

Gender, Language, and Power: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Fury Road and The Lightning Thief

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Abstract. This study examines masculine and feminine speech styles and their relationship to gender and power in the dialogues of *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) and *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* (2010), drawing on Wood's (2008) gender-based communication theory. It aims to identify the types and functions of masculine and feminine speech styles and examine how language reflects social interaction, power relations, and gender as a social construct. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method using content analysis. The data were collected from the dialogues of the two films and supported by film transcripts. The findings reveal that both masculine and feminine speech styles are represented in the dialogues. Masculine speech features include establishing status and control, instrumentality, conversational command, directness and assertiveness, abstract language, and lower emotional responsiveness. Feminine speech features include establishing and maintaining relationships, promoting equality, supporting others, maintenance work, responsiveness, personal and concrete language, and tentativeness. Among these features, maintenance work is the most dominant, indicating that characters frequently use language to sustain interaction, maintain relationships, and encourage participation in conversation. In contrast, tentativeness is the least frequent feature, suggesting that expressions of uncertainty are relatively uncommon. The findings further indicate that masculine and feminine speech styles are not determined solely by the characters' biological gender. Instead, their use varies according to communicative context, situation, interpersonal relationships, and purpose. Thus, language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a resource for negotiating power, constructing identities, maintaining relationships, and expressing gendered patterns of interaction. Overall, the study demonstrates that gendered speech styles are flexible and context-dependent, reflecting gender as a socially constructed aspect of communication.

Keywords: Language and Gender, Masculine, Feminine, Speech Style, Film

INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental means through which humans communicate, express ideas and emotions, fulfil needs, and establish social relationships. Parikh (2001) describes language as the most advanced human tool because it serves various purposes, including giving commands, asking questions, and expressing feelings. Its function, however, extends beyond the simple transmission of information. Language enables speakers to negotiate meaning, construct interpersonal relationships, express attitudes, and respond to particular social situations. In this sense, language is closely connected to the social and cultural contexts in which it is used. Masniar (2022) emphasises that language contains cultural elements and reflects the values associated with human social being. Similarly, Apriyanto (2020) explains that language functions not only to communicate information but also to express feelings, develop ideas, persuade others, entertain, fulfil daily needs, and facilitate cooperation. Therefore, language can be understood as both a communication system and a representation of its users' social and cultural environment.

One important aspect of the relationship between language and society is gender. Language does not merely reflect existing social structures but may also contribute to their construction and maintenance. Usman et al. (2025) state that language functions as a powerful instrument for demonstrating and supporting social structures, including gender roles. Through language, speakers communicate not only literal meanings but also social identities, cultural values, relationships, and expectations concerning appropriate behaviour. In a similar vein, Salsabila et al. (2024) argue that language plays an important role in reflecting and shaping gender roles in society. Particular words, expressions, and interactional patterns may reproduce stereotypes, such as associating men with strength, authority, and independence, and women with gentleness, dependence, and emotionality. Thus, language is not entirely neutral because linguistic choices can influence how gender identities, relationships, and social positions are perceived.

The relationship between gender and language has consequently become an important concern in sociolinguistic studies. Husain et al. (2022) note that men and women may employ language differently in social interaction. Such differences can

involve vocabulary, conversational strategies, topics, and ways of structuring interaction. Jakiela and Ozier (2020) further explain that language demonstrates considerable diversity in both structure and vocabulary, with speakers using different linguistic forms to represent similar concepts and relationships. However, differences in communication should not be considered solely as consequences of biological sex. They are also influenced by social context, interpersonal relationships, communicative purposes, and culturally established expectations. Therefore, an analysis of gendered language needs to consider not only what linguistic forms speakers use but also how and why those forms are employed in particular interactions.

Fitriani et al. (2023) explain that conversations occur in various contexts and may involve two men, two women, or a man and a woman. Differences may emerge in the topics discussed, conversational styles, and strategies employed by participants. Previous observations have associated male speech with conversational dominance, teasing, competition, and status building. In contrast, female speech has often been associated with politeness, expressions of uncertainty, marker questions, cooperation, and the maintenance of social harmony. Nevertheless, these tendencies should not be interpreted as fixed characteristics of all male and female speakers. Communication practices can vary according to situation, relationship, topic, identity, and communicative purpose. This consideration is particularly important when examining gender representation in fictional dialogue because characters may perform different gender identities through their linguistic choices.

Accordingly, the distinction between sex and gender is essential to understanding gendered communication. Coates (2004) distinguishes sex as referring primarily to biological differences between males and females, whereas gender refers to socially constructed roles, behaviours, and expectations associated with these categories. Gender is therefore produced and negotiated through social interaction, including language use. Burke (as cited in Stets & Burke, 2000) similarly explains that femininity and masculinity, often discussed in relation to gender identity, concern how individuals understand themselves as masculine or feminine within prevailing social norms. Because these concepts are socially constructed, they are not necessarily

determined by biological sex. A woman may demonstrate masculine characteristics, while a man may demonstrate feminine characteristics. This perspective makes it possible to examine masculine and feminine communication as flexible patterns rather than automatically assigning them to male and female speakers.

From this perspective, the present study examines masculine and feminine speech styles in the dialogues of *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) and *Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* (2010). The study focuses on how characters use language to construct gendered identities, social roles, relationships, authority, and power. *Mad Max: Fury Road*, directed by George Miller, presents a post-apocalyptic society defined by survival, conflict, resistance, and power struggles. Its characters, including Max and Furiosa, employ linguistic strategies associated with masculine and feminine speech patterns. Furiosa, for instance, frequently communicates through direct, assertive expressions that support her portrayal as a leader, while other characters employ linguistic forms that convey care, emotionality, cooperation, or resistance. The interactions among the characters therefore provide opportunities to examine how language contributes to the negotiation of authority and power.

In contrast, *Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief*, directed by Chris Columbus, presents a fantasy narrative centred on Percy, a teenager who discovers he is a demigod and becomes caught in a conflict among the gods. The dialogues among Percy, Annabeth, and other characters demonstrate diverse communication styles that may represent masculine and feminine characteristics. The distinct narrative and social contexts of the two films offer an opportunity to examine whether masculine and feminine speech styles are consistently represented or vary with character, situation, relationship, and communicative purpose. Comparing the two films also allows the study to move beyond a simple male-versus-female distinction and focus on how gendered communication is constructed through linguistic practices.

Although previous studies have investigated language and gender in films, many have primarily compared male and female speakers according to biological sex. Fewer studies have examined masculine and feminine speech styles as communication patterns that speakers can adopt regardless of their biological sex. This study addresses

this gap by analysing masculine and feminine speech styles without assuming that masculine language necessarily belongs to male characters or feminine language exclusively belongs to female characters. Such an approach provides a broader understanding of gendered communication by emphasising linguistic characteristics, social meanings, and communicative functions.

To analyse these patterns, the study applies Wood's (2008) gender-based communication theory. The theory provides a framework for examining differences in masculine and feminine communication and for understanding how these patterns relate to social expectations concerning gender. Using this framework, the study investigates how characters employ language to express identity, establish authority, convey emotions, maintain relationships, give commands, demonstrate support, and negotiate social positions. The analysis therefore treats masculine and feminine speech styles as socially meaningful communication practices rather than biologically determined linguistic characteristics.

By examining the dialogues in *Mad Max: Fury Road* and *Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief*, this study aims to demonstrate how gender, language, identity, and power intersect in film discourse. It particularly seeks to identify the linguistic patterns associated with masculine and feminine speech styles and explain their functions within particular interactions. The study contributes to sociolinguistic research by emphasising that gendered speech is not necessarily determined by biological sex but can operate as a flexible linguistic resource shaped by context, social relationships, identity, and communicative purposes. From this perspective, film dialogue can be understood not merely as entertainment but also as a representation of how society constructs, negotiates, and communicates ideas about masculinity and femininity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is the study of how language is used in everyday life, both in conversation and in the media. It also examines how social norms, policies, and rules

influence the way language functions and is used in society (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). Darwis (2018) argued that sociolinguistics is a branch of science that combines sociology and language studies. These two fields are closely related because they both study humans and their interactions. Sociolinguistics therefore examines how language is used in social life and how it reflects interpersonal relationships. In other words, sociolinguistics not only discusses linguistic forms but also considers their roles and functions in social activities and everyday communication.

According to Tagliamonte (2011), sociolinguistics encompasses a wide range of topics depending on the research focus. Some studies emphasise cultural aspects, while others focus on educational environments or other social contexts. Therefore, sociolinguistics cannot be viewed as a single, fixed field but as an interconnected discipline that reflects the diverse ways language is used in social life. Through its broad scope, sociolinguistics provides insight into how language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a representation of social behaviour and cultural identity.

B. Language and Gender

Tran et al. (2025) explain that language is a communication system composed of grammar and vocabulary. Its function is not only to convey thoughts but also to reflect and reinforce social and cultural norms in human interaction. Language can also be understood as a collection of symbols through which humans express their thoughts and describe the world around them. Because every language has different systems and rules, the way people understand the world can also differ (Dong, 2014).

According to Irwandi et al. (2024), language is part of culture and is used not only for communication but also to express values, ways of interacting, and behaviours in society. One important issue reflected in language is the difference in social relations between men and women. Since language reflects social patterns, it also demonstrates gender differences. Certain terms and expressions may describe the roles and behaviours expected from men and women. In this way, language can maintain societal views concerning how men and women should behave. These differences are often associated with sexism, which contributes to the development of masculine and feminine styles of speaking.

The term gender is more suitable than sex when discussing these linguistic differences because sex generally refers to biological differences. In contrast, gender relates to social and cultural behaviour, including ways of speaking. Gender differences in language should not necessarily be viewed as two opposite categories, male and female, but rather as a scale. This means that speech features associated with men or women can be used by anyone depending on how they wish to present themselves as more masculine or feminine (Holmes, 2013).

