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"The one and only Boy that can Catwalk like Zeda Jane": Language Use Among a Group of Homosexual Individuals

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ABSTRACT

"The one and only boy that can catwalk like Zeda Jane" - Most male individuals would not know who Zeda Jane is and how to catwalk. However, the homosexuals studied in this paper are the experts. The Malaysian community refuses to understand the psyche and identity of the homosexual individuals or learn about their language usage much less take note of their interests, skills and talents and because of this, the homosexuals are estranged from the community. This paper is an outcome of a study that investigated the language use of a group of homosexual individuals (gays). The objective of this paper is to discuss the language features used by the homosexual individuals in verbal communication and to identify whether the homosexuals use feminine language features or masculine language features in verbal communication. The data is obtained from qualitative recorded conversations between two respondents. The recorded conversations were transcribed and analyzed using Discourse Analysis and Conversational Analysis as the Analytical Framework. The results reveal that the homosexual individuals studied used feminine language features more than masculine language features in their verbal interaction. This shows that the homosexuals have a unique way of communication since they use mixed language features in their conversation. This paper is of interest to academicians, students and researchers interested in feminine and masculine language in language and gender.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis, Conversation Analysis, homosexuals, feminine language, masculine language.

Introduction

Linguists, especially those in language and gender have informed us that language is gender-based, whether one is male or female, gender can be realized and identified in and through language use. In communicating, males and females use language differently in terms of syntax and semantics. However, academic studies on language use have rarely focused on the group of people known as homosexuals especially so because of tight gatekeeping amongst this group of people. Homosexuals are basically men who are attracted sexually, emotionally and/or romantically to the same sex. Externally, they are naturally male but deep inside the 'wife' or what is known as the 'bottom' has the contingent of becoming a woman (Spargo, 1999). This contingency of becoming a woman influences the homosexual in his gestures, behaviour and the way he talks. This produces a distinct kind of language which have been widely used but is rarely known or noticed by people around the world. This paper is based on the findings of a study that focused on investigating the language features used by a group of homosexuals in a Malaysian higher education institution. The study

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reported in this paper ignored the respondents' appearance in terms of representation of self, especially in clothing, hair style, mannerisms and so on and will focus only on how they assert their identities as homosexuals in and through their use of language specifically by focusing on the language features used when communication with each other. The objective of this paper is to discuss the language features used by the homosexual individuals in verbal communication and to identify whether the homosexuals use feminine language features or masculine language features in verbal communication.

Literature Review

Homosexuals usually refer to individuals who refuse or disrupt the cultural norms of masculine or feminine appearance or behaviour and their assumed correspondence to pre-existing biological maleness or femaleness (Spargo, 1999). According to Davis (2011), the term 'homosexual' at its most basic level, applies to someone who does not fit within society's standard of how a man or woman is supposed to look or act. Language is used to convey meanings, to communicate and more importantly to give-receive information in context while gender is recognition of the sex of an individual in representing himself or herself to the world (Christie, 2000). According to Tannen (1995), people believe that men's and women's speech styles are different. That is, if you are a woman, you are more inclined to use the 'female' pronoun form and if you are a man, you are more inclined to choose from the 'male' pronoun form (Talbot, 2010). Keith and Shuttleworth (2000) suggested that women talk more than men, talk too much, are more polite, are indecisive/hesitant, complaint and nag, ask more questions, support each other, are more cooperative, interrupt more while men swear more, do not talk about emotion, talk about sport more, talk about women and machines in the same way, insult each other frequently, are competitive in conversation, dominate conversation, speak with more authority, give more commands, speak one at a time.

Research Questions

Because homosexual individuals are often judged as “different” from others, they are ostracized and thus become estranged from the community so very little is known about their interests, skills and talents including the language they use and their language behavior. The respondents of this study expressed their uncomfortable feelings of being unaccepted by society in terms of their language and their identity. The research questions of this study are: What are the language features used by the homosexual individuals studied? Why do the homosexual individuals use different language features in their communication?

Research Methodology

This study followed a qualitative research design. Data are primarily audio-tape recorded conversations of the respondents as they communicated with each other. The taped recorded conversations were then transcribed using a transcription convention developed by Jefferson (1972).

