

Investigating Sexism in the English Language Discourse

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Abstract :

As the title indicates the study deals with language and gender. It is also called sexism. Sexism in language represents one of the major issues in sociolinguistic studies. As a phenomenon of society, sexism is reflected through language that expresses inclination in favor of one sex and treats the other one in a discriminatory manner. Thus, the language is presented as a powerful tool of the patriarchy. Even though in English-speaking countries all the people are considered equal, discrimination against women exists and this fact is observed in language. The aim of this study is to define the concept of sexist language; To identify and evaluate, cultural factors, social factors, physiological factors, cultural factors, and psychological factors which influence the existence of sexism in the English language, and to show and explain the concepts of gender in a speech. The following differences between men and women in speech: a) women talk more/less than men; b) women break the 'rules' of turn-taking less than men c) women use more standard forms than men, and d) women's speech is less direct/assertive than men's, and what is the relationship between gender and politeness. Results showed that there does not seem to be a distinguishable difference with respect to the usage of language by men and women potentially due to the establishment of an informal atmosphere and a sense of solidarity among participants, which enabled them to make use of the code to maintain a conversation.

Keywords: Sexism- Gender- Sex- Language

استقصاء التحيز اللغوي في خطاب اللغة الإنجليزية

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كما يشير العنوان ، فإن الدراسة تتناول اللغة والجنس. ويسمى أيضاً التمييز على أساس الجنس. يمثل التمييز على أساس الجنس في اللغة إحدى القضايا الرئيسية في الدراسات اللغوية الاجتماعية. كظاهرة في المجتمع ، ينعكس التحيز الجنسي من خلال اللغة التي تعبر عن ميل لصالح أحد الجنسين وتعامل الآخر بطريقة تمييزية. وهكذا ، يتم تقديم اللغة كأداة قوية للنظام الأبوي. على الرغم من أن جميع الناس في البلدان الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية يعتبرون متساوين ، إلا أن التمييز ضد المرأة موجود ويتم ملاحظة هذه الحقيقة في اللغة. الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو تحديد مفهوم اللغة المتحيزة على أساس الجنس. لتحديد وتقييم العوامل التاريخية والعوامل الثقافية والعوامل الاجتماعية والعوامل الفسيولوجية والعوامل الثقافية والعوامل النفسية التي تؤثر على وجود التمييز على أساس الجنس في اللغة الإنجليزية ، ولإظهار وشرح مفاهيم الجنس في الكلام مناقشة ما إذا كانت الاختلافات التالية بين الرجل والمرأة في الكلام: (أ) تتكلم النساء أكثر / أقل من الرجال ؛ (ب) تخالف النساء «قواعد» تبادل الأدوار أقل من الرجال. (ج) تستخدم النساء أشكالاً قياسية أكثر من الرجال ، و (د) يكون كلام المرأة أقل مباشرة / حازماً من خطاب الرجل ، وما هي العلاقة بين الجنس والتأدب. أظهرت النتائج أنه لا يبدو أن هناك فرقاً يمكن تمييزه فيما يتعلق باستخدام اللغة من قبل الرجال والنساء بسبب وجود جو غير رسمي وإحساس بالتضامن بين المشاركين ، مما يمكنهم من الاستفادة من اللغة من أجل الحفاظ على محادثة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التمييز على أساس الجنس - الجنس - اللغة

1.Introduction

Language is far from merely reflecting the nature of society; it serves as a primary means of constructing and maintaining that society. Its existence and development are closely linked with the social attitudes of human beings and to a great extent are affected by their social views and values, so people's socio-cultural behaviors and attitudes, as well as thoughts, are reflected in their use of the language. "Sociolinguistics is the science which studies the relationship between language and society, between the use of language and the social structures in which the users of the language live. It is generally recognized that sociolinguistics as an independent discipline arose in the mid-1960s". Historically and sociologically, our society is man-oriented and man-centered. Gender discrimination is felt and found all over the globe; women have been inferior to men. They have been discriminated against in one way or another. Sexism in English reflects sexism in social reality. Until now sexism still exists in language and women have a language of their own, which is different from and inferior to the language of men in the society. Ralph Fasold studied this issue of sex and language, she

