THE PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF TAG QUESTION AND HEDGE
IN THE UTTERANCES OF MALE AND FEMALE OF SILADANGESE

By: SRI MINDA, S. Pd., M.Hum[1]

Abstract

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan fitur linguistik dari *Tag question* dan *hedge* pada ujaranlaki-laki dan perempuan masyarakat Siladang. Penelitian ini didesain dengan metode deskripsi kualitatif. Sumber data penelitian ini adalah masyarakat Siladang yang tinggal di desa Aek Banir dan Sipagapaga, Panyabungan. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk pengumpulan data adalah lembar observasi dan wawancara. Analisis data yang digunakan adalah pendekatan Bokdan dan Biklen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwajenis *tag question* yang diujarkan oleh laki-laki Siladang adalah *modal tag*, sedangkan perempuannya mengujarkan *modal tag* dan *affective tag*. Dan juga ditemukan bahwa ada empat fitur linguistik dari *hedge* pada ujaran laki-laki dan ada lima fitur linguistik *hedge* pada ujaran perempuan.

Kata Kunci: *Tag question, Hedge*, laki-laki dan perempuan masyarakat Siladang

A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a multiethnic country which has a lot of cultural society. One of them is Siladangnese society. Geographically, Siladang people are living in the valley of Tor Sihite. It is located about 17 Km from Panyabungan, the capital of Mandailing Natal. This language becomes potential phenomenon in linguistics study to be researched. As it was informed in Kompas (2007), about 736 of 746 vernaculars in Indonesia are endangered and one of them is Siladang language.

In general, society has constructed the belief that men and women behave differently to images of masculinity and femininity. Male and masculine are two different concepts: the first term refers to biology and the other refers to identity. Being male is not complete without the existence of masculinity. Even some features of masculinity are quickly recognized as being a biological part of being male.[2]

A study about Siladang language which focuses on the Siladang language prosody is interrelated with gender. The data were collected by recording the

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[1] Lecturer of English Deparment, FTIK IAIN Padangsidimpuan
[2] Spender, D. 1985. Man made language. 2ndedn. London: Routledge&Kegan Pail. pg.39

utterances in three different types such as declarative, imperative and interrogative. The findings of the research shows that women's tone in speaking is higher than the man's tone but not really significant.[3]

From among these researchers, Lakoff proposed theories on the existence of women's language. Her book '*Language and Woman's Place*' has served as a basis for much research on the subject. She mentions ten features for women's language.[4]

There are some linguistik features of tag question in the utterances of female. These ten features are as follows: [5]

1. Lexical hedges or fillers, *e.g. you know, sort of, …*

2. Tag questions, *e.g. she is very nice, isn't she?*

3. Rising intonation on declaratives, *e.g. it's really good.*

4. Empty adjectives, *e.g. divine, charming, cute.*

5. Precise color terms, *e.g. magenta, acqamarine.*

6. Intensifiers such as *just* and *so*.

7. Hypercorrect grammar, *e.g. consistent use of standard verb forms.*

8. Superpolite forms, *e.g. indirect requests, euphemisms.*

9. Avoidance of strong swear words, *e.g. fudge, my goodness.*

10. Emphatic stress, *e.g. it was a BRILLIANT performance*.

It is stated that male seldom use tag questions and hedge in language. It often find in females' language. Moreover, the use of tag question in female's language indicates the uncertainty.

Consistently with this idea, Lakoff claimed that women were more likely than men in the same situation to use extra-polite forms (e.g., "Would you mind…"), a claim that was supported by subsequent empirical work. Gender differences have also been examined by studying the actual words people use.[6]

Women have been found to use more intensive adverbs, more conjunctions such as *but*, and more modal auxiliary verbs such as could that place question marks of some kind over a statement. While men have been found to swear more, use longer words, use more articles, and use more references to location.

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[3] Sinar, T. S. &Syarfina, T. 2010. *Prosodi bahasa Siladang Sumatera Utara.* Medan: University of North Sumatera Press. pg.14

[4] Lakoff, R. 1975. *Language and woman's place.*New York: Harper Colophon Books. pg.67

[5] *Ibid*

[6] *Ibid.,69*

Based on the background of the study, the researcher conducted a study about gender differences in the use of tag question and hedge among the Siladangnese people. The following questions were forwarded as the research problems:

1. What are pragmatic features of tag question and hedge found in the utterances of male and female of Siladangnese?

2. How are the differences of pragmatic features of tag question and hedge in the utterances of male and female of Siladangnese.

B. CONCEPT of TAG QUESTION and HEDGE

1. Tag Question

A tag questionis a grammatical structure. It refers to a declarative statement or an imperative that are modified to become a question by adding an interrogative fragment". In other word it can be stated that tag questions can be considered as an indicator of politeness, emphasis, or irony. It may suggest confidence or lack of confidence.

Men are said to use more *modal tags* and *affective tags* are more popular among women. She divided the pragmatic features of tag questions into two categories, they are:

a. *Modal tag* is speaker oriented in which the speaker wants his/her proposition to be confirmed by the addressee and sometimes to seek information from the addressee.

For example: *She´s coming around noon isn´t she?*

(Husband to wife concerning expected guest)

The realization of the pragmatic features of tag question:

She´s coming around noon isn´t she?

The above sentence means that a husband gives a signal to his wife to give confirmation or information concerning the expected guest who will come to their house. So, it is clear that the pragmatic feature of tag question in this sentence is modal tag.

b. *Affective tag*is speaker-oriented in whichthe speaker wants to soften the negative meaning in his/her proposition.

For example: *That was pretty silly, wasn´t it?*

(Older child to younger child)

The realization of pragmatic features of tag question:

That was pretty silly, wasn´t it?

There is a negative meaning in the above sentence which is *pretty silly.* The negative meaning is talked by the speaker as his/her personal attitude or opinion to someone, so to lessen the impact of the negative meaning, the speaker use the tag question in order not to hurt someone feeling. It means that it is affective tag.[7]

2. Hedge

The words hedge and hedging can be broadly defined as referring to a barrier, limit, defense, or the act or means of protection. The term 'hedge' is words whose job is to make things more or less fuzzy"'. The truth and falsity are a matter of degree, and hedges make natural language sentences more/less true or more/less false".

The theory also believes that women use more hedges than men do. She goes on to distinguish three different pragmatic features of hedges. They are:

a. First, as a means of uncertainty,It is described as a "fully legitimate" usage where the speaker is genuinely unsure of the facts.

For example: I do not know exactly about the reason of her gone.

The realization of the pragmatic feature of hedge:

I do not know exactly about….

The hedge is *I do not know exactly* indicate that the speaker did not know for sure about the reason why did she go. This hedge is as a sign of uncertainty.

b. Second, as a means of politeness, hedge mitigates the possible unfriendliness or unkindness of a statement. That is, where it is used for the sake of politeness.

For example: I'm afraid I can't agree ….

The realization of the pragmatic feature of hedge:

I'm afraid I can't agree with you on this point.

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[7] Palomares, N. A. & Lee, Eun Ju. 2009. *Virtual gender Identity: The Linguistics Assimilation to Gendered Avatars in Computer-Mediated Communication.* Sage Publication. pg. 7-8

The example is an evaluation to student's answer. Though the student's answer is completely wrong, theteacher's words sound very euphemistic.

c. Thirdly, as a means of certainty, the usage is when someone is very certain of the fact about the information being proposed.

For example: They told me that they are married.

The realization of the pragmatic feature of hedge:

They told me that ….

If the speaker only says that "they are married" and they do not know for sure if they are married, they may violate the maxim of quality since they say something that they do not know to be true or false. Nevertheless, by adding *they told me that*, the speaker wants to confirm that they are observing the conversational maxim of quality.[8]

The pragmatic features of hedge rely on the situation of producing the hedge. It means that the pragmatic features of hedge are various. It proposed some types of pragmatic features, they are:

to express self protection

For example: He told me that Marry will visit us today

The realization of the pragmatic features of hedge:

He told me that…

The above sentence contains a hedge namely "He told me". The speaker directly protects him/her by adding hedge in the sentence. The speaker avoids himself/herself from falsity of what being talked.

a. to express self deference of the limitation knowledge

For example: As what I know, the Bank has bankrupt.

The realization of the pragmatic features of hedge:

As what I know…

From the sentence above, the hedge "As what I know" means that the speaker limit his/her information about the situation of the bank. The speaker may be does not know for sure about the fact of the bank. So he/she make a limitation in the proposition.

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[8] Holmes, J. 1986.*Functions of 'you know' in women's and men's speech Language.*London, UK: Longman. pg.13-15

b. to express politeness

For example: You made a small mistake, so the computer didn't operate well.

The realization of the pragmatic features of hedge:

You made a small mistake..

The hedge in that sentence above indicates that the speaker wants to soften the negative meaning in his/her proposition. The speaker said that the mistake is small but actually the problem is very serious. So, in order not to hurt someone's feeling the speaker utter the hedge to soften the language.

c. to express the persuasive the language

For example: This information is so important for us to be success in this work.

