



A Sociolinguistic Study of Female Language with Reference to English and Kurdish

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ABSTRACT

The main aims of this study are to point out whether some aspects of language such as “hedges and fillers, tag-questions, hypercorrect grammar, interruption, soft swear words emphatic stress, super polite form, intensifiers, empty adjectives and rising intonation”, which are indicated by Lakoff, are used by females of English and Kurdish societies for different purposes or not, and if the level of literacy of females has any effect of them in using or not. To collect data, an open-ended questionnaire is used for collecting data from 70 senior Kurdish female students at Salahaddin University/ College of Languages/ English Department and 70 senior English female students at University of Leicester/ School of English. Both sides of the participants were asked to express their views on the same 10 statements. The researcher employed a mixed-methodologies technique that used quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze the data that was collected. The current study concluded that both sides of participants use most of the selected aspects of language for different purposes and the level of literacy of females has some effects on them in communication because through the process of education people can learn how to use the aspects of their language correctly.

1. Introduction

In every society, females and males complete each other and work together in many sectors. Both genders use a language to communicate and exchange information. It is worth pointing out that many academic researchers have conducted several studies



on the use of language between males and females. So, it can be said that working on the way females use language is not a very new phenomenon. However, if you look at most of the academic works on the language of females and males, they have focused on how both genders use their language in daily communication. There is no doubt that females and males communicate in two different ways. Thus, society is a major factor that affects the way females and males communicate because most societies give preference to males and consider them as first class. Moreover, many societies consider females as a second class. This difference causes males and females to have two different styles of communication. One of the famous sociolinguists, which is Lakoff, claims that some aspects of language which are “hedges and fillers, tag-questions, hypercorrect grammar, interruption, softer swear words emphatic stress, super polite form, intensifiers, empty adjectives and rising intonation”, are used between males and females for different purposes. It is worth saying that biologically females and males are different to each other. Therefore, it would be said that each of these two genders has its own way of communicating and behaving. Therefore, more academic researches should be done on some aspects of language to find out whether females from two different societies and males from two different societies use the same aspects of language for the same purpose or for two different purposes.

This academic study, unlike previous scientific researches, focuses on the use of some aspects of language between just females from two different societies, which are English and Kurdish societies such as, “hedges and fillers, tag-questions, hypercorrect grammar, interruption, soft swear words, emphatic stress, super polite form, intensifiers, empty adjectives and rising intonation”, which are pointed out by Lakoff (1975), to know whether they are used by females of English and Kurdish societies for the same purposes or for different ones.

1.1 The Problem of the Study:

There is no doubt that many academic studies have been conducted on the language of female speech in a society. Moreover, to my best of knowledge researchers have not investigated the female’s communication language style in two different societies to know whether females of both different societies have the same language style of

communication or not. In other words, enough academic studies have not been done about females in two different societies use some aspects of language such as “hedges and fillers, tag-questions, hypercorrect grammar, interruption, soft swear words emphatic stress, super polite form, intensifiers, empty adjectives and rising intonation” for the same purposes or different purposes to know whether females in two different societies have the same communication language style or not. Instead, the researchers only have applied the Lakoff’s views towards the female’s communication language on some females in a society by analyzing some speeches of some females. Therefore, the researcher of this study believed that such a study should be conducted to obtain new information on Lakoff's views on female communication language style in two different societies by conducting a questionnaire and making an interview because in this case females are able to express their views towards each view of Lakoff regarding the use of each aspect of language for a purpose.

1.2 The Aim of the Study

It is worth explaining that the current study does not analyze the speeches of females. Instead, it wants to know the English and Kurdish females’ views about the use of some aspects of language, which are claimed by Lakoff. To get some results, through making interviews, conducting a questionnaire and analyzing data, the results of the current study will be able to decide whether from two different societies, females agree or disagree with whatever Lakoff claims about the language of females in communication and for what purposes females use some aspects of language. In other words, it will be clear that females in two different societies use some aspects of language such as “hedges and fillers, tag-questions, hypercorrect grammar, interruption, soft swear words, emphatic stress, super polite form, intensifiers, empty adjectives and rising intonation” for the same purposes or different purposes.

1.3. The Research Questions

The study aims at addressing the following questions:

1- Do English and Kurdish females use most aspects of language, which are mentioned by Lakoff, for different purposes?

2- Does females' literacy level affect their use of most aspects of language?

1.4 Hypothesis:

This current paper hypothesizes that:

- 1- English and Kurdish females use most aspects of language for different purposes.
- 2- The level of literacy of females has effects of the use of some aspects of language.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Hedges (Cautious languages) and Fillers

Lakoff (1975, p.54) believes that some linguistic features such as 'you know', 'well', 'I think', 'sort of', 'I believe', 'er', 'mm', 'hmm', 'what I mean is' and other features are used by females in speaking. But, using of linguistic forms in speaking by females is a sign that females feel lack of confidence in talking. But, Lakoff's idea and thoughts towards females' speech was criticized by other linguists. Fishman (1998: 258) disagrees with Lakoff's belief by saying that women use many linguistic features in speaking when they do not receive responds by their partners in speaking. Females use these features to motivate others to be involved in speaking. Furthermore, when female's partners are not responsive in communication, they use many linguistic forms not to turn a good conversation to a bad one. Wilamova (2005: p. 81) and Coates (1988, p. 9) state that hedges and fillers can be considered as pragmatic markers, their function in utterance is to soften the strength of the sentences, females use hedges and fillers when they realize that males get angry in speaking. To reduce the anger of the men and prevent the conversation from ending unpleasantly, females use hedges and fillers while speaking.

