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INTRODUCTION

The study of language has been a constant preoccupation with more or less professional researchers for thousands of years. Since the earliest times, much before the birth of linguistics as a distinct scholarly discipline, people have been aware of the essential role language plays not only in their everyday life, but also as a characteristic feature of mankind, radically differentiating human beings from other species of the animal kingdom.

The fact that language acts as a fundamental link between ourselves and the world around us and that in the absence of language our relation to the universe and to our fellows is dramatically impaired is something that people have been (at least intuitively) aware of since the beginning of history. Suffice it to mention that different cultures seem to associate speech problems with intellectual deficiencies. The origin of language (believed to be divine in most ancient cultures), the relation between language and thinking, the question if we can think without the help of language (and if we can, what kind of thinking is that), the manner in which human beings (who are not, obviously, born with the ability to speak, but have, however, an innate capacity for language acquisition) come, with an amazing rapidity, to successfully use language, beginning with the very first stages of their existence (the acquisition of language actually parallels the birth of the child's self-consciousness and the latter can hardly be imagined without the former) have puzzled researchers for centuries and none of these questions has actually received a satisfactory and universally accepted answer.

Language is obviously the main system available for us, not only for knowing the world and understanding it, but also for accumulating, storing and communicating information**.** Language can thus be understood as the main system we have for communicating among us. All the other systems of conveying information are actually based on this essential, fundamental one. Communication by means of language can thus be understood as a complex process actually consisting of several stages. Any act of communication basically takes place between two participants: on the one hand we have the source of the information,

the person who has to communicate something, the sender of the message that contains the information, and on the other hand we need a second party, the recipient, the addressee of the message, the beneficiary of the communication act, in other words the person(s) to whom the information contained in the message is addressed. Since the sender has to convey a message, and the transmission is to take place on the basis of a system of signs (a code), the first thing the sender has to do is to encode or codify his message, in other words to render the contents of the message by means of the signs of the respective code (the language) .The next stage is obviously represented by the transmission of the message proper, which can be achieved in several ways (depending of the type of communication; e.g. written or oral). Once the message reaches the recipient, the process should unfold in the opposite direction. That is, the message gets to the recipient in an encoded form so that the recipient has to decode it and grasp its meaning.

The novelty of the study. Novelty of the diploma work is that it adds some details to what was studied before. This theme is actual for today and will always be. Many linguists are interested in the peculiarities of gender linguistics. Due to the analysis which is used in this work to determine the gender issues in language learning, to reveal their differences and dominance.

The subject of the study is peculiarities of the gender issues in language learning and the linguistic behavior of men and women across languages.

The purpose of this paper is the study of lexical and morphological differences of the gender issues in language learning, grammatical forms of verbs according to the sex of the speaker.

The English language gradually becomes one of the most widely used languages in the world. There are large numbers of students in institutions of higher and further education who are learning English for many purposes: as the medium of the literature and culture of English-speaking countries; for access to scholarly and technological publications; to qualify as English teachers, translators, or interpreters; to improve their chances of employment or promotion in such areas

as tourist trade, international progammes for economic or military aid. In countries where it is a second language, English is commonly used as the medium for higher education, at least for scientific and technological subjects.

Theoretical and practical significance of this paper is that it will be useful both to teachers, and to students. In teaching activity it can be applied in studying of such courses as practical course of translation, theoretical course of translation, practicum on culture of speech communication, etc. The analysis made in this diploma work will help to predict mistakes while speaking, will help to practical exercises for development of skills of linguistics.

The main task is to reveal peculiarities of the gender issues in language learning, find similarities and differences between the women's form and men's form of speaking, to define difficulties which encounter the students while reading and analyzing the texts, which are necessary to overcome, and also to study the theoretical basis of English linguistics in order to understand the structure of Modern English language.

The structure of the degree work. The present diploma work consists of the introduction, two chapters, the conclusion and bibliography.

CHAPTER 1. Literary review on the problem of the relationship between the language and gender Studies

1.1 Linguistic Stereotypes of gender

Gender stereotyping in the linguistics is a well-established fact. Nowhere is it more obvious than in advertising, where the authoritative male voice-over is a regular feature.'Perhaps the most telling evidence of sexism in advertising is not to be found in 'what happens', but in the ubiquity of the male in the voice-over, even in ads portraying or aimed at women, or which pay lip-service to the modern liberated women!' [Cook G., 1992] The attribution of specific and indeed limited gender roles by the advertising industry and by society in general is a fascinating subject in its own right. We propose to look initially at just one element of it, i.e. the portrayal of women's language and communicative skills as a component of their general behaviour patterns. Usually, references to women's linguistic behaviour are implicit rather than explicit. There are occasions when deep-rooted expectations and prejudices come to the fore, displaying a stereotypical picture of women as creatures who talk a lot, interrupt men and are illogical and changeable.

Be Quiet! Didn't your husband teach you not to interrupt when a man is talking?' - Pieter Botha, President of South Africa, responding to a female heckler. [Werner M., 1993].

How can we have an invasion when the troops storm ashore and then change their minds!' - Bob Hope, entertainer, about women in combat. [Werner M., 1993].

A further example relates to the stereotype that women talk a lot. It is taken from the British Telecom advertising campaign called 'It's good to talk':

e.g. Why can't men be more like women?

e.g. Women and men communicate differently.

e.g. Have you noticed?

e.g. Women like to sit down to make phone calls.

e.g. They know that getting in touch is much more important than what you actually say.

e.g. Men adopt another position.

e.g. They stand up.

Their body language says this message will be short, sharp and to the point. 'Meet you down the pub, all right? See you there'. That's a man's call.

e.g. Women can't understand why men are so abrupt. [The Sunday Times]

Lip-service is paid to women's role in maintaining social harmony. However, it is abundantly clear that what women say is unimportant, if 'getting in touch is much more important than what you actually say' and women's conversation is irrelevant if it is 'not to the point'. Interestingly, the two accompanying pictures show a man and a woman on the phone, wearing no clothes with the caption strategically positioned. The suggestion is obviously (and dