on by industrialization and capitalism. Dickens argues that Bounderby, the capitalist, uses his money and authority recklessly.

3.4.3. Cecelia Jube (Sissy)

Cecilia (Sissy) Jupe is a circus girl in Sleary's circus and a pupil in Thomas Gradgrind's rigorous classroom. Sissy holds her own set of beliefs and views. (Tomaiuolo, 2015). Sissy is the figure that teaches the Gradgrinds how to live at the end of the novel, when their philosophy of rigorously sticking entirely to facts fails. Sissy Jupe is presented for the first time as Girl Number Twenty in Gradgrind's classroom. She is viewed as unworthy of the institution since she has difficulty keeping up with Gradgrind's severe focus on repetition of facts.

Sissy also represents creativity due to her circus experience, something that Gradgrind children were not permitted to participate in. Mr. Gradgrind went to Sissy's father to notify him that she would no longer be attending his school, at the request of Josiah Bounderby. Sissy, the novel's sense of imagination and fantasy, also acts as the voice of reason. She is unable to understand Gradgrind's ideology since she has a more realistic sense of the way the world should be regarded. Sissy is the one Louisa and Mr. Gradgrind turn to when they realize their way of life is no longer working; she takes care of Louisa and helps her enjoy a new, happy life.

3.4.4. Louisa Gradgrind

Although Louisa is the novel's main female character, she stands apart from the other women, especially, Sissy and Rachael. While the other two reflect the Victorian image of compassion and sensitivity, School has prevented Louisa from acquiring these characteristics. Instead, Louisa is silent, cold, and emotionless. However, Dickens may not be saying that Louisa is truly emotionless, but rather that she lacks the ability to perceive and express her feelings.

According to Makhloof (2020), many critics claim that Louisa struggles between two forces, the factual and the fancy worlds. Furthermore, Louisa shows great potential in trying to

express her thoughts under Sissy's guidance. Similarly, Louisa learns to respond compassionately to pain via her friendship with Rachael and Stephen.

3.5 Robin Lakoff's Theory of Gender (1975)

According to previous studies, huge amount of research papers and linguistic studies used Lakoff's (1975) theory of gender for it is considered as the cornerstone for analysis and comparison. Here, the researcher is going to apply Lakoff's (1975) theory of gender on Dickens' *Hard Times*. Moreover, the speech production and their functions will be clarified. Throughout the last part of the analysis, the researcher is going to find the most common traits used by the four main characters on one hand, and if there is gender inequality between males and females.

3.6 Method

This study follows the mixed-method research. The collected data are from Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* which represents the Victorian and industrial revolution era and its impact on social status. The researcher has deeply read the novel and elicited quotations from two main female and two male characters that concern the theme of gender inequality among other characters and put them on an Excel (2019) sheet then calculated the number of traits occurred. These speeches will be analyzed through the application of Robin Lakoff's (1975) theory of gender.

3.7 Conclusion

In this section of the thesis, the study questions, hypotheses, and participants are presented. The study aims to answer three main questions related to the language traits of female and male main characters and the presentation of gender inequality in Charles Dickens' novel, *Hard Times*. The hypotheses propose that significant differences in communication patterns will be revealed among the main characters, and evidence of gender inequality will be found through variations in

language use and communication styles. The participants include Mr. Thomas Gradgrind, Mr. Josiah Bounderby, Cecelia Jube (Sissy), and Louisa Gradgrind, each characterized with their unique attributes and roles in the novel. The methodology employed is a mixed-method research, utilizing data collected from *Hard Times* and analyzing speeches of the main characters based on Robin Lakoff's (1975) theory of gender.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

In this chapter, Lakoff's (1975) theory of gender and language is applied on both male and female main characters in Dickens *Hard Times*. The speech of the four main characters is analyzed alongside with the demonstration of the linguistic traits that occurred in order to answer the research questions; hence, this chapter will be divided into eight sub-sections, each sub-section presents the language traits of Lakoff's theory of gender by pointing out the used traits that distinct female and male speakers from the novel, Louisa Gradgrind, Cecelia Jupe -Sissy-, Mr. Gradgrind, and Mr. Bounderby (See Table 1).

4.1 Fillers and Lexical Hedges

Lexical Hedges and fillers are used as a trait according to Lakoff (1975) to analyze females' speech in order to show a distinctive trait compared to males. The functions of lexical hedges and fillers are expressing uncertainty and vagueness. They are known as hesitation markers (Ibkar, 2018). According to the analysis, the researcher found that women overuse lexical hedges and fillers than men for the female characters introduce an element of caution and flexibility into the conversation.

4.1.1 Louisa Gradgrind

Mrs. Gradgrind's loving daughter, Louisa, falls victim to Mr. Gradgrind's educational system and to her father's manipulative behavior. As a first step, Gradgrind undermines her future by depriving her of the right kind of education. Secondly, he destroys her life by marrying her off to the old industrialist, Bounderby. Despite her emotional breakdown, she finds it impossible to lead a balanced life again. A dramatic change in a relationship could lead to the emotional breakdown (Opeifa, 2017).

Throughout the novel, Louisa shows how frustrated and oppressed she is in her life due to the constant exposure of her father's concept of facts and the undesirable marriage she is going through which represents Lakoff's gender deficit theory features.

The use of lexical hedges and fillers show uncertainty and lack of confidence according to Lakoff (1973). The researcher found (14) utterances that include lexical hedges and fillers. The most two repetitive forms of lexical hedges produced by Louisa are, "*I think*" and "*I don't know*".

Example (1):

"I was tired, father. I have been tired a long time," said Louisa.

"Tired? Of what?" asked the astonished father.

"I don't know of what - of everything, I think." (Book 1, ch.3, p.14)

Unintentionally, Mr. Gradgrind walks by the circus and sees his children Thomas and Louisa playing. He was shocked for this behavior is against his mentality of sticking to facts and going to his school to study since the circus is fun and creative. So, he starts yelling at them. As a result, Louisa responds to her father of how tired she is of such rigid mentality.

Louisa seems to face difficulty in expressing her feelings and emotions towards her father and his rigid monotonous mentality. After asking her of what she is tired of, she resorts to reply with vagueness and uncertainty, not only once but twice.

Example (2):

"He fell into suspicion," said Louisa, 'with his fellow-weavers, because - he had made a promise not to be one of them. I think it must have been to you that he made that promise. Might I ask you why he made it?" (Book 2, ch.6, p.181)

Rachel and Louisa are talking about the decision that her husband -Stephan- of not joining the reunion with the other fellows, but it is obvious that Rachel was the drive force of such a decision. She told him not join the reunion. However, during their chat, Louisa, again, uses another filler to show interest but with uncertainty.

Example (3):

Louisa: "Tell me some of your mistakes."

"I am almost ashamed," said Sissy, with reluctance.

