

Verbal Responses toward Insults in the Celebrity Read Mean Tweets Segment

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ABSTRACT

Receiving insults virtually is one of the drawbacks of living with cutting-edge technology. Drawing on insults, the study's objectives are to examine the verbal responses toward insults and the language features employed by the celebrities in the 'Celebrity Read Mean Tweets' segment on the Jimmy Kimmel show on Youtube. The data are verbal responses by 50 participants taken from the talkshow's account. The analysis was carried out qualitatively by adopting the frameworks of Bond and Venus' verbal responses accompanied by the gender language features of Lakoff and Coates. The results suggested that verbal responses were mainly employed to resist the insults. The strategies of resisting were conducted mostly via antinomies, correcting, and swearing. To signalize their acceptance, the speakers mostly appreciate the quality of the insult. Other purposes of the verbal responses were to ignore the insults which were done predominantly via digression. Subsequently, the highly employed language feature by the celebrities was lexical hedges/fillers and harsh words/swearing. Most of the features were used altogether by both genders, except for empty adjectives which were discovered from female responses. The results of this study can help explore strategies to tackle insults and future research related to verbal responses.

Keywords: celebrity read mean tweets, gender language features, insults, verbal responses

INTRODUCTION

The presence of hate speech toward celebrities is rather inevitable as a result of the power and influence they possess, which also comes in parallel with admiration. Lau (2022) suggested that the celebration and consumption of their power explicitly include their reputation in the public eye. Moreover, celebrity is one of the collective groups that receive derogatory expressions and insults. These insults are more often about their personalities. Their responses dealing with the insults range from mild (for instance, by ignoring or smiling in acceptance) to extreme ones like suing the perpetrators. In addition, some participants prefer to leave rather than prolong the insult sequence (Sacks, 1995). A particular illustration of how a celebrity deals with insults casually can be understood through James Blunt's responses on Twitter. He replied to tweets directed at him with funny answers to deflect the constructed potential insults, and some of his answers indicate a continuation of the insult sequence (McVittie et al., 2021). His actions denoted that responses with the proper strategy can benefit the insult recipients instead of distressing them. On the other hand, one cannot control the way these people will respond; thus some severe replies might be demonstrated. To illustrate this, extreme responses toward insult can also lead to the act of *doxxing* (dropping a document). A technological term that defines a search for and publishing private or identifying information about (a particular individual) on the internet, typically with malicious intent (Support Google, 2022). Such a response had been shown by an Indonesian Instagram influencer, Rachel Vennya, and she received wider hateful comments in return. Although it is part of her right to respond to the

insult, she also could potentially be prosecuted back for violating the Constitution of electronic information and transaction (UU ITE) applied in Indonesia. Both distinguish responses from Blunt and Venya can be examples of how the recipients act toward insults can result in the further implication intended, especially regarding their celebrity's image.

Celebrities inevitably possess influence, and fans are encouraged by how their idols act and then imitate it. Popular culture celebrities, especially in Asia, are believed to have soft power, referring to 'the ability to attract and persuade rather than coerce and intimidate people' (Lau, 2022, p.141). It means fans are encouraged instead of compelled in pursuing specific actions following these influential figures. A study conducted by Aderonke & Adinlewa (2021) suggested that exposure to celebrities and celebrity lifestyles may affect the desire for fame and future aspirations, especially for young people. This example, at least, demonstrates how the power of celebrities inspires their admirers. Even with merely a virtually-formulated bond, fans can experience a psychological relationship that affects the way they behave to be similar following their favorite celebrities and also establish further proximity and loyalty toward the idols (Kim & Kim, 2020, p. 2).

In this regard, understanding how celebrities respond to insults may motivate their fans to tackle derogatory expressions in a particular way similar to the person they imitate. Shortly, celebrities' actions, may affect a particular person either by dealing with insult joyfully or harshly. Hence, this study mainly deals with insults directed at famous people projected through media. Besides social media, one of the ways to study celebrities' responses is from mass media that provides such portrayals including the Jimmy Kimmel show.

A Jimmy Kimmel Live show provides a collection of famous people's responses to insults. On their Youtube account, they shared "Mean Tweets" segment. This section broadcasts various celebrities reading tweets collected by Kimmel's production team. The celebrities are told beforehand that they would be reading something insulting about themselves. Some of them responded with laughs and pretended to be upset (Kies, 2021, p. 1-2). They also performed verbal responses such as swearing to counterattack the perpetrators.