claimed that women experience linguistic discrimination in two ways; in the way they are taught to use language and in the general way language is used to treat them. Further, she concluded that both ways tend to degrade women to a lower position. Since sexist language helps to reinforce the sexist social structure and English is becoming an international language, documentation of linguistic sexism in this paper is of practical significance. Differences between the way males and females speak were long restricted to grammatical features, such as the differences between masculine and feminine in morphology in many languages. However, in the 1970s women, researchers started looking at how a linguistic code transmitted sexist values and bias. (24) work is an example of this; she raised questions such as: Do women have a more restricted vocabulary than men? Do they use more adjectives? Are their sentences incomplete? Do they use more 'superficial' words? Consequently, researchers started to investigate both bias in the language and the differential usage of the code by men and women.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of the study is to investigate sexism in the English language discourse.

Objectives of the Study

The aims of this study are:

To define the concept of sexist language.

To identify and evaluate the historical factors, cultural factors, social factors, physiological factors, cultural factors, and psychological factors of sexism in the English language.

, and to show and explain the concepts of gender in speech

Questions of the Study

The questions of the study are:

1. What is sexist language?
2. What are the factors of Sexism in the English Language?
3. What are the concepts of gender in speech?

Significance of the Study

Sexism in language has been a controversial topic among socio-linguists since its inception and Sexist language is often part of people's everyday speech. Therefore, the study will help to have a better understanding of the relationship between language and society.

Delimits

This study is limited to the investigation of gender and language in the English language discourse.

Methods

A brief review of literature on the studies of gender differences in English was conducted and

an analytical and descriptive approach is adopted. Results are summarized and recommendations are made.

Literature Review

Sexism refers to the prejudice or discrimination involving sex. It often refers to the discrimination against women. The inequality between the two sexes causes sexism in society. And sexism can also be defined as the unfair and unreasonable discrimination between sexes. Therefore, sexism is a kind of system of beliefs and rules that confirm the dominance of men over women. (21) examines how sexism works in the language in her book *A Women Changing Language*. Sexism in language refers to the phenomenon that we use some language containing discrimination against women. Sexist language refers to the expressions that differentiate between men and women or eliminate and trivialize either gender. Studies on Sexism refer to the phenomenon of discrimination against women. It is common in society and reflected in language, that is linguistic sexism. Linguistic sexism is the language that assures one sex dominates the other one, that is, the language that favors the male, and degrades the female. Sexism is a common phenomenon throughout human history. (5) once said sexist language not only reflects the stereotyped attitudes to men and women but also reflects the values and beliefs of a nation. The discrimination against women is inherited from one group to another and from one generation to the next. With the development of the movement of feminists for woman's rights, the phenomenon of sexism against women is gradually eliminated. And women will be treated equally in the future. Sexism is a widely debated area included in the subject of gender and language. As already stated, a definition used within this study is (25): "a statement is sexist if it contributes, promotes or exploits an unfair or irrelevant or impertinent distinction between the sexes". Both genders are included in this definition. However, (4) suggests that it is women who are

suffering from sexist structures in language. Some linguistic sexism is evident, such as the use of “whore” or other words that describe women negatively. However, linguistic sexism also concerns language use that in different ways diminishes women and makes them invisible (28). Feminists state that English is a language with sexist structures (19). The subject of sex and gender is an interesting area that will only briefly be mentioned in this study. (21) describes sex as the biological state of being either female or male and gender as the social categorization of females and males. The term gender will be used henceforth. Also, worth pointing out briefly in connection to this type of study is that the system of categorizing two genders is problematic. (14) criticizes the division of people into the categories of women and men, females, and males. For example, transsexuals and intersexually are to some extent excluded from these categorizations (14). The opinions about linguistic sexism vary among linguists, some believe that sexist language characterizes a sexist society, and others believe that sexist language influences society to be more sexist (28). Significant when discussing this is as mentioned the theory of linguistic determinism, which is a theory that believes that language determines the way the world is perceived by the language user (22). A supporter of the theory of linguistic determinism, (23) argues that sexist language enables sexist worldviews. She also argues that those with power, in other words, four men, can create language and consequently reality (23). Critics of linguistic determinism argue that if this would be the case, speakers of languages with very few words for colors would not be able to perceive different colors (23). However, it is vital to point out that two forms of the theory exist: the strong one that argues that language determines how we interpret the world and the weak one that argues that language is only one factor in how we construct the world (22). According to (23), most sociolinguists believe that language to some extent affects our worldview and consequently the way we view gender.

