Women’s Language in Soap Operas: Comparing Features of Female Speech in Australia and Germany

KATHRIN LAMBERTZ AND MELANIE HEBROK*

Abstract
This paper is concerned with investigating Robin Lakoff’s claims about tentativeness in women’s language and the influence of media role models on reproducing gender stereotypes. The aim of this research project was to investigate representations of women’s language in German and Australian soap operas. The project focused on the frequency and the functions of sentence-preceding disclaimers and sentence-ending tag questions. The data consisted of female dialogues in several episodes of the Australian soap opera Home and Away and the German soap opera Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten. Questionnaires, forums and chat-rooms were designed to obtain a general background regarding women’s identification with soap operas and their language. The key findings supported the hypothesis that although the features can be identified in both cultural contexts, they tended to act as boosters rather than hedging devices. The research project confirms empirical studies disproving tentativeness in women’s language.

1. Introduction
Robin Lakoff (1975) suggests that there are universal characteristics of ‘women’s language’ and the way in which women are expected to speak. In her view, female speech expresses tentativeness and uncertainty through the extensive use of certain linguistic devices. For example, the frequent use of mitigating devices such as I think and I guess is supposed to “give the impression that the speaker lacks authority” (Lakoff 2004:79). She also points out that media plays an important role in creating stereotypes of women’s language and notes that “almost every woman you see in the media has many traits of women’s language built into her speech” (Lakoff 2004:83).

This paper is concerned with investigating Lakoff’s claims about tentativeness in women’s language and the influence of media role models on reproducing gender stereotypes. Since soap operas rely heavily on authentic representations of their characters in order to maintain the loyalty of a mainly female audience (Geraghty 1991:9), they provide an excellent medium for the current research concerns. Furthermore, as written dialogue in television shows needs to reflect authentic language use, the construction of these texts is inevitably a reflection of internalised perceptions and assumptions about female speech patterns (Biber & Burges 2000:23; Tannen & Lakoff 1994:139). Thus, soap opera speech can be used to illuminate the hidden assumptions about gendered language use across cultures. In order to test whether Lakoff’s claims can be validated cross-culturally, this paper analyses female dialogues in Australian and German soap operas.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Women’s Language
The most influential theory on women’s language was developed by Robin Lakoff in her book “Language and Woman’s place” (1975). Using introspection only, Lakoff
identifies several interrelated features of ‘women’s speech’, among them super-politeness, avoidance of profane language and heightened indirectness. Lakoff argues that this language style both reflects and contributes to the oppressed role of women in a patriarchal world, as women are pressured into adopting the features which are deemed non-assertive and as a consequence, have to assume a demeaning position in society (Lakoff 2004:77-85). The overall effect of women’s language, Lakoff claims, is that it “submerges a woman’s personal identity, by denying her the means of expressing herself strongly, on the one hand, and encouraging expressions that suggest triviality in subject-matter and uncertainty about it” (Lakoff 1973: 48).

One example of this female tentativeness is the frequent use of ‘hedges,’ i.e. linguistic devices weakening the force of an utterance, in situations where the speaker is in fact perfectly certain of what she is saying. While qualifying words and phrases such as sort of, probably and I think are frequently used by both sexes to express genuine uncertainty, it is the woman who ‘excessively’ inserts these devices into her propositions “as an apology for making an assertion at all” (Lakoff 2004:79). The use of tag questions at the end of a statement is also seen as characteristic of female speech, offering the speaker a way to make an assertion without committing herself to its truthfulness. Tags such as isn’t it? allow the listener to disagree without attacking the speaker directly, as the speaker does not appear to be completely convinced of the statement anyway (Lakoff 1973:54). Thus, women are believed to use these devices to avoid making strong declarations and taking responsibility for their assertions, even in situations where there is no genuine doubt or uncertainty on their behalf.