2.2 The Tag-Question

Regarding using tag-questions by women there are different views. According to Lakoff (1975, p.54), when women are unsure about information or what they want to talk about, they frequently employ tag questions. However, Holmes (1993) disagrees with Lakoff's beliefs of using tag questions by female. Holmes (1993, p. 23) states that there are four functions of tag question such as expressing uncertainty, facilitative, softening and confrontational. He believes that males usually use tag questions when they have doubtful about what they talk about while females usually use tag



questions to facilitate the debate to motivate women's partner in conversation to a successful one and participate their partners in a better way. Therefore, it can be said that it does not mean that women feel lack of confidence during speaking when they use tag questions. On the other hand, Coates (2004, p. 90) states that there are two types of tag-questions which are modal tag-questions and affective tag-questions. Both types generally are more used by women than men. Modal tag-questions are used when women want their views to be confirmed by their listeners. However, affective tag-questions are used when women want to know the listener's views about their ideas and speeches. The main purposes of using both types of tag-questions by women are to get more information, make facilities in conversation and to soften the conversation.

2.3 Hypercorrect Grammar

According to Lakoff (1975: p. 49), females usually utilize the standard verb forms when they want to show their politeness to others because in some societies women are viewed as being of lower social standing. Brown (1980: p. 112) states that it is undeniable truth that females are more aware than men in using the correctness of grammar because in the most of societies female is considered as a powerless class compared to male and male is considered as a first and powerful class.

On the other hand, Trudgill (1983b: 88) and Pan (2011, p. 1017) note that females use the correct form verbs, standard language, pronunciation and standard grammatical forms to avoid being perceived as a lower class or subject to criticism by people; as a result, females have better status consciousness in conversation. For example, women usually use the full spelling of the verbs while speaking, because using the full spelling of the verbs is related to the politeness. Moreover, women pronounce all words correctly without skipping the any sound of any letter, especially the sound of *-ing* and *-ed* at the end of words. Xia (2013, p. 1488) states that females strive to better themselves by utilizing standard language because they are very aware of their status and long for a better place in society. Women are more aware of speaking to show that they have enough ability to speak like males in society.

2.4 Interaction

Male and female communication styles are known to differ, and numerous studies on these interactions have been conducted. Lakoff (2002 cited in Githens 2016, p.12) points out that interruption occurs more frequently in males than in females when they speak to each other. Moreover, men usually want to control conversation when they speak to women. Similarly, in a non-private conversation, such as a conference or a meeting, Holmes (1993, p. 25) notes that it is evident that men typically control the talking time. Concerning interruptions, Tannen (1994: p.53), Zimmerman and West (1975, p. 112) claim that the most intriguing finding was that, whereas cross-sex contacts revealed that men interrupted women most frequently, same-sex interactions showed a relatively similar amount of interruptions.

Regarding cooperative overlap, Tannen (1994: 53) states overlap occurs when men and women talk to each other. This does not mean that they want to interrupt each other to show their dominance. Instead, this means that they listen enthusiastically to each other and want to add more information to their conversation. Bennett (1981, p. 179) points out that people should make differentiate between interruption and overlaps. Overlap is neutral and interruption is negative, they should be handled differently. Falk (1980: 512) believes that overlaps can be viewed as a helpful and advantageous part of dialogue.

2.5 Avoidance of Strong Swear Words

Swear words sometimes are pointed out as a taboo language. Lakoff (1975) believes that it is society which makes female to attempt to have a proper language for communication. Therefore there is a difference between female and male in conversation. Moreover, Lakoff (1975, p.50 and 1998: p. 246) states that society does not take and accept female's seriousness as an individual and first class in the society, therefore; women try to accept a proper language for conversation. In addition, he believes that male uses stronger swear words such as 'damn' and 'shit' than female in conversation. But, female uses some softer swear words such as 'sugar', and 'heck'. According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003, p. 181), a swear word is a type of interjection or exclamation that is used to show strong emotion and has long been seen as a potent statement. This is regarded as a strong language that occasionally

has significant consequences on the style of speaking. Additionally, it is thought to be inappropriate for usage by females and kids. Swear words more frequently are employed by males than by females because males usually use them in their speech. Moreover, Coates (2004: p.98) mentions that both men and women generally use more swear words when a man talks to a man and a woman talks to a woman. It means that they usually have more swear words when they are in conversation with the same sex.

2.6 Emphatic Stress

According to Lakoff (1975, p. 47), emphatic stress is a common term for the special emphasis that a speaker gives to a word in a sentence, usually to highlight, contrast, correct, or clarify something. Emphatic stress words are used by females to strengthen and emphasize the meaning of a sentence. Oktapiani et al (2017, p. 211) states that the words *really* and *brilliant* are used as emphatic stress in the sentences “he is really handsome” and “it was a brilliant performance”.

2.7 Super Polite Form

Lakoff (1975, pp. 56-57) believes that regarding politeness in communication females are more polite than males because they use polite words and sentences when they ask other to do something for them. For example, if at the same time a man and woman ask another one to close the door. The man says “close the door”. But, the woman says “will you please close the door?” Putra and Prayudha (2019, p.7) point out that women are so polite in communication because they try to avoid offending others.

2.8 Intensifiers

According to Lakoff (1975, p. 53), females are used more intensifiers such as “so, much, just, awfully, terribly, vastly, pretty” while speaking generally compared to men. Among all mentioned intensifiers *so* is used by women more than other intensifiers. Regarding the purpose of utilizing intensifiers by women, Pan (2011, p.1016) states that intensifiers are used by women just to strengthen the meaning of what they want to say.



2.9 Empty Adjectives

Lakoff (1975, p. 51) states that there are some neutral adjectives, which are used by males and females in communication. But, among all adjectives some of them are called empty adjectives and are used by women in conversation. There are some empty adjectives such as “adorable, charming, sweet, lovely, divine, gorgeous and cute”. There are several groups of adjectives that not only have a literal meaning but also convey the approbation or appreciation of speakers for a given object. Oktapiani et al (2017, p. 210) believes that using empty adjectives makes the language of females more interesting.