What is Sexist language?

Most of the early work both on language and gender and within various studies of women’s and men’s speech took sex as a social variable. Different from other social variables that are dominant in sociolinguistic investigations, this concept was taken to be straightforward and

so does not require a theoretical explanation. This of course contrasts with variables such as social class. Sexism is a set of attitudes and behaviors towards people that judge or belittle them based on their gender. Nowadays, the term is most often used to refer to a threatening attitude towards women.

(30) says: Sexist language refers to words and phrases that demean, ignore, or stereotype members of either sex or that needlessly call attention to gender. It's a form of biased language. On the surface, eliminating sexist language from your writing can be just a matter of word choice or making sure your pronouns aren't all "he" and "him." Sexist language has been defined as "words, phrases, and expressions that unnecessarily differentiate between females and males or exclude, trivialize, or diminish either gender" (32). In other words, sexist language refers to the use of language expressions in such a way that it constitutes an unbalanced portrayal of the sexes. Hyde explains: a sexist language "he" and "man" refer to everyone. This fact becomes clear when (35) examines the English language stating that except for words that refer to females (mother, actress, Congresswoman), and words for occupations traditionally held by females (nurse, secretary, prostitute), the English language defines everyone as male. The 'language as sexist' prong of language and gender studies has faded in the last two decades. It was soon realized that a word could not unproblematically be ridiculed as sexist since it could in principle be 'reclaimed' by a given speech community "*queer*" probably being the most famous actual example.

English countries claim that all people were born "equal"; there are a lot of inequalities between men and women. It puts stress on this topic because according to sociolinguistic research, this inequality is reflected in language and this phenomenon, sexism in language represents one of the major issues in sociolinguistic studies. According to (21), sexism in the English language has existed for a long time, which is reflected in the traditional ethics that men are superior to women. In this order of ideas, (7), reveals that Men originate from Mars and Women originate from Venus. Given this evidence, some gender differences do exist. Support for this interpretation comes from (41), who confirms that males are above females because in the past there existed the myth

of superiority when the entire power was in the hands of men. Thus, as a special social phenomenon, sexism is inevitably reflected through language, and sexism in language reflects sexism in society. But, with the rise of women's liberation, and the development of mass media, the whole English words start a social revolution to remove sexism in the English language, because sexism in the English language is seen as a discrimination act of women.

Linguistic Sexism suggests that sexist language is any language that is supposed to include all people, but unintentionally (or not) excludes a gender this can be either males or females. It is clear therefore that a look at sexist language is finding the relation between language and gender. A more reasonable explanation for this phenomenon is when many people meet difficulties in making the choices between certain words in their everyday discourses. For instance, they wonder which to choose "the chairman has arrived for the meeting", or "the chairperson has arrived" when referring to a woman. This leads to the fact and argument that sexist language excludes women and minimizes what women do. Sexist language is especially common in situations that describe jobs-common assumptions include that all doctors are men, all nurses are women, all coaches are men, or all teachers are women. In addition to this, sexist language can be viewed as an instrument used by the members of society to damage someone. (7) out that a language can be called sexist if it represents or names the world from a masculine viewpoint. This means that language encodes a culture's values, and in this way reflects sexist culture.

1. Sex and gender differences in sociolinguistics

Some people may use the terms "sex" and "gender" interchangeably, but they mean different things. Gender is a social construct trusted source and merely denotes the social and cultural role of sex within a given community. People often develop their gender identity and gender expression in response to their environment. This refers to the way a person identifies along with the gender range. Gender is not neatly divided along the binary lines of "man" and "woman." For example, some people do not identify with any gender, while others identify with multiple genders. Only the person himself can determine what their gender identity is, and this can change over time. No one assumes