According to Coates (2004), men swear more than women and use more taboo words. Nevertheless, it is not entirely forbidden for women to use these language features in their speech. Based on the verbal responses to the hateful tweets, it is found that several female celebrities also use swearing in dealing with insults in the 'Mean Tweets' segments. Drawing on this basis, the present study attempts to explore the use of language by male and female celebrities to understand various ways of dealing with insults as reflected through the preferred media.

The 'Mean Tweets' segment of the Jimmy Kimmel show is specifically studied. It is a well-known segment; millions of people have watched its broadcast recordings on Youtube (a video-sharing online platform). It is considered that the Mean Tweets segment can provide a small-scaled portrayal of people's responses toward insults. Previous scholars have studied this segment for the sake of science. For instance, Kies (2021) explored how television, presented by Jimmy Kimmel Live, remains powerful despite the appearance of social media. Then, Darma et al. (2017) analyzed swearing words used by the celebrities featured in the segment which the result of this study contribute to linguistics study.

Furthermore, as the further focus is on insult, earlier research conducted on the scope of insulting activities was completed by McVittie et al. (2021). It explored how James Blunt, as a celebrity, addressed hate speech on his Twitter account by using humor and turned insults into a means to improve his image. Other studies define insult and a similar term (i.e., slur) as the use of derogatory force but differ in the degree; slurs have more substantial quality (Cousens, 2020), yet both insult and slur convey negative compliments (Archer, 2015). Another discussion about men's reactions towards slurs or insults concerning their masculinities was investigated, suggesting that men physically responded when targeted by slurs/insults (Saucier et al., 2015). Similarly, El-Dakhs (2020) researched celebrities' strategies for responding to criticism. Although his analysis emphasized more on responses to criticism rather than insults,

the study is helpful to provide insight related to dealing with an unpleasant situation. It is accordant to the present research in terms of studying the strategies.

This research addresses gender language. Priorly, the research on gender language features has shown that the way men and women talk is different (Chandra & Yulia, 2017), (Karjo & Wijaya, 2020), (Morikawa, 2019), (Priska et al., 2020), and different gender may result in different responses in directive's usage (Gavenila et al., 2019). All the studies denoted that language and gender studies are continuing phenomena to discuss.

Considering the presented motives, the formulated research questions are listed as follows:

- 1) What are the celebrities' verbal responses and their strategies towards insult?
- 2) How do gender language features denote male and female celebrities' responses to insults?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding insult and the approach toward it

Insults refer to any negative words or gestures about individuals regarding their personalities, thoughts, or actions that unleash anger, shame, or powerful emotions (Mosquera et al., 2008). Gabriel (1998) defined verbal insults as a form of mocking invective, cutting remarks, negative stereotypes, rudeness, satire, or straight swearing. It also manifests in actions such as contaminating valued objects, desecrating symbols, returning gifts, refusing invitations, facial expressions, or neglect (Gabriel, 1998). He also added that obscene gestures or racist and sexual harassment can denote a severe form of insult. Related to the data in this study, the Mean Tweets read by the celebrities predominantly contain the mentioned characteristics of insults.

Gabriel (1998) continued that insults consist of a perpetrator, a target, and sometimes audiences. Assigning insults can denote the dominance of the perpetrator. In general, insult is a striking construction to demonstrate superiority and subordination by challenging people's competence and morality (Bond & Venus, 1991; Gabriel, 1998). Responses then are related to whether the receiver intends to admit, neglect, or resist the negative expressions. Bond & Venus (1991) classified the responses towards insults into three classes. They explained that "Acceptance would take the form of acknowledging the correctness of the insult, perhaps underscoring the acceptance by non-verbal amplifiers such as a lowered head, a softer voice, and so forth. Ignoring may be communicated by silence, irrelevant verbal input, and so forth. Resistance to the insult may take the milder form of excuse-making, which accepts the attacker's construction of failure but claims an external, rather than the insulter's internal, attribution for the shortfall" (Bond & Venus, 1991, p.85). They continued that an outright rejection of the insults, a challenge to the offender to outperform the insulted party, or retaliatory name-calling are all effective forms of insult resistance. Acceptance, ignoring, and resistance would be the basis of classification in deciding the verbal responses in the present study.