Teibowei and Therese (2024) argued that differences in the way people speak are strongly influenced by gender. Gender as a social construct affects language, causing speaking styles to vary with social factors. The relationship between social differences and gender complicates language variation. Although men are commonly associated with masculine ways of speaking and women with feminine ways of speaking, gender communication demonstrates that masculine and feminine speech styles can occur in different forms and contexts.

1. Masculine Speech Style

According to Wood (2008), several speech styles are commonly associated with masculine communication, including establishing status and control, instrumentality, conversational command, direct and assertive communication, abstract language, and reduced emotional responsiveness. These features describe ways speakers may use language to demonstrate authority, solve problems, control conversations, and communicate information.

a. Establish Status and Control

Establishing status and control involves expressing authority and opinions, telling jokes or stories, and asking others questions. Through these forms, speakers can demonstrate their position and influence within an interaction. For example, "Don't let your boss get to you."

b. Instrumentality

Instrumentality is usually demonstrated through problem-solving activities, such as seeking information, finding facts, and offering possible solutions. This style

emphasises the practical purpose of communication and focuses on achieving specific objectives. For example, "Just talk to her like you are talking to me now."

c. Direct and Assertive

Direct and assertive communication is generally strong and authoritative. Because this style can be absolute or commanding, it may sometimes limit conversation and provide others with little opportunity to speak. An example is the expression "please stop."

d. Conversational Command

Conversational command refers to speaking more frequently or for longer periods, directing the flow of conversation, using what others say as a starting point for one's own topics, or sometimes interrupting the conversation. This feature demonstrates how speakers may attempt to control the direction and development of an interaction.

e. Less Emotionally Responsive

Less emotionally responsive refers to giving minimal responses, revealing little about oneself, and expressing limited sympathy or understanding. Short responses such as "yeah" or "um hmm" may represent this feature.

f. Abstract

Abstract communication refers to the use of general terms that are detached from concrete experiences and personal feelings. In public contexts, this style often emphasises theoretical, conceptual, and broad ideas rather than specific personal experiences (Wood, 2008).

2. Feminine Speech Style

According to Wood (2008), several speech styles are associated with feminine communication, including relationship-building and maintenance, equality, support for others, maintenance work, responsiveness, a personal and concrete style, and tentativeness. These features generally emphasise cooperation, interpersonal connection, emotional support, and participation in conversation.

a. Equality

Equality in speaking aims to create balance in interactions, where participants collaborate by responding to and developing each other's ideas. For example, "I totally

know what you mean." This feature encourages shared participation rather than emphasising authority.

b. Maintenance Work

Maintenance work refers to efforts to keep conversations going by encouraging others to speak and inviting them to develop their thoughts. Questions such as "How was your day?" can encourage another speaker to continue the interaction.

c. Establish and Maintain Relationship

Establishing and maintaining relationships involves participating in conversations to share personal experiences and get to know others better. Through this feature, language becomes a means of developing and strengthening interpersonal relationships.

d. Support for Others

Support for others involves showing care by expressing emotions that communicate understanding of another person's situation or feelings. For instance, saying "Oh, you must feel terrible" demonstrates sympathy and emotional support.

e. Responsiveness

Responsiveness refers to the learned tendency to pay attention to others and make them feel appreciated and included. It works by affirming the speaker and encouraging further explanation through genuine interest in what has been said. An example is "Tell me more."

f. Personal and Concrete Style

Personal and concrete style involves sharing details, personal stories, and specific reasoning. This way of speaking creates a personal tone and helps build closeness by connecting conversation to the speaker's own experiences.

g. Tentativeness

Tentativeness can be demonstrated through hedging words, tag questions, and similar expressions. This style creates space for others to participate and share their opinions. An example is, "I'm not sure if this is right, but..."

C. Dialogue

According to Ellinor and Girard (2023), dialogue is a powerful form of communication because it can influence and change the people involved. Dialogue is not simply an exchange of opinions; it can create a shared understanding that develops over time and leads to joint action. In this way, dialogue can foster meaningful conversations and create opportunities for closer, longer-lasting cooperation.

Knight and Littleton (2015) argue that dialogue is not only a tool for conveying messages but also a means of shaping the atmosphere or situation surrounding communication. When people speak, they do not simply communicate within an existing context; they also create and transform that context through interaction. For example, the atmosphere of a classroom or the relationship between teachers and students can be shaped by the way they communicate. Therefore, context should not be understood as a fixed setting but as something that can change and develop throughout an interaction.

D. Relevant Studies

Several previous studies have examined language in relation to gender differences, particularly in films that represent masculine and feminine speech styles. These studies provide an important foundation for understanding how language reflects gender identity and social interaction.