2.10 Rising Intonation on Declarative

According to Lakoff (1975, pp.55-56) and Xia (2013, p.1485), when females are asked questions, they sometimes answer with a rising intonation. Using this rising intonation does not have any bad effective on the language of females. Instead, it is a type of declarative response to a query. Moreover, this intonation might occasionally be interpreted as lacking confidence of yes-no questions. Contrarily, males prefer to utilize falling intonation to convey a sense of certainty in their speech. Falling intonation also demonstrates men's self-assurance and occasionally power.

3. Methods of Data Collection

3.1 Data Collection

The open-ended survey was created for this study to gather additional viewpoints from senior students. The questionnaire included 10 items. For analyzing the obtained data both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. Every item on the questionnaire needed written responses from each participant. Additionally, enough time was given to each participant to accurately convey their opinions on each item.

To analyze the obtained data, the Likert Scale was employed. According to the Likert Scale, five viable answers should be offered, such as (Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, and Strongly Agree=5), so that survey respondents can express their ideas on each issue. The researcher wanted to make sure that all modified items are understandable and that all participants can clearly express their



views on all items, so before asking the questionnaire's participants to share their opinions about each item, a small group of senior students were asked to express their point of view about each item. This is called piloting. Over three weeks following the distribution of the questionnaire to the participants, the answers were gathered. In this instance, the questionnaire's face validity was obtained.

3.2 Participants

To collect academic data 70 female students at Salahaddin University-Erbil/ College of Languages/ English Department participated in the questionnaire and another 70 female students at the University of Leicester-UK from Department of English participated in the questionnaire as well. Generally, the age of senior students was from 22 to 25. They had enough time to express their views regarding each item in the questionnaire. On purpose, the students from the departments were requested to participate in the current study because the researcher wanted to collect data from participants of two different societies and make a comparison between the two collected data. Also, students usually provide academic views.

3.3 Validity and Reliability

Regarding validity, the collected data must make sense and provide an excellent conclusion or result to the researchers. Therefore, before collecting data some university professors, as jury members, evaluated all items of the questionnaire to be sure that all items are good and related to the current study. They offered insightful remarks on each item. Finally, each item has undergone minor adjustments. Regarding reliability, when the same participants give their opinions on the questionnaire items at two distinct items, it suggests that the data should be stable. To confirm that the participants provide the same opinions as the first time, the researcher requested the same participants to submit their thoughts regarding each item three weeks after collecting the data for the first time.

3.4 Data Analysis

The SPSS 21 program was used to analyze the collected data to determine the percentage of participants' views, the mean score, and the standard deviation for each option in each item. Cronbach's alpha can be used to determine the degree of

internal consistency of results from two data sets that were acquired for the same questionnaire items, according to Wodak (2019, 47). For the result to be considered significant, it must be equal to or lower than $\alpha=0.05$.

3.5 Results

1- As for item (1), which says ‘hedges (cautious languages) and fillers are used by females when they feel lack of confidence’. Hedges and fillers such as “well, you know, I think, I believe, er, mm, and so on”. As pointed out in Table (1), the results show that 82.86% of English participants strongly disagree and 17.14% of them disagree with the statement. The mean score is 1.17, and the standard deviation is 0.58. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.02. Therefore, the result is statistically significant because it is less than $\alpha= 0.05$. The participants say that the reason of using hedges and fillers by females in communication is that they always try to soften their communication with others. It is clear that when females are in conversation with males, males sometimes get angry especially when they talk about those subjects, which are dealt with more by females. In this case, to reduce the anger of males, females use hedges and fillers. Therefore, when hedges and fillers are used by females, it does not mean that they have lack of confidence while speaking about something. It is worth noting that the level of literacy has enough effects on using hedges and fillers by females.

On the other hand, as pointed out in Table (1), regarding the Kurdish participants, 70% of them strongly disagree and 30% of them disagree with the statement. The mean score is 1.3, and the standard deviation is 0.77. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.03. Therefore, the result is statistically significant because it is less than $\alpha= 0.05$. The participants mention that when females are in conversation with men or other females; they usually use fillers and hedges when they feel that the other people are not responding to them. So, in order not to let the conversation be over, females usually use hedges and fillers to get answers to their questions and views from their listeners. Like English female participants, Kurdish female participants say that females' educational background influences the use of all types of hedges and fillers during communication.

Table (1): English participants’ responses to item (1)

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 1	English Participants	82.86%	17.14%			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 1	Kurdish Participants	70%	30%			

2- As for item (2), which says ‘females use tag-questions when they are unsure about something while speaking’. Tag-questions such as “isn’t it, don’t we, wasn’t it and so on”. As stated in Table (2), the results show that 60% of English participants strongly disagree, 28.57% disagree and 11.43% are neutral. The mean score is 1.51, and the standard deviation is 1.12. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.04. Therefore, the result is statistically significant because it is less than alpha= 0.05. They believe that women use tag-questions in communication to encourage their listeners to be more involved in the conversation because some people sometimes do not say anything when others speak to them.

On the other hand, regarding of the Kurdish participants as stated in Table (2), the results show that 64.29% of participants strongly disagree, 20% disagree and 15.71% are neutral. The mean score is 1.51, and the standard deviation is 1.15. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.02. Therefore, the result is statistically significant because it is less than alpha= 0.05. They state that females use tag-questions to get the views of their listeners about what the females talk about and make their listeners evaluate what females say while speaking. In this case, more ideas and views are exchanged by speakers and listeners. Both sides can express more information about a subject being discussed between them. Therefore, it can be said that females usually use tag-questions when they want to get more information about a particular subject. It should be said that the level of female’s literacy has enough influences on using all types of tag-questions. Otherwise, they cannot use tag-questions accurately.