Additionally, Sacks (1995) elucidated ways of dealing with insults in interactional conversation. First is misidentification or referring to other speakers (the perpetrators) with kinship terms when the speakers are factually not part of the kinship group. Then, the use of antinomies stops the progression of insult sequences by accepting the insult so that the acceptance is readily seen as untrue. If statements are accepted as true, the reality is false, and vice versa. Subsequently, ostensible gratitude phrases such as "thank you" aim to stop the insult sequence since these are set up as an acceptance: 'you're welcome'. Sacks (1995) argued that there is power in having 'the last word' in insult sequences and that cutting off further exchanges can be useful.

Gender language features

The general perception raised within society is that men and women speak differently. Men learn to talk like men and women learn to talk like women because society subjects them to different life experiences (Tannen, 1991). Differences in men's and women's speeches are one of the topics studied in this research. Related frameworks to account for the phenomena come from Lakoff (1975) and Coates (2004). Lakoff (1975) suggested that women's speech was characterized by numerous linguistic features such as:

- a) Lexical hedges or fillers, e.g., *you know, sort of, well, you see.*
- b) Tag questions, e.g., *she's very nice, isn't she?*
- c) Rising intonation on declarative, e.g., *it's really good.*
- d) 'Empty' adjectives, e.g., *divine, charming, cute.*
- e) Precise color terms, e.g., *magenta, aquamarine.*
- f) Intensifiers such as *just* and *so*, e.g., *I like him so much.*
- g) 'Hypercorrect' grammar, e.g., consistent use of standard verb forms.
- h) 'Super polite' forms, e.g., indirect requests, euphemisms.
- i) Avoid strong swear words by using euphemism alternatives, e.g., *fudge, my goodness.*
- j) Emphatic stress, e.g., *it was a BRILLIANT performance.*

Few pieces of literature specifically discuss men's language features (Karjo & Wijaya, 2020). Karjo & Wijaya (2020) in their paper commented that male language features are usually categorized by contrasting them with the female ones due to the less attention put on men's languages. Nevertheless, one prominent scholar that examined the features of men's language is Jennifer Coates (2004). She noted several characteristics associated with male speech as demonstrated:

- a) Minimal Responses or backchannel e.g., *yeah, right, or hmm.* It performs to highlight dominance.
- b) Command and Directives words such as *gimme, gotta, and gonna.* It encourages someone to do something and is extensively used in a same-sex group.
- c) Swearing and Taboo Languages may convey the power of men during an interaction. Examples of these features are *damn, fuck, shit,* and more.
- d) Compliments based on skills and possessions mean men will likely adopt minimal patterns of compliments, e.g., *Great car!* The pattern of questions that men used is predominantly for gaining information.

Studying the responses to insults will provide alternatives for everyone when experiencing insults. It is also expected that the outcome of examining this topic will contribute to the study of insult responses. Furthermore, it is noted that earlier studies were likely to describe anger and shame as an insult response (Mosquera et al., 2008), and the motivation as well as the action that evokes such responses. The present paper accentuates classifying responses linked to gender language characteristics. Since previous studies emphasize greater on the content of insults and non-verbal responses, the present study attempts to address insult responses in the form of verbal responses and how they link to gender language features.

METHOD

This paper is a descriptive and qualitative study. It concerns non-statistical data because the paper's focus is examining verbal responses toward insults, which were conveyed through utterances and digital materials. Data were obtained from videos from Jimmy Kimmel Live's YouTube account, specifically from the Mean Tweets segment. Filter the videos, it was done by particularly looking at videos entitled "Celebrity Read Mean Tweets". The videos comprise 12 pieces uploaded between 2012-2019. The data were verbal responses including words, phrases, clauses, and sentences regarding the tweets forwarded to the celebrities and the screenshots of the videos displaying the tweets. Celebrities with merely non-verbal responses

(facial expressions, laughs, humming, gestures) are excluded. Notwithstanding, these non-verbal responses would be considered in presenting the analysis to assist the verbal ones.

According to their verbal responses, 50 celebrities participated in the videos. Initially, the participants consisted of 40 men and 25 women. However, the final data included 50 participants including 25 women and 25 men. Male celebrities' responses were excluded and purposively selected based on their varied answers to match the number of female celebrities. The basis of the selection was mainly due to their inaudibility, although several efforts had been conducted to re-listen to the videos. In addition, this research employed data collection through observation, documentation, and audiovisual and digital materials. According to Creswell (2014), observation is done by taking notes on individuals' activities and behavior, namely observing speakers who performed verbal responses; documentation is done by collecting documents such as video transcription, and digital materials such as screenshots from the videos.