another person's gender or gender pronouns. In the past decades, the sociolinguistic study of gender variation has taken new directions, both theoretically and methodologically. Within sociolinguistics, issues of gender emerged primarily as the study of "sex differences," in which the focus of the analysis was the quantifiable difference between women's and men's use: of linguistic variables, especially phonological variables. While these questions were essentially important, their motivation was often less interested in women or men themselves than in understanding the social processes that cause and advance linguistic change. Thus, the close relationship between language and gender and quantitative sociolinguistics in the early years of both subfields became looser over time, as scholars pursued separate sets of questions with separate theoretical and methodological tools. Researchers whose work contributed to both areas kept the connection between the subfields, and as language and gender studies witnessed a wave of renewed activity, the effects have been felt in variationist circles as well. At the same time, current work in quantitative sociolinguistics has opened a new set of issues of interest to language and gender scholars. Sociolinguists must understand gender not as a variable that surpasses situations but as a complex and context-specific system for producing identities and ideologies.

2. Factors of Sexism in the English Language

2.1 Religious Factor

According to the Holy Bible "The Books of The Old Testament", God created man first, while the woman made from one of man's ribs was created just as a help meet for him -Holy Bible-. From the order of the birth, it is obvious to see the different importance of man and woman. So, man and woman are not equal at all because a woman is only a part of a man, which itself is discrimination against women. Additionally, to this, it is a known fact that the first sin was also committed by the woman. Consequently, the woman was punished to bring forth children in pain and was ruled over by the man. These two examples reveal the superiority of men and the inferiority of women. In fact, the Holy Bible is a book of men and as Christianity is such a powerful religion in Western countries, it is clear therefore that this religious factor consolidates the inferiority of women.

2.2 Physiological factor

(45) argue that “gender” is a “master identity” continually and inescapably managed, aside from social roles a person may play. They classify gender variation according to a triad somewhat different from Bird-whistell’s, with only one category based on biological differences: (1) Sex- established by assignment into a category based on biology; (2) Sex category- maintained by “identificatory displays” appropriate to a category; (anyone can claim membership in either sex category); (3) Gender continual management of situated conduct, according to social norms for behavior within each sex category. The process of creating sexual dimorphism is invisible, so gender differences are accepted as being “axiomatic” It is a socially learned belief that gender requires specific characteristics for males and females, and that these are opposites; it is accepted that whatever is “masculine” cannot be “feminine” (11).(45) emphasize the need to investigate gender as “an ongoing activity embedded in everyday interaction: “while the categories of “male/female” may easily be seen, the members of these categories are always working at “doing” effective and convincing “masculine/feminine” gender performance.

2.3 Social Factor

It is argued that language is a social resource controlled by powerful groups in a deterministic manner to create realities beneficial to them (3) and that meanings lost in translations are evidence of relativism. The connection between the individual’s mental structure of language, and the social group’s shared use of language, exemplifies the intersection of the micro-and macro-levels of sociological analysis; this difficult question of the direction of influence in the thought-language relationship, is a challenge to investigate empirically, has also been considered by philosophers.

2.4 Psychological factor

The most obvious difference between men’s and women’s ways of communication comes from the fact that men and women view the use of conversation differently. Academic research on psychological gender differences has proved that women use language to promote social connections and create relationships, men use communication to bring to

bear dominance and achieve tangible goals. This is such as women are, overall, more expressive, tentative, and polite in conversation, while men are more assertive and power-hungry. (2). Popular works by John Gray and Deborah Tannen show that while men view conversations as a way of establishing and maintaining status and superiority in conversation, women see that the motivation behind communication is to create and foster an intimate bond with the other party by talking about tropical problems and issues they are communally facing.

2.5 Cultural factors

In 393 B.C., Aristophanes acknowledged gender-related speech variation, by writing If a language were sex-differentiated in all four conditions, there would be sixteen speech variations. By the nineteenth century, sex differences in speech were noted by researchers among Brazilian and Caribbean Indians, as well as among Europeans (1 and 3). Speakers in some cultures claim not to know of gender-related speech differences and may misquote cross-sex characters during storytelling by using their own gender's speech style; in other cultures, speakers can coherently describe the gender differentiation in their language, children are taught to use the appropriate gender style, and cross-sex characters are quoted accurately during storytelling (3). Around the world, a variety of gender-related speech differences are found. The women's movement was a turning point in linguistics, marking a shift in the "scientific paradigm" in the direction of gender differentiation (40). While variables such as age, and/or ethnicity may be better predictors than gender for language use (36), analysis is complicated by such inter-related variables as the tendency for men in class-stratified societies to use more "stigmatized variants" (lower-class forms of speech) than women use (34). Gender differentiation may also vary between rural and urban areas, as was shown by Bedouin men (who spent more time in contact with women) speaking more like women than did urban Arab men, though all men tried to avoid the use of women's speech styles (1). Analyses of language differences can consider variation occurring across time (i.e., Elizabethan vs. contemporary English), and regional dialects (i.e., Canadian vs. Australian English). Distinct variation may be found in subcultural argot/group slang (4), in occupational vocabularies, and in the special "registers" used for speaking to babies,