The resulting lack of assertiveness is characteristic of the way in which women are supposed to speak “precisely because they are socialized to believe that asserting themselves strongly isn’t nice or ladylike, or even feminine” (Lakoff 2004:79). This stereotype is then purported to be reflected constantly in the women seen in the media, specifically the ones most likely to act as role models for female behaviour. The fact that they must have these female traits built into their speech in order to appeal to the audience (Lakoff 1973:46) at the same time creates even higher pressure for young women to match the ideal they are confronted with (Lakoff 2004:84). Hence, the pressure women feel in conforming to the female stereotype leaves them no other option but to reproduce gender inequality.

2.2 Women and Soap Operas

While female stereotypes are supposedly represented throughout all forms of media, the soap opera genre is particularly interesting for investigating this assumption. In his book about the meaning of soap operas, Allen (1985:9) defines them as dramatic serial programs that are concerned with domestic crisis, often featuring little action but much sentiment. Soap operas deal with thoughts and practical experiences of everyday life and, as Hobson (2003:29) claims, “[i]t is the way that individual characters handle their lives and the way that their actions and experiences resonate with the experiences of the audience that forges the bond between the characters in the drama and the audience.”

Initially aimed at suburban housewives by providing them with identifiable characters and morally relevant storylines (Brown 1994:46), soap operas are now a universal form of popular television that depends heavily on a close and continuous
relationship between women audiences and the multiple female characters on offer. Geraghty (1991:17) explains that the shows aim to provide identification with different aspects of the lives of several characters, rather than depending on central figures. Hobson (2003:82) concurs, stating that the characters deal with the resolution and negotiation of real-life problems and therefore provide points of recognition for many women viewers. Thus the characters need to reflect women’s real-life experiences as well as the expected language with which they can identify.

Weatherall (1996:61) claims that “the language used in television provides widely available representations of language use in the real world.” Furthermore, studies that have investigated linguistic sex roles on television have shown that men dominate women in a way that can also be found in real-life language use (Wober quoted in Weatherall 1996:61). This is consistent with Lakoff (1973:46), who makes the following observation:

The speech heard, e.g., in commercials or situation comedies on television mirrors the speech of the television-watching community: if it did not (not necessarily as an exact replica, but perhaps as a reflection of how the audience sees itself or wishes it were) it would not succeed.

2.3 Soap Operas and Cultural Identity

In order to successfully appeal to women in a particular country, local soap operas also need to reflect recognisable cultural themes and language patterns. Turner (2005:417) observes that television formats designed for national audiences always operate within discourses of familiar cultural identities. He states that Australian soap operas in particular tend to focus on suburban ordinariness and traditional values in order to display a simple and recognisable Australian identity for both local and overseas audiences.

The Australian soap opera Home and Away, created by Alan Bateman in 1988, is set in a fictional town on the New South Wales coast. The show focuses on poor children from broken homes and its themes are meant to take an educational approach to daily entertainment. Bateman was confident that the show’s dealing with problems of the working class would reflect contemporary Australian society more accurately than did the clichéd and conservative Neighbours (Kingsley 1989:211). As he stated, “I wanted to make something as effective for young people, written from their perspective, using their language. Most soap opera is written by middle-class people writing about ideal youngsters, and I didn’t want that” (Kingsley 1989:211).

In the case of Home and Away then, the idea was to challenge the ‘traditional’ Australian discourse of suburban middle-class life, highlighting the potential for the genre to extend beyond dominant ideals and include other members of society within a broader cultural discourse (Hobson 2003:16).

Emphasising cultural identity is particularly crucial with regard to adapting foreign soap operas from other cultural contexts. Germany’s longest-running daily soap opera, Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten (Good Times, Bad Times), began as an adaptation of the Australian show The Restless Years in 1992. The first 230 episodes of Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten were filmed according to the original Australian scripts, while local writers worked on independent dialogues and storylines after the initial period failed to draw a big audience (Moran 1998:123). A study conducted by Moran

Griffith Working Papers in Pragmatics and Intercultural Communication 4, 1/2 (2011), 39-54
(1998:150-154) reveals that German viewers now classify *Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten* as distinctly ‘German’, showing that the language, characters, and themes depicted in the show display identifiable aspects of German cultural identity. Set in a fictional suburb of the nation’s capital, Berlin, the popular soap opera deals with the lives and loves of several middle-class families and friends, focusing on topics such as homosexuality, racial conflict and teenage drug use (*Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten* Official Site, 2010).

