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Women's language features and gendered identity construction in the movie *Uglies* (2024): A sociolinguistic analysis of Tally Youngblood

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the women's language features used by Tally Youngblood, the main character in the movie *Uglies* (2024). Drawing on Lakoff's (1975) theory of women's language, the study employs a qualitative content analysis to identify linguistic features commonly associated with women's speech, including lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, empty adjectives, precise color terms, rising intonations on declaratives, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress. The data were collected from Tally Youngblood's utterances throughout the movie and analyzed based on Lakoff's classification. The findings reveal that Tally uses nine of the ten women's language features proposed by Lakoff. A total of 76 utterances were identified, consisting of 30 lexical hedges or fillers, 13 emphatic stresses, 12 intensifiers, 8 super polite forms, 5 instances of avoidance of strong swear words, 3 empty adjectives, 3 rising intonations on declaratives, 1 tag question, and 1 precise color term, while hypercorrect grammar was not found. The most dominant features are lexical hedges or fillers and emphatic stress. The frequent use of lexical hedges reflects Tally's uncertainty, caution, and efforts to conform to the social expectations imposed by her society, whereas emphatic stress highlights her emotional intensity and internal conflict regarding prevailing beauty standards. These findings suggest that women's language features function not only as linguistic characteristics but also as a means of expressing identity, emotion, and social positioning within the dystopian world of *Uglies*.

KEYWORDS: women's language features, gendered identity
construction; sociolinguistics, Lakoff's Theory, discourse analysis,
Dystopian Film, *Uglies* (2024)



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1. INTRODUCTION

The difference in language between men and women has long been a focus of sociolinguistic studies. Men generally speak more directly and assertively, often focusing on topics such as sports or business, while women tend to use language that is more polite, emotional, and relational (Haas, 1979). Lakoff (1975) introduced the concept of women's language, which includes linguistic features such as hedges, tag questions, intensifiers, and empty adjectives that reflect the social position of women (Svendsen, 2019). According to Inoue (2019, p. 465), gender influences the way people speak. However, this influence is not solely due to inherent differences between men and women. Gender instead shapes language behavior through a variety of other factors that more directly influence an individual's linguistic patterns. A person's language choice is often related to their social environment, daily activities, personal identity, and social position relative to others. Gender differences, inherent in the social structure of society, can influence all these factors.

Sunderland (2006) identifies four features of women's language patterns, including social status, public spotlight, subordination, and gender expression. First, women's language is often based on social background because language shows women's status by the way they speak. Second, women are often required to speak with good manners because they are in the public eye. Thirdly, women tend to avoid language that could offend men, so they speak more carefully. Finally, women who have masculine features are often portrayed with higher voices and hard work, which shows how gender expression can affect the way they communicate.

Women's language can be examined not only in real life context but also through fictional media such as movies, which function as social and cultural representations. Movies are considered an effective medium for depicting the realities of society through narrative, visuals, and dialogue (Prince, 2010). According to Barsam and Monahan (2013), movies have evolved alongside technological and cultural developments, positioning cinema as a significant medium for understanding social change and human identity. In this study, the movie *Uglies* (2024) is particularly interesting to study because it criticizes oppressive beauty standards and cosmetic surgery. This dystopian science fiction movie follows Tally Youngblood, a teenager living in a future society where everyone is considered "ugly" until they undergo mandatory cosmetic surgery at the age of sixteen. Tally's journey, which initially accepted the system, turns into a struggle against oppressive social norms, and her expressions in dialogue reflect her emotional pressure and social position as a woman.

The purpose of this study is to examine the use of women's language features in the main character of the movie *Uglies*, directed by McG, adapted from Scott Westerfeld's novel of the same name. The theoretical framework for this study is based on Lakoff's (1975) classification of ten women's language features, namely the use of lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, empty adjectives, precise color terms, rising intonations on declaratives, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stresses.

Studies on women's language have been conducted across various media and genres. Adara et al. (2025) found that hedges and super polite forms dominate the speech of female characters in the novel *The Poppy War*. Arista et al. (2023) demonstrated that the character Ally in *A Star Is Born* employs seven of Lakoff's ten features of women's language, reflecting the influence of social relations on her language choices. Nuringtyas and Navila (2022) identified the dominant use of intensifiers in the film *Charlie's Angels* as a form of argument reinforcement, while Utami (2022) found eight features of women's language in the novel *Tempurung*, shaped by Balinese patriarchal culture. Lubis and Bahri (2020) also revealed that lexical hedges and tag questions are predominantly used in talk shows to maintain politeness and reduce communicative tension.

