

THEORETICAL DISCUSSIONS OF REFLECTION OF GENDER IN LANGUAGE AND SPEECH

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Abstract:

Gender investigations of phraseological units, using linguistic means due to belonging to a definite sex, reflection of national-cultural features of gender concepts in languages are important problems for world linguists to solve. In the dissertation in order to select and classify English genderly marked phraseological units the following criteria have been proposed: grammatical due to usage of personal pronouns, morphological that is vivid in suffixes, basing on the choice of proper and common nouns lexical and dependent on dictionary meaning semantic criteria.

Key words: discourse, anthropology, sociolinguistic, rational, euphemism.

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The problems of gender linguistics are the most attractive ones in the modern language study. This is an obviously new branch of science which studies out the focus on difference of means of language between men and women. And not only language but behavior itself. Each chapter of our work constituted a powerful response to male-centered cognitive studies, which had taken modes of thinking associated with dominant men as the norm and appraised the cognitive processes of females (and often of ethnic and racial minorities as well) as deficient. While all of this work ultimately emerged from feminist impatience with male-dominated and male-serving intellectual paradigms, it also appealed to a popular thirst for gender difference. And in the end, this research is frequently transformed in popular discourse - to justify and support male dominance [2].

The collaboration of the problem of gender began in 1990 when Penelope Eckert was asked to teach a course on language and gender at the 1991 LSA Linguistic Institute at the University of California at Santa Cruz, and Sally was asked to write an article on language and gender for the *Annual Review of Anthropology*. They decided to combine these projects into a joint effort to rethink approaches to language and gender, and particularly to bring together their work in quite different areas of linguistics. Penny's focus in linguistics has been on sociolinguistic variation, and she was employing ethnographic methods to examine the embedding of linguistic practice in processes of identity construction. Sally came to linguistics from math and analytic philosophy, and has divided her career between teaching and research on language and gender, especially the pragmatic question of what people (as opposed to linguistic expressions) mean, and on formal semantics.

In 1972, Robin Lakoff published an article entitled "Language and woman's place," which created a huge fuss. There were those who found the entire topic

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trivial - yet another ridiculous manifestation of feminist "paranoia." And there were those - mostly women - who jumped in to engage with the arguments and issues that Lakoff had put forth. Thus, was launched the study of language and gender [1].

We are surrounded by gender lore from the time we are very small. It is ever-present in conversation, humor, and conflict, and it is called upon to explain everything from driving styles to food preferences. Gender is embedded so thoroughly in our institutions, our actions, our beliefs, and our desires, that it appears to us to be completely natural. The world swarms with ideas about gender - and these ideas are so commonplace that we take it for granted that they are true, accepting common adage as scientific fact. As scholars and researchers, though, it is our job to look beyond what appears to be common sense to find not simply what truth might be behind it, but how it came to be common sense. It is precisely because gender seems natural, and beliefs about gender seem to be obvious truth, that we need to step back and examine gender from a new perspective.

This is not easy, for gender is so central to our understanding of ourselves and of the world that it is difficult to pull back and examine it from new perspectives. But it is precisely the fact that gender seems self-evident which makes the study of gender interesting [4]. It brings the challenge to uncover the process of construction that creates what we have so long thought of as natural and inexorable -- to study gender not as given, but as an accomplishment; not simply as cause, but as effect. The results of failure to recognize this challenge are manifest not only in the popular media, but in academic work on language and gender as well. As a result, some gender scholarship does as much to reify and support existing beliefs as to promote more reflective and informed thinking about gender.

Thus, the very definition of the biological category's *male* and *female*, and people's understanding of themselves and others as male or female, is ultimately social. It is commonly argued that biological differences between males and females determine gender by causing enduring differences in capabilities and dispositions. Higher levels of testosterone, for example, are said to lead men to be more aggressive than women; and left-brain dominance is said to lead men to be more "rational" while their relative lack of brain lateralization should lead women to be more "emotional."

Consider our voices. On average, men's vocal tracts are longer than women's, yielding a lower voice pitch. But individuals' actual conversational voice pitch across society does not simply conform to the size of the vocal tract. At the age of four to five years, well before puberty differentiates male and female vocal tracts, boys and girls learn to differentiate their voices as boys consciously and unconsciously lower their voices while girls raise theirs. In the end, one can usually tell whether even a very small child is male or female on the basis of their voice pitch and quality alone, regardless of the length of their vocal tract.

One thing that is overwhelming in our narrative of development is the ubiquity of gender. Children get gender from everywhere. Gender consists in a pattern of relations that develops over time to define male and female, masculinity and femininity, simultaneously structuring and regulating people's relation to society [3]. It is deeply embedded in every aspect of society -- in our institutions, in public spaces, in art, clothing, movement. Gender is embedded in experience in all settings from government offices to street games. It is embedded in the family, the neighborhood, church, school, the media, walking

down the street, eating in a restaurant, going to the restroom. And these settings and situations are all linked to one other in a structured fashion. Gender is so intricately organized at every level of experience that there is something approaching a seamless connection between a girl's desire for a frilly party dress and the male control of the means of production. Every time a little girl desires a frilly pink party dress, insists on having one, or wears one, she is performing a gendered act that renews the gendered meanings associated with pink, frills, dresses, and party clothes. The little girl who insists on wearing grubby overalls has a different effect. Interestingly, however, people often dismiss what they see as "exceptions" so that the actions of the nonconforming girl may have less ongoing effect [1]. The purpose of this section is to give some account of the connection between the pink party dress and the male control of institutions -- an account of the structuring of gender ubiquity and of male domination.

The idea and subject of positioning in speech are interconnected and implicated in gender construction and gender studies. Many linguists argue about positioning in speech acts relating to the gender research. For example, American linguist Robin Lakoff studied women's speech peculiarities and proposed that American women soften and attenuate their expression of opinion through such devices as

- tagging questions ("the weather is pleasant, isn't it?")
- indirection (saying "Well, I've got a dentist appointment then" in order to convey a reluctance to meet at some proposed time and perhaps to request that the other person propose an alternative time)
- rising intonation on declaratives (A: "When will you come?" B: "Seven o'clock?")
- euphemism (avoiding profanities by using expressions like piffle, fudge, or heck; using circumlocutions like go to the bathroom to avoid "vulgar" or tabooed expressions such as pee or piss)
- the use of various kinds of hedges ("That's kind a sad " or "it's probably dinnertime")
- boosters or amplifiers ("I'm so glad you're here")
- conventional politeness, specially forms that mark respect for the addressee. There were other elements in the picture she painted of "women's language," but the main focus was on its "powerlessness," seen as deriving from the "weak" stance or position those women (and others) were assuming.

Literature:

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