The first study by Maulidya et al. (2024), titled "*Language and Gender Use of Linguistic Forms in Your Place or Mine Movie (2023)*," examines linguistic differences between male and female characters in the film *Your Place or Mine*. The researchers employed a qualitative descriptive method based on Lakoff's (1975) and Coates' (2004) theories of language and gender. Data were collected from the movie script and analysed through content analysis. The findings showed that male speech included minimal responses (21%), commands and directives (21%), topic choice (11%), and swearing words (21%). Male characters also used features commonly associated with women, including tag questions (16%), lexical hedges (5%), and avoidance of strong swear words (5%). Female speech included nine linguistic features: tag questions (14%), lexical hedges or fillers (22%), raising intonation on declaratives (6%), avoidance of strong swear words (22%), super polite forms (3%), emphatic stress (8%), hypercorrect grammar (6%), intensifiers

(11%), and empty adjectives (8%). The study indicates that gendered language is not strictly divided, as both men and women may use linguistic forms associated with the other gender depending on the social context.

The second study, entitled "*Masculine and Feminine Speech Styles of The Main Character in Mulan Live-Action (2020) And After the Ball (2015) Movies,*" was conducted by Hanif and Wildi (2024). This research examined masculine and feminine speech styles using Wood's (2008) theory and Holmes's (2013) functions of speech. The researchers employed a qualitative method and analysed textual data taken from the main characters' speech in both movies. As a result, 173 data points were identified as belonging to masculine and feminine speech styles and their functions (Solichah & Adila, 2024).

The third study, conducted by Muna (2025), was titled "*Language, Gender, Men's Language Features, Women's Language Features, Movie.*" The study aimed to identify language features used by men and women in *Deadpool & Wolverine*. It employed a descriptive qualitative approach and content analysis. Data were collected through documentation of the movie and its transcripts. The language features were analysed using Coates (2013) and Lakoff (2004). The findings identified four of six male language features: questions, commands and directives, swearing and taboo language, and compliments, while responses and themes were not found in the movie.

Although many studies have explored language and gender in films, research specifically analysing masculine and feminine speech styles remains limited. Most previous studies have focused on the speaker, particularly by comparing male and female characters. However, this study takes a different approach, focusing on language itself and analysing features that reflect masculine or feminine speech styles regardless of the speaker's biological sex. Thus, this study highlights how gender characteristics can be expressed through language and how films construct and represent masculinity and femininity through dialogue. This approach expands understanding of gendered language in cinematic contexts and emphasises language's role in shaping social and cultural perceptions of gender

METHODS

A. Research Design

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. Creswell (2024) explains that qualitative research is a way to understand how individuals or groups make meaning of social or humanitarian problems. Researchers generally begin with broad questions, collect data directly from the relevant environment, and analyse the data gradually to identify patterns or themes. The results are presented as descriptions and interpretations rather than numerical data. This approach emphasises understanding meanings from the subjects' perspectives and examining phenomena in their natural contexts.

According to Moleong (2018), qualitative research focuses on non-numerical data to understand people's thoughts, attitudes, opinions, and behaviour. It is particularly useful in behavioural studies because it helps researchers explore the reasons behind particular actions or responses. The results are based on the researcher's interpretation of the collected data rather than mathematical or statistical calculations.

B. Source of the Data

The data sources in this study are the transcripts of the movies *Mad Max: Fury Road* and *Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief*. The transcripts serve as the primary analytical material for examining language features that portray masculinity and femininity. The movies also provide emotional and visual contexts that support the analysis, including characters' intonation, facial expressions, body language, and conversational situations.

C. Techniques of Collecting Data

The writer uses documentation as the main technique for collecting data. This technique involves collecting and analysing documented materials, including the movies *Mad Max: Fury Road* and *Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief*, along with their transcripts. Documentation is appropriate for qualitative research

because it enables the researcher to examine language use and social interaction presented in media texts.

The data collection process consists of several steps. First, the writer obtains the complete movies and their transcripts. Second, the movies are watched repeatedly to observe interactions among characters, particularly speech styles associated with masculinity and femininity. Third, the transcripts are carefully reviewed to identify relevant language features and speech styles. The writer records the identified data and makes detailed notes. Key scenes are replayed when necessary to ensure accuracy and to consider important contextual elements, such as tone, emphasis, facial expressions, and body language, which contribute to the interpretation of gendered communication.

D. Technique of Data Analysis

The data are analysed using content analysis. Content analysis assumes that texts contain important information that can contribute to understanding a particular phenomenon. The analysis considers the participants involved and the context in which the text is produced. The data are then organised into related categories to identify patterns, similarities, differences, and possible underlying meanings (Kleinheksel et al., 2020).

In this study, the writer follows several analytical steps. First, dialogues spoken by male and female characters in *Mad Max: Fury Road* and *Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* are identified and grouped according to relevant theories of masculine and feminine language use. Second, the researcher watches the movies while simultaneously examining the transcripts to understand how the identified speech features are used in particular situations. Third, each dialogue is carefully examined according to its linguistic features and contextual meaning. The movies are watched several times to ensure that significant dialogues and speech features are not overlooked. Finally, the collected notes and classifications are reviewed and compared with the relevant theories to ensure that the interpretation is accurate, consistent, and supported by the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Research Findings

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of feminine and masculine speech styles in *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) and *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* (2010). The analysis is based on dialogues from both films, drawing on Wood's (2008) theory of gendered communication. The analysis identifies and compares masculine and feminine speech-style features and explains their relevance to the research question.

The findings indicate that masculine and feminine speech styles are gender constructs rather than fixed characteristics determined by biological sex. Both male and female characters may use masculine or feminine speech styles depending on the context, purpose, relationship, and communication situation. Wood's (2008) theory identifies several masculine and feminine communication features. The following tables present the frequency and percentage of each feature found in the two films.

Table 1 *Percentage of Masculine Speech Style*

Type of Masculine Speech Style	Mad Max: Fury Road	Percy Jackson: The Lightning Thief	The Total	Percentage (%)
Establish status and control	9	10	19	26.03%
Instrumentality	19	10	29	39.73%
Conversational Command	2	3	5	6.85%
Direct and assertive	5	4	9	12.33%
Abstract	3	2	5	6.85%
Less emotionally responsive	2	4	6	8.22%
Total			73	

Based on Table 1. 73 data points in the masculine speech style were identified. Instrumentality is the most dominant feature, with 29 occurrences (39.73%). This

indicates that many conversations in both films focus on achieving goals, solving problems, obtaining information, and taking practical action.

Table 2. *Percentage of Feminine Speech Style*

Type of Feminine Speech Style	Mad Fury Road	Max: Percy Jackson: The Lightning Thief	The Total	Percentage (%)
Establish and maintain a relationship	4	7	11	10.48%
Equality	2	7	9	8.57%
Support for others	5	10	15	14.29%
Maintenance work	18	25	43	40.95%
Responsiveness	4	5	9	8.57%
Person and concrete style	5	8	13	12.38%
Tentativeness	3	2	5	4.76%
Total			105	

Table 2 shows that 105 data points were identified in the feminine speech style. The most dominant feature is maintenance work, with 43 occurrences (40.95%). This suggests that many conversations involve maintaining interaction, asking questions, obtaining information, and encouraging others to continue speaking. The total number of masculine and feminine speech-style data points is 178, comprising 81 from *Mad Max: Fury Road* and 97 from *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief*, representing 100% of the analysed data.

1. Masculine Speech Style

Masculine communication generally emphasises achieving goals, showing control, maintaining independence, establishing status, and focusing on action, as described by Wood et al. (2018). Wood explains that communication can be used to demonstrate authority, prove ability, and negotiate social position. Six masculine speech styles were found in both films: establishing status and control, instrumentality, conversational command, direct and assertive communication, abstract communication, and reduced emotional responsiveness.

Table 3. *Masculine Speech Style*

No. Masculine features	Mad Max: Fury Road	Percy Jackson: The Lightning Thief
1. Establish Status and Control	"Stay out of sight now!"	"If you touch him, you will have the fight of your life."
2. Instrumentality	"You're relying on the gratitude of a very bad man."	"Just give us the lightning bolt, and we'll let you go."
3. Conversational command	"Behind you!"	"Sally, watch out!"
4. Direct and assertive	"Stop, turn the ring around, go back for her."	"Just shut up, shut up, man. Go on."
5. Abstract	"My world is fire and blood."	"Be prepared. Everything is about to change, Percy."
6. Less emotionally responsive	"Yeah-yeah organic."	"Hmm Hmm."

1. Establish Status and Control

Establishing status and control refers to communication used to demonstrate authority and power over a situation. Speakers may issue commands, warnings, or statements that influence others' behaviour.

Furiosa: **"Stay out of sight now!"** (23:24)

Furiosa uses this short, firm statement in a dangerous situation. Her purpose is to ensure that the others remain safe and avoid being seen by enemies. The direct command leaves little opportunity for discussion because immediate action is required. Therefore, the statement represents masculine speech through establishing status and control. Although Furiosa is a female character, she adopts this style because the dangerous situation requires authority and direct communication.

A similar example appears in *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief*:

Poseidon: **"If you touch him, you will have the fight of your life."** (03:51)

Poseidon uses a strong warning to prevent others from harming Percy. Although the statement is not a direct command, it demonstrates power by emphasising the consequences of another person's actions. Thus, it reflects masculine communication, as the speaker attempts to control behaviour and to protect Percy.

2. Instrumentality

Instrumentality refers to communication used to accomplish a goal, solve a problem, obtain information, or provide practical solutions.

Furiosa: **"You're relying on the gratitude of a very bad man. You've damaged one of his wives. How grateful do you think he's gonna be?"** (40:30)

Furiosa uses this statement when Max takes control of the rig and considers returning to Immortan Joe. She explains the risks and consequences to influence Max's decision. Her communication focuses on solving the immediate problem and selecting a safer course of action. Therefore, it demonstrates instrumentality.