The realization of the pragmatic features of hedge:

This information is so important…

The importance of hedges for the speaker's own face may be motivated by the fear of being proved wrong later on. Being imprecise or mitigating one's commitment to the truth-value of a proposition or a claim makes it possible to say, if proved wrong, that the claim was only tentative or an approximation.[9]

C. METHOD OF RESEARCH

In this study,qualitative descriptive method was applied by using Bogdan & Biklen approach. The data was collected by using observation and interview. The daily conversations by native speaker of Siladangnese were observed.

The analysis was done through some steps namley analyzed during data collection and (b) analyzed after the data collection. The data was analyzed through four steps namely first, data collection in which the researcher did observation and interview.

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[9] Wilamová. S. 2005. *Expressing Politeness in English Fictional Discourse.*Ostrava: OystrayskUniverzita. https://is.muni.cz/th/106163/pedf_b/text_prace.pdf).

In the observation the researcher directly observed all the activity of the informant and recorded their utterances and in interview the researcher interviewed three of the informant and recorded all the utterances. Secondly, data reduction in which the researcher reduced the data gained from the observation and interview and categorized them into tag question and hedge. Thirdly, data display, in which the researcher displayed the data of tag question and hedge then, analyzed them one by one.Fourthly, conclusion, in which the researcher was drawing and verifying the result of the study about the pragmatic features of tag question and hedge in the utterances of male and female of Siladangnese.[10]

D. DATA and DATA ANALYSIS

In this study, the data was collected by doing observation and interview. In the observation the researcher recorded the utterances of male and female of Siladangnese. The interview was done to find out the context of uttering more the pragmatic features of tag question and hedge in the utterances of male and female of Siladangnese.The researcher transcribed the utterances from the recorder of mobile phone, and then analyzed it that shown in this following section.The data deals with the pragmatic features of tag question and hedge used in the utterances of male and female of Siladangnese. In this case the data were uttered by male and female of Siladangnese. The data analysis can be seen as follows:

1. **The Pragmatic Features of Tag Question**

   1.1 The Pragmatic Features of Tag Question in the Utterances of Male Siladangnese

   After they have analyzed, there was only one pragmatic feature which found in the utterances of males Siladangnese, namely modal tag question. The pragmatic feature in the utterances of males Siladangnese can be seen in the table 1.1 below.

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[10] Bogdan, R. C. &Biklen, S. K. 1992.*Qualitative Research for Education; Introduction to Theory and Methods.*2 nd edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. pg. 98

Table 1.1 Tag Question in the Utterances

Male Siladangnese

Pragmatic Features of Tag Question	Total	Percentage
Modal tag	28	100
Affective tag	-	-
Total	28	100

From the data display above, it can be seen that males Siladangnese only utter modal tag in their utterances. Males of Siladangnese utter modal tag question because they are speaker-oriented. It means thatthe speaker wants his or her proposition to be confirmed by the addressee or seeks for information. Modal tag questions which are uttered by male Siladangnese are signals of speaker's desire for confirmation and information. They want somebody else can give confirmation of their proposition. It can be seen from the data in below:

To pala milas ofi ko, iyo?(Today is not really hot, isit?)

From this data, the speaker used modal tag question. It can be seen from the utterances uttered by the speaker that "*To pala milas ofi ko, iyo"?*it means that "*today is not really hot, isn't it?",* here the speaker wanted a confirmation about the statement that his uttered. The tag question "*iyo"* performs as the signal to the addressee in order to give confirmation.

1.2 The Pragmatic Features of Tag Question in the Utterances of Female Siladangnese

Based on the analysis, the pragmatic features of tag question in the utterances uttered by female Siladangnese are affective tag and modal tag. It can be seen in the table 1.2 as presented below.

Table 1.2 Tag Question in the Utterances of

Female Siladangnese

Pragmatic Features of Tag Question	Total	Percentage
Modal tag	21	65.63
Affective tag	11	34.37
Total	32	100

There is 65.63% of modal tag found in the utterances of femaleSiladangnese in which this kind of pragmatic feature dominated the tag question meaning in the utterances of female Siladangnese. The pragmatic feature of modal tag which is uttered by female Siladangnese is used in order to invite the addressee to give his or her confirmation or information toward the speaker's proposition. The use of modal tag in their utterances shows the lack of certainty in them. It means that kind of tag as a sign of uncertainty of female Siladangnese.

The data of pragmatic features of tag question namely modal tag can be seen as the following.

Kalamo adong do ngeo nta, iyo"?(we still have the coconut, don't we?

From the data, it is clear that the speaker was seeking for information from the addressee. The tag *"iyo"* worked as signal to the addressee to give some information about her statement. The speaker wanted to know is there any coconut left in their house or not. So, based on that situation the tag that is used by the speaker is modal tag question.