While many soap operas differ in their approach to fictional versus realist storytelling, those that claim to be realist depend considerably more on contemporary cultural and social issues (Geraghty 1995:66). Thus, cultural identity is inevitably linked to the current questions about women’s language in soap operas, as both of the shows discussed claim to provide their audiences with recognisable and identifiable cultural discourses.

3. Questions and Criticism
The review of the dominant literature raises several interrelated questions. First, Lakoff’s theory has not been uncontested. Due to her lack of empirical evidence, Lakoff has inspired a variety of subsequent studies concerned with testing gender differences in language use. Dixon and Foster (1997:90) show that some of these studies have confirmed that women use more hedges than men, seemingly supporting the hypothesis that female speech is more tentative. However, they argue that most of these studies looked at the frequency of hedging devices without considering their specific linguistic and social functions. As Holmes (1997:201) explains: “Counting forms is demonstrably unilluminating if one is interested in the contribution of pragmatic particles to the construction of a particular gender identity.” Depending on factors like immediate context or intonation, Lakoff’s ‘hedges’ can also express assertiveness, challenging and facilitation (Holmes 1997:200). Holmes (1990:202) further shows that, contrary to Lakoff’s argument, men are in fact more likely to employ the devices as uncertainty markers while women use them either to emphasise their views confidently or to express solidarity with the hearer, rendering the claim that women are tentative communicators unsubstantiated (Palomares 2009).

This raises further questions about the supposed stereotypical representations of women in the media, especially with regard to fabricated language in soap operas. Brown (1994:7) says that “even though the genre is created for women, it is assumed to be keeping women in place.” But if real-life data suggests that women are confident speakers, how can writers create a language style for these female role models that both reflects dominant ideas about women’s subordinate role in society and at the same time accounts for the fact that women present themselves as strong and independent individuals? The result is often a pressure on soap operas to avoid stereotypical images of women and to include changing ideas about women’s role in society (Geraghty 1991:135). It would thus be interesting to see whether female soap opera characters represent Lakoff’s conservative notion of women’s language or the empirically tested confident speech style.

Another question that arises from the literature is if and how cultural identity is linked to the representation of women in realist soap operas. Can a universal women’s language be identified or do local soap operas differ in the way they
represent female speech styles according to distinct cultural ideas? While Lakoff admits that her theory is based on broad generalisations, she also believes that the features of ‘women’s speech’ are not limited to her own cultural context (USA) but “that, in fact, much may, mutatis mutandis, be universal” (Lakoff 1973:47). She describes her argument as a starting point for further research into cross-cultural variation in order to determine whether her claims can in fact be applied to other countries and languages. This study takes up this point to investigate Australian and German cultural contexts.

4. Research Questions and Hypotheses
The preceding claims and criticisms have led to the following research questions to be investigated in this paper:

1. Do women feel that soap operas reflect their real-life language patterns?
2. Can Lakoff’s characterization of women’s language be identified cross-culturally in soap operas?
3. Do these identified characteristics express more than just the suggested tentativeness and powerlessness?

After a careful review of the existing literature, the following hypotheses concerning the outcome of this study were developed:

1. Soap opera speech will display the features identified by Lakoff as characteristic of female language.
2. However, if women agree that female soap opera characters display realistic language use, the speech of the characters will not conform to Lakoff’s tentative stereotype, i.e. the features will have functions other than just expressing uncertainty.
3. In addition, there will be cross-cultural variation with regard to the form and functions of Lakoff’s features in Australian and German soap opera dialogue.