In gathering the data, the researcher took the following procedures. The researcher watched and observed the "Celebrity Read Mean Tweets" videos and jotted down participants that responded to the tweets verbally. The researcher downloaded the 'Mean Tweets' videos from Jimmy Kimmel Live's YouTube. The transcriptions for verbal responses were mainly conducted manually because not all videos provide automatic transcription embedded within the online videos. Then, screenshots of the tweets were captured. The researcher watched the videos again to ensure the use of verbal responses by the celebrities and re-check the responses. The chosen data were obtained from observation notes, transcriptions, and screenshots.

Moreover, the approach to analyzing verbal responses is based on Bond & Venus (1991). Verbal responses were initially classified as acceptance, ignoring, or resistance (Bond & Venus, 1991). The taxonomy was adopted for the data presentation as well. Then, the celebrities' utterances were examined to see if they tend to apply Sack's strategy (Sacks, 1995) or perhaps the possible use of other techniques. Continuously, the researcher explored whether gender language features are employed to deliver the intended responses. In this regard, Coates, (2004) and Lakoff (1975) frameworks are considered

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, you mention the findings and discussion of your study. For example, Indonesian diaspora literature in the United States is focused on (1) the literary works whose original version is in the Indonesian language, (2) the literary works whose original version did not use the Indonesian language but have been translated into the Indonesian language. For this second type, the focus of the study is the literary works that have been translated into the Indonesian language.

The researcher scrutinized as many as 50 responses uttered by 25 male and female celebrities, respectively. The results revealed that the tendency of the reaction pattern of the speakers is predominantly to decline the idea carried through the insults. Since ignoring is likely associated with silence, ignoring responses was relatively few because they did not meet the criteria of verbal responses. Acceptance responses indicate the recipients acknowledge the quality and intent of the insults. On the other hand, the resistance response is to oppose the idea of insults either implicitly or explicitly. The findings on the data are reported in the following table.

Table 1. Strategies employed by the celebrities in each category

Strategy	Number		Percentage
	Female	Male	
Acceptance	6	6	24%
Ostensible Gratitude	3	2	
Appreciative Feedback	3	4	
Ignoring	2	2	8%
Digression	1	2	
Rhetorical Questions	1	-	-
Resistance	17	17	68%
Antinomies	4	7	
Correction	4	2	
Syntactic Echoing	1	-	-
Swearing	2	5	
Rhetorical Questions	3	1	
Direct Counter-Attack	2	2	
Challenging the Perpetrators	1	-	-
Total	25	25	100%

Table 2. Language features found in the responses

Language Features	Female	Male	Total
Lexical hedges/Fillers	7	2	9
Empty Adjective	2	-	2
Harsh Words/Swearing	6	3	9
Intensifiers	1	4	5
Rhetorical Questions	3	1	4
Command Words	2	1	3
Emphatic stress	3	1	4

Table 1 illustrates that both male and female celebrities favored resistance as their responses (34 out of 50 participants). The women participants negated the meanings of the insults by countering with predominantly antinomies, correction, rhetorical questions, and directly refuting the insulters' opinions with various alternatives. Meanwhile, the men participants mainly used antimony, swearing, correction, or even direct attack. Additionally, Sacks (1995) noted the possible use of misidentification as an attempt to retaliate against insults in interaction, but from the data collected, the celebrities did not use this strategy.

Overall, seven language features were examined from how the celebrities responded to the offensive expressions. Mostly all of the features were uttered by both male and female participants. However, empty adjectives were rarely to be discovered in men's answers. Detailed information is provided in table 2.

Verbal responses projected by the celebrities

Acceptance

In observing the accepting responses, answers with ostensible gratitude such as "thank you" are nearly equal for both genders of participants. There were three female participants and two male participants who applied the gratitude expressions. Besides, appreciating the content of insults by stating the quality of the insults is also the trend among the speakers. Such responses are presented below.

Example 1

Tweet : Ever since @matisyahu shaved, he looks like old, fat, Justine Bieber.
Mati Syahu : Thanks...

Example 2

- Tweet : There are people who think Julia Roberts is hot!? Her gigantic mouth looks like it will devour an elephant in one bite.
- Julia Roberts : Thank you @Kemotherapy7 and good luck.

Example 1 and Example 2 illustrate the use of apparent gratitude. Syahu dan Roberts addressed gratitude expressions towards body-shaming comments against them. This strategy is designed to stop further conversation that results in other offensive terms. Unlike the first type of strategy, sending gratitude despite accepting the insult, demonstrates that those who ended first have this 'power' to dominate the conversation (Sacks, 1995).

Besides both strategies, another form of acceptance is evaluating the quality by appreciating the insult. The speakers assessed the abuses by assigning adjectives such as "good", "not bad", "funny", "sweet", and "amazing". The examples are displayed below.

Example 3

- Tweet : Paul Rudd is the most boring vanilla dude. You know he just sits at home with his wife having a bland spaghetti dinner talking about his day.
- Paul Rudd : That's pretty funny

Example 4

- Tweet : I hate Courtney Cox I fucking hate her. Pussy hoe.
- Courtney Cox : That's sweet.

Rudd replied by mentioning the adjective "funny" towards the insult. Meanwhile, Cox described the pejorative words against her as "sweet". Both terms are adjectives and symbolize acceptance by the two celebrities. The use of positive adjectives means the celebrities considered insults as 'compliments' and thus wanted to stop the insult's sequence in a friendly manner.

Ignoring

There were four utterances classified as ignoring responses. Ignoring can be in the form of irrelevant feedback or silence. The replies were inclined to be irrelevant or digression and rhetorical questions. Ignoring responses from male and female responses demonstrates the different patterns. The examples are illustrated as follows.

Example 5

- Tweet : @joelmchale is a huge d-bag
- Joel Mchale : Oh, you couldn't spell douche? Have 140 characters, you couldn't spell douche? I got it.

In this example, Mchale was offended and called a 'd-bag'. The term was a short form of douchebag, vulgar slang for an obnoxious or contemptible person. Instead of denying or accepting the content directly, Mchale countered the writing of d-bag by concluding that the Twitter user could not write such a simple and short word. The researcher summarized the response as part of ignoring because it did not directly answer the point of the insult and Mchale altered the focus by criticizing the sender of the insult; the celebrity mocked the sender, indicating that the person was incapable. In other words, it can be said that Joel Mchale performs digression in responding to the insult.

Example 6

Tweet : No one else finds Hayden Panettiere intolerable.
Hayden Panetti : Is that a question?

The eighth example employed the use of the rhetorical question. It was realized as ignoring because it displayed unrelated words of the insulting content. As the tweet degraded Panetti by claiming she was intolerable, she then questioned if the tweet was a sort of question to answer. Her reply was a rhetorical question since the tweet structure was a statement. It was proven by the sentence pattern that was preceded by the subject (no one else) and followed by the predicate (finds). Even though there is no punctuation in the actual tweet, such as a period, the structure of the tweet was a statement. Panetti gave that kind of response to ignore the insult directed at her.

Resistance

There were numerous resistance responses to the utterance which concluded this category as the utmost one. Overall, 34 responses were categorized as resistance and were in various forms. Below are some of the strategies used by celebrities.

The most employed one is antinomies. It is directly admitted the ‘trueness’ of the insult. Phrases such as “that’s true”, “he’s right”, “that’s just truthful” or “couldn’t agree more” are examples. These aim to validate the meaning carried by the offensive comments but it indirectly denies the insult contents. These samples were repeatedly found in male responses, and they only appeared four times in the female responses.

Example 7

Tweet : Yo @kevin_nealon you suck fat balls
Kevin Nealon : That is true.

Example 8

Tweet: : Kristen Bell seems like the kinda person Id be thrilled to be paired up with 4 a school project but then would never hang with her otherwise.
Kristen Bell : That’s probably true.

In the first example, ‘suck fat balls’ means Nealon, a male, performed sexual activity by sucking the male testicles. However, Nealon is a heterosexual and married man who has a slight tendency to do the act intentionally. Here, the insult is an idiomatic expression that describes Nealon as unpleasant, disappointing, or upsetting. His response then confirmed the associated adjectives to be his. The second example told a different story. Kristen Bell was characterized as an intelligent person, signaled by ‘thrilled to be paired up with for a school project’, yet she carried the ‘unfriendly’ quality. Thus, people did not want to involve her in daily life. However, both responses may indicate that Nealon and Bell use the antinomies strategy. When acknowledging if something is true, it is false (Sacks, 1995). In other words, the celebrities attempted to reconstruct their image to be something positive by correcting the content of the insult indirectly through this ‘true but false’. Nealon rebuilt his image by implying he was pleasant or excellent. Bell might infer that she was a compatible type.