Originally, five respondents were selected for this study but only two respondents gave their consent that data collected could be used for this study. The respondents were students and all were active participants in the cultural troop performances particularly as dancers in a higher education institution in Malaysia. Based on confidentiality and privacy of the respondents, they are identified as Acap (AP henceforth), and Pija (PJ henceforth) in this study. The researcher was able to collect data for the study as she had cultivated a friendship with the respondents two years prior to conducting the study. Before the tape recording started, the respondents were given a short questionnaire to fill in. The information gathered from the questionnaire enabled the researcher to gather information about their ethnographic backgrounds. Two audio-tape recorded conversations were used in this study.

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PJ comes from a poor family. His father is a rubber tapper and his mother is a housewife. He has six siblings. His mother tongue is Malay. He has a boyfriend and at the time the study was conducted, Pija was staying with his boyfriend. He thinks that society should accept him for what he is and accept his ways of interacting by using a language that is distinct to the group he belongs to, i.e., the homosexual group because his ‘straight’ friends are comfortable in using it and many transgender language terms have been used widely by others.

AP comes from an average family background. His father is a technician and his mother is a clerk. His mother tongue is Malay and he feels comfortable communication in English. He did not have a boyfriend at the time the study was conducted. He is active in arts and performance and is a dancer. He has seven siblings, three boys and four girls. He thinks that society must accept people of his kind because for him, he is just trying to be what he actually is.

Theoretical Foundation

This study uses Discourse Analysis and Conversation Analysis as the analytical framework Social Identity Theory as the theoretical framework. According to Edmondson (1981), Discourse Analysis focuses on knowledge about language beyond the world, clause, phrase and sentence that is needed for successful and communication. It looks at patterns of language across texts and considers the relationship between language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used. Discourse analysis also considered the ways that the use of language presents different views of the world and different understandings (Halliday, 2002). It examines how the use of language is influenced by relationships between participants as well as the effects the use of language has upon social identities and relations. As for Conversation Analysis, Sidnell (2009) maintains that it is an approach to the analysis of spoken discourse that looks at the way in which people manage their everyday conversational interactions. It examines how spoken discourse is organized and develops as speakers carry out these interactions. Conversation analysis has examined aspects of spoken discourse such as sequences of related utterances, preferences for particular combinations of utterances, turn taking, feedback, repair, interruptions, overlapping, openings and closings, discourse markers and response tokens (Wreth, 1981).

According to Tajfel (1974), Social Identity Theory involves three central ideas: categorization, identification and comparison. In categorization, the process involved is to categorize people to understand the social environment. In identification, this is where they will be identified with the groups they perceive themselves belonging to. Sometimes, identification involves them to think of themselves as group members and at other times they think of themselves as a unique individual. The last idea is comparison. In comparison, the homosexual individuals were interpreted as positively involved in that group or not.

Findings

Discourse Analysis on Conversations: Lexical Choice

Lexis is a term used to mean a set of words used to describe something like person or an object (Barry, 2002). Lexicon is a term that refers to the words and phrases that you actually employ to transfer meanings to others. The lexical choices you make are simply the ways that you choose to express yourself (Hogg, 1988). You may find, as an individual, that you adjust your lexical choice to match the audience. Lexical choice is a choice of words you use in your daily life or conversation. Examples of lexical choices are nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, intensifiers and adjectives. However, lexical choice in this study focuses only on nouns, pronouns, intensifiers, verbs and adjectives.

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Nouns

According to Burton (1984), ‘noun’ comes from the Latin word *nomen*, meaning ‘name’. The function of a noun is to name someone or something. Barry (2002) stated that we recognize nouns by their traditional function: they name a person, place, thing or idea. When we discuss about nouns, they may either be singular (one) or plural (more than one) or common or proper nouns. However, this study focuses only on common nouns and proper nouns. Barry stated that common nouns are written with lower case letters and refer to general categories, e.g., girl, ball, book; while proper nouns begin with capital letters and designated a specific function, e.g., Mary, Fifth Avenue, Malaysia.

In this study, the nouns which are common nouns and proper nouns are divided into two parts: English and Bahasa Malaysia. The nouns listed from two recorded conversations were analyzed to decide whether they are related to males or females. English Nouns are listed in Figure 1.1 below and Bahasa Malaysia Nouns are listed in Figure 1.2.