5. Methodology
In order to conduct the research, questionnaires were used as the first tool, in order to obtain a general view of women’s perception of and relation to soap operas. (See Appendix A.) Four questionnaires were sent to German and Australian women regardless of age and social background. They were asked about their views on the accuracy of language use in German and Australian soap operas in order to see whether soap operas could be deemed representative of real-life women’s speech. Also, we asked which German and Australian female characters women could identify with best and why they might identify with them. As an additional source, we posted questions onto forums and chat rooms designed by fans of the previously discussed soap operas Home and Away and Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten in order to start a general discussion.

In the process of finding the language data, we watched a randomly selected week (five episodes) of each soap opera. The duration of an episode of Home and Away was approximately 22 minutes and the duration of an episode of Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten was approximately 25 minutes. We then transcribed the relevant speech acts in which female characters used Lakoff’s linguistic devices in order to create a corpus for further analysis. (See Appendix B.) We focused on the sentence-
prefacing disclaimers I think, I guess, I mean in English and the German equivalents Ich denke, Ich glaube and Ich meine. Additionally, we analysed sentence-ending tag questions like right and okay in English and their German counterparts oder (+twas/wie) and ne. We chose these devices because they are most likely to be included in the script, while other ‘hedges’ might have been inserted by the women acting out the scenes. Finally, we counted the instances of these linguistic devices in each soap opera and analysed their different functions within the context.

6. Results

6.1 Questionnaires, forums and chat rooms
The first part of this research dealt with the question as to whether the language used in soap operas reflects ‘real-life’ language and whether women are able to identify with the female characters. Interestingly, all opinions gathered through the forums, chat rooms and questionnaires posted by the German respondents suggest the language in Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten generally reflects the language spoken in the real world. As an example, one of the German participants stated:

“Ja, ich denke schon. Eine einfache Sprache wird benutzt um viele Leute anzusprechen. Ich denke sie spiegelt die Sprache die Leute im alltäglichen privaten (nicht im Arbeits-) Leben benutzen.”
(“Yes, I think so. A simple language is used to appeal to as many people as possible. I think it reflects the language that people use in everyday life (but not work) situations.”)

Furthermore, we can conclude that the majority of the participants agree with the fact that one can identify with some of the female characters and their stories. The following quote represents one of the opinions towards identification with the characters:

(“I think the situations, reactions or opinions reflect personal experiences. Situations in soap operas not always but often remind me of my own life, the real world. I wouldn’t say that I can always identify with certain characters, but that aspects of different characters in specific situations remind me of myself and my own experiences and that can relate to the characters.”)

Australian respondents, on the other hand, turned out to be divided in their opinions regarding the reality of the language spoken in soap operas and the possible identification with the characters. One woman criticised the representation of language on Neighbours:

“I am quite conscious that the way they speak is not the way people speak in everyday life and it can become quite frustrating and annoying for me when I watch the show. I can see how the writers of the show try to convey serious
messages to their audience but their messages don’t really strike a serious cord with me.”

Another respondent goes even further and suggests that the language in Australian soap operas is somewhat altered by the writers in order to represent a certain ideology:

“...soap operas I think (in Australia anyway) tend to use language in more of an ideological, or pretentious way – like the way we think or want to speak.”

Fans of Home and Away, however, showed more confidence in its realistic language use and identifiable characters. When asked if the language on the show reflects real-life speech, fans claimed:

“Definitely yes because each word that comes out of their mouths is like any other thing someone would say (mainly ‘cause it’s a soap opera).”

“The dialogue seems very natural and you get a sense when watching the show that these characters are all very close to each other.”

“Yes I do think the language reflects the way of real-life speaking.”