Example 9

Tweet : Zooey Deschanel is overrated
Zooey Deschanel: I-I think I’m underrated.

Example 10

Tweet : Does Gerrard Butler have a massive student loan or something? Is that why he does all the shit films?
Gerrard Butler : Dude, I don’t have a student loan, I just do the shit films.

The answers in examples 9 and 10 rejected the insults directly and took the form of correction. The celebrities considered the tweet's content incorrect and needed to be justified. In example 9, the tweet said that Deschanel was overrated, meaning she was valued too highly than she deserved. The expression described Deschanel as unworthy of what she had at that time. The American actress then corrected by claiming the opposite. She argued that she was underrated or barely seen to be significant.

Additionally, the expression in example 10 began with a question. It is considered as a presupposition; thus, Butler had to rectify it. He directly answered the question and made a clear statement that he did not have the loan and just played the roles in the films. Even though he used the harsh word 'shit', the researcher decided to discuss it separately from the following category. Butler merely joined the sentence pattern to emphasize the quality of the movies as referred to by the Twitter user. He practiced the strategy of syntactic echoing, where he repeated the words "have a student loan" and "do the shit films" (McVittie et al., 2021). Both responses from the examples above denoted that the recipients disagreed and tried to correct the insults.

Example 11

Tweet : Oh, fuck off, June Squibb
June Squibb : Ben1283. You fuck off!

Example 12

Tweet : I am not being mean but why does @andersoncooper remind me of dinosaur?
Anderson Cooper: Fuck you!

In example 11, Squib adopted the same strategy as Butler, namely syntactic echoing. This strategy is proposed by McVittie et al. (2021). Syntactical structure refers to the expressions that utilize a particular form based on its syntax. As in the tweet, the pattern was straight "fuck off, (name)". Squib then deployed with "(name), fuck off". The researcher concluded in example 11 by using the harsh word because the reply merely consisted of rude remarks. Example 12 was sufficiently straightforward. Cooper directly attacked the user with the swearing word "Fuck you" rather than prolonging the answer by commenting on other aspects.

Example 13

Tweet : I have 'Matthew Perry Syndrome' – I'm a sarcastic loser with a giant head.
Matthew Perry : What's the matter with my head?

Example 14

Tweet : Sophia Vergara sounds like she has a dick in her mouth...I hate hearing her talk.
Sophia Vergara : What's wrong with having a dick in my mouth?

The two examples above were a set of expressions that shaped rhetorical questions. Both responders attempted to make a point. In examples 13 and 14, Perry and Vergara intended to state that nothing was wrong with their conditions. Perry was offended because his head was called "giant", yet he countered the insult by asking a rhetorical question. It signaled that Perry did not think her head was unusual. Similarly, Vergara's voice was mocked as it sounded like male genitalia blocking her voice. The same rhetorical question was employed because

Vergara believed her voice was normal. Therefore, she opposed the insulter by making the point to turn the insult down.

Language features in the celebrities' responses

Based on the result, it is found that several language features are inherent in the way celebrities speak. The researcher found that not all features detailed by Lakoff and Coates were displayed here, and only a few appeared. The observable characteristics are emphatic stress, empty adjectives, harsh words, intensifiers, lexical hedges, and rhetoric questions.

Intensifier

Intensifiers are featured to emphasize the words they attach to. Generally, women use intensifiers more than men. Men will likely use negative intensifiers (such as 'dreadfully') to strengthen the positive meaning of words (Karjo & Wijaya, 2020). However, the result from the present study is slightly different. Four of five intensifiers were spoken by men. Rather than implementing the negative ones, male participants preferred to accentuate basic and positive intensifiers such as "really" and "pretty."

Example 15

Tweet : @simoncowell you my friend are a #dick
Simon Cowell : That's actually one of the nicest things anybody has ever said about me, though. Could've been longer my friend, thank you, because I'm **really** a dick.

Example 16

Tweet : The Bob Balaban storyline on Seinfeld is creepy as fuck. My stomach turns when I see that goofy little worm.
Bob Balaban : That's **really** good.