sick people, pets, plants, and so on. (4). These differences contribute to the variation of speech, in addition to the effects of gender; they may also vary by gender, so again, problems in language analysis include interactions of variables with complex directions of influence.

6. Differences in men's and women's speech

The issue of women interacting differently from men has been discussed for hundreds of years. However, feminist movements in the 1960s realized that language was one of the instruments of female oppression by males. As a matter of fact, language not only reflected a patriarchal system but also emphasized male supremacy over women. Most of the works analyzing language were done mostly with male language production. (22 and 23), for instance, described mostly the speech of men. However, other linguists, such as the ones cited below, started to become interested in observable differences in language production depending on the sex of the speakers. Humans could be different from one person to another in using language, particularly in the way they speak. One of the aspects of differences is associated with a biological part, for instance, their pitch differences. Besides, (27) emphasizes that in many societies some of the most important sociolinguistics divisions are associated with differences in social prestige, wealth, and power. Regarding this, humans identify themselves as belonging to a particular group and social identity for several reasons such as social, religion, politics, culture, family, and so forth. These differences could be investigated through several aspects as follows:

6.1 Vocabulary Differences:

Men and women have different styles of choosing words to express their feelings. These differences in vocabulary choices can be seen in the numerous aspects below:

a. Adjectives: women prefer to use more adjectives such as soft, wonderful, sweet, good, nice, and so forth. On the other hand, men seldom use adjectives. The use of more adjectives indicates that when women would like to describe their feeling and everything in the world, they tend to be more cautious and sensitive to the environment. In addition, women were fond of expressing their emotions by using strong words that men seldom used.

Thus, this is in line with Ward Haugh's claims that women tend to use

linguistic devices that as the use of more adjectives in their conversation to show their solidarity and more vivid conditions.

b. Color Words: A sense of feminism usually belongs to women, and they tend to use more colorful words to make something more vivid and colorful than men rarely use. For example, amazing, extraordinary, unique, and so forth. This finding is in line with Ward Haugh's statement that women are more likely to focus on the functions of affective in the communication more often than men do.

c. Adverbs: The language usage of differences between men and women could be seen in using adverbs. In this case, women prefer using several adverbs such as "so", "and "quiet". For instance: of course. Heeemmm so yummy, it's so nice to be here, I'm quite tired Ida. Meanwhile, men tend to prefer using the adverb "very". For example, People say that the museum is unique.

d. Expletives and swear statements: Women perhaps are stylistically more flexible and gentler than men. Hence, they try to avoid uttering swear words because these words are uncomfortable, and they belong to taboo words for women. Besides, those words can annoy the friendship with their friends. Indeed, women tend to apply linguistic devices that focus more on solidarity than men do. Women rarely utter swear words such as "damn". They used "oh my god" instead to express their feelings. For example: Wow Oh, my God! It's so a wonderful view! Consequently, women more focus on the manners and politeness of using language.

e. Diminutives: women tend to like using words that indicate affections, such as so sweet, oh dear. Such words will be problematic if they are uttered by the men, particularly in accordance with psychological aspects and their manly characteristics. Besides, women tend to appreciate politeness and increase solidarity such as please, and sorry. It was definite that there are different ways in choosing vocabulary to get emphatic effects. Indeed, this finding is in line with Ward Haugh's that women prefer focusing on the affective functions of interaction more often than men do.

5.2 Women talk more/less than men

According to (6), the amount we talk is influenced by who we are with and what we are doing. They also add that if we collect many studies,

it will be observed that there is little difference between the amount men and women talk. On the one hand, a recent study, (10) states that women talk three times as much as men. On the other hand, (10), in an experiment on gender identity in a conversation of two parts found that men speak more than women.