(Source: Questionnaires, Home and Away Official Site Forum, Home and Away Central Forum, Gute Zeiten Schlechte Zeiten Official Site Forum)

6.2 Analysis of episodes of Home and Away and Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten

The language data found in Home and Away and Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten will now be the focus for discussion. Figure 1 represents the occurrences of sentence-prefacing disclaimers and sentence-ending tag questions in Home and Away and Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten. It can be seen here that women seem to use more sentence-prefacing disclaimers in Home and Away whereas women in Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten use more sentence-ending tag questions. Overall, 42 occurrences of the analysed linguistic devices were found in Home and Away but only 27 occurrences in Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten, as figure 1 shows:

![Occurrence of disclaimers and tag questions](https://example.com/figure1.png)

Figure 1: Occurrences of prefacing disclaimers and sentence-ending tag questions in Home and Away and Gute Zeiten Schlechte Zeiten

Griffith Working Papers in Pragmatics and Intercultural Communication 4, 1/2 (2011), 39-54
In figure 2 it can be observed that *Home and Away* makes more use of sentence-prefacing disclaimers, while *Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten* uses more sentence-ending tag questions:

![Figure 2: Occurrences of sentence-prefacing disclaimers and sentence-ending tag questions in percentage](image)

... Figure 3 presents a more detailed description of figure 2. Here are depicted all of the different linguistic devices found in both soap operas. It can be concluded that *Home and Away* uses more sentence-prefacing disclaimers such as *I think* and *I mean* and *Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten* uses more sentence-ending tag questions such as *oder?* *(or?)* and *ne?* *(or?)*.

![Figure 3: Types of sentence-prefacing disclaimers and sentence-ending tag questions](image)

... Figure 4 displays the functions of the linguistic devices found in this analysis. An analysis of the corpus revealed that the linguistic devices function as a means of expressing opinion, emphasis, challenging, seeking confirmation, giving advice,
joking or uncertainty. The figure illustrates the different uses of disclaimers and tag questions in Home and Away and Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten.

7. Discussion
The first thing worth noting about the results is the difference in opinion concerning real-life speech in soap operas. While the German viewers agreed that it largely mirrors everyday language patterns, Australian women were divided in their opinions. Most of the latter argued that Australian soap opera speech in general is too pretentious or stereotypical and fails to portray a suitable image of real-life language use. This is consistent with Turner’s (2005:417) observations about the simplified and conservative Australian identity in local soap operas. However, faithful watchers of Home and Away felt quite differently about the language portrayed, arguing that it seems natural and mirrors the way in which they would use language as well. They also confirmed Hobson’s (2003:82) claims concerning multi-character identification by admitting they can relate to some aspects of the characters’ lives and behaviour.

The difference in opinion might be due to the fact that loyal fans know more about the stories, characters and language in Home and Away while the other women surveyed expressed general views of soap operas in Australia. Apart from familiarity, age and ethnic background could also be factors determining whether people can relate to soap opera speech. These factors were deliberately omitted from this study, as the main focus was on the general view of female audiences. The two soap operas were chosen because of their high popularity in their respective countries as well as their supposed realism. The mixed reactions from the Australian participants show that realism in soap operas is generally a matter of subjective judgement and not every member of the audience agrees with the stories and language portrayed in the shows. In the eyes of its loyal female fans, at least, Home and Away seems to be a good example of everyday speech patterns, while the unanimous reactions from the German audience indicate that Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten is also perceived as a reflection of real-life language use.
The first research question, as to whether women can relate to female soap opera speech, is therefore answered conclusively (within the scope of this study). Closer attention can now be paid to how this language reflects familiar assumptions about women’s speech.

The analysis of the language data confirmed the hypothesis that Lakoff’s actual features can be identified in soap opera speech. Both Home and Away and Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten provided numerous examples of sentence-prefacing disclaimers and sentence-ending tag questions which were used by a variety of female characters in every episode observed. However the data is also consistent with empirical research findings disproving Lakoff’s theory of tentativeness in women’s language. As Holmes (1997:201) suggested, it is also crucial to analyse the particular functions the instances served within their immediate contexts, in order to determine whether they really operated as hedging devices.