Example 17

Bill Murray : That's **pretty** good.

Such answers indicate acceptance by male celebrities. The word "really" in example 15 was joined by a noun. It emphasized the description assigned to Simon Cowell who was not merely but thoroughly 'a dick' as claimed by Cowell himself. In contrast to example 16, the intensifier was followed by an adjective. It asserted the adjective addressed to the quality of the insult. Then, the word "pretty" served the same function as the previous example.

Example 18

Tweet : Chloe Moretz or whatever her stupid name is looks like my asshole seriously she is not decent looking whatsoever.
Chloe Moretz : You must have a **really** bleach asshole.

Meanwhile, the above answer was spoken by a female celebrity to resist the offensive meaning. Moretz had fair and bleached skin color. She associated the insulter's buttohole with the color of her skin rather than any possible ugly features of her appearance. The word 'really' was said in a sarcastic tone. The previous examples of intensifiers were inclined to be a compliment. However, Moretz's purpose in using intensifiers was to oppose the negative view and characterize it as a good one.

Empty adjectives

The finding suggested that women celebrities predominantly uttered empty adjectives. It is in line with Lakoff's (1975) perspective stating that women extensively use empty adjectives to display admiration towards something. Example 4 becomes the illustration. It shows how

Cox was astonished by the insult. Cox might turn the purpose of the insult into compliments instead of offenses. Therefore, she characterized the abuse to be “sweet.”

Another example is demonstrated below. Model 20 shared a similar pattern to example 4. Tyler is likely to consider the tweet amusing instead of correcting how it feels ‘having a father that is just a giant ballsack’ is; therefore, she graded it as “amazing” content.

Example 20

Tweet : Must be hard for Liv Tyler having a father that is just a giant ballsack.
Liv Tyler : That’s **amazing**.

Harsh words/swearing

The feature made up the most frequently found celebrities’ responses. Generally, men stated harsh words more repeatedly than women. Typical words employed by the speakers are the variation of “fuck” (i.e., the fuck, fucking, fucker, motherfucker), “dickhead” and “bitch”. Many of these expressions were communicated to negate the insult because the terms are appropriate to deliver strong emotions. Male participants use swearing more often because they are inclined to be aggressive, whereas females have a better-coping strategy in dealing with the undesired situation (Guvendir, 2015). The speakers answered with swearing words to battle and showed dominance over the specific situation. According to Guvendir (2015), swearing words function to threaten and dominate positions, hoping that the insult will discontinue. The illustration of harsh words can be seen in examples 11-12.

Emphatic stress

Male speakers were less to be found to use emphatic stress. Talbot (2010) specified emphatic stress as women’s greater pitch of range. Drawing on this narration, no men used their highest pitch to assert their statement. Men mentioned words with emphasis per syllable accompanied by a low tone instead of the highest. One excerpt showed best how emphatic stress was communicated by Sarah Silverman. Silverman did not elaborate on her counteraction directly or swear like some speakers. She stressed the word ‘needed’ to signal the mild resistance toward the insult she received. According to Lakoff (1975), women use this strategy to anticipate not being heard seriously or, in other words, if they want to emphasize a particular idea. From the present study, emphatic stress served a similar function as detailed by Lakoff. In the following example, a person wanted to pee on Silverman’s face without apparent reason. However, to Silverman, this reasonless expression seemed absurd that she questioned it by emphasizing the word ‘needed’, implying that the cause was important to consider. Silverman’s response was in the form of a rhetorical question expressing that she might criticize the perpetrator and simultaneously urge the sender to pay attention to reasons for wanting to pee on Silverman’s face. The detailed response is as follows.

Example 21

Tweet : I wanna pee in Sarah silverman’s face, no reason behind it
Sarah Silverman: No reason **needed**?

Lexical hedges

In this current research, hedges were discovered predominantly from female responses. It supported Lakoff’s notion about the tendency of women to employ lexical hedges/fillers more than men. In line with the result, another study conducted by Sabhagani et al. (2022) also validated the tendency of lexical hedges to be inherent among women characters, even in a fictional work. The hedges found in this present research include *I think, like, though, well*, and so on. One datum to illustrate the use of hedges is in example 9. It was applied as the preface

of Deschanel's declaration. Another example is provided below. The hedge "well" was used as the preface, yet it also demonstrated the speakers' confidence in addressing the statement. In the example, Haddish initiated her resistance by establishing her confidence and challenging the user with harsh terms. She finished her account by expressing gratitude.