5.3 Women break the ‘rules’ of turn-taking less than men

Studies in language and gender often make use of two models of dominance and of difference. The first is associated with (37) and (39), while the second is associated with (33). Dominance can be attributed to the fact that in mixed-sex conversations, men are more likely to interrupt than women. It uses an old study of a small sample of conversations, recorded by Don Zimmerman and Candace West at the Santa Barbara campus of the University of California in 1975. The subjects of the recording were white, middle class, and under 35. Zimmerman and West produce in evidence 31 segments of conversation. They report that in 11 conversations between men and women, men used 46 interruptions, but women only two. (39) represents male and female language use in a series of six contrasts:

• Status vs. support

This claims that men grow up in a world in which conversation is competitive - they seek to achieve the upper hand or to prevent others from dominating them. For women, however, talking is often a way to gain confirmation and support for their ideas. Men see the world as a place where people try to gain status and keep it. Women see the world as “a network of connections seeking support and consensus”.

• Independence vs. intimacy

In general, women often think in terms of closeness and support and struggle to preserve intimacy. Men, concerned with status, tend to focus more on independence. These traits can lead women and men to starkly different views of the same situation

• Advice vs. understanding

(40) claims that for too many men, a complaint is a challenge to find a solution:

“When my mother tells my father she doesn’t feel well, he always offers to take her to the doctor. Invariably, she is disappointed with his reaction. Like many men, he is focused on what he can do, whereas she

wants sympathy.”(39).

• **Information vs. feelings**

Culturally and historically speaking, men’s concerns were seen as more important than those of women, but today this situation may be reversed so that the giving of information and shortness of speech are considered of less value than sharing of emotions and elaboration.

• **Orders vs. proposals**

It is claimed that women often suggest that people do things in indirect ways - “let’s”, “why don’t we?” or “wouldn’t it be good, if we...?” Men may use, and prefer to hear, a direct imperative.

• **Conflict vs. compromise**

This situation can be clearly observed in work situations where a management decision seems unattractive - men will often resist it vocally, while women may appear to agree, but complain afterward. In fact, this is a broad generalization - and for every one of Deborah Tannen’s oppositions, we will know of men and women who are exceptions to the norm.

5.4 Women use more standard forms than men:

In the literature, (41) found a kind of sex differentiation for speakers of urban British English. His study demonstrated that “women informants”... use forms associated with the prestige standard more frequently than men”. His study also discovered that male speakers place a high value on working-class nonstandard speech. He offers several possible reasons for the finding that women are more likely to use forms considered correct: (1) The subordinate position of women in English and American societies makes it “more necessary for women to secure their social status linguistically”; and (2) while men can be rated socially on what they do, women may be rated primarily on how they appear – so their speech is more important. As for American literature, research has not shown a noticeable difference in terms of the usage of standard forms by men and women.

5.5 Women’s speech is less direct/ assertive than men’s

In 1975, (25) published a set of basic assumptions about what marks the language of women. Among them she made some claims about those women:

- Hedge: using phrases like “sort of”, “kind of”, “it seems like”, and so on.
 - Use (super) polite forms: “Would you mind...”, “I’d appreciate it if...”, “...if you don’t mind”.
 - Use tag questions: “You’re going to dinner, aren’t you?”
 - Speak in italics: into national emphasis equal to underlining words - so, very, quiet.
 - Use empty adjectives: divine, lovely, adorable, and so on
 - Use hypercorrect grammar and pronunciation: English prestige grammar and clear enunciation.
 - Use direct quotation: men paraphrase more often.
 - Have a special lexicon: women use more words for things like colors, men for sports.
 - Use question intonation in declarative statements: women make declarative statements into questions by raising the pitch of their voice at the end of a statement, expressing uncertainty. For example, “What school do you attend? Eton College?”
 - Use “wh-” imperatives: such as, “Why don’t you open the door?”
 - Speak less frequently
 - Overuse qualifiers: for example, “I think that...”
 - Apologize more: (for instance, “I’m sorry, but I think that...”)
 - Use modal constructions: such as can, would, should, ought - “Should we turn up the heat?”
 - Avoid coarse language or expletives: such as defecate or excrete (for *shit*) and fornicate or copulate (for *fuck*) and abusive swearing, intended to offend, intimidate or otherwise cause emotional or psychological harm.
 - Use indirect commands and requests: for example, “My, isn’t it cold in here?” - really a request to turn the heat on or close a window.
 - Use more intensifiers: especially so and very for instance, “I am so glad you came!”
 - Lack of a sense of humor: women do not tell jokes well and often don’t understand the punch line of jokes. (25)
- (19) and (26) have both constructed similar lists of (25) work on “women’s language”. As can be noted, some of these statements are easier to verify by investigation and observation than others. It is easy to count