Only 1% of the devices in Home and Away conveyed possible uncertainty, while the others served a variety of different functions. For example, it was noted that the frequent use of I think in the Australian dialogue is not in fact a reflection of a particular tentative stereotype, but rather acts as a diversely applicable tool in taking a personal stance in utterances. Aijmer (quoted in Baumgarten & House 2010:1189) distinguishes between tentative and deliberate uses of the possible hedge I think, the former expressing uncertainty about the proposition and the latter operating as a booster to express reassurance. In this study only two tentative uses of I think were found, compared with 16 booster uses, confirming Holmes’s (1990; 1997) analysis of women’s speech. Furthermore, most of the tag questions in Home and Away were employed in a confident manner, emphasising a point or challenging the speaker, rather than acting as hedges (Dubois & Crouch 1975:292). Thus, the devices that Lakoff readily labelled as ‘hedges’ mostly had the opposite effect, by acting as ways to emphasise an utterance. The employment of boosters rather than hedges evidenced in this study’s corpus confirms the second hypothesis as correct.

Lastly, the third hypothesis also proved to be correct. While similar forms and functions were observed in Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten, there were also some differences with regard to linguistic preferences. Although episodes of Home and Away are slightly shorter than those of Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten (~3 minutes), a considerably higher number of the selected devices were identified in the Australian soap opera. Interestingly, the majority of these instances were sentence-prefacing disclaimers and I think was the most frequent device that occurred in female dialogue in Home and Away (43% of the total corpus). The German characters, on the other hand, displayed more sentence-ending tag questions, with oder? (or?) accounting for 45% of the total instances analysed. It can therefore be assumed that there may be different cultural conventions or preferences with regard to the use of deliberate linguistic features. There were also slight differences with regard to the functions of the observed features. While most instances in the corpus were used as boosters, a considerable amount of Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten dialogue dealt with confirmation- seeking tag questions. Again, this does not mean that the female characters were uncertain of their utterances. Rather, this might be an example of how women use language to facilitate communication and to express solidarity with the hearer (Holmes 1990:202). The context plays an important role and the differences in the features cannot be sufficiently explained without examining factors like the

Griffith Working Papers in Pragmatics and Intercultural Communication 4, 1/2 (2011), 39-54
role of character, plus relationships with other characters and overall story, which unfortunately cannot be considered in this limited research project.

8. Conclusion
Since Home and Away and Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten pride themselves on accurately depicting their cultural contexts, these findings can be said to reflect real-life preferences with regard to the use of Lakoff’s features. Further research would be needed to determine the reasons for these preferences and to investigate whether they are characteristic of female speech in their respective countries or if they reflect linguistic conventions for both genders in their cultural context.

What seems probable from these findings is that there are no universal conventions that account for women’s language in every social or cultural context, but rather that women deliberately employ different linguistic devices in different situations to serve different functions. Of course, due to the limitations of this research project, it cannot be implied that the findings are valid for every country or cultural background. Further research is therefore necessary to obtain a more universal picture of female language use. This observation makes it difficult to argue for the existence of a distinct female stereotype to which women feel they must conform in order to be accepted. Realist soap operas, at least, do not seem to portray a tentative language style as the norm for female speech. In fact, this study’s analysis disproved Lakoff’s claims and provided further evidence for acknowledging women’s language as facilitative and confident in both cultural contexts.

*Author Notes*
Kathrin Lambertz and Melanie Hebrok are German students completing the Bachelor of Arts in Languages and Applied Linguistics at Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia. Kathrin is majoring in Spanish, International English and Linguistics; Melanie’s majors are Linguistics and International English. The authors can be contacted via their student email accounts at kathrin.lambertz@griffithuni.edu.au and melanie.hebrok@griffithuni.edu.au.