Although various studies have examined the features of women's language in literary works and films, most have focused on the drama or romantic genres. Studies on women's language features in dystopian science fiction movies genre remain very limited, particularly studies that highlight the

relationship between language, gender, and social pressure arising from beauty standards. This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing Tally Youngblood's utterances in the dystopian science fiction movie *Uglies* (2024). By examining women's language features within a dystopian science fiction genre that portrays societal pressure related appearance, this study offers novelty in understanding how the main female character employs women's language features in her utterances when confronting the beauty norms imposed by society. This research is unique because it focuses on the relationship between language, gender, and social pressure in dystopian movie genre.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach using content analysis to examine the women's language features used by Tally Youngblood in the movie *Uglies* (2024). Qualitative research is appropriate for exploring and understanding the meanings individuals or groups attach to social phenomena (Creswell & Creswell, 2014). Content analysis was selected because it enables researchers to identify, categorize, and interpret linguistic patterns within a text systematically. According to Krippendorff (2018), content analysis is a research technique used to make valid and replicable inferences from texts to their contexts of use. In this study, content analysis was used to identify and interpret women's language features based on Lakoff's (1975) framework and to examine how these features contribute to the construction of Tally Youngblood's gendered identity throughout the film.

2.2 Data Source

The primary data source of this study was the dialogue of Tally Youngblood, the main female character in *Uglies* (2024), directed by McG and adapted from Scott Westerfeld's novel of the same title. The movie was selected because it addresses issues of beauty standards, gender expectations, identity formation, and social control, which are relevant to the study of language and gender. The researchers obtained the dialogue by repeatedly watching the movie and cross-checking the transcription with the publicly available script. Only utterances spoken by Tally Youngblood were included in the analysis. A total of 398 utterances were identified, of which 76 contained linguistic features categorized as women's language according to Lakoff's (1975) theory.

2.3 Data Collection

Data collection was conducted through several stages. First, the researchers watched the movie repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the narrative context and character interactions. Second, Tally Youngblood's dialogue was transcribed and verified using the available script. Third, each utterance was examined and coded based on Lakoff's (1975) ten categories of women's language features: lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, empty adjectives, precise color terms, rising intonations on declaratives, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress. Utterances containing one or more of these features were selected for further analysis.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During the data condensation stage, utterances containing women's language features were selected and categorized according to Lakoff's framework. In the data display stage, the classified data were organized into tables to facilitate interpretation and comparison. Finally, conclusions were drawn by examining the frequency and function of each linguistic feature within its conversational context.

To enhance analytical consistency, each identified utterance was reviewed repeatedly and compared with the operational definitions provided by Lakoff (1975). The analysis focused not only on

identifying the occurrence of women's language features but also on interpreting how these linguistic choices reflected Tally Youngblood's negotiation of identity, emotional expression, social position, and response to the beauty norms imposed by the dystopian society portrayed in the film.

Table 1. Analytical Framework

Women's Language Feature	Operational Definition	Identity Function Examined
Lexical Hedges	Expressions indicating uncertainty	Negotiation of confidence and conformity
Tag Questions	Statements seeking confirmation	Interpersonal dependence and reassurance
Intensifiers	Words strengthening meaning	Emotional involvement
Super Polite Forms	Highly polite expressions	Social accommodation
Emphatic Stress	Stressing particular words	Assertion and resistance

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study identified nine of the ten women's language features proposed by Lakoff (1975) in the utterances of Tally Youngblood in *Uglies* (2024). A total of 76 utterances were found to contain women's language features, with lexical hedges or fillers occurring most frequently (30 instances), followed by emphatic stress (13 instances) and intensifiers (12 instances). Hypercorrect grammar was not identified in the data.

The distribution of these features suggests that Tally's speech is characterized by a combination of uncertainty, emotional involvement, and politeness. These linguistic patterns reflect not only gendered communication practices but also Tally's evolving identity within a dystopian society that imposes rigid standards of beauty and social conformity. The findings indicate that women's language features function as linguistic resources through which Tally negotiates obedience, friendship, self-expression, and resistance throughout the narrative. Table 2 presents the frequency of women's language features identified in the study.