Table (2): English participants’ responses to item (2)

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 2	English Participants	60%	28.57%	11.43%		
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 2	Kurdish Participants	64.29%	20%	15.71%		

3- As for item (3), which says ‘Females use hypercorrect grammar to show their politeness’. Hypercorrect grammar such as “ain’t, and the use of standard verb forms”. As mentioned in Table (3), regarding the English participants the results show that 35.71% of the participants strongly disagree and 64.29% of them disagree with the statement. The mean score is 1.64, and the standard deviation is 1.13. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.03. Therefore, the result is statistically significant because it is less than $\alpha=0.05$. They believe that nowadays there is no relationship between using language and having a good grammar to show politeness. Having a good level of grammar is mainly due to people's level of literacy. If people are well educated, they can use the grammar of their language excellently, but if they are not well educated, and have not studied language science in detail in institute or university, they cannot use any language with a very good level of grammar. Moreover, females use the hypercorrect grammar in communication in order not to be considered as a lower class in society because in most societies males believe that females cannot speak accurately as males do.

On the other hand, regarding of the Kurdish participants as stated in Table (3), the results show that 85.71% of participants strongly disagree and 14.29% disagree with the statement. The mean score is 1.14, and the standard deviation is 0.53. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.01. Therefore, the result is statistically significant because it is less than $\alpha=0.05$. They believe that women use their language in communication with a good level of grammar when speak to others to prove that they are as able to speak with having a good level in grammar of their language as men. Moreover, females usually try to pronounce all words and suffixes correctly. Additionally, they believe that females always try to use

hypercorrect grammar in communication. This reason of using hypercorrect grammar by females in the Kurdish society is that there is no employment opportunity in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region in state sectors. In this case, females try to get jobs in the private sectors. In the private sectors, all candidates are interviewed before getting a job; if any candidate has a poor level in using language with a good level in grammar, he/ she cannot get a job there. Therefore, females always try to be able to have a very good level of using language with having a very good level of grammar in communication. Also, when females are well educated; they can have a good level of using hypercorrect grammar.

Table (3): English participants’ responses to item (3)

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 3	English Participants	35.71%	64.29%			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 3	Kurdish Participants	85.71%	14.29%			

4- As for item (4), which says ‘During interaction, females usually do not interrupt others because they cannot control the conversation’. Regarding the English participants, as stated in Table (4) the results show that 40% of the participants strongly agree, 45.71% agree and 14.29% are neutral. The mean score is 4, 25, and the standard deviation is 3.78. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.002. Therefore, the result is statistically significant because it is less than $\alpha = 0.05$. They believe that males interrupt women more during conversations. Males believe that they are more superior to women, so females should talk less and listen more to males. This is more common at the workplace, where males are more likely to interrupt women when they talk to each other, especially those males who are responsible for a department or a section at the workplace. Therefore, females cannot control the conversation. It should not be forgotten that when people are well educated at universities and institutes; they interrupt each other rarely because at that time they know that interrupting each other is not good.

On the other hand, regarding the views of the Kurdish participants, as stated in Table (4) the results show that 44.29% of the participants strongly disagree and 55.71% of them disagree. The mean score is 1.55, and the standard deviation is 1.05. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.04. Therefore, the result is statistically significant because it is less than $\alpha = 0.05$. They mention that females sometimes interrupt males more during conversation, and sometimes males interrupt females more during conversation. Interruptions during conversation depend on the topics being discussed. For example, if the topic is about cars and types of cars, males are more likely to interrupt females because males have more experience and knowledge about cars. However, if the topic is about parenting, females are more likely to interrupt males during the conversation because they have more knowledge about parenting than males and can control the conversation. The participants say that when females hear incorrect information from people; they interrupt them to correct what they have said. Therefore, the main purpose of interruption by females is to correct. Of course, when people have a good level of educational background; they do not interrupt each other while speaking.

Table (4): English participants’ responses to item (4)

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 4	English Participants			14.29%	45.71%	40%
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 4	Kurdish Participants	44.29%	55.71%			

5- As for item (5), which says ‘Females use soft swears words to keep their dignity and personality’. Soft swear words such as “my goodness, heck, fudge and so on”. Both the English and Kurdish participants provided the same views for item (5). Regarding the English participants, as pointed out in the Table (5), the results show that 58.57% of the participants strongly agree and 41.43% of them agree with the statement. The mean score is 4.58, and the standard deviation is 4.08. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.01. Therefore, the result is statistically significant

because it is less than $\alpha = 0.05$. But, regarding the Kurdish participants, as pointed out in the Table (5), the results show that 55.71% of the participants strongly agree and 44.29% of them agree with the statement. The mean score is 4.55, and the standard deviation is 4.05. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.02. Therefore, the result is statistically significant because it is less than $\alpha = 0.05$. They believe that females always use soft words and males use strong swear words in communication. When males and females are surprised about a news or event, they always use certain words; the certain words are called strong and soft swear words. It is clear that soft swear words such as *my goodness, my god* and *oh dear* are used by females, and strong swear words are such as *shit, damn it* and *hell* used by males. Females are more conscious of their dignity and language use than males are. Therefore, they always use softer swear words than males because those people, who use rude words, are usually criticized and considered as not well educated people by other people in society. When pupils and students study at schools and universities; they are informed and taught that just softer swear words should be used in communication because when some people use strong swear words, other people considered them as rude people. Hence, the level of literacy of females plays a great role of using soft swear words.