Percy: **"Okay, let's split up. Check everything."** (48:19)

Percy gives a practical solution while searching for something in a difficult environment. By suggesting that they split up, he creates a more efficient way to complete the search. The statement is therefore instrumental because it focuses on an action required to achieve a specific goal.

Both examples demonstrate instrumentality because they focus on solutions and actions. However, Furiosa explains the consequences to influence Max, whereas Percy offers a direct plan to solve the problem.

3. Conversational Command

Conversational command occurs when a speaker controls or redirects a conversation, including by interrupting or shifting the focus of the interaction.

Furiosa: **"Behind you!"** (43:20)

Furiosa interrupts the ongoing interaction with Max to warn him about enemies behind them. Her short statement immediately shifts Max's attention toward danger. It therefore functions as a conversational command, controlling the direction of interaction and demanding immediate attention.

Grover: **"Sally, watch out!"** (17:20)

Grover similarly interrupts Sally and Percy's conversation to warn Sally about the danger ahead. His statement changes the focus from the previous conversation to an immediate threat.

Both examples demonstrate conversational command because the characters interrupt the interaction to direct attention to danger. The difference is contextual: Furiosa's statement occurs in a survival situation, while Grover's occurs during a more emotional conversation that suddenly becomes dangerous.

4. Direct and Assertive

Direct and assertive speech is forceful and authoritative, often limiting opportunities for further discussion.

The Wives: **"Stop, turn the rig around, go back for her."** (59:07)

The Wives use a series of direct commands when one of them falls from the vehicle. Their urgent language emphasises immediate action and leaves little room for debate. Although the speakers are female characters, their communication reflects a masculine speech style because it is highly direct and assertive.

Percy: **"Just shut up, shut up, man. Go on."** (01:23:35)

Percy uses a firm command when Grover continues to complain. The repeated phrase "shut up" directly stops Grover's speech and encourages them to continue their journey. The statement is therefore direct and assertive because Percy expresses his intention without softening his language.

Both examples demonstrate masculine communication through direct and forceful language. However, the Wives use assertiveness to rescue someone in danger, while Percy uses it to stop a complaint and move forward.

5. Abstract

Abstract speech uses general, symbolic, or conceptual language rather than specific descriptions of concrete experiences.

Max: **"My world is fire and blood."** (00:23)

Max uses “fire and blood” symbolically to describe the violent world in which he lives. The statement does not refer to one specific event but presents a general representation of his experience. It is therefore classified as abstract speech.

Poseidon: **“Be prepared. Everything is about to change, Percy.”** (10:02)

Poseidon uses general language to describe the major changes that Percy will experience after discovering his identity. He does not explain the specific events that will happen, making the statement abstract.

Both examples use general and symbolic language. Max uses abstraction to describe a violent world, while Poseidon uses it to anticipate major changes in Percy’s life.

6. Less Emotionally Responsive

Less emotionally responsive refers to brief responses that provide limited emotional expression or explanation.

War Boy: **“Yeah-yeah organic.”** (16:30)

The War Boy responds briefly while Nux and the other War Boys are preparing for conflict. The response provides little emotional engagement or sympathy. Its short and firm form demonstrates limited emotional responsiveness.

Annabeth: **“Hmm Hmm.”** (38:31)

Annabeth gives a brief response while talking with Percy about their parents. Her response indicates agreement without additional explanation or emotional elaboration.

Both examples are less emotionally responsive because the speakers provide minimal responses. However, the contexts differ: the War Boy’s response occurs in a tense situation, while Annabeth’s occurs during a casual personal conversation.

2. Feminine Speech Style

Seven feminine speech styles identified by Wood’s (2008) theory were found in both films: establishing and maintaining relationships, equality, support for others, maintenance work, responsiveness, personal and concrete style, and tentativeness.

Table 4. *Feminine Speech Style*

No. Feminine features	Mad Max: Fury Road	Percy Jackson: The Lightning Thief
1. Establish and maintain a relationship.	"Are you hurt? You bleed."	"I'm sorry, Percy. I try, man, I really do."
2. Equality	"And water."	"Right."
3. Support for others	"Witness!"	"Annabeth, I am so proud of you."
4. Maintenance work	"What happened to your mother?"	"Wait, a Fury? What a fury!"
5. Responsiveness	"It feels like hope."	"Yes! Yeah."
6. Personal and concrete style	"Once, I was a cop."	"I once had hair like that."
7. Tentativeness	"I don't know if it's still any good."	"I don't know, maybe that is the ADHD."

1. Establish and Maintain a Relationship

This feature refers to communication used to develop interpersonal connections, express concern, share personal information, and understand others.

The Wives: **"Are you hurt? You bleed."** (01:14:01)

One of the Wives asks about Max's condition after he is injured. The question demonstrates concern for his physical well-being and contributes to interpersonal connection. Therefore, it represents the establishment and maintenance of a relationship.

Grover: **"I'm sorry, Percy. I try, man, I really do."** (21:50)

Grover expresses regret and concern after Percy discovers that his mother has been taken. His statement acknowledges Percy's feelings while explaining his own efforts. This demonstrates communication intended to maintain their friendship.