References


**Appendix A: Questionnaire**

**Subject:** 3150LAL Language and Gender Research Project

**Topic:** Women’s Language in German and Australian Soap Operas

**Researchers:** Melanie Hebrok and Kathrin Lambertz, Griffith University

*For your information, this questionnaire is part of a research project for Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia. The aim of this research project is to compare women’s language in German and Australian soap operas. Your given information will be treated absolutely confidential by the researcher. Please fill out the form and send it back to Kathrin.Lambertz@yahoo.de or melanie.hebrok@gmx.de. If you have any further questions or enquiries please do not hesitate to contact us.*

1. **Personal Information**

1.1 Country of Residence:

2. **Language in Soap Operas**

2.1 Which soap operas do you watch, if any?

2.2 Can you identify with any of the characters? Why? Why not?

2.3 Overall, do you think spoken language in soap operas in your country reflects ‘real-life’ ways of speaking? Please explain.

**Appendix B: Corpus**

*Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten*

27th of September 2010 *Kathrin macht reinen Tisch, Folge 4580*

Ich hoffe ich werde euch nicht enttäuschen. (Anna)
(I hope I won’t disappoint you.)
Du magst mich, oder? (Emily)
(You like me, or?)
Ich weiß nicht, ob das so ‘ne gute Idee ist. (Emily)
(I don’t know if that’s a good idea.)
Ich denke, dass er es von sich aus sagen wird. (Kathrin)
(I think he will say it himself.)
Das ist krass, oder? (Emily)
(That’s crazy, or?)

*Griffith Working Papers in Pragmatics and Intercultural Communication* 4, 1/2 (2011), 39-54
28th of September 2010 Patrick trifft einen alten Freund wieder, Folge 4581

Du willst doch Jasmine zurück, oder nicht? (Emily)
(You do want Jasmine back, or not?)
Wir haben doch einen Deal, oder nicht? (Emily)
(We do have a deal, or not?)
Soll ich ihn vielleicht noch mal anrufen, oder? (Pia)
(Should I maybe call him again, or?)
Also nerve mich nicht, okay? (Emily)
(So don’t get onto my nerves, okay?)
Was ja nicht allein meine Schuld ist, ne? (Pia)
(What isn’t just my fault, or what?)
Hast du dich jetzt um entschieden, oder wie? (Emily)
(Did you change your mind now, or what?)
Sind wir hier bei ’ner Peep-Show, oder wie? (Pia)
(Are we at a peep show, or what?)

29th of September 2010 John ist ein stolzer Vater, Folge 4582

Ich weiß nicht, aber ich glaube wir haben gegen Tayfun keine Chance. (Pia)
(I don’t know, but I believe we have no chance against Tayfun.)
Wir können du sagen, oder? (Emily)
(We can „you“[personal 3rd person singular], or?)
Aber wir bleiben doch nicht hier, oder? (Emily)
(But we are not staying here, or?)
Ich dachte, wir wollten ins Casino. (Emily)
(I thought we wanted to go to the casino.)
Aktien, glaube ich. (Emily)
(Stocks, I believe.)

30th of September 2010 Ayla kann Pia doch verzeihen, Folge 4583

Soll ich dir was zu essen machen, oder? (Dascha)
(Should I make you something to eat, or?)
Ich hoffe, dass das alles gut geht. (Dascha)
(I hope that everything will be alright.)
Ich dachte, wir könnten mal wieder ins Kino gehen. (Ayla)
(I thought we could go to the cinema again.)
Ich weiß doch auch nicht, ob ich das Richtige mache. (Ayla)
(I don’t know if I am doing the right thing.)
Ich weiß nicht, aber ich glaube ich hab Mist gebaut. (Pia)
(I don’t know, but I think I did something wrong.)