"But to-day, for instance, Mr. M'Choakumchild was explaining to us about Natural Prosperity."

*"National, **I think** it must have been," observed Louisa. (Book 1, ch.9, p.64)*

Here, Cecelia Jupe -Sissy- is confessing to Louisa of how she is not as smart as her, giving an example of her own. It seems that Sissy heard the word "*Natural*" instead of "*National*" when Mr. M'Choakumchild asked the question. However, Louisa replies to her with the filler "***I think***" to release the tension of the scenario that Sissy has been put in.

Example (4):

*"I am coming to it. Father, chance then threw into my way a new acquaintance; a man such as I had had no experience of; used to the world; light, polished, easy; making no pretences; avowing the low estimate of everything, that I was half afraid to form in secret; conveying to me almost immediately, though **I don't know how** or by what degrees, that he understood me, and read my thoughts. I could not find that he was worse than I,, But **if you ask me** whether I have loved him, or do love him, I tell you plainly, father, that it may be so. **I don't know**,, This night, my husband being away, he has been with me, declaring himself my lover. This minute he expects me, for I could release myself of his presence by no other means. **I do not know** that I am sorry, **I do not know** that I am ashamed, **I do not know** that I am degraded in my own esteem. All that I know is, your philosophy and your teaching will not save me. Now, father, you have brought me to this. Save me by some other means!" (Book 2, ch.12, p.249-250)*

Louisa finally faces her father off and confronts him about how she has been raised in a monotonous way. In addition, she tells him about how she feels comfortable with Mr. Harthouse and the chemistry between them in comparison with Mr. Bounderby. They decided to meet and flee. However, Mr. Harthouse is a freeloader, and Louisa doesn't feel safe anymore, so she tells her father about the plan of running off and how she feels about him and herself.

Louisa overused ***"I do not know"*** while she was talking to her father. It was mentioned (5) times. She doesn't know who she is anymore or what she wants. Does she love Mr. Harthouse? Does she make the right or the wrong vital decisions of her life? In other words, Louisa is hesitant and does not know who to blame and she is uncertain about her life decisions, too. She jumps between blaming her father for everything and then asserting that not all of her issues are his responsibility.

Another lexical hedge is the use of ***"If"***. It has been mentioned by her (3) times. To illustrate, a conversation between Tom and Louisa was conducted as follows:

Example (5):

*Louisa: "Tom, have you anything to tell me? **If ever you loved me in your life**, and have anything concealed from every one besides, tell it to me."*

Tom: "I don't know what you mean, Loo. You have been dreaming."

*Louisa: "Is there nothing you can tell me **if you will**? You can tell me nothing that will change me. O' Tom, tell me the truth!" (Book 2, ch.8, p.216)*

After the bank has been robbed, Mr. Bounderby suspects Stephan Blackpool of such an action; however, it is Tom who has robbed the bank. Louisa seems to know for sure that the robber is her brother so she enters his room and starts talking if he knows anything about the robbery.

According to Lakoff's theory (1975), the use of "if" as a lexical hedge also indicates women's hesitancy. Louisa used them in different situations. From example (5), "if you will" and "if you ever loved me", she is asking him to say what is in his mind in a mannered way; she does not want to force him. This indicates how women feel inferior to men, too. Finally, Louisa used two lexical hedges to seek confirmation.

Example (6):

*"Ought I to say, after what has happened," said his sister, standing by the bed - she had gradually withdrawn herself and risen, "that I made that visit? **Should I say so? Must I say so?**"*

"Good Heavens, Loo," returned her brother, "you are not in the habit of asking my advice. say what you like. If you keep it to yourself, I shall keep it to myself. If you disclose it, there's an end of it." (Book 2, ch.8, p.218-219)

As the two brothers keep up the conversation about the robbed bank, Tom goes to bed and Louisa ends the conversation asking for confirmation. She is obviously asking for permission from her brother. On the contrary, Tom is very confident and tells her to do what pleases her. This demonstrates the two opposing extremes of thinking.

Table 2: Fillers and lexical hedges by Louisa Gradgrind

| | Fillers and lexical hedges | Number of occurrences | Linguistical function |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Louisa Gradgrind | I think | 4 | Uncertainty and hesitation |
| | I do not know | 5 | |
| | Modal verbs (should, must) | 2 | |
| | If (clause) | 3 | |

4.1.2 Cecelia Jupe – Sissy

Cecelia Jupe or Sissy is another main female character presented in the novel. She acts and behaves as an opposing force of Mr. Gradgrind's philosophy of sticking to only facts. However, she is a creative innocent girl who lives with her father. Unfortunately, her father abandons her when he felt that he can't afford a good living for her. Hence, Mr. Gradgrind accepts her in his monotonous school. Sissy Jupe used the same traits that Louisa used. The most common and featured utterances between both were "*I don't know*", "*I think*", and the use of "*If,,,*", too. To further illustrate, the researcher found that Sissy used "*I don't know*" twice in the following contexts:

Example (7):

*"Father must have gone down to the Booth, sir. **I don't know** why he should go there, but he must be there; I'll bring him in a minute!" She was gone directly, without her bonnet; with her long, dark, childish hair streaming behind her.*" (Book 1, ch.6, p.32)

Sissy notices her father is not in his room at the Pegasus Arms. She abandons Bounderby and Gradgrind as she searches for him. In this scene, Sissy does not seem to know where her father is, which indicates the insignificant role of Sissy with her father. She is clueless of what is her father doing. To add, Dickens described her state and her apprehensive behavior when she went to look for her father in as she is lost. She certainly does not know what to do or what is going on.

Example (8):

*"Where can I go? I have very little money, and **I don't know** who will hide me!"* (Book 3, ch.7, p.316)

Sissy informs Gradgrind that she is attempting to free Tom from prison. She's hiding him at the circus with Mr. Sleary until he can be sent overseas to another country. Although Sissy went

through a lot, she is not able to take a clear decision of her own. She is hesitant, too, as she asks herself where to go. However, after the hesitation, she takes her decision and hide in the circus with Tom.

Another lexical hedge used by Sissy is “**if,**,”. She mentioned it (3) times.

Example (9):

*“I would be something to you, **if I might.**” said Sissy.*

*“What?” said Louisa, almost sternly. “Whatever you want most, **if I could be that.** At all events, I would like to try to be as near it as I can” (Book 3, ch.1, p.256)*

Example (10):

*“**If I do not understand** - and I do not, sir” - said Sissy, “what your honour as a gentleman binds you to, in other matters:” the blood really rose in his face as she began in these words: “I am sure I may rely upon it to keep my visit secret, and to keep secret what I am going to say. I will rely upon it, if you will tell me I may so far trust – “(Book 3, ch.2, p.262)*

The first excerpt, **example (9)**, happens when Sissy visits Louisa and suggests that they renew their old friendship. Initially, Louisa is cold and detached to this concept. But then, Louisa remembers that they got each other’s back when they were kids. While the other one happens between Sissy and Harthouse, they are talking about Harthouse and Louisa’s relationship and the fact that Harthouse can’t deal with the guilt that he feels for he is depersonalizing Louisa in the relationship; hence, he is ending the relationship with her. However, Sissy tells him to leave the town and he asks her to keep the visit that he made as a secret.