<u>ENGLISH NOUNS</u>		
Boy	Christmas	Dairy
Drag	English	Gender
God	Girl	Japanese
Legendary	Leg	Mouth
Mama	News	One
Person	People	Queer
Sheota	Transgender	Truth

Figure 1.1

<u>BAHASA MALAYSIA NOUNS</u>	
Ayie	Mak

Figure 1.2

<u>NOUNS RELATED TO FEMALES</u>			
ENGLISH			BAHASA MALAYSIA
Boy	Christmas	Drag	Ayie
Dairy	Gender	God	
Legendary	Leg	News	

Figure 1.3

<u>NOUNS RELATED TO MALES</u>	
ENGLISH	BAHASA MALAYSIA
Girl	Mak
Leg	

Figure 1.4

As we can see, in the two conversations recorded, the respondents use more nouns that are related to females than those that are related to males. For example, the participants use nouns in terms of beauty and fashion. As most of us know, beauty and fashion are closely

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related to the female gender, the male respondents of this study tend to use this kind of nouns more. In conversation 1 and 2, ‘drag’, ‘legendary’ and ‘leg’ were uttered by the respondents. These kinds of nouns are usually alien to males since males are known not to be keen on beauty and fashion. Even though AP, PJ used mostly female related nouns however, they did utter some male related of nouns in their conversations. This proves that while they are presenting themselves as females, they too need to mingle around with normal males and act like normal males to survive and in order to mingle around; they need to know what normal males know or focus on.

Pronouns

According to Murphy (2004), a pronoun can replace a noun or another pronoun. You use pronouns like "he," "they," "themselves," and "you" to make your sentences less cumbersome and less repetitive. This study focuses only on personal pronouns. A personal pronoun refers to a specific person or thing and changes its form to indicate person, number, gender, and case. A subjective personal pronoun indicates that the pronoun is acting as the subject of the sentence. The subjective personal pronouns are "I," "you," "she," "he," "it," "we," "you," "they." An objective personal pronoun indicates that the pronoun is acting as an object of a verb, compound verb, preposition, or infinitive phrase. The objective personal pronouns are: "me," "you," "her," "him," "it," "us," "you," and "them."

In conversation 1, and 2, there are many personal pronouns found. As seen below in figures 1.5 and 1.6, the pronouns found are divided to those that are in English and those that are in Bahasa Malaysia.

<u>SUBJECTIVE PERSONAL PRONOUNS</u>			
ENGLISH		BAHASA MALAYSIA	
I	They	Aku	Nok
You	It	Kau	Uols
We	She	Kita	Nyah
He		Dia	Orang

Figure 1.5

<u>OBJECTIVE PERSONAL PRONOUNS</u>			
ENGLISH		BAHASA MALAYSIA	
Her	Us	Dia	Kita Orang
Him	Me	Korang	

Figure 1.6

14	PJ	: Are you se:rious? Oh my <u>God (?)</u> ! I mean like <u>SHE</u> with <u>Sheota</u> ?
18		can find another person.(ha ha ha) Oh no: mama. she kept crving.
11	AP	: You know her (?) ?
12	PJ	: Of cou:irse I know <u>her</u> !

Excerpt from Conversation 1

In conversation 1, lines 14, and 18, the pronouns ‘she’ were used repeatedly by the respondents. The ‘she’ used in the conversation refers to Ayie. ‘Her’ is also uttered by the

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respondents in the conversation. It has been used in conversation 1, lines 11, 12, and 33. Normally ‘*her*’ is used as an objective personal pronoun for a female. However, in the context of the conversation, it is used to refer to Ayie who is categorized as a homosexual individual. PJ says that “it is compulsory to pronounce a drag using feminine objective pronoun because the drag has tried so hard to dress like a girl and this rule is only applicable when the drag is in drag and when you as the audience know the sissy boy really well”. In this case, the drag and the sissy boy were given female identities and referred to as *her* and *she* respectively in conversations 1 and 2. This shows how much the respondents have the desire to be females and their use of pronouns emphasizes this desire as they all want to be ‘girls’ in their own eyes. The lexical items used for males are now manipulated and referred to as females in the conversation between the homosexual individuals. Each of the homosexual individuals in the group validates himself and each other as females.

Furthermore, the respondents involved in this study also use the homosexual subjective personal pronouns which are ‘*nok*’ and ‘*uols*’ in their conversation. ‘*Nok*’ denotes the meaning ‘you’ in the homosexual world. They use ‘*nok*’ with each other whenever they feel comfortable and know someone quite well and that someone accepts them as what they are. Simply put, the usage of ‘*nok*’ is meant for usage only within the homosexual intergroup during conversation. As for ‘*uols*’, it is used for others who belong outside their ‘family’. They are comfortable in using ‘*uols*’ with everyone not withstanding whether others accept them as homosexual individuals or not.