1.3 The Pragmatic Features of Hedge in the Utterances of Male Siladangnese

There are four pragmatic features of hedge found in the utterances of male Siladangnese. They are hedge as a means of protection, as a means of certainty, as a means of uncertainty and as a means of limitation. It can be seen in the table 1.3 below.

Table 1.3 Hedgein the Utterances of Male Siladangnese

Pragmatic Features of Hedge	Total	Percentage
As a means of protection	14	43.75
As a means of certainty	11	34.37
As a means of uncertainty	2	6.25
As a means of politeness	-	-
As a means of limitation	5	15.63
Total	32	100

The highest percentage of among the pragmatic features of hedge in the utterances of male Siladangnese is hedge as a means of protection which is 43.75% (see table 1.3). They use the hedge in order to protect themselves from falsity. The other pragmatic features of hedge in here are as a means of certainty which is 34.37%, as a means of uncertainty which is 6.25% and as a means of limitation which is 15.63%. But a pragmatic feature as a means of politeness is not found in the data. The elaboration of the data can be seen as follow.

"Okoh boto do rokok sadia sonnari, kolo sabibu tofonyo to pala bisa mambalik rokok i".(You know the price of a cigarette, if it is only a hundred, we cannotbuy it).

From this data, it can be seen that the speaker considered that the addressee also know the price of cigarette is not cheap. The speaker used the hedge *"you know"* as expressing speaker's confidence or certainty. The speaker confidently believed that the addressee also have the same experience with him about the price of the cigarette.

1.4   The Pragmatic Features of Hedge in the Utterances of FemaleSiladangnese

There are five pragmatic features of hedge in the utterances of female Siladangnese which are found in this study. They are a) hedge as a means of protection, b) hedge as a means of certainty, c) hedge as a means of uncertainty, d) hedge as a means of politeness, and e) hedge as a means of limitation. They are described in the following table (see table 1.4).

Table 1.4 Hedge of Female Siladangnese

Pragmatic Features of Hedge	Total	Percentage
As a means of protection	13	35.14
As a means of certainty	2	5.40
As a means of uncertainty	14	37.84
As a means of politeness	5	13.51
As a means of limitation	3	8.12
Total	37	100

From the table 1.4, it can be seen that the highest percentage of pragmatic feature of hedge is as a means of protection which is 35.14%. Just like male Siladangnese, the use of hedge for female Siladangnese is to protect them from falsity. The second rank is hedge as a means of uncertainty which is 37.84%. The other pragmatic features of hedge found in this study are hedge as a means of politeness, as a means of certainty and as a means of limitation. Some of data of hedge in the utterances of female Siladangnese elaborated as follows.

"Nakupikike ako bilo pokolampak ma jangen capak bori ni". (I think I will cook it at four o'clock, so it will not get spoiled too soon.)

From the data above, it can be seen that the hedge "*I think*" means of politeness. The speaker rejected to cook the food at the time her mother asked to do it. So, to soften the rejection, the speaker use hedge *"I think"* to show her politeness to her mother.

E. FINDING and DISCUSSION

1. Finding

a. There are two pragmatic features of tag question found in the utterances of male and female of Siladangnese, namely modal tag and affective tag. Male Siladangnese only utter modal tag while female Siladangnese utter both modal tag and affective tag. Then, there are five pragmatic features of hedge in the utterances of female Siladangnese, they are as a means of certainty, as a means of uncertainty, as a means of politeness,as a means of protection and as a means of limitation.But, male Siladangnese have less pragmatic features

of hedge than female. There was not found pragmatic features of hedge as a means of politeness in the utterances of male Siladangnese.

b. It was found that female Siladangnese tend to use the hedging expression *"Nakupikike (I think)"* as expressing uncertainty or softening theforce of the proposition. On the other hand, male Siladangnese uttered hedging expression *"Nakupikike (I think)"* to express certainty. Moreover, female Siladangnese tend to use the expression "Okohboto(*you know)"* function as a means of positive politeness. Male Siladangnese, on the other hand, use the hedging expression "Okohboto (*you know)"* as a means of certainty which it refers to presupposed shared knowledge or acts as a hedge on the validity of a proposition.

c. Speaker's sex influences the frequency of the pragmatic features of tag question and hedge. In mix sex talk, the pragmatic features of tag question and hedge is increased in the utterances of male and female of Siladangnese.