Analytically, Sissy used “*if*” in two different situations with two different genders. Despite women usually feel free to talk to each other and feel less constrained, Sissy in the first extract was not sure and uncertain if she could be her friend supposedly down deep in her heart, she knows what she wants for their friendship. To support, the second excerpt, **example (10)**, Sissy shows

her uncertainty in her speech while Mr. Harthouse answers her without hesitation and show certainty “*I am sure*”.

In other words, according to Fromkin et al. (2011),” women use hedges and other similar devices not because they lack confidence but in order to express friendliness and solidarity, a sharing of attitudes and values, with their listener”

Example (11):

“*I thought it best myself that I should be sent away, for **I felt** very **uncertain** whether you would like to find me here.*” (Book 3, ch.1, p.257)

Cecelia, while talking to Louisa, confirms her state of uncertainty not only by saying (*I was very uncertain*) but instead, she confirmed her state of uncertainty by unintentionally adding a lexical hedge “***I felt very uncertain***”. To support, Sissy was talking to Rachel about Stephan and how people are not trust worthy in the country. Sissy uses the same pattern that she used with Louisa; Sissy said: “*with my whole heart. **I feel so certain**, Rachael,*” (Book 3, ch.5, p.292). Sissy here, again, adds a stative verb that confuses her certainty instead of saying (I am so certain). Finally, Sissy used “***I think***” which shows uncertainty only once while she was taking to Harthouse on behalf of Louisa in Chapter 2.

Table 3: Fillers and lexical hedges by Cecelia Jupe – Sissy

| | Fillers and lexical hedges | Number of occurrences | Linguistical function |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Cecelia Jupe | I think | 1 | Uncertainty and hesitation |
| | I do not know | 2 | |
| | I feel | 2 | |
| | If (clause) | 3 | |

4.1.3 Mr. Gradgrind

Mr. Gradgrind could be considered as one of the most important male characters in the novel for the actions of the novel take place according to his restricted mentality; to abide by the rules that he makes and to only believe in facts without considering any creative thoughts. His language traits are demonstrated one by one in order to answer the research question of gender equality.

Mr. Gradgrind used lexical hedges for the same purpose as other main characters used this trait for. One of the most reoccurred utterance produces by Gradgrind was “*I think*”; he produced it (4) times in the following contexts:

Example (12):

“I think your good sense will perceive,” Mr. Gradgrind remonstrated in all humility, ‘that whatever the merits of such a system may be, it would be difficult of general application to girls.,,The enlightenment has been painfully forced upon me, and the discovery is not mine. I think there are - Bounderby, you will be surprised to hear me say this - I think there are qualities in Louisa, which - which have been harshly neglected, and - and a little perverted.,,’ Bounderby,’ returned Mr. Gradgrind, rising, ‘the less we say tonight the better, I think.” (Book 3, ch.3, p.275-278)

Gradgrind is far more human than he has previously seemed, making Bounderby even more soulless than he normally is. Gradgrind also believes it is better for Louisa to stay with him for a time and work through her mental and emotional troubles. He also mentions that marriage is a disaster. Hence, Bounderby acts in a defensive way and tells Gradgrind that the problem is that Louisa does not appreciate him.

Gradgrind does not usually use lexical hedges throughout the course of the novel, until he became a bit emotional and senseful than he usually is. As a result, he used these lexical hedges that women mostly use to lessen the intensity of the debate between him and Bounderby. He totally

stood by his daughter’s side and was trying to help her mentally by explaining to Bounderby what he thinks of.

Other used lexical hedges were “*I do not know*”, “*I suppose*”, and “*if,,,*”; these expressions were also used to serve the same purpose as the previous expressions did. In three different situations, Gradgrind tried to convince Louisa of his ideas. However, the purpose was not to show uncertainty but rather to show solidarity with his beloved daughter as seen in the 15th chapter “*FATHER AND DAUGHTER*” which is all about the two. The following excerpt is said by Mr. Gradgrind:

Example (13):

*“Mr. Bounderby is a very remarkable man; and what little disparity can be said to exist between you - **if any** - is more than counterbalanced by the tone your mind has acquired. It has always been my object so to educate you, as that you might, while still in your early youth, be (**if I may so express myself**) almost any age. Kiss me once more, Louisa. Now, let us go and find your mother.”*
(Book1, Ch1.15, P.116)

Table 4: Fillers and lexical hedges by Mr. Gradgrind

| | Fillers and lexical hedges | Number of occurrences | Linguistical function |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Mr. Gradgrind | I think | 4 | Uncertainty, hesitation, and solidarity |
| | I do not know, I suppose | 2 | |
| | If (clause) | 2 | |

4.1.4 Mr. Bounderby

The researcher did not find any lexical hedges for Bounderby. He is a man of his word and arrogant. In other words, he is not hesitant as the other characters are. Another reason is the avoidance of the sensitive topics. According to Coates (2013), “A possible reason for male

speakers' apparently lower usage of hedges is their choice of topics: unlike female speakers, male speakers on the whole avoid sensitive topics".

The following table shows the number of used lexical hedges by each main character.

Table 5: The number of the fillers and lexical hedges used by the four main characters.

| Characters | Number of occurrences | Total of Occurrences |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Louisa Gradgrind | 14 | 22 |
| Cecelia Jupe | 8 | |
| Mr. Gradgrind | 8 | 8 |
| Mr. Bounderby | 0 | |

Lexical Hedges and fillers are used as a trait according to Lakoff (1975) to analyze females' speech in order to show a distinctive trait compared to males. From **Table 5**, the total occurrences of females are 22 while males are 8. Hence, the results go in the line with Lakoff's (1975) theory of gender that women use this trait more than men. As noted, Mr. Bounderby has not used any hedge for he is more assertive and has more power and authority than the others characters who use more hedges and fillers.

4.2 Tag Questions

The functions of tag questions are mainly to seek confirmation and to express uncertainty and politeness. This is indicated by analyzing the main characters' speeches. The researcher found that women use tag questions more than men. In other words, Louisa and Cecelia are seemingly less assertive and more hesitant than Mr. Gradgrind and Mr. Bounderby because female characters want to ensure an effective communication between the listener and the speaker.