Table 2. Distribution of Women's Language Features in *Uglies* (2024)

No	Women's Language Features	Total
1	Lexical Hedges or Fillers	30
2	Emphatic Stress	13
3	Intensifiers	12
4	Super Polite Forms	8
5	Avoidance of Strong Swear Words	5
6	Empty Adjective	3
7	Rising Intonations on Declarative	3
8	Tag Question	1
9	Precise Color Term	1
10	Hypercorrect Grammar	0
	Total	76

The predominance of lexical hedges and fillers suggests that Tally frequently moderates her statements when interacting with others. This tendency may reflect her uncertainty regarding the social system in which she lives, particularly as she begins to question dominant beliefs about beauty and social status. The relatively high occurrence of emphatic stress and intensifiers indicates that, despite moments of hesitation, Tally also expresses strong emotional involvement and personal commitment to certain ideas. Together, these features portray a character who is simultaneously negotiating conformity and resistance, highlighting the complex relationship between language, gender, and identity construction in the film.

3.1 Lexical Hedge or Filler

More broadly, Tally's frequent use of lexical hedges reflects her transitional identity throughout the film. As she moves from accepting the dominant social order to questioning its legitimacy, her speech frequently reveals hesitation and self-monitoring. Rather than simply indicating weakness or uncertainty, these hedges function as linguistic markers of identity negotiation within a society that regulates both appearance and behavior. The lexical hedges or fillers are words or phrases used to reduce the assertiveness of a statement, such as "*I think*", "*maybe*", "*you know*", or "*like*". This feature is often associated with women's language, as it is thought to reflect hesitation or a desire to avoid conflict (Lakoff, 2004). However, recent research suggests that the function of hedges is more complex. Holmes (2013) argues that hedges do not necessarily signal self-confidence but also function as a politeness strategy to engage the listener in the conversation.

Data [1]: Shay: "What was it like?"

Tally: "Which part?"

Shay: "The party, the city, all of it."

Tally: "**It's like**...It's everything they promised us."

In Data [1], Tally shares her experience of sneaking into New Pretty Town with her friend Shay. The phrase "It's like" acts as a lexical hedge, softening her statement and implying that her observations are subjective. The sentence "It's like ...It's everything they promised us" suggests that what she saw in New Pretty Town was exactly what the government had promised. This choice of words indicates her struggle to articulate her feelings about sneaking into New Pretty Town. Rather than directly stating her opinion, she uses the phrase "It's like" to express something emotional or complex that is difficult to explain clearly.

Data [2]: Dr. Cable: "Shay's missing, please have a seat."

Tally: "Um...that's terrible."

Dr. Cable: "You did realize she wasn't I the waiting room."

Tally: "I thought she must have been sick, **you know**, or **something like that**."

In data [2], the situation was quite awkward and difficult for Tally. She lies to Dr. Cable, the authority figure in Special Circumstances, about the whereabouts of her friend Shay's, who has left the dormitory to join the rebel group called 'The Smoke.' When she says, "I think she must have been sick, you know, or something like that," she subtly tries to create a fake story. In this statement, she uses two hedges, "you know" and "something like that." The phrase "you know" is intended to seek approval from Dr. Cable and make her statement sound softer, while "or something like that" indicates uncertainty and doubt about her answer. By saying "you know, or something like that," she tries to act as if she doesn't know anything, even though she knows more than she admits. She aims to protect both her friend and herself by withholding information. Her choice of words reflects her uncertainty and caution as she faces a powerful individual who could pose a threat to her.

Data [3]: Tally: "You seem happy."

Shay: "I am."

Tally: "I wasn't expecting that."

Shay: "What do you mean? Why not?"

Tally: "**Well**...I...there's something about this place, Shay. It's just... It's not what it seems."

In data [3], Tally senses something strange about The Smoke and wants to convey this feeling to Shay. Tally begins her statement with the word “well,” which serves as a cautious and indirect opening. This word choice indicates that Tally is struggling to organize her thoughts and is hesitant to openly express her concern that something is wrong with the place. By being indirect, Tally tries to avoid creating conflict with Shay when expressing her thoughts.

3.2 Emphatic Stress

Emphatic stress is used to emphasize certain words in a sentence, aiming to show emotional involvement or to strengthen the meaning of a statement. According to Lakoff (1975), women typically use this emphasis to highlight specific information, express strong feelings, or emphasize a point more emphatically. This function allows women to express their opinions more clearly without having to use harsh or aggressive language, thereby maintaining norms of politeness in communication.

Data [4]: Tally: You should have seen the birthday party that I threw for Peris last year. It was **amazing**.”