Intensifiers

Intensifiers play a role as a word that emphasizes another word or phrase. In English grammar, an intensifier is a word, especially an adverb or adjective, that has little meaning in itself but is used to add force to another adjective, verb, or adverb (Murphy, 2004). Sometimes, an intensifier has little semantic content but affect the meaning of the word that it modifies clearly. In the world of conversation, women are reported to use lots of intensifiers in their conversations as they like to emphasize everything so that people will know what it means to them (Lakoff, 1973). Lakoff also identifies the use of intensifiers as part of women’s/feminine language.

In this study, intensifiers are also used by the respondents in the conversations. Examples of intensifiers used in the conversations are ‘*so*’, ‘*really*’, ‘*very*’, ‘*too*’ and ‘*only*’. The lexical items situated after the intensifiers in their conversations are modified by the intensifiers to be more dramatic and full of emotion. For example, in conversation 1, line 09 when PJ mentioned that Ayie is the only boy in UKM that can walk like the famous model, Zeda Jane. It really emphasizes Ayie’s capability as a boy that can perform a girl’s technique of walking. The example of intensifiers used in conversations 1 and 2 are as below (Figure 1.7).

<u>INTENSIFIERS (Eng)</u>	
Only	Really

Figure 1.7

09 AP: Well the one and only boy that can catwalk like Zeda Jane.

Excerpt from Conversation 1

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Verbs

Verbs are often considered to be the lexical category that indicates the action of the sentence, but you can probably imagine some of the shortcomings of this definition (Barry, 2002). According to Burton (1984) the word (or group of words) that performs the essential ‘telling’ function in the predicate is called the verb. How do we find the verb in a sentence? It can be found in sentences that consist of subject and object and can be recognized by recognizing the word that denotes action or being.

In this study, verbs found in the conversations are mostly in their base forms, and represented in present tense, past tense and future tense forms. Listed in the figures below are verbs found in this study. The listed verbs were then categorized accordingly to female and male related verbs. The respondents were observed and analysed whether they use a lot of female related verbs or male related verbs.

VERBS		
English		Bahasa Malaysia
Being	Know	Bagitau
Break Up	Like	Carut
Catwalk	Love	Faham
Called	Make	Mati
Crying	Read	Mampus
Crushing	See	Menangis
Do	Stereotyped	Membaca
Eating	Tell	Suka
Feeling	Understand	
Find	Wearing	

Figure 1.8

In the conversations studied, the respondents used a lot of verbs to tell action or being. However, only a few of the verbs apply according to gender. According to Barry (2002), a verb may also agree with the person, gender, and/or number of some of its arguments, such as its subject, or object. If the subject or the object is referring to a female, verbs use may be categorized as feminine verbs. For example, “Mary cried when her cat died”. According to the literature in gender, crying is a female thing and depending on which males usually do not cry. Therefore, the verb ‘*crying*’ is usually used together with females or being used to refer to females more than males.

15	AP	: Ha, she is like (.) cry::ing to me you know and:: (2.5)
25		macam(..) FEELING, FEELING, CRUSHING, CRUSHING la (?) .
33	AP	: Ye::la (?), sebab Ayie dah confess katanya::

Excerpt from Conversation 1

In conversation 1, lines 9, 15, 25, and 32, verbs like ‘*catwalk*’, ‘*crying*’, ‘*feeling*’, ‘*crushing*’ and ‘*confess*’ were used by the respondents in the conversation. As mentioned earlier, these are verbs used together with females or refer to females rather than males. Listed above are examples of verbs used by females and in the context of this study, they are used by male participants in this study. Meanwhile, verbs like ‘*crying*’, ‘*feeling*’, ‘*crushing*’, ‘*confess*’, and ‘*couple*’ are often used by females in expressing something to others. Females

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are known to cry a lot and that makes sense when ‘crying’ or ‘menangis’ in Bahasa Malaysia is classified under feminine verbs.

06 PJ : Like really fuc:king (.)

Excerpt from Conversation 2

In conversation 2, verb like ‘fucking’ is found. Males rarely use ‘indulging’ in expressing the way they taste cake but females do.