4.2.1 Louisa Gradgrind

Coates (2013) claims that tag questions decrease the strength of assertions. Louisa expressed her hesitation and sought for confirmation by using two tag questions as indicated below:

Example (14):

*“Mr. Bounderby, she went on in a steady, straight way, without regarding this, asks me to marry him. The question I have to ask myself is, shall I marry him? That is so, father, is it not? You have told me so, father. **Have you not?** ‘Certainly, my dear.’” (Book 1, ch15, p.114)*

Her father, Gradgrind, informs her that Bounderby has proposed to her. She looks at her father without expression, which makes him anxious. She does not know if she should marry him; she seems controlled and constrained to her father’s proposals. This is shown linguistically when she used tag questions such as *“is it not?”* and *“have you not?”*. Women, according to Lakoff (1973), use tag questions in a positive form to seek for confirmation from the other party.

In this situation, Louisa asks for confirmation twice while addressing her father about whether marrying Bounderby although she knows that her father wants her to accept his proposal and marry him despite her thoughts and feeling towards the marriage issue. Noteworthy, this is the only situation in which Louisa uses tag questions.

4.2.2 Cecelia Jupe – Sissy

Women usually use excessive- unnecessary tag questions and that indicates their self-insecurities. The following scene was previously discussed when Sissy visited Louisa to reassure her and renew their friendship.

Example (15):

Louisa: 'Why should you stay with me? My sister will miss you. You are everything to her.'

'Am I?' returned Sissy, shaking her head. (Book 3, ch.1, p. 256)

In this scene, Sissy is a friend of Jane too -Louisa's sister-. Louisa tells Sissy to leave her room in an implicit way by mentioning that Jane will miss her if she does not go and see her. Consequently, Sissy replies with a positive tag question to lessen the tension of feelings upon herself.

However, Sissy uses a negative form of tag questions. This refutes Lakoff's claims that women use only positive forms of tag questions. This could be due to the friendly, woman to woman types of conversations between Cecelia and Louisa; they feel comfortable gossiping and talking to each other for it fosters their intimacy (McHugh & Hambaugh, 2010). This was shown when she misheard Mr. M'Choakumchild asking her about "National prosperity" and she thought he said "Natural prosperity" as in the following example:

Example (16):

'National, I think it must have been,' observed Louisa.

'Yes, it was. - But isn't it the same?' she timidly asked. (Book 1, ch.5, p.64)

4.2.3 Mr. Gradgrind

Mr. Gradgrind visits Louisa and wishes he had known about her issues sooner. He tells her that he has always had good intentions for her.

Example (17):

'I am not too proud to believe it, Louisa. How could I be arrogant, and you before me! Can it be so? Is it so, my dear?' He looked upon her once more, lying cast away there; and without another

word went out of the room. He had not been long gone, when she heard a light tread near the door, and knew that someone stood beside her. (Book 3, ch.1, p. 255)

Gradgrind seems more understanding and emotional than he has ever been. One outcome of these emotions is the type of the utterances he uses; he is supportive and he seeks for confirmation from his beloved daughter for his daughter seems to be in a stronger position now.

4.2.4 Mr. Bounderby

After the children had been caught up in the circus and had been rebuked by their father when they returned home, Bounderby made a visit and went upstairs to check on Tom and Louisa. Bounderby approaches Louisa and promises her that he will talk to her father and fix it out with him; he leans down and asks for a kiss.

Example (18):

*'It's all right now, Louisa: it's all right, young Thomas,' said Mr. Bounderby; 'you won't do so any more. I'll answer for it's being all over with father. Well, Louisa, that's worth a kiss, **isn't it?**' (Book1, ch.4, p.23)*

Linguistically, Bounderby uses a negative tag question for he wants to kindly approach Louisa and establishes a strong, well-bonded relation with her for he intends to marry her. Consequently, he uses the same language that women would use.

Table 6: The number of the tag questions used by the four main characters.

| Character | Number of occurrences |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| Louisa Gradgrind | 2 |
| Cecelia Jupe | 2 |
| Mr. Gradgrind | 1 |
| Mr. Bounderby | 1 |

According to Coates (2013), tag questions decrease the strength of assertions. As a result, from **Table 6**, men used less tag questions while women do. As mentioned previously, Mr. Bounderby is more confident and powerful than any other character. He is assertive, hence, the use of tag questions that could indicate hesitation or being less assertive is produced as much as Louisa and Cecelia do.

4.3 Empty Adjectives

In this section the researcher found that this linguistic trait was only used by Louisa Gradgrind and her father Mr. Gradgrind, and we will explore them in details. Empty adjectives do not provide any specific information about the noun they modify. Although they seem meaningless; they serve several functions such as a subjective evaluation, and show vagueness or ambiguity, and social interactions. Mr. Gradgrind's use of the empty adjective "dear" served as a social interaction; it helped him to maintain rapport and provide positive reinforcement for his daughter Louisa as seen in the following data analysis for both characters.

4.3.1 Louisa Gradgrind

Empty adjectives show vague emotions for a certain situation. These adjectives are used interchangeably between males and females. One of the most used and reoccurred empty adjectives is "*dear*".

Example (19):

"My dear brother: ' she laid her head down on his pillow, and her hair flowed over him as if she would hide him from every one but herself: 'is there nothing that you have to tell me? Is there nothing you can tell me if you will? You can tell me nothing that will change me. O Tom, tell me the truth!'" (Book 2, ch.8, p.216)

It is known that "Brothers and sisters are separated by distance, joined by love." This is resembled in the relationship with the siblings Tom and Louisa. Although they are distant from

their preoccupations, but they are intuitively close enough. Louisa felt that her brother was the man who robbed the bank so she entered his room to reassure him and see if he really did it. She approached her brother, linguistically, by addressing him as “*dear brother*”. Louisa uses this empty adjective to amplify a particular feeling, in this case, her love, affection, and respect to her brother. In other words, according to Badari & Setyowati (2019), women emphasize their sympathy by using empty adjectives.

For the same reason and purpose, Louisa addresses her brother as “*a dear brother*” in the following example:

Example (20):

“You are a dear brother, Tom; and while you think I can do such things, I don't so much mind knowing better. Though I do know better, Tom, and am very sorry for it.” She came and kissed him, and went back into her corner again. (Book 1, ch.8, p. 58)

Tom and Louisa have a long conversation in which Tom tells Louisa how often he despises his life and everyone except her. He despises his education and despises having so little joy. Louisa, in a way or another, tries to comfort Tom but she does not really know what to do to him but only being a supportive sister. Noteworthy, Louisa usually addresses Tom as “*dear brother*” but in one situation, she calls him by his name “*No, dear Tom, I won't forget.*” (Book 1, ch.14, p.108). It is psychologically known that calling someone by his name shows more affection and respect to the addressee; it keeps them connected and shows that they are paying attention. The same case is applicable to Louisa. It is worth mentioning that after the bank robbery, Louisa's conversation with her brother Tom shows that Louisa feels more protective for her sibling than Mrs. Gradgrind does (Makhloof, 2020).