In data [4], Tally shared her experience to Shay about celebrating Peris’s birthday party. The word “amazing” is said strongly to convey her enthusiasm for last year’s birthday party, and the emphasis on “amazing” indicates that the birthday party was meaningful and enjoyable for her. The use of emphatic stress reflects an expressive style of speech, demonstrating that she is not only sharing information but also wants the interlocutor to understand how meaningful and memorable the experience was for her.

Data [5]: Shay: “Maybe I’d go to The Smoke.”

Tally: “That place is a **myth**, Skinny. It’s not a real **place**.”

In data [5], Tally responds to Shay’s thoughts that she intends to leave the city and live with the rebel group called ‘The Smoke.’ However, she emphasizes that the word “myth” means ‘The Smoke’ and that it is not a real place but only a concept in imagination or fiction. Her emphasis on the word “real” strongly goes against Shay’s perspective of what she considers an ideal place to live. By emphasizing those words, she is trying to remind Shay that what she thinks is unrealistic and would be useless. She focuses on reality and logic with expressive and serious assertiveness.

The use of emphatic stress also suggests moments in which Tally attempts to assert her own perspective. While lexical hedges often signal caution, emphatic stress allows her to communicate conviction and emotional intensity. This contrast reflects the tension between conformity and resistance that characterizes her development throughout the narrative.

3.3 Intensifiers

Ariani (2017) argues Intensifiers are vocabulary words used to emphasize or affirm meaning in a sentence. Examples include so, very, and really, which are used to add emotional emphasis to speech. Women tend to use intensifiers more often to express feelings dramatically or reinforce opinions, as in “I’m so excited!” or “That’s really amazing!” Suhesty & Sriyono (2023) argues that the use of intensifiers reflects women’s tendency to create expressive and empathic communication.

Data [6]: Tally: *A few of the very best scientists were tasked with salvaging what was left of civilization.*

In data [6], Tally describes the dystopian background. The word “very” serves to emphasize the adjective “best.” In this context, “best” refers to scientists with the highest level of skill and expertise. By using the word “very,” it emphasizes that these scientists are not just the best; they stand out among the best. This phrasing highlights her confidence in their abilities and credibility to address the enormous challenges

of transforming civilization.

The use of intensifiers demonstrates Tally's emotional investment in the ideas and experiences she describes. These expressions strengthen her evaluations and reveal how deeply she has internalized, and later questioned, the values promoted by her society. Intensifiers therefore contribute to the construction of a gendered identity that is both emotionally expressive and socially situated.

3.4 Super Polite Forms

Super polite form shows how women must carefully choose their word in front of their interlocutors and those around them. This is partly due to women's desire to maintain their reputation (Widyasari et al., 2023). Super polite forms might take the shape of hidden requests, complimenting others, or simply avoiding an ignorant image. For instance, phrases like 'would you mind?' 'Could you please?' or too many apologies, such as "I'm so sorry to bother you, but could you help me?" and so on.

Data [7]: Tally: *"Would you tell me where we're going, please?"*

In data [7], the situation in the dialogue shows that Tally was suddenly forcibly taken by the staff, she feeling confused and anxious because she was uncertain about where the staff is taking her. She uses the word "would" in her question to convey politeness and a non-demanding attitude. Rather than directly asking, "Where are we going?" or "Tell me where we're going," she chooses a more gentle and cautious phrasing that reflects her unease. She adds "please" at the end of her sentence, which further emphasizes her respect for the strange man. This deliberate choice of language highlights a common tendency among women, particularly in unfamiliar situations, to defuse conflict through very polite language.

Tally's use of highly polite expressions may also reflect the power imbalance between herself and authority figures. In this sense, politeness functions not only as a gendered communication style but also as a strategy for navigating institutional control within the dystopian social structure depicted in the film.

3.5 Avoidance of Strong Swear Words

The avoidance of strong swear words refers to women's tendency to avoid using harsh words or swearing in favor of softer expressions to maintain modesty and femininity (Lakoff, 1975). Lakoff (2004) proposed that women, being socialized to uphold a "ladylike" demeanor, tend to replace strong expletives with softer alternatives like "Oh dear!" or "Goodness!" rather than using harsh terms.

Data [8]: Shay: "You got it, ready?"

Tally: "Okay."

Shay: "Three, two, one..."

Shay: "Yeah not like that."