Therefore, based on conversations 1 and 2, this study found that the homosexual individuals involved in this study used more feminine verbs in conversing with each other. They also used general verbs but they used only a few masculine verbs like ‘fucking’ in these conversations. ‘Fucking’ as most of us know is the common verb used by males in emphasizing their lust towards sex. Females rarely use this verb in this manner since it is consider unfeminine and too not appropriate to be used in polite company. Nevertheless, we can conclude that even though the respondents are expressing themselves as female, they still retain some of the male side in them.

Adjectives

According to Nordquist (2009), adjectives describe words. Adjectives are added to nouns to state what kind, what colour, which one or how many. Adjectives are said to modify nouns and are necessary to make the meanings of sentences clearer or more exact, for example: Large elephant. In the example, *large* is an adjective used to describe the elephant. Listed below are adjectives found in the conversations used by the respondents in this study. The adjectives are classified into two parts: English adjectives and Bahasa Malaysia adjectives. The adjectives listed can be further divided into feminine and masculine adjectives.

<u>ADJECTIVES</u>			
ENGLISH	BAHASAMALAYSIA		
Another	One	Just	Sebenar
Official	Other	Straight	
Japanese	World	Mobilty	
More			

Figure 1.9

Based on the adjectives listed above, this study found 7 adjectives that are mostly used by females. Those adjectives are ‘official’, ‘just’, ‘straight’, and ‘more’. ‘Official’ is usually uttered by females as they are more concerned about relationships or status. They are afraid of getting married at an old age and they really care about status. ‘More’ on the other hand, are often used by females because they tend to need and require everything more than what they actually need. For example: more Money. Male usually ignore whether the needs they have more or exceeds their usage. Males usually use or buy only what they really need and they do not even bother whether they have extra money to be saved. As compared to females, females will usually make sure they have more than enough money to save and use in the future. Even though the frequency of feminine adjectives that are used in the conversations is more than the masculine adjectives however this study can list 1 mostly used masculine adjective that have been used by the respondents. The adjective that have been used is ‘world’. Usually, males tend to be more concerned about what is happening to and in the world, most probably the World Cup and World Wars. As a conclusion, when studying

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the verbal aspects of the homosexual individuals in the sentences they use, they use only a few feminine adjectives in the conversations but the feminine adjectives used exceed the masculine adjectives used.

Discourse Analysis on Conversations: Language Choice

In the world of conversations, Lakoff (1973) states that there are two different kinds of language, mainly male and female language. Usually, it is stated that females use feminine language in their conversation and males use masculine language. Below are masculine and feminine features that make up male and female language.

Masculine/Feminine Language

According to <i>Lakoff (1973)</i> women's talk has the following properties: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Lexical <u>hedges</u> or <u>fillers</u>, e.g. you know, sort of, ...■ <u>Tag questions</u>, e.g. she is very nice, isn't she?■ <u>Rising intonation</u> on declaratives, e.g. it's really good.■ Empty <u>adjectives</u>, e.g. divine, charming, cute.■ <u>Precise</u> color terms, e.g. magenta, acqamarine.■ <u>Intensifiers</u> such as just and so.■ Hypercorrect grammar, e.g. consistent use of standard verb forms.■ <u>Superpolite forms</u>, e.g. indirect requests, euphemisms.■ <u>Avoidance of strong swear words</u>, e.g. fudge, my goodness.■ <u>Emphatic stress</u>, e.g. it was a BRILLIANT performance.

Figure 1.10

According Tannen (1990) men's talk has the following properties: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ <u>Statement</u> instead of question: "I want that blue bag."■ <u>Direct</u> to the point: "I think that's an <u>ugly</u> car".■ Men <u>curse</u> more than women.■ Men <u>interrupt</u> more than women.■ Boys:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tend to play in large groups that are hierarchically structured• Their group has a leader• Status is negotiated via orders, or telling jokes/stories• Games have winners and losers• Boast about skills, size, ability■ Men do talk to their friends and the topics are: work, sports, politics, not so much about family

Figure 1.11

There are a lot of female language features that are used in this study. As Lakoff (1973) has mentioned, female language features tend to involve the following properties: lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, rising in intonation, empty adjectives, precise colour terms, lots of intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress. Even though lots of female language features have been used throughout the conversations audio-taped in this study however, the respondents did maintain their masculinity by using a few male language features like being direct and to the point, cursing and interrupting while other are speaking. The figures (see Figures 1.12 and 1.13) below show the analysis done on male and female language features used in the 2 conversations studied.