4.3.2 Mr. Gradgrind

Mr. Gradgrind's most noted empty adjective was "dear". Most of them were addressed (14) times to his daughter and Mr. Bounderby in different contexts. The researcher shall look into the ones directed to his beloved daughter first, then shall look into the ones directed to Mr. Bounderby.

Example (21):

"My dear Louisa,' said her father, 'I prepared you last night to give me your serious attention in the conversation we are now going to have together. You have been so well trained, and you do, I am happy to say, so much justice to the education you have received, that I have perfect confidence in your good sense,, 'Louisa, my dear, you are the subject of a proposal of marriage that has been made to me.',,, 'This so far surprised him, as to induce him gently to repeat, 'a proposal of marriage, my dear.'" (Book 1, ch.15, p. 109-110)

In the chapter, *FATHER & DAUGHTER*, Louisa comes to talk to her father. He tells her about Mr. Bounderby's proposal of marriage. Mr. Gradgrind tries to convince his daughter to accept the offer in a reasonable way for he thinks she is responsible and an educated girl who will match Mr. Bounderby's mentality.

Mr. Gradgrind is trying to win Louisa's heart; he addressed her with "dear" as Louisa unconsciously could be devoted to her father's decisions. In addition, it could be seen that Mr. Gradgrind is a manipulative father; he knows how to win his daughter's heart by being kind to her. As a result, Louisa will accept whatever her father tells her because of the father-daughter relationship.

Mr. Gradgrind used the empty adjective more than three times in the same context. This shows his determination to convince her. For further illustration, during their conversation, Mr. Gradgrind intentionally provokes her feelings towards him to accept whatever he wants. Louisa knew about her father's intentions in persuading her to marry Mr. Bounderby; hence, as a defense

mechanism, Mr. Gradgrind reapproached her saying “*My dear Louisa, no. No. I ask nothing.*” (Book 1, ch.15, p.111) However, when he felt his words are meaningless, he told her that “*The rest, my dear Louisa, is for you to decide.*” (Book 1, ch.15, p.113)

At the end of their conversation, Mr. Gradgrind happily and successfully leaves after convincing his daughter to accept the proposal and marry Mr. Bounderby. Although he won the psychological warfare with the help of his kind and tender words to Louisa, he undisturbedly used the same empty adjective to cover his intentions. To support, “*Mr. Gradgrind was quite moved by his success, and by this testimony to it. 'My dear Louisa,' said he, 'you abundantly repay my care. Kiss me, my dear girl.*” (Book 1, ch.15, p.116)

Mr. Gradgrind also uses the empty adjective “*dear*” to address Mr. Bounderby. Therefore, Mr. Gradgrind belittles himself so that he can be admired to Bounderby in order to do whatever pleases him.

From the novel, book 3, chapter 3, *VERY DECIDED*, Bounderby is upset, and has a lengthy debate with Gradgrind about Louisa, the status of their marriage, and Louisa's apparent intention to split from him for a while. On the contrary, Mr. Gradgrind is now a more caring, kindhearted, and considerate father than he was before; thus, he tries with his well-disposed language to lessen the tension of the hostile disagreement with Mr. Bounderby about his relationship with Louisa. The context below can be used for more illustration:

Example (22):

”I - I had intended to recommend, my dear Bounderby, that you should allow Louisa to remain here on a visit, and be attended by Sissy (I mean of course Cecilia Jupe), who understands her, and in whom she trusts.” (Book3, ch.3, p. 276)

Mr. Gradgrind is careful and hesitant in his words for he is in a weak, vulnerable position with Mr. Bounderby. He repeated the subject “*I*” twice which shows hesitation as he wanted to “*recommend*” him what suits Louisa the best, followed by an empty adjective “*my dear Bounderby*” which indicates his weakness while confronting Mr. Bounderby.

Table 7: The number of the empty adjectives used by the two main characters.

| Character | Empty adjectives | Number of occurrences | Linguistical function |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Louisa Gradgrind | Dear | 3 | Exaggerate a particular feeling (power) |
| Mr. Grandgrind | | 14 | |

The researcher focused on the empty adjective “*dear*” throughout the novel. It was only mentioned by Mr. Gradgrind and Louisa, his daughter. Empty adjectives are usually used to exaggerate a particular feeling as seen from the collected data in **Table 7**. According to Lakoff (1975), women use more empty adjectives. However, the results contradict Lakoff’s theory. This supports the claims that both genders use this trait interchangeably.

4.4 Intensifiers

One of the most common functions of intensifiers occurred in the analysis are amplification and emphasis. According to the corpus analysis, women use more intensifiers than men because they are in a less assertive position and try to convince the listener who is overpowered such Mr. Bounderby and Mr. Gradgrind by magnifying the intensity of an action, feeling, or a state.

4.4.1 Louisa Gradgrind

Louisa used two intensifiers; “so” and “very” (19) times as an assertive tool to indicate the importance of a certain situation or a feeling (Sratton, 2020). These two intensifiers occurred in different contexts as follows:

Example (23):

*'First, Sissy, do you know what I am? I am **so** proud and **so** hardened, **so** confused and troubled, **so** resentful and unjust to every one and to myself, that everything is stormy, dark, and wicked to me. Does not that repel you?’,,, 'I am **so** unhappy, and all that should have made me otherwise is **so** laid waste, that if I had been bereft of sense to this hour, and instead of being as learned as you think me, had to begin to acquire the simplest truths, I could not want a guide to peace, contentment, honour, all the good of which I am quite devoid, more abjectly than I do. Does not that repel you?’ (Book 3, ch.1, p.257-258)*

The above context takes us back to the scene where Sissy visits Louisa at her place in order to fix the relationship between them. Louisa talked about how she feels about herself as well as the people around her; she has the mixture of feelings of pride, and confusion. She thinks she treats people in an unjust way. However, she uses the intensifiers in order to emphasize her state of being to Sissy and the way she feels about her. She is comfortable to reveal all of her emotions.

To add, when Louisa enters her room at first, she was dazzled about the welcoming look of her room and asserts the state of her room; she exclaims “*It was you who made my room **so cheerful***” (Book3, ch.1, p.252). To support, when Louisa asks her father to stop attacking the dog “*Father, father! Pray don't hurt the creature who is **so fond** of you!*” (Book 1, ch.9, p.68), she asserts that the dog is fond of him as he is a loyal creature who has feelings as a human being. It shouldn't be harmed.

In the same way, Louisa's speech to her father indicated the use of intensifiers to affirm the qualities that her father has and the way he dealt with his daughter in Louisa's perspective. Mr. Gradgrind is "*so careful,, You have trained me so well, that I never dreamed a child's dream. You have dealt so wisely with me, father, from my cradle to this hour, that I never had a child's belief or a child's fear.*" (Book 1, ch.15, p.116).