1st of October 2010 Kathrin will auf Alexander verzichten, Folge 4584

Und heißt das, dass ihr dann eure ganzen Daten auswendig lernen müsst, oder wie? (Emily)
(And that means that you have to learn all the information by heart, or what?)
Das ist schon ein bisschen merkwürdig, oder? (Emily)
(That is a bit weird, or?)
Ich glaube nicht, dass es der Entwicklung von Johanna gut tut. (Anna)
(I don’t think that it is good for Johanna’s development.)
Irgendwie haben wir das Ausmaß nicht so ganz erfasst, oder? (Dascha)
(Somehow, we did not grasp the dimension of this, or?)
Mann, ich bin deine Schwester! Musst du mich dann anlügen, oder wie? (Emily)
(Man, I am your sister! Do you have to lie to me, or what?)

Home and Away

Tue 12 Oct, episode 5182

I’m HERE, aren’t I? (Indigo)
Well, some girls would be, I mean he doesn’t have a shortage of admiring girlfriends. (Indigo)
Just, eh, me and Annie, right? (Indigo)
I really think that you should be asking Romeo these questions. (Nicole)
Well, it’s irrelevant because it’s in the past, okay? (Nicole)
You don’t give up, do you? (Gina)
Well it’s understandable, her being homesick, right? I mean if I had been away for…how long has it been? (Indigo)
Do you think Annie is gonna move back to Summer Bay permanently? I mean you know her better than anyone else, right? (Indigo)
I don’t know it’s probably nothing but she was asking me about Annie today. (Nicole)
I think Romeo is still in love with his ex-girlfriend. (Indigo)
I know, I do but…It doesn’t mean that I have to trust Annie. I mean, what if she says she wants to get back with him? (Indigo)

Wed 13 Oct, episode 5183

No, well I don’t believe him of course I mean who could do such a terrible thing it’s unthinkable! (Coleen)
Well, that’s hardly the issue, is it! (Gina)
You really hurt me, you know? (Adrian)
That’s… sweet, I think. (Adrian)

Thu 14 Oct, episode 5184

I think that you are rushing into things with Vittorio. (April)
I think that you’re trying to rewrite history to make things the way they were before he cheated on you. (April)
I think that you’re in love with Liam. (April)
No, I don’t think my subconscious is that smart but I will try to take a bit more care I promise. (Leah)
I don’t think you should have done it but… I can understand why you did it. (Leah)
I don’t know why you’re taking this so hard, I mean, you just need to get yourself out there and- (Marilyn)
I’d be, eh, I’d be lying if I didn’t say that (.) I think that maybe we should be waiting. (Bianca)
I think we’d be better off sorting out some locks for the windows and the doors. (Marilyn)
What so that’s it then? There’s nothing else to do, right? (Adrian)

Fri 15 Oct, episode 5185

Well, I think the dream freaked me out a little bit more than I realised. And I think that we should ALL stay well aware from Penn, well AWAY. (Marilyn)
Well, I don’t think that you need to tell either of us that twice. (Nicole)
(I’m married) Yeah I know but that didn’t stop you coming after me, did it? (Shandi)
This thing between us, I told you it was casual, yeah? (Shandi)
I didn’t think you guys were right for each other anyway. (Leah)
Yeah I think I liked you better when you were being Sergeant Angelo. (Ruby)
Well, I’m glad Ruby is okay, I mean, that would be a great way to start your driving career, wouldn’t it? (Marilyn)

Mon 18 Oct, episode 5186

Let’s just hold off for a bit, okay? (Charlie)
I think from now on Mister Steward the best thing is just to stay right away from him. (Marilyn)
I just...I don't think I can. (Indigo)
No, no it’s just all a bit tense at the moment that’s all particularly for poor Mister Steward, I mean, apparently he had another run-in with Penn at the surf club last night. (Marilyn)
Hey, I know it’s easier said than done but if you’re thinking about Penn, don’t, okay? (Ruby)
I’m not proud of myself, okay but I really thought that you still had feelings for Annie and...That’s what this is REALLY about, isn’t it? (Indigo)
I just think you need to talk to her. (Nicole)
Yeah exactly, I mean knowing him this is probably some sick joke and he’s just gonna turn up and pretend like nothing’s happened. (Nicole)