Table (5): English participants’ responses to item (5)

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 5	English Participants				41.43%	58.57%
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 5	Kurdish Participants				44.29%	55.71%

6- As for item (6), which says ‘Females use emphatic stress to emphasize the meaning of a word’. Emphatic stress such as “brilliant, really, extremely, terribly and so on”. It should be mentioned that both sides of participants have the similar views for item (6). Regarding the English participants, as stated in the Table (6), the results show that 51.43% of the participants strongly disagree and 48.57% of them disagree with the

statement. The mean score is 1.48, and the standard deviation is 0.98. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.004. Therefore, the result is statistically significant because it is less than $\alpha = 0.05$. Regarding the Kurdish participants, 38.57% of the participants strongly disagree and 61.43% of them disagree with the statement. The mean score is 1.61, and the standard deviation is 1.10. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.009. Therefore, the result is statistically significant because it is less than $\alpha = 0.05$. They state that females frequently employ words that emphasize a point or strengthen the meaning of a statement or a word in a sentence. Emphatic stress is used to indicate a word that needs to be highlighted or read aloud in a statement. However, in written communication, the word that requires additional emphasis is either underlined or has its entire letters capitalized. It should be noted that in both spoken and written language, an adjective is frequently used before the specific word. But, it should be noted that those people, who are illiterate or have a poor level of literacy, cannot use those words that emphasize a point or strengthen the meaning of a word or a phrase in a sentence appropriately.

Table (6): English participants’ responses to item (6)

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 6	English Participants	51.43%	48.57%			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 6	Kurdish Participants	38.57%	61.43%			

7- As for item (7), which says ‘Females use super polite form in communication to show their politeness’. Super polite forms such as “indirect questions and euphemism”. Regarding the English participants, as pointed out in the Table (7), the results show that 54.29% of participants strongly agree and 45.71% of them agree with the statement. The mean score is 4.54, and the standard deviation is 4.04. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.01. Therefore, the result is statistically significant because it is less than $\alpha = 0.05$. There are two reasons

why females speak more politely than males. First, generally females are naturally very respectful. Second, they use super polite form in communication not to be considered as a lower class in the society especially by males.

On the other hand, regarding the Kurdish participants, as pointed out in Table (7), 58.57% of the strongly disagree and 41.43% of them disagree with the statement. The mean score is 1.41, and the standard deviation is 0.91. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.005. Therefore, the result is statistically significant because it is less than $\alpha = 0.05$. They state that females do not use super polite form in communication just to show their politeness. Instead, there are some reasons of using super polite form in communication by females. First, females always believe that if you directly order others to do something, this direct of requesting or ordering may have a negative impact on others. Second, females do not want to offend others by using direct order. Third, if females directly order others, especially males, to do something for them, they may not do anything for females because males usually do not accept direct order from females. Fourth, females usually do not order others, especially males, directly to do something because males may believe that females consider themselves greater than males therefore they directly order males to do something, as it is clear that ordering occurs from up to down. Therefore, females always use super polite form in communication while ordering. For example, generally females never say “Open the window”. Instead, they say “could you kindly open the window”. It should be mentioned that those females, who are a better level of education than those females who have a poor level of education background; can use super polite form in communication because they study all forms of super polite in detail.

Table (7): English participants’ responses to item (7)

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 7	English Participants				45.71%	54.29%
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 7	Kurdish Participants	58.57%	41.43%			

8- As for item (8), which says ‘Females use intensifiers to strengthen what they want to say’. Intensifiers such as “so, just, totally, absolutely, awfully and so on”. Regarding the English participants, as stated in Table (8), the results show that 52.86% of the participants strongly agree and 47.14% of them agree with the statement. The mean score is 4.52, and the standard deviation is 4.02. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.04. Therefore, the result is statistically significant because it is less than alpha= 0.05. They believe that females use intensifiers while speaking to reinforce whatever they want to say to show their feelings towards something or someone and to add more meaning to a word in a sentence. It is worth noting that those females, who have a better educational background than those females with a poor level of educational background, are able to use all intensifiers correctly and much more appropriately. Regarding the Kurdish participants, as stated in Table (8), the results show that 42.86% of the participants strongly disagree, 35.71% of them disagree with the statement and 21.43% of them are neutral. The mean score is 1.78, and the standard deviation is 1.41. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.03. Therefore, the result is statistically significant because it is less than alpha= 0.05. They believe that in the Kurdish society females use intensifiers in communication due to two reasons. First, they use intensifiers to beautify their language. Second, to prove that females use different vocabulary in speaking compared to males. The use of intensifiers depends on the level of literacy of males and females. There is no doubt that everyone learns how intensifiers are used in sentences and communication through the educational process.

Table (8): English participants’ responses to item (8)

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 8	English Participants				47.14%	52.86%
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 8	Kurdish Participants	42.86%	35.71%	21.43%		

9- As for item (9), which says ‘Females use empty adjectives for praising’. Empty adjectives such as “charming, cute, sweet, adorable, gorgeous, lovely and so on”. Regarding the English participants, as showed in Table (9), the results show that 31.43% of the participants strongly agree, 42.86% of them agree and 25.71% of them are neutral. The mean score is 4.05, and the standard deviation is 3.66. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.02. Therefore, the result is statistically significant because it is less than $\alpha = 0.05$. They believe that females generally use empty adjectives to describe what they want to say and give an emotional reaction and feeling towards a particular subject or object. Moreover, females use precise color terms, such as “beige, lavender and reddish-brown” to describe objects completely. But, it is undeniable fact that the level of female’s literacy has effects on using empty adjectives because those females, who are literate, use empty adjectives more than those females who are illiterate, this is due to they always want to strengthen whatever want to say.