To put it differently, Louisa used another intensifier that is also used to assert and affirm a particular feeling or situation. The intensifier "**very**" has been used in different contexts by Louisa. She asserts the intense feeling of pity towards the lives of both Tom and Louisa "*It's very unfortunate for both of us*" (Book 1, ch.8, p.58). For the same purpose, Louisa calls her father in a devastating thought "*that life is very short*" (Book 1, ch.15, p.114). Additionally, Louisa asks her brother, Tom, to "*Whisper very softly*" (Book 2, ch.8, p.217) and to say only yes if he has anything to tell her without letting anyone hear them out about the robbed bank.

Another example is when Rachel talked about the accusations that has been put on Stephan Blackpool. Rachel burst out crying for her husband which leads Louisa to say "*I am very, very sorry,*" (Book 3, ch.4, p.286). Louisa sincerely asserts her apology for Rachel to show empathy and support.

4.4.2 Cecelia Jupe – Sissy

Intensifiers are used to persuade the addressed speakers. They also aimed to make people take them seriously and to show that they are expressing their real feelings. In other words, intensifiers' main function in emotions' boosting was used by young people to show emphasis (Tagliamonte, 2008).

Cecelia's first use of intensifiers was when she described the learning process at school as easy and she affirms it "*All that is difficult to me now, would be **so easy** then.*" (Book 1, ch.9, p.63) However, she felt not as good as the other students as she says "*O **so stupid!***" (Book 1, ch.9, p.63) when Louisa and Sissy were talking about the misheard word in school, and as a result, Sissy's reaction was to assert her act of stupidity during that situation for not hearing the word "*national*" right. Sissy, on the other hand, keeps complaining to Louisa about her inability to learn as the others; she affirms that by saying "*I am **so anxious** to learn, I am afraid I don't like it*" (Book 1, ch.9, p.65). To support, Cecelia tells and confirms to Mr. Gradgrind that she is not as he expected following his mentality of facts, but rather she is "***very fond** of flowers,*" and she would only fancy what is "***very pretty and pleasant,***" (Book 1, ch.2, p.7)

To further illustrate, Cecelia expressed and asserted her feelings of uncertainty to Louisa when she entered Louisa's room to renew their friendship as she said "*I felt **very uncertain** whether you would like to find me here.*" (Book 3, ch.1, p.257) Then she added that she was not really hurt about their separation because Cecelia thought that she was not important to Louisa, "*You knew **so much**, and I knew **so little**, and it was **so natural** in many ways, going as you were among other friends, that I had nothing to complain of, and was not at all hurt.*" (Book 3, ch.1, p.257).

4.4.3 Mr. Gradgrind

Mr. Gradgrind used intensifiers to assert his feeling towards his daughter as well as towards himself in different contexts. According to Sari et al (2021), one of the intensifiers' functions is to convince the audience by emphasizing facts.

Mr. Gradgrind, while apologizing for Louisa about his state of mind, regrets what he has done to her by confessing that he stayed up all night thinking about "*what has **so painfully** passed*

between us” (Book 3, ch.1, p.253) He affirms and knows that he has been harsh in his treatment to his daughter besides the unavailing disappointment that he has been through.

Additionally, he used the same intensifier when he addressed his daughter as “*And you so young, Louisa!*” (Book3, Ch1, P.248) to convince his daughter and affirm her state of being that she still has a lot to go through and learn from despite wasting her time complying to his monotonous orders as marrying Mr. Bounderby and believing only in facts.

Mr. Gradgrind has also used the intensifier “*very*” (4) times to be either persuasive or assert a particular feeling or emotion towards a state or a person. Mr. Gradgrind said to Louisa and Thomas, “*I am sorry to hear it. I am very sorry indeed to hear it*” (Book 1, ch.3, p.14), he repeatedly confirmed and asserted that he is sorry for himself to know that his children went to the circus for they are not supposed to be anywhere around such a place. To add, Mr. Gradgrind expressed his feeling towards Mr. Bounderby when he discovered that he is interested in his daughter; he said he was “*very much*” annoyed about it.

4.4.4 Mr. Bounderby

Most of Mr. Bounderby’s speech and utterances were direct while describing or explaining a certain feeling or situation. Mr. Bounderby interrupted Mr. Gradgrind while they were talking “*This is good, Gradgrind!*” (Book 1, ch.5, p.36). Here, Bounderby did not assert to Gradgrind his emotions towards what Gradgrind has said; instead of saying “This is so/very good”, he merely affirmed his emotions by only giving a direct adjective without using any intensifier.

However, he used less intensifiers than any the other main character. To explain, he asserted his feelings towards the idea of imagination by telling Mr. Gradgrind that imagination is “*A very bad thing for anybody*” (Book 1, ch.4, p.21). In another context, he addressed his mother

as “*the very worst woman that ever lived in the world*” (Book 1, ch.6, p.36). Mr. Bounderby thinks that he is a self-made man and nobody helped him including his mother. Linguistically, instead of only using the superlative form “the worst”, he asserted his feelings and emotions towards his mother by calling her as “the very worst” which indicates his hatred to his mother.

Table 8: The number of the intensifiers used by the main characters.

| Character | The intensifier | Number of occurrences |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Louisa Gradgrind | “Very” & “So” | 19 |
| Cecelia Jupe | | 14 |
| Mr. Gradgrind | | 6 |
| Mr. Bounderby | | 5 |

From **Table 8**, the results show that women use more intensifiers than men according to Lakoff’s (1975) theory of gender and supports the claims of Stratton (2020) that women use intensifiers to show the importance of a particular situation or feeling.

4.5 Super Polite Forms

Super polite forms are linguistic expressions used to show respect, express humility, and to establish social distance between the speakers. The researcher found that women use more polite forms than men due to their social status and their less authoritative position compared to men. In other words, Louisa used polite forms to show respect to her father in some cases while Cecelia used them to establish a social distance between her and the speaker, acknowledging their differing positions and roles in the society.

4.5.1 Louisa Gradgrind

According to Lakoff (1973), women's use of super polite forms indicates weakness and less assurance for women, yet it shows superiority to the opposite gender. Louisa's most occurred expression that shows politeness is calling her dad – Mr. Gradgrind- as “, *father*,”. Noteworthy, all of them were put between two commas. Additionally, the researcher did not find any other used expression from Louisa to address Mr. Gradgrind. In other words, she did not address him as “dad”, “daddy”, and “papa” and she did not call him by his name which shows respect and politeness to her father. On the other hand, the father used different words to address his daughter as “*Louisa*” or “*My child*” (Book 1, ch.15, p.111)

The term of address “, *father*,” has been repeated (24) times throughout the novel. Louisa addressed Mr. Gradgrind as “, *father*,” when he caught Tom and Louisa at the circus and started arguing about it while she was trying to defend her brother - Tom – saying, “*I brought him, father*,” (Book 1, ch.3, p.14). In another context, Louisa tried to stop her father from hitting their dog by saying “*O Heaven forgive you, father, stop!*” (Book 1, ch.9, p.68). To support, while Louisa and her father were talking about a certain announcement - the marriage proposal- he wanted to see if she is prepared for the announcement; she respectfully told him that she “*cannot say that, father, until I hear it. Prepared or unprepared, I wish to hear it all from you*” (Book 1, ch.15, p.110)

The best way for women to show insecurity is to ask a question, says Lakoff (1973). In other words, Louisa repeatedly and respectfully asked “Shall I marry him?” to her father in different context about marrying Mr. Bounderby. In different words and according to Lakoff (1973), women's speech generally sounds more polite than men's and that leaves the decision open.