the frequency with which tag questions or modal verbs occur. However, (25) remark about humor is much harder to quantify - some critics might reply that notions of humor differ between men and women. In their study, (26) investigated courtroom cases and witnesses' speeches. Their findings challenge Lakoff's view of women's language. Doing some research on what they describe as "powerless language", they show that language differences are based on situation-specific authority or power and not gender. It is also evident that there may be social contexts where women are (for other reasons) the same as those who lack power. As a matter of fact, this is a far more limited claim than that made by (37), who identifies power with a male patriarchal order - the theory of dominance.

As a result of their study, (26) concluded that the quoted speech patterns were neither characteristic of all women nor limited only to women. Therefore, the women who used the lowest frequency of women's language traits had an unusually high status. They were well-educated professionals with middle-class backgrounds. A corresponding pattern was noted among the men who spoke with a low frequency of women's language traits. (26) tried to emphasize that a powerful position might derive from either social standing in the larger society and/or status accorded by the court.

5.6 Politeness and gender

(20) states that women and men recognize conversations differently. Generally, women see talking as something important; they think of language as a means of establishing and maintaining relationships. Men, tend to use conversations to receive and convey information; thus, they see language as a tool for this. In other words, the focus in men's conversation is on the content and it seems that they do not think of the feelings of others whereas women's focus is on the feelings of their conversation partner. The different kinds of focus demonstrate two different functions of speech: 'the referential function' where speech is used to convey information; and 'the affective function' where speech is used to convey feelings and reflect social relationships (20).

(20) suggests that women think they focus on other people's feelings. Consequently, her conclusion is that women are more polite than men because they tend to express politeness or friendliness in their way of

using language.(13)agree with (20), claiming that men are more competitive, and competition does not involve politeness. In contrast, women show tendencies to be more cooperative which leads them to care about other people's feelings.

Although, there are authors who question this view of gender influencing language. (4) suggests that it is not only gender that has a role in expressing politeness. She mentions the social network which is a group of people where the members have established ways of talking. Examples of social networks are colleagues at work, classmates, and family members. The social network is as important as other factors. Thus, if a person uses Can you... in a group of friends, it does not necessarily mean that the person is being impolite. It may rather be that the less polite form is the one used in that group. Moreover, there are communicative strategies and social motivations which influence our speech. (4) claims that we need to have these factors in mind when discussing gender and language because people are sensible actors and tend to adapt to different contexts and networks (4). For example, if having a meeting with the boss, more polite forms are used whereas if having a family meeting around the kitchen table, less polite forms are used. (4) further discusses factors that "seem to be involved" in our decision of appearing polite. One example is the factor of being superior/inferior in the interaction. If considering the example above with the meeting with a boss, the employee will probably appear polite because the boss is superior.

5.7 Results

1. Women and men recognize conversations differently and had equal opportunities to express themselves during the conversation.
2. Women are more polite than men because they tend to express politeness or friendliness in their way of using language
3. Language differences are based on situation-specific authority or power and not gender.
4. Sexism in the language is a social problem, which reflects the social reality and social division of the population. Because of the differences between their superiority and inferiority in social activities, men and women are differentiated from one

another in many aspects, which give rise to variations in their styles and language uses. That is why language was and is seen as a powerful instrument of patriarchy.

5.8 **Recommendations**

It is recommended that we should not only learn the linguistic basic knowledge about a language but also the culture of the language. We should get acquainted with gender differences in language. Moreover, we should know as much as possible about the speech patterns or styles of men and women. There is still much for researchers to investigate and disclose detailed differences between male and female speakers as well as their main causes.

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