Tally: "Oh my god" (She fell from the flying board)

In data [8], the phrase "Oh my God," uttered by Tally after falling while learning to ride flying board with Shay, there is an avoidance of strong swear words. Although she fell from the flying board and it was physically painful, she did not use any harsh words or curses. Instead, she chooses phrases that sound soft, like "Oh my God," to express her shock. Her word choice illustrates how women can convey feelings of shock or pain without using harsh language.

This tendency aligns with Lakoff's argument that women are often socially encouraged to avoid aggressive language. In Tally's case, the use of softer expressions reinforces a socially acceptable feminine identity while simultaneously reflecting the behavioral expectations imposed by her society.

3.6 Empty Adjective

Empty adjectives express subjective or emotional judgments without conveying concrete meaning. Words like ‘lovely,’ ‘adorable,’ and ‘cute’ subtly express admiration or agreement, creating a feminine, polite, and supportive impression in communication. This aligns with social norms that expect women to speak gently and avoid confrontation (Lakoff, 1975). Lakoff (cited in Tahir et al. 2022) argues that in most occupations and social strata, men are prohibited from using empty adjectives as they will be perceived as suspicious.

Data [9]: Tally: “Oh by the way, I love it.”

Shay: “Yeah?”

Tally: “Yes, the seasons and then the water.”

Tally: “It sounds so **beautiful**, it makes be wish I could visit.”

In data [9], Tally shared with Shay the details about the book she was reading, and the word “beautiful” conveys her admiration for the vivid portrayal of the setting within the narrative. This choice of word also highlights a feminine communication style, which emphasizes emotion and sensitivity. It illustrates her deep appreciation for the descriptions offered in the book.

The use of empty adjectives is particularly significant in a narrative centered on beauty standards. Through evaluative expressions such as “beautiful,” Tally reproduces linguistic patterns associated with aesthetic appreciation, revealing how dominant beauty ideologies shape her perceptions and language choices.

3.7 Rising Intonation on Declarative

According to Lakoff (2004), rising intonation is one of the features of “women’s language.” Rising intonation occurs when the speaker raises the tone of voice at the end of a declarative sentence, making it sound like a question, even though structurally it is a statement. According Mary Talbot (cited in Ariani, 2017), this rising intonation weakens the strength of the statement and creates an impression of uncertainty.

Data [10]: Tally: We said “Best friend **forever**.”

Peris: “Maybe we will.”

In data [10], Tally feels disappointed because Peris did not keep his promise to meet her at the bridge. As a best friend, Peris has always kept his promises, so she expresses her feelings by saying, “We said best friends forever,” with a rising intonation at the end of “forever.” Although she is making a statement, the upward shift in her tone makes it sound like a question. She does this because she is seeking validation and reassurance from Peris about their friendship which senses is fading.

The occurrence of rising intonation suggests Tally’s desire for reassurance and interpersonal validation. This feature highlights moments when her confidence is challenged, reflecting her uncertain position within changing social relationships and identities.

3.8 Tag Question

Tag questions are short questions added to statements that confirm information and invite participation from the interlocutor. As proposed by Lakoff (1975), tag questions reflect an attitude of non-imposition and convey humility or caution. For instance, in the tag question proposed by Lakoff (It’s so hot, isn’t it?), the sentence conveys an opinion but still leaves room for agreement from the interlocutor. Lakoff considers this a part of women’s language that reflects a polite or non-confrontational attitude.

Data [11]: Tally: “You’re not gonna let the take your scar, **right?**”
Peris: “I made a promised.”

In data [11], Tally used the word “right” as a tag question to show that she was unsure and wanted to encourage her interlocutor to respond. In this context, she hopes that even though Peris will undergo cosmetic surgery that may change his appearance, he will still keep his scar as a symbol of their friendship. However, instead of expressing her hope directly, she expresses it hesitantly through the tag question. This word suggests that she’s unsure whether Peris will fulfill her expectations, and by adding “right?” she encourages Peris to confirm. The use of the question tag also reflects Tally’s emotional vulnerability in dealing with the possible changes in their relationship after both undergo surgery and become pretty. Although tag questions appear only once, their presence is meaningful because they reveal Tally’s emotional dependence on social confirmation during a period of personal transition. The feature demonstrates how language can simultaneously communicate information and seek relational support.

3.9 Precise Color of Term

Lakoff (cited in Ariani 2017) revealed women usually have more color vocabulary than men. Women generally have more variety of vocabulary to refer to colors than men. For example, the color purple, which is referred to by men in general, can be described more specifically by women in terms of colors such as lavender or mauve. It can be concluded that precise color terms are a woman’s language features related to the ability to mention colors in a more diverse manner than men.