4.5.2 Cecelia Jupe – Sissy

Previous studies discussed that women's speech tends to be more polite than men's, and they were adapted to several forms of behavioral politeness that women use. Thus, women use more standard and polite phrases (Gilley & Summers, 1970). In other words, women's speech is more polite and prestigious while men's speeches exhibit less of these characteristics.

In the novel, Cecelia used the if-clause "*if you please*" to indicate a degree of politeness. It has been used (4) times. For example, while arguing with Mr. Gradgrind, Cecelia answered the proposed question by using a prefatory comment, "*If you please, sir, when they can get any to break, they do break horses in the ring, sir.*" (Book 1, ch.2, p.3). The prefatory comments functioned as an utterance to lessen the tension, and to show respect and superiority to the addressee.

Other linguistic forms that were used interchangeably are "*May I try*" and "*if you wouldn't mind*". These two forms were also used to address male characters but never seen to address female characters. This indicates the politeness and formality of women. Noteworthy, most of the polite forms produced by Cecelia are followed by "*sir*".

4.5.3 Mr. Gradgrind

Mr. Gradgrind use of super-polite forms as women is demonstrated in only one occurred utterance. For example, when Mr. Gradgrind and Mr. Bounderby were at the Pegasus Arms, Cecelia was there and wanted to search for her father for they wanted to see him. However, he couldn't wait until she finds him, instead, he respectfully asked Mr. Bounderby "*if you please, I will leave a message for him with you.*" (Book 1, ch.6, p.33). This demonstrates that the perspective of power differs from each point of view. To illustrate, Gradgrind sees himself as

inferior to Bounderby, thus, he chooses his words wisely and address his friend Bounderby respectfully and with formality.

4.5.4 Mr. Bounderby

Mr. Bounderby used one polite form while he was talking to Mr. Gradgrind which is “*if you please*”. Polite forms are used to indicate inferiority according to Lakoff (1973). To explain, Mr. Bounderby is considered one of the most powerful and superior characters for his prestigious position in town. However, he used a super-polite form which makes the reader believes that Mr. Bounderby is inferior to Mr. Gradgrind. His polite words were followed by words that might reveal impoliteness “*Don't make yourself a spectacle of unfairness as well as inconsistency,*” (Book 3, ch.3, p.277).

Table 9: The number of super-polite forms used by the main characters.

| Character | Number of occurrences |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Louisa Gradgrind | 28 |
| Cecelia Jupe | 15 |
| Mr. Gradgrind | 1 |
| Mr. Bounderby | 1 |

Super-polite forms are verbal expressions employed to convey modesty, and create a sense of social separation between individuals. By looking into **Table 9** and according to the researcher's findings, women tend to utilize polite forms more frequently than men. This discrepancy arises from women's societal status and their comparatively less authoritative positions.

4.6 Avoidance of Using Strong Swear Words

According to Lakoff (1973), women avoid using swear words to show politeness and conformity to social norms. Louisa avoided swearing for it is considered “a kind of interjection that can express extreme statements” (Lakoff, 1973). One example is when Louisa’s father hit their dog because he was angry about Tom and Louisa who were going to the circus; hence, Louisa said “*O Heaven forgive you, father, stop!*” (Book 1, ch.9, p. 68). In other words, Lakoff (1973) claims that “women tend to avoid using swear words because they will consider them as unladylike”. While having a conversation with Louisa, Mrs. Gradgrind was triggered and frustrated by her husband’s mentality so she asked Louisa “*for God's sake*” (Book 2, ch.9, p.228) to find her a pen to write a letter to Mr. Gradgrind.

Noteworthy, both gender and age may influence people’s swearing behavior (Mercury, 1995). Cecelia Jupe as a main female character, unintentionally called herself as “*a stupid girl*” to express her true feelings about herself in comparison to the other students at Mr. Gradgrind’s school. In other words, Louisa and Cecelia would feel more comfortable talking to each other rather than talking to another male.

For Mr. Gradgrind, no curse words were indicated. This could be for his parental status and social position in the town. Additionally, when comparing Mr. Gradgrind to Mr. Bounderby, one can notice that Bounderby has more power than Gradgrind. According to Jay (1992), people hardly swear with people who are higher in power than them since they would be afraid of the risk of losing one’s respect. However, Mr. Bounderby is aware that he used swear words more than any other character in the novel. To illustrate, Mr. Bounderby addresses Stephan Blackpool who is a worker at his factory saying “*The more fool you,*” (Book 1, ch.11, p.81). Mr. Bounderby

explicitly uses curse words for he is in a higher position and sees himself as the man who would help weak, working hand so he allows himself to use whatever words that he wants.

In addition, he confidently mentions that he came “*of the scum of the earth*” (Book 1, ch.7, p.52). The use of the word “*scum*” could mean two things. One meaning is that Mr. Bounderby is fond of himself; he thinks he is a self-made man, and people need him. The other view is that Mr. Bounderby uses an intended pun -wordplay- which shows that he was brought up as a man with a higher position because of the “*scum*” people and system on earth.

However, Bounderby also avoids using swearing words. Instead of saying “by the lord of **the hell**”, he said “*by the Lord Harry*” (Book 1, ch.11, p.86). Bounderby swore by “*the Lord*” (4 times) in different context. The utterance is considered as euphemism. The speaker tries to express a certain offensive feeling through an inoffensive one. Although Bounderby is in a higher position, still he is a human who has self-interests from treating other people nicely trying not to use strong words to hurt them.

Table 10: The number of swearing words used by the main characters

| Character | Number of occurrences |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| Cecelia Jupe | 1 |
| Mr. Bounderby | 2 |

The table shows that all of the main male and female characters avoid using swear words. However, there were exceptions. These exceptions are in line with Lakoff’s theory (1975) which states that women avoid swearing. The number of occurrences for the produced swearing words by female characters is lower than that of male characters. To support, the researcher found that

secondary male characters also used swearing words such as when Slackbridge unfolded what he called “*that damning document*” (Book 2, ch.9, p.282) while females did not.