The difference is that the Wives express concern about physical safety, whereas Grover provides emotional support and reassurance.

2. Equality

Equality refers to balanced interaction in which speakers respond to and build upon each other's ideas.

The Wife: **"And water."** (01:27:05)

The Wife contributes to the discussion about returning to the Citadel by adding water as another reason for the decision. Her contribution builds on the previous idea and demonstrates cooperative interaction.

Grover: **"Right."** (06:35)

Grover responds to Percy's statement by agreeing with him. He does not attempt to dominate the conversation but participates by acknowledging Percy's idea.

Both examples represent equality because the characters respond cooperatively. The difference is that the first occurs during a group decision, while the second appears in a casual conversation between friends.

3. Support for Others

Support for others refers to expressing encouragement, understanding, care, and recognition of another person's feelings or achievements.

War Boy: **"Witness."** (22:34)

The War Boys shout "Witness!" to recognise and support a fellow War Boy during combat. Their response demonstrates group encouragement and acknowledgement of courage.

Athena: **"Annabeth, I am so proud of you."** (01:44:18)

Athena expresses pride in Annabeth after Percy and Annabeth retrieve the stolen lightning bolt. Her statement directly communicates emotional support and recognition of Annabeth's achievement.

Both examples provide support, but their forms differ. In *Mad Max: Fury Road*, support is expressed collectively in combat, whereas in *Percy Jackson*, it is expressed personally through pride and emotional recognition.

4. Maintenance Work

Maintenance work refers to communication that keeps an interaction going, often by asking questions or inviting another person to provide further information.

Many Mothers: **"What happened to your mother?"** (01:19:39)

Many Mothers asks Furiosa about her mother and encourages her to discuss her past. The question demonstrates interest in Furiosa's personal experience while keeping the conversation active.

Percy: **"Wait, a fury? What a fury?"** (13:56)

Percy asks questions because he is confused about the strange events surrounding him. His questions encourage further explanation and help him understand the situation. Both examples represent maintenance work because questions sustain interaction. Many Mothers seeks personal information, while Percy seeks information about an unfamiliar situation.

5. Responsiveness

Responsiveness refers to showing attention, involvement, and interest in another speaker's contribution.

Nux: **"It feels like hope."** (01:28:14)

Nux expresses a positive emotional reaction to the situation. His statement demonstrates involvement and responsiveness toward what is happening around him.

Annabeth and Grover: **"Yes! Yeah."** (42:59)

Annabeth and Grover respond enthusiastically to Percy. Their positive responses demonstrate attention and support, encouraging continued interaction.

Both examples show responsiveness, but Nux's response is calmer and reflective, whereas Annabeth and Grover's responses are more enthusiastic.

6. Personal and Concrete Style

Personal and concrete style refers to the use of specific details and personal experiences in communication.

Max: **"Once, I was a cop."**

Max shares specific information about his past. The statement helps others understand his background and provides a concrete detail about his identity.

Medusa: **"I once had hair like that."** (50:46)

Medusa refers to her own past while speaking with Annabeth. The specific comparison makes the conversation personal and connects Medusa's experience to Annabeth.

Both examples use personal experiences and concrete information. Max uses his statement to explain his past identity, while Medusa uses hers to establish a connection with Annabeth.

7. Tentativeness

Tentativeness refers to expressing uncertainty or presenting an idea in a way that allows alternative interpretations and responses.

Furiosa: **"I don't know if it's still any good."** (01:27:09)

Furiosa expresses uncertainty about the condition of the place they plan to visit. The phrase "I don't know" makes her statement less absolute and leaves room for other opinions.

Percy: **"I don't know, maybe that is the ADHD."** (08:04)

Percy uses "I do not know" and "maybe" to express uncertainty about himself. His statement does not present his interpretation as definite, demonstrating tentativeness. Both examples show uncertainty. Furiosa is uncertain about a physical location, while Percy is uncertain about an explanation of himself.

B. Discussion

The analysis demonstrates that both *Mad Max: Fury Road* and *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* exhibit masculine and feminine speech styles as identified by Wood's (2008) theory. The findings indicate that these styles are not determined solely by the characters' biological sex. Instead, they are influenced by context, purpose, social relationships, and communicative situations.

The masculine speech styles included establishing status and control, instrumentality, conversational command, direct and assertive speech, abstract speech, and reduced emotional responsiveness. Instrumentality was the most frequent masculine feature, with 29 occurrences (39.73%). This indicates that goal-oriented and problem-solving communication is particularly important in the dialogues. Characters frequently communicate to obtain results, respond to danger, give instructions, or solve immediate problems.

The feminine speech styles included establishing and maintaining relationships, equality, support for others, maintenance work, responsiveness, a personal and concrete style, and tentativeness. Maintenance work was the most frequent feminine feature, with 43 occurrences (40.95%). This demonstrates the importance of communication for maintaining interaction, asking questions, sharing information, and encouraging conversation.