2. Discussion

Modal tag is the only pragmatic feature of tag question which found in the utterances of male Siladangnese. This tag is used as a sign of uncertainty. The role of 'modal' tags is to confirm information of which a speaker is uncertain. Males of Siladangnese uttered 28 modal tags in their utterances. All informant in this research uttered modal tag in showing their uncertainty of their proposition. They requested a confirmation or information to what they were talked about to the addressee when they used the tag *"iyo"* in their utterances.

Meanwhile, female Siladangnese uttered two types of pragmatic features of tag question namely modal tag and affective tag. The role of modal tag in female utterances is the same with the male has. It is a signal in order to get a confirmation or information toward the proposition delivered by the speaker. There are 21 modal tags provided by female Siladangnese in this research. This tag indicates that female Siladangnese is lack of certainty because the function of this tag is as a means of uncertainty. Another pragmatic feature of tag question found in the utterances of female Siladangnese is affective tag. This kind of tag the tag question can be understood as softening, since the utterance

can be interpreted as an attempt to soften the force, when addressing a possible sensitive subject. It is a kind of showing politeness toward the addressee. There are 11 out of the 32 tag questions provided by female found in this research adhered to affective tag. It means that almost a half of the total frequency of tag question uttered by female Siladangnese is affective tag.

Based on the analysis in this research, the frequency of tag question in males and females of Siladangnese is not too different. The total frequency of tag question in male Siladangnese utterances is 28 tags and female Siladangnese has 32 tags. It is clear that the difference is not significant which female has 4 more tags than male do. This finding is in line with Holmeswho reports that women and men do not notably differ in the total usage of tags, although men are more likely to use modal tags whereas women use more affective tags.

This finding also is strengthen by Holmeswho found out that certain types of tag question are used more by men than by women, namely*modal tags*, and certain other types are used more by women, namely *affective tags*. The finding of the research conducted by Holmes is in the line with the finding of this research.

Based on this research the frequency of hedge in female Siladangnese utterances more often found than in males of Siladangnese utterances, but the different is not significant. The frequency of hedge in female Siladangnese is 37 while male Siladangnese has 32 hedges.

While in the analysis, it was found that there are five pragmatic features of hedge in male and female Siladangnese utterances in which three of them theoretically match with the pragmatic features in the theory, namely hedge as a means of certainty, as a means of uncertainty, as a means of politeness, while two of them are new pragmatic features that are not described in the theory namely hedge as a means of protection and as a means of limitation.

The finding of hedge in this research is strengthened by the theory proposed by Willamová, who stated that the pragmatic features of hedge rely on the situation of producing the hedge. It means that the pragmatic features of hedge are various. She proposed some types of pragmatic features, they are: to

express self protection, to express self deference of the limitation knowledge, to express politeness, to express the persuasive the language and to express formality.

Therefore, the two pragmatic features of hedge in this finding namely as a means of protection and as a means of limitation are not match with the theory proposed by Lakoff. But, they are described in the theory Willamová, in which she stated that the pragmatic features of hedge are to express self protection, to express self deference of the limitation knowledge, to express politeness, to express the persuasive the language and to express formality.

F. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Conclusions

The study concerned on the pragmatic features of tag question and hedge in the utterances of male and female of Siladangnese. Based on the analysis, the conclusions are drawn as follows:

1. The Pragmatic features of tag question uttered by male Siladangnese is modal tag and the Pragmatic features of tag question uttered by female Siladangnese are modal tag and affective tag. It is also found that there are four pragmatic features of hedge found in the utterances of male Siladangnese namely hedge as a means of protection, as a means of certainty, as a means of uncertainty and as a means of limitation. Then, there are five pragmatic features of hedge in the utterances of female Siladangnese which are found in this study. They are a) hedge as a means of protection, b) hedge as a means of certainty, c) hedge as a means of uncertainty, d) hedge as a means of politeness, and e) hedge as a means of limitation.

2. The differences of pragmatic features of tag question in utterances of male and female Siladangnese is male Siladangnese tend to utter modal tag as a means of uncertainty, while female Siladangnese utter more affective tag as a means of politeness. Then, the differences of pragmatic features of hedgein the utterances of male and female of Siladangnese is the function of hedging expression *"Nakupikike (I think)"* and *"Okohboto (You Know)"*. The difference is that female Siladangnese utter the pragmatic features of hedge

especially the expression *"Nakupikike (I think)"* function as a means of uncertainty and softening language, while male Siladangnese utter the expression *"Nakupikike (I think)"* as a means of certainty . Another difference is that the use of hedging expression *"Okohboto (You Know)"* in the utterances of male Siladangnese as a means of certainty, but in the utterances of female Siladangnese the expression *"Okohboto (You Know)"* function as a means of positive politeness.

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