4.7 Emphatic stress

Prosodic features of language can be found throughout the phonetic segments of speech, including rhythm, pauses, length and stress levels, and intonation. (Crystal, 1975) According to Lakoff (1973), emphatic stress emphasizes the most important word in a speaker's statement. This trait could be highlighted from texts by usually referring to capitalized utterances. However, the researcher could barely find any utterances that indicate empathic stress for it is considered as a prosodic feature which is not available in a written text.

The only produced utterance was by Mr. Gradgrind. The researcher highlighted it for it was repeatedly mentioned. To put in context, Mr. Gradgrind said “*Fact, fact, fact!*” (Book 1, ch.2, p.7) to emphasize that Cecelia could refer to nothing but only facts, not imagination nor creativity.

Table 11: The number of utterances containing emphatic stress as produced by the main characters

| Character | Number of occurrences |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| Mr. Gradgrind | 1 |

4.8 Hypercorrect grammar

According to Oktapiani (2017) “hypercorrect grammar involves an avoidance of terms considered vulgar, such as (*ain’t*)”. Since Dickens’ novel depicts different classes of people, the high-class characters such as Mr. Gradgrind’s family use Standard English. They tend to use hypercorrect grammar regardless of their gender while low-class characters such as Stephan Blackpool and Sleary’s family produce slang language; hence, they would produce language with hypercorrect grammar to fit in with other classes. In other words, “The class dialects used by

Dickens are for the most part those of lower-class speakers, but he showed himself also able to reproduce the chief features of upper-class dialect.” (Brook, 1970)

The researcher did not find any hypercorrect grammar utterances produced by the main characters since they already speak the standard English and they avoid any use of vulgar speeches that do not represent them. Utami et al (2020) claim that “women have the tendency to give more attention of using clear grammar”. However, although Mr. Bounderby is considered belonging to the high class, he uses slang language which supports Lakoff’s theory that women tend to use more elevated language than men. To put in context, Mr. Bounderby used “ain’t” (3) times while other characters avoided using such non-slandered words. He used them in the form of tag questions to achieve assurance. For example, he says: “*Your name's Blackpool, ain't it?*” (Book 1, ch.15, p.165)

Table 12: The total utterances used by the male and female characters according to Lakoff’s theory of gender

| No. | Trait | Total frequency | | Males | | Females | |
|-----|--------------------------------|-----------------|------|-------|-----|---------|-----|
| | | | | | | | |
| 1. | Fillers and lexical hedges | 30 | | 8 | 6% | 22 | 15% |
| 2. | Tag questions | 6 | | 2 | 1% | 4 | 3% |
| 3. | Empty adjectives | 17 | | 14 | 10% | 3 | 2% |
| 4. | Intensifiers | 44 | | 11 | 8% | 33 | 23% |
| 5. | Super-polite forms | 45 | | 2 | 1% | 43 | 30% |
| 6. | Emphatic stress | 1 | | 1 | 1% | 0 | 0% |
| 7. | Avoidance of using swear words | 0 | | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| 8. | Hypercorrect grammar | 0 | | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| 9. | Precise color terms | 0 | | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| # | Total | 143 | 100% | 38 | 27% | 105 | 73% |

Chapter Five: Results, Conclusion, and Recommendations

5.1 Results and Conclusion

This research is an attempt to study Dickens' *Hard Times* through the application of Lakoff's theory of gender (1973). There are two research questions in this study. The study aims at revealing the most common language traits of the main female and male characters, and gender inequality representation in the novel.

The researcher found eight traits of Lakoff's gender theory that were used by the four main male and female characters; Louisa Gradgrind, Cecelia Jupe, Mr. Gradgrind, and Mr. Bounderby. These eight traits are lexical hedges, tag questions, intensifiers, empty adjectives, super-polite forms, avoiding strong swear words, emphatic stress, and hypercorrect grammar (see Table 12). The two features that have not been explored are rising intonation and precise color terms. Rising intonation was not explored as previously stated since it is a trait of spoken language not a written one.

To answer the first question based on the corpus analysis (see Table 12), the most used trait is super-polite forms. It has been used (43 times) by the two female characters while male characters used them only twice. This trait indicates women's weakness to the other opposite gender. The second most used trait by women are intensifiers. They are produced (33 times) by women while men uttered them only (11 times). However, traits such as empty adjectives are used mostly by men, especially Mr. Gradgrind. Empty adjectives are used (14 times) by men while (3 times) by women in total which contradicts Lakoff's theory. Yet, the other traits are produced more by women.

Concerning the avoidance of using swear words, Menzi (1991) claims that swear language can reinforce a culture of gender inequality. Most of the characters avoided using coarse words.

The researcher did not indicate any swear words produced by the main characters. Yet, Cecelia Jupe swears once and Mr. Bounderby twice (see Table 10).

According to Eshreteh & Al-Qeeq (2023), there are numerous aspects that could influence speech styles such as power and gender. To put it simply, “power becomes a productive tool because new changes happen due to the change in its relations” (Eshreteh & Al-Qeeq, 2023). In other words, gender inequality is the unequal distribution of power, resources, and opportunities between men and women in society (Juniana, 2011)

From the novel, the researcher put to comparison the total of the produced utterances for both male and female characters and found that women use more of the language traits that Lakoff had proposed. In other words, women produced (105) utterances in total while men produced (38) utterances which results in 73% to 27% in total of the produced utterances. This indicates that men have the power over women and shows that there is gender inequality according to the corpus analysis of *Hard Times*.

Additionally, Louisa's hateful marriage could be an indication to the strict and rigid attitudes toward women's roles in Britain during the Victorian era. Dickens sees that the industrial revolution is somehow responsible for the strictness toward women's role in the British society (Chouiref & Aidi, 2016).

5.2 Recommendations

This mixed (qualitative-quantitative) method research adopted Lakoff's (1973) theory on Dickens' *Hard Times*. In this section, the researcher is going to suggest some recommendations for other researchers to apply in future research.

- *Hard Times* was the subject of this study as the researcher applied Lakoff's (1973) gender theory. Similar research could be conducted on other novels in order to increase the theory's credibility and validity.
- Other studies may apply other theories on the same literary work or others to may reveal different results. Comparing and applying both Deborah Tannen's (1990) and Robin Lakoff's (1975) theory of gender traits, for instance, could be a good recommendation.
- Since the researcher detected Lakoff's linguistic features as used by two male and female characters, other researchers may study the differentiation of linguistic features throughout the novel for more characters.
- Since the researcher detected gender inequality according to Lakoff's theory of gender, other theories and issues could be investigated regarding power, capitalism, familial relationships, and potential psychological issues of characters.
- Applying the theory in this research reflected the image of men and women in the Victorian era. Other novels and literary works could reveal and reflect other certain cultures and societies.

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