Example 22

Tweet : Tiffany Haddish has a big ass mouth. You can't bring ratchet ass bitches like her nowhere. Just shut the fuck up.

Tiffany Haddish: **Well**, you know what? Why don't you shut the fuck up with your 14 followers? But thank you for introducing me to them.

Rhetorical questions

The researcher noticed that several responses inserted questions. Rather than aiming to gain information or reduce the force of the statement (Talbot, 2010), both genders rhetorically formed their questions. Since the contexts were one-way communication, meaning there was only a speaker in a specific situation, the celebrities' questions remained unanswered. Some of the rhetorical questions were provided as the speakers' judgments against the insulters. The illustrations can be seen in examples 5, 6, 13, 14, and 21.

Command words

Coates (2004) associated command words to be one of the characteristics of men's language features. Despite finding evidence in the men's utterances, the feature is also found in the women's utterances. Generally, the pattern of the commands is similar, yet it has slight differences. Firstly, the data both discovered from the resistance response, which purpose is to oppose the insulting content. Then, both genders utilized the pattern of 'go + *phrase*' and straight command words including *fuck* (example 11-12), *shut*, *should*, and *keep*. Example 23 is presented to illustrate the 'go + *phrase*'.

Example 23

Tweet : It's a good thing Ray Romano is funny because his face looks like a dump I took today.

Ray Romano : Oh, that's cold. It got on Twitter so I can't respond on @GOLF-GUY_127. Here's what you should do. **Go on my website and join. Go to the bottom of the page** and just keep on hitting agree, agree, and when you get 'the fuck you', click accept.

Additionally, another diverse pattern is command words followed by the expression *please*. Such a response is merely discovered from the female's reply. The term *please* is often signalized as a politeness marker, although in a particular case, the utterance containing it is not always polite (Morikawa, 2019). Nevertheless, the datum here serves to establish a resistance in a polite yet urging sense. In example 24, resistance is performed by challenging the perpetrator to realize the tweet's content. It simultaneously serves as the model of challenging the perpetrator which according to Bond & Venus (1991), is summarized as a powerful form of resistance.

Example 24

Tweet : I'd rather plant poison ivy plants in my anus before hearing another word about Kim Kardashian!

Kim Kardashian: Go ahead and do that, **please**

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the verbal responses spoken by celebrities and study how gender language features indicate the type of responses given. In responding to the insults, the

speakers predominantly showed the stand of resisting for both genders. The results presented that the celebrities primarily employed antinomies, correcting, syntactic echoing, swearing, asking rhetorical questions, direct counterattacks, and challenging the perpetrators. The most popular strategy is the antinomies which directly agree over the statement or the insult. However, the implied purpose of this strategy is to keep the positive images of the speakers by denying the content of the insult indirectly even though they seem to validate the degrading content. It can be understood that most participants wanted to confront the perpetrators and establish their dominant and accurate images. Then, acceptance was found to be the next favored response. It was asserted through ostensible gratitude and appreciative feedback to express acceptance responses whose purpose is to stop the insult sequence. Regarding the next objective, the language features used were multi-faceted. The salient language features vary from each gender. Male speakers used intensifiers a lot to support their acceptance. Meanwhile, the female participants employed lexical hedges not only to accept the insult but also to resist the insult. According to the responses, both genders shared specific language features, and at the same time, they performed different characteristics. These shared features are intensifiers, empty adjectives, harsh words, lexical hedges/fillers, rhetorical questions, and command words. Features adopted merely by female participants is emphatic stress. The language feature was principally discovered from the rejection response. Only empty adjectives and intensifiers were used in the acceptance response. It is possible because these two features can accommodate celebrities' neutral and positive responses. Overall, language features were largely adopted by women except for the intensifier which was mostly utilized by male speakers.

Lastly, upon the completion of this research, it is expected that the results of this study can be helpful for the study of language and insulting words and their relation to the language characteristics of men and women. Due to the limitation in data collection, the researcher only used a sample that included one-way conversations between celebrities and insulters. Future research can further discuss whether the response strategy takes stopping insults or developing them. Studying the continuation of insult responses from other perspectives such as age and educational background can be an alternative for future research as well.

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