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MALE LANGUAGE FEATURES PROPERTIES	EXAMPLE USED IN THE CONVERSATION (1&2)
Direct to the point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversation 2, line 24 and line 29 “What are you eating Zety? Not enough Christmas’s turkey?”
Cursing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversation 2, line 6 “Like really fucking.”
Interrupting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversation 1, only in line 30. • Conversation 2, actively interrupt each other in line 7, 8, 27, 28, 29, 30

Figure 1.12

FEMALE LANGUAGE FEATURES PROPERTIES	EXAMPLE USED IN THE CONVERSATION (1 &2)
Lexical hedges or fillers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of “...you know..” in conversation 1, line 15, 25. • The use of “..you know...” in conversation 2, line 11, 22. • The use of “..something like that..” in conversation 2, line 14.
Tag questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversation 1, line 07 “You know Ayie?” • Conversation 1, line 14 “I mean like she with Sheota?”
Rising in intonation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversation 1, line 1, 6, 7, 9, 11, 14, 16, 20 etc • The rising of intonation in speaking were labeled with (?) mark.
Intensifiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversation 1, line 3, 9, “..just..”, “..only..”, “..so..”
Avoidance of strong swear words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversation 1, line 2, 3 and 14 “Oh my God!” • To avoid harsh words, respondents use the name of the God to replace swear word when they are shock with that news.
Emphatic stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversation 1, line 26 “...macam FEELING, FEELING, CRUSHING, CRUSHING la...” • Conversation 2, line 13, line 26 “IF YOU CAN READ PEOPLE...” “Ok: ok. DIRECT!”

Figure 1.13

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As listed above, the respondents in this study used more female language features rather than male language features. This concludes that they are internalising and emulating the female way of speaking. They use a lot of lexical hedges and tag questions in conversing with each other which is often done by females. They also raised their intonation and use certain high pitch voices in interacting with one another. Even though they have tried very hard to emulate females however, they cannot get away from their masculine side. As a feminine male, many times they are still direct and to the point with each other like other males. Interruption is one of the most used features that helped to highlight their masculine side in this study because it has been empirically reported that men interrupt more than women.

Conversation Analysis of Conversations

Overlapping

Linguists refer to overlapping as "two voices that are simultaneous". Tannen (1994) states that overlapping is "beginning to make a sound while someone else is speaking." Whereas interruption is "an interpretative, not a descriptive act", overlapping is a way to keep conversation going without risking silence.

Conversation 1
20 PJ : actually that girl wants to do Sheota (?).
21 AP : [**Ye ke?** (2.0)]
44 PJ : [She was so:: obsessed with him (,) so:: like

Figure 1.14

23 AP : **Yelah nok!**
24 ZT : [Oh my god!]

Figure 1.15

In this study, as can be seen in Figures 1.14 and 1.15, the overlaps observed are mostly done throughout the conversation especially between PJ and AP. Whenever one of them starts say something, the other one will overlap the interaction of the speaker at the end of the sentence. This signals the speaker that he (the one who interrupts) is well informed or knows about that topic or that current issue.

Interruption

Schegloff (1987) stated that interruption is a "violation of the turn exchange system", whereas overlapping is "a misfire in it". Leffler, Gillespie and Conaty (1982) do not make a distinction between interruptions and overlapping, they include as interruptions "all vocalisations where, while one subject was speaking, the other subject uttered at least two consecutive identifiable words or at least three syllables of a single word."

29 **dia**(?)! (.hh) **Tu yang dia menangis kat I.** (pretend crying)
30 PJ : [**Nok, nok, nok!**] **Mak tak faham(?)! Mak the**

Figure 1.16

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06	PJ	: Like really <u>fuc:king</u> (.)
07	ZT	: [bad bad bad]
08	PJ	: [Yes!] We <u>love::</u> to make <u>fun</u> of other

Figure 1.17

26	ZT	: Oh: ok. <u>DIRECT(?)</u> !
27	PJ	: [Haa <u>gitu!</u> Yes(?), Yes(?)!]
28	AP	: [Hah! <u>Straight forward!</u>]

Figure 1.18

Figure 1.16 is an example of excerpt taken from conversation 1 while Figures 1.17 and 1.18 are examples of excerpts taken from conversation 2. As we can see, while PJ was talking, AP interrupted to give his opinion. Although it is a simple and basic interruption made, this situation however, shows that both respondents have masculine sides as proposed by Cowie (2000). Cowie labelled males as high-involved speakers. Males wanted their opinion to be heard every time they speak to others. High-involved speakers want to show as much enthusiastic involvement as possible. They tend to interrupt more but they do not have the intention of cutting off others. They simply feel that an opinion or objection cannot wait for the convenient moment.