Regarding the views of the Kurdish participants to the current item, as showed in Table (9), the results show that 47.14% of the participants strongly disagree and 52.86% of them disagree with the statement. The mean score is 1.52, and the standard deviation 1.02. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.04. Therefore, the result is statistically significant because it is less than $\alpha = 0.05$. They state that there are some reasons of using empty adjectives by females. First, they use empty adjectives to attract other people to themselves. Second, females use empty adjectives to show that the language of females is different to the language of males in communication. Third, it is the nature of females to use very empty adjectives while speaking.

However, it should be pointed out that the Kurdish participants believe that females use precise color terms, such as “aquamarine, magenta and azure” when they talk about anything to describe objects as they are, without giving any inaccurate or incorrect description. But, it is true that the level of literacy of females have enough effects on them to use all empty adjectives correctly when it is necessary because without having a good level of the educational background, no one is able to know all empty adjectives.

Table (9): English participants’ responses to item (9)

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 9	English Participants			25.71%	42.86%	31.43%
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 9	Kurdish Participants	47.14%	52.86%			

10- As for item (10), it says ‘Females use the rising intonation when they declare some information, and it is sometimes a sign of hesitation about the truth of their answer’. Regarding the English participants, as stated in Table (10), the results show that 60% of participants strongly agree, 25.71% of them agree and 14.29% of them are neutral with the statement. The mean score is 4.45, and the standard deviation is 3.99. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.04. Therefore, the result is statistically significant because it is less than $\alpha=0.05$. They believe that females usually use the rising intonation when they declare something after getting questions. But, it is worth saying that females use the rising intonation, while answering questions, when they are in doubt about the truth of their answers. There is no doubt that the level of literacy has enough effects on females to use the rising intonation. On the other hand, regarding the Kurdish participants, as stated in Table (10), the results show that 42.86% of participants strongly disagree and 57.14% of them disagree with the statement. The mean score is 1.57, and the standard deviation is 1.06. For this item, based on the views of participants the P-Value is 0.01. Therefore, the result is statistically significant because it is less than $\alpha=0.05$. They believe that females use the rising intonation when they declare some information after getting questions, but they are definitely sure about what they want to declare, therefore; they use the rising intonation. The Kurdish participants mention that it is the process of education, which teaches females how to use the rising intonation correctly.

Table (10): English participants’ responses to item (10)

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 10	English Participants			14.29%	25.71%	60%
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 10	Kurdish Participants	42.86%	57.14%			

4. Discussion

Generally speaking, depending on the obtained data, the level of literacy has enough effects on English and Kurdish females of using of all aspects of language because it is clear that generally females with good literacy and educational backgrounds communicate more beautifully than females with poor level of literacy. It is worth noting that regarding of using some aspects of language which are mentioned by Lakoff cannot be applied on females in all different societies in the world. Therefore, for the current research, the researcher collected data from two different societies, an English society and a Kurdish society to know whether some aspects of language are used for the same purposes or not by females in two different societies or not.

After analyzing the data, it is clear that both English and Kurdish females use hedges and fillers but for different purposes. Here, it is clear that females in both societies do not agree with using hedges and fillers for the purpose that Lakoff refers to. The English females believe that when males get angry, females use hedges and fillers to reduce their anger. So, by using hedges and fillers females can prevent males getting angry while speaking to each other. But, the Kurdish females indicate that when the other people, who listen to females, do not respond to their questions and comments; females use hedges and fillers to make the other people respond to their comments, views and questions. In this case, their conversation will not be over soon. So, it can be said that females are eager to talk to other people.

Regarding using tag-questions by females, when English females speak to other people but they do not get answers to their questions and views appropriately, females use tag-questions to encourage more people to be involved in the conversation to get answers to their questions and views. Therefore, it can be said



that females use tag-questions as an indirect tool to learn more about a topic and to get more others involved in the conversation. Also, it is unfair to say females use tag-questions when they are unsure about what they talk about while speaking with others. However, Kurdish female believe that when females want their views be evaluated by others; they use tag-questions when they ask other people about anything. In this case, more ideas will be exchanged between females and other people because they ask questions and answer each other. Therefore, they have a richer communication when they exchange more ideas.

Regarding using hypercorrect grammar by females, according to the current study; English females use the hypercorrect grammar for a different purpose, not for the purpose that Lakoff refers to. They use hypercorrect grammar during conversation in order not to be considered as a lower class in the society. This is a good perception from English females because when a female is not able to speak with having a good level of grammar, other people consider her as undeveloped person. So, in order not to be criticized by other people, females use hypercorrect grammar. Regarding the Kurdish females' views, whenever people want to get a job, they should be interviewed to assess their literacy and communication skills. If people do not have good grammar and conversation skills they will find it very difficult to get jobs. Therefore, females always perform well in using hyper-correct grammar in order to get jobs.

Regarding interruption, English females believe that females do not interrupt other people while speaking because they cannot control the conversation. This is due to that most societies give preference to males. Therefore, females do not interrupt others while speaking. However, the Kurdish females have a different view. They believe that when females have more information than others about a topic; they interrupt and correct others when females hear incorrect information. This is a good view because if females have more knowledge about the subject they discuss, they interrupt other people during the discussion and control the discussion. For example, during class, a female student sometimes talks more about a topic after the instructor asks questions. This does not mean that the female student does not allow other students to control the conversation. Instead, it means that she has more information



than other students. Therefore, she answers the questions and controls the conversation.

Regarding the use of softer swear words by females, English and Kurdish females have the same view. They believe that females have softer swear words in communication because using strong swear words has negative effects on their dignity and personality. Therefore, females always use softer swear words while talking to protect themselves from being criticized and not be considered as a lower class.

Regarding using emphatic stress by females, English and Kurdish females have the same view. They state that females use some words (such as adjectives) to emphasize the meaning of a word in a sentence. It is clear that adjectives give more meaning to a word in a sentence. Therefore, females from both societies use them in communication.

Regarding using super polite form in communication by females, English females state that females use super polite form in communication for two reasons. First, females usually are very respectful and respect people. Therefore, they use super polite forms. Second, if females do not use super polite form in communication, other people consider them as a lower class in society. Regarding, Kurdish females, they believe that females use super polite forms because they believe that if you directly command others to do something, this style of command will have a negative impact on others, and they may not do it. But, if you ask the others to do something gently and nicely, they will do it without hesitation. It can be said that this way of speaking makes others respect females more. It can be said that this view is nice because generally females do not offend other people while ordering because they usually use indirect questions for ordering. Generally, females are sensitive and know how to tell others to do something.

Regarding using intensifiers by females, depending on the results of the current research, the purpose of using of the intensifiers is different from a society to another one. In the English society, females use intensifiers to strengthen and add more meaning to a word in a sentence. But Kurdish females use intensifiers for to beautify their language and to show that females use different vocabulary in communication. The views of English and Kurdish females are correct because in every society, it can



be felt that females usually have a different style of speaking by using different words while they talk about any topic and object.

Regarding empty adjectives, based on the results of this study, it is clear in English society females use empty adjectives to show their feelings towards something. However, in Kurdish society, females use empty adjectives to attract other towards their language and to show that they have a specific language in speaking. Their views are correct because females always try to show their feelings towards everything, and their style of speaking is different with the style of speaking of males. For example, females always speak very slowly and calmly.

Regarding the use of rising intonation, all English participants in the English community indicate that females use rising intonation in conversation when they want to announce information and feel hesitation about their answers. However, in Kurdish society, females use rising intonation when they want to announce information and are sure of the truthfulness of the information.

After analyzing the data, it is found that Lakoff's views towards the language of females cannot be applied to all females in different societies of the world because Lakoff's views on females' language vary from society to society. Therefore, more academic researchers are needed to be done. If there is a slight difference between the communications of females from two different societies, the society has a role on the style of speaking of females because generally every member in a society tries to use every single aspect of language for the same purpose as his/ her surroundings use to because it is clear that everyone always imitates his parents and those people, who are around him. Finally, as a new model it can be said that females from a society to another society use most aspects of language, which are indicated by Lakoff, for different purposes. Moreover, it should be stated that the level of literacy has sufficient influences on females on the use of any aspect of language.

5. Conclusion

1- Females of English and Kurdish societies use most aspects of language in daily communication. But, they use them for different purposes. In this case, it is the answer of the first research question of the current study. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the first hypothesis of the study is verified.

2- The level of the literacy has enough effects on English and Kurdish females on using of most aspects of language. Females with higher literacy levels can use most aspects of language better and without mistakes than those females, who are illiterate or do not have a good level of literacy. In this case, it is the answer of the second research question of the current study. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the second hypothesis of the study is verified.

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Appendix

**Salahaddin University-Erbil
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Dear Respondent,

My name is Sangar Othman Ibrahim. I am working on an academic research. The title of this academic research is **A Sociolinguistic Study of Female Language with Reference to English and Kurdish**. I'm using this questionnaire to collect data for my academic study. You are required to participate in the current questionnaire by choosing one option for each statement and sharing your thoughts. If you have any queries, don't hesitate to ask them.

I want to reassure you that the data you supply and your name will be used anonymously, kept private, and that you can withdraw at any moment, for any reason.

The major objectives of this study are to determine whether certain linguistic features, like “hedges and fillers, tag-questions, hypercorrect grammar, interruption, soft swear words emphatic stress, super polite form, intensifiers, empty adjectives and rising intonation”, which are indicated by Lakoff, are used by females of English and Kurdish societies for various aims or not, and the level of literacy of females has any effect of them in using or not.

“By answering 'YES' to the question below, you confirm that you have understood this and consent to take part in the research under the confidentiality conditions stated”.

“Note: You can use a separate sheet to provide your views for each item”.

Do you consent to taking part in this research? YES/ NO

Name:

Place of Work:

Gender:

“Note: for each of the questions below, circle the response that best characterizes how you feel about the statement, where: 1= Strongly disagree (SD), 2= Disagree (D), 3= Neutral (N), 4= Agree (A), and 5= Strongly Agree (SA). Moreover, provide the reasons for your choice of every item”.

Items	How you feel about the statement				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
1- Hedges (cautious languages) and fillers are used by females when they feel lack of confidence. Hedges and					



<p>fillers such as “well, you know, I think, I believe, er, mm, and so on”.</p> <p>The reasons for your choice:</p>					
<p>2- Females use tag-questions when they are unsure about something while speaking. Tag-questions such as “isn’t it, don’t we, wasn’t it and so on”.</p> <p>The reasons for your choice:</p>					
<p>3- Females use hypercorrect grammar to show their politeness’. Hypercorrect grammar such as “ain’t, and the use of standard verb forms”.</p> <p>The reasons for your choice:</p>					
<p>4- During interaction, females usually do not interrupt others because they cannot control the conversation.</p> <p>The reasons for your choice:</p>					
<p>5- Females use soft swears words to keep their dignity and personality’. Soft swear words such as “my goodness, heck, fudge and so on”.</p> <p>The reasons for your choice:</p>					
<p>6- Females use emphatic stress to emphasize the meaning of a word’. Emphatic stress such as “brilliant, really, extremely, terribly and so on”.</p> <p>The reasons for your choice:</p>					
<p>7- Females use super polite form in communication to show their politeness’. Super polite forms such as “indirect questions and euphemism”.</p> <p>The reasons for your choice:</p>					
<p>8- Females use intensifiers to strengthen what they want to say’. Intensifiers such as “so, just, totally, absolutely, awfully and so on”.</p> <p>The reasons for your choice:</p>					
<p>9- Females use empty adjectives for praising’. Empty adjectives such as “charming, cute, sweet, adorable, gorgeous, lovely and so on”.</p> <p>The reasons for your choice:</p>					
<p>10- Females use the rising intonation when they declare some information, and it is sometimes a sign of hesitation about the truth of their answer.</p> <p>The reasons for your choice:</p>					

تویژینه وهیه کی کۆمه لایه تی زمانه وانى له زمانى ئافره ت به ئاماژه دان به ئینگلیزی و کوردی

پوخته

ناونیشانی ئەم تویژینه وهیه بریتیه له 'تویژینه وهیه کی کۆمه لایه تی زمانه وانى له زمانى ئافره ت به ئاماژه دان به ئینگلیزی و کوردی'. ئاماژه سه ره کیه کانی ئەم تویژینه وهیه ئە وهیه که ئایا هه ندیک لایه نی زمانه وانى که له لایه ن زانای زمانه وان له یکه ف ئاماژه پیکراوه وه کو کلکه پرسیار، به کاره یێنانی رێزمان به دروستی، پچراندنی یه کتر له کاتی گه فتوگۆدا، به کاره یێنانی ووشه ی نهرمونیان، جه خت کردنه وه له سه ر ووشه یه ک، گه فتوگۆکردن به شیوازیکی زۆر رێزداری، به کاره یێنانی ئاوه لکاره کان، ئاوه لئاوه کان و به رزکردنه وه ی ئاستی ده نگ، له لایه ن ئافره تانی کۆمه لگای ئینگلیزی و کۆمه لگای کوردی به مه به ستی جیاواز به کارده هێنرێن یاخود نا، وه ئایا ئاستی خوێنده واری ئافره تان کاریگه ری هه یه له سه ر به کاره یێنانی ئەم لایه نی زمانه وانیه یاخود نا. بۆ کۆکردنه وه ی داتاگان، پرسیارنامه یه کی کراوه به کاردیت بۆ کۆکردنه وه ی داتا له ۷۰ خوێندکاری کچی کورد که له دوا قۆناغی خوێندن بوون له زانکۆی سه لاهه دین/ کۆلیژی زمان/ به شی ئینگلیزی و ۷۰ خوێندکاری کچی ئینگلیزه که له دوا قۆناغی خوێندن بوون له زانکۆ له لیسنه ر/ به شی زمانى ئینگلیزی. تویژه ره ته کنیکیکی میتۆدۆلۆژیای تیکه لاوی به کاره یێنا که شیوازی جوړی و چه ندی به کاره یێنا بۆ شیکردنه وه ی ئەو زانیاریانه ی که کۆکراونه ته وه. ئەم لیکۆلینه وه یه گه یشتوو ته ئەو ئەنجامه ی که هه ردوولای به شداربووان زۆربه ی لایه نه کانی زمان بۆ مه به ستی جیاواز به کارده هێنن و ئاستی خوێنده واری به شداربووان کاریگه ری له سه ر به کاره یێنانی هه موو لایه نه کانی زمان هه یه له کاتی گه فتوگۆدا. ئەو ئافره تانه ی که ئاستیکی باش و ئەزموونیکی زۆرتریان هه یه له پرۆسه ی خوێندندا، ده توانن به دروستی و بۆ مه به ستی جیاواز هه موو ئەو لایه نانه ی زمان به کار بێنن که له لایه ن زانای زمانه وانى له یکه فه وه دیاریکراوه، زیاتر له و ئافره تانه ی که ئاست و ئەزموونیکی باشی خوێنده واریان نیه.

دهسته وازه گرنگه کان: کلکه پرسیار، به کاره یێنانی رێزمان به دروستی، پچراندنی یه کتر له کاتی گه فتوگۆدا، شیوازی نایابی رێزگرتن له کاتی گه فتوگۆدا، به رزکردنه وه ی ئاستی ده نگ له کاتی وه لآمده انه وه دا.

دراسة اجتماعية لغوية للغة الأنتى مع الإشارة إلى اللغة الإنجليزية والكردية

الملخص

عنوان هذا البحث هو "دراسة اجتماعية لغوية للغة الأنتى مع الإشارة إلى اللغة الإنجليزية والكردية". وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى توضيح ما إذا كانت بعض جوانب اللغة مثل "hedges and fillers, tag-questions, hypercorrect grammar, interruption, soft swear words emphatic stress, super polite form, intensifiers, empty adjectives and rising intonation"، التي أشار إليها ليكف، تستخدم من قبل الإناث في المجتمعات الإنجليزية والكردية لأغراض مختلفة أو لا، ومستوى معرفة القراءة والكتابة للإناث لها أي تأثير في استخدامها أم لا. للحصول على البيانات، يستخدم استبيان المفتوح لجمع البيانات من 70 طالبة كردية في جامعة صلاح الدين / كلية اللغات / قسم اللغة الإنجليزية و من 70 طالبة إنجليزية في جامعة ليستر. / قسم اللغة الإنجليزية. استخدم الباحث أسلوب المنهجيات المختلطة التي استخدمت الأساليب الكمية والنوعية لتحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها.

خلصت الدراسة الحالية إلى أن كلا الجانبين من المشاركين يستخدمان معظم جوانب اللغة لأغراض مختلفة ومستوى معرفة القراءة والكتابة للمشاركين له بعض التأثيرات على استخدام جميع جوانب اللغة في التواصل. من الواضح أن هؤلاء الإناث، اللاتي يتمتعن بمستوى تعليمي أفضل، قادرات على استخدام جميع الجوانب المختارة للغة والتي تمت الإشارة إليها أعلاه أكثر من أولئك الذين لديهم مستوى تعليمي ضعيف لأنه من خلال عملية التعليم يمكن للناس التعلم كيفية استخدام جوانب لغتهم بشكل صحيح ولأغراض مختلفة.