The distribution of these features also reflects differences between the films. *Mad Max: Fury Road* contains a strong emphasis on survival, violence, conflict, and physical danger. Consequently, characters frequently use short, direct, assertive, and instrumental language. Furiosa provides an important example because she is a female character who repeatedly uses communication styles traditionally associated with masculinity. Her commands and practical explanations demonstrate that masculine speech styles can be adopted when circumstances require authority and decisive action.

In contrast, *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* contains more scenes involving friendship, family, cooperation, personal discovery, and emotional relationships. Consequently, feminine features such as maintenance work, support for others, responsiveness, and relationship maintenance occur frequently. Characters use questions, agreement, encouragement, and emotional expressions to maintain social connections.

Nevertheless, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that men naturally communicate in masculine ways and women naturally communicate in feminine ways. Instead, the examples demonstrate that characters can shift between communication styles according to their immediate goals. Furiosa, for example, uses direct, assertive language despite being female, while male characters such as Grover can demonstrate supportive, relationship-oriented communication. This supports Wood's (2008) perspective that gendered communication should be understood as a social and contextual pattern rather than a fixed biological characteristic.

The findings also reveal that traditional gender stereotypes remain present in both films. Masculine communication is often associated with power, authority, independence, action, and problem-solving, while feminine communication is

frequently associated with care, emotional support, cooperation, and relationship maintenance. These patterns correspond to conventional cultural expectations about masculinity and femininity.

However, the films also challenge rigid gender stereotypes. Female characters can demonstrate authority, assertiveness, and instrumentality, while male characters can express concern, provide support, and participate cooperatively in relationships. Therefore, gendered communication in the films is flexible. The same character may employ different styles depending on the situation.

The genre and narrative context of each film also contribute to the difference in speech-style distribution. *Mad Max: Fury Road* is primarily an action and survival film, meaning that communication often occurs under pressure. In such circumstances, characters have limited time for lengthy conversations and therefore rely on commands, warnings, practical explanations, and direct statements. In contrast, *Percy Jackson* includes more opportunities for personal interaction, friendship, family relationships, and emotional development. These circumstances allow more supportive, responsive, and relationship-oriented communication.

The findings therefore demonstrate that communication style is closely connected to social context. A character who is normally supportive may become direct and assertive during an emergency, while a character who usually communicates through commands may use supportive language in a personal relationship. The examples from both films show that masculine and feminine speech styles can coexist within the same character and can change according to communicative needs.

The results support the usefulness of Wood's (2008) theory for analysing gendered communication in film dialogue. The theory provides categories for examining how characters use language to establish power, solve problems, maintain relationships, provide support, express uncertainty, and respond to others. At the same time, the findings indicate that these categories should not be treated as rigid characteristics of male or female speakers.

This study shows that masculine and feminine speech styles in *Mad Max: Fury Road* and *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* are not determined solely by

biological gender. They are flexible communication patterns shaped by situation, purpose, relationship, and narrative context. *Mad Max: Fury Road* tends to emphasise masculine features associated with survival, control, directness, and instrumentality, whereas *Percy Jackson* contains more feminine features related to relationships, support, responsiveness, and maintenance work. Nevertheless, both films demonstrate that male and female characters can use either style. Thus, Wood's (2008) theory remains relevant for examining how film dialogue represents gender, power, interpersonal relationships, emotional support, and character identity

CONCLUSION

This study identified and analysed masculine and feminine speech styles in *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) and *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* (2010) using Wood's (2008) theory. The findings demonstrate that all six masculine features—establishing status and control, instrumentality, conversational command, direct and assertive communication, abstract communication, and less emotional responsiveness—and all seven feminine features—establishing and maintaining relationships, equality, support for others, maintenance work, responsiveness, personal and concrete style, and tentativeness—are represented in the two films. Among the identified features, maintenance work is the most frequent, occurring 43 times (40.95%), indicating that the dialogues frequently function to sustain interaction, obtain information, and encourage continued communication. Instrumentality is the second most frequent feature, with 29 occurrences (39.73%), demonstrating the importance of goal-oriented communication, problem-solving, and practical action. Conversely, tentativeness occurs only five times (4.76%), indicating relatively limited use of uncertainty or hesitation. Conversational command and abstract speech each occur 5 times (6.85%), indicating that interruption, conversational control, and generalised expressions are comparatively less prominent. Importantly, the findings indicate that masculine and feminine speech styles are not exclusively determined by biological sex. Both male and female characters employ different speech styles according to situational demands, communicative purposes, and interpersonal relationships. Female characters may use direct, assertive, and action-oriented language, while male characters may

demonstrate supportive, caring, and responsive communication. Therefore, the findings support the view that gendered speech styles are socially constructed and context-dependent rather than biologically fixed. Future research should examine gendered speech styles across different media, characters, cultures, and real-life interactions. Researchers may also focus on particular speech features or combine Wood's (2008) framework with other theoretical approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of language, gender, and communication

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