In this study, it was observed that both respondents interrupted each other mostly in every line of their conversation. The respondents proved that they still have their masculine side even though they are trying very hard to be female in every which way they can.

Discussion

Social Identity Theory according to Tajfel (1974) involves three central ideas: categorization, identification and comparison. In categorization, the process involved is to categorize people to understand the social environment. This study was able to categorize the respondents studied as homosexual individuals based on the relationship of the respondents with the researcher that spanned 2 years. This study also recorded that their behaviour gravitated towards emulating the female side based on their language use. Secondly, after they have been categorized as homosexual individuals, the respondents were then identified whether they present themselves as homosexual individuals only within the group or that this was their personal identity. Based on the analysis done via discourse and conversation analysis, it can be proved that the respondents are homosexual individuals both within that group and within themselves. The respondents' social identity (in public) as homosexual individuals is due to their inclination towards being female. As have been shown in the analysis, the respondents in this study emulate being females in and through their language use but they tend also to preserve their masculinity at certain points due to the degree of their acceptance in society; while they may be outwardly showing more female qualities in the way they speak, they must also maintain a balance in showing the masculine qualities in order to be accepted in their community. The social and personal identities were interpreted based on the transcription, the analysis and the ethnographic background collected. The final idea in Tajfel's theory is comparison. Comparison takes into account whether or not the respondents are involved actively as homosexual individuals. In addition, comparison sees whether the members of the in group have the same values as the out group members. With

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regards to comparison, this study showed that PJ and AP were trying to compare the homosexual's individual capability on winning Sheota's heart basically in order to prove that Ayie, a friend of PJ and AP's is actively presenting himself as a homosexual individual when he has feelings for a male instead of a female. This is based on conversation 1 where the respondents speak about Ayie who has a crush on Sheota where at the same time, Diba, their 'normal' female friend also has a crush on him (Sheota). At the end of the conversation, they conclude that Ayie and Diba should share Sheota. By doing this, they put themselves at the same level as Diba, and thus show that they are indeed being female and rightly they belong to the female group.

Tajfel (1981) also suggests that individuals interact on two levels: interpersonal and intergroup behaviour. Interpersonally, it has been shown via discourse and conversation analysis that the respondents of this study interact as males and females at the same time. This may be due to the conscious effort of balancing their language use so that they not only assert being who they are, i.e. being homosexuals through using feminine language features but also they want to be accepted by the community that still see them outwardly as males and therefore, they assert their masculinity through masculine language features. However, in intergroup interaction, they did not hide their homosexual individual identity in interacting. This is because; they feel comfortable in being within the group and sharing the same identity and values. In intergroup interactions, they put much effort in emulating females and converse towards the feminine side in order to present themselves as feminine male in the eyes of everyone in that particular group.

Conclusion

It can be said that the respondents involved in this study can be categorized and identified as homosexual individuals. It has been shown that they have their own unique language as illustrated via analysis of their conversations with each other; they use both female and male language features in conversations and have their own words such as 'bonggah', 'nok' and 'kelas' that cannot be understood by others unless they learn the language. This study also identified language features used by the homosexual individuals. Those language features used by the homosexual individuals in conversation have strongly represented them as female instead of male because they tend to use more feminine language features rather than male language features in conversing with one another. In other word, this study managed to highlight and identify the unique language use by the homosexual individuals in order to knowledge public on their existence in the community. Based on the Social Identity Theory, it is proved that the homosexual individuals in this study are comfortable using this kind of language due to their surroundings and the fact that they want to preserve their identity as male to be accepted by their community but also want to move towards becoming female at the same time. This study benefits academicians, students and researchers interested in feminine and masculine language in language and gender. It can be suggested that future researchers find more opportunities to study homosexual individuals in an in-depth way, specifically to investigate their unique language use and how they signal their identity in and through language. Further, researchers especially in Malaysia should carry out research on the homosexual individuals' language use in written communication in such diverse contexts such as in social network in particular, Facebook and Twitter.

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