Data [12]: Tally: “What color eyes do you want Shay?”
Shay: “I...I don’t know.”
Tally: “ I’m gonna get **gold** to match my hair.”

In data [12], Tally the dialog depicts Tally asking Shay about the hair color she would like to have after undergoing cosmetic surgery. The phrase “I’m gonna get gold to match my hair,” spoken by Tally, exemplifies the use of precise color terms, as it refers to the specific and uncommon color “gold” rather than a basic color like yellow. In this context, she deliberately chooses the color “gold” because she wants her eye color to match her hair color, demonstrating aesthetic awareness and desire to appear ideal according to her society’s beauty standards. The choice of the word “gold” also carries connotations of luxury, beauty, and high social value, thus strengthening the function of the precise color term.

Within the context of *Uglies*, the use of the precise color term “gold” carries symbolic significance. The reference reflects Tally’s aspiration to achieve the idealized appearance promoted by her society. Consequently, this feature not only demonstrates lexical specificity but also reveals how beauty standards influence identity formation and self-presentation.

3.10 Women’s Language and Identity Construction in *Uglies*

The findings demonstrate that women’s language features in *Uglies* (2024) function not only as linguistic characteristics but also as important resources through which Tally Youngblood constructs and negotiates her identity. Throughout the film, Tally occupies a complex social position as a young woman living in a dystopian society that strictly regulates physical appearance, behavior, and social status. Her language choices reflect her ongoing struggle between conformity to societal expectations and the development of an independent sense of self.

The frequent use of lexical hedges and fillers indicates that Tally often expresses uncertainty and caution when discussing sensitive issues, particularly those related to beauty standards and social norms. These features suggest an individual who is questioning dominant beliefs while remaining aware of the consequences of challenging them. At the same time, the occurrence of emphatic stress and intensifiers

reveals moments of emotional involvement and personal conviction, allowing Tally to assert her opinions and express her evolving perspectives.

Other features, such as super polite forms, tag questions, and rising intonation on declaratives, further illustrate her need for social acceptance and interpersonal reassurance. These linguistic choices reflect the pressures placed upon women to communicate in ways that are perceived as polite, cooperative, and non-confrontational. Meanwhile, the use of empty adjectives and precise color terms highlights the influence of beauty-related discourse on her self-perception and worldview.

Taken together, these findings suggest that Tally's language reflects a dynamic process of gendered identity construction. Rather than portraying women's language as a fixed set of linguistic features, the film demonstrates how language can serve as a means of negotiating power, expressing resistance, and navigating social expectations. In this sense, women's language features in *Uglies* function as markers of both conformity and transformation, revealing the complex relationship between language, gender, identity, and societal control.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that women's language features used by Tally Youngblood in the movie *Uglies* (2024) were identified in 76 utterances, in accordance with Lakoff's (1975) framework of women's language. Among the ten proposed features, nine were found in the data, while hypercorrect grammar did not appear in the character's speech. The most dominant feature was lexical hedges or fillers with 30 occurrences, followed by emphatic stress with 13 occurrences and intensifiers with 12 occurrences.

The absence of hypercorrect grammar can be attributed to the characterization of Tally Youngblood as a teenager living in a dystopian futuristic society, where informal and context-dependent speech styles are more commonly used. Her linguistic behavior reflects the adaptive nature of youth language within a controlled social environment, where strict adherence to formal grammatical norms is less prominent in everyday interaction.

The dominance of lexical hedges suggests that Tally frequently expresses uncertainty, hesitation, and caution in her speech. This tendency reflects not only individual communicative style but also her social positioning within a hierarchical society that classifies individuals according to beauty status. In this context, language functions as a tool for negotiation, allowing Tally to manage power relations and avoid direct confrontation with authority and dominant social norms.

In contrast, the frequent use of emphatic stress indicates moments of emotional intensity and assertiveness, particularly when Tally expresses personal beliefs or reacts to social injustice. This feature highlights her evolving agency as she begins to question and resist the dominant ideology of beauty within her society.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that women's language features in *Uglies* (2024) are not merely linguistic patterns, but also serve as meaningful resources for gendered identity construction. Tally's speech reflects a dynamic negotiation between conformity and resistance, revealing how language operates as a site where identity, power, and ideology intersect in a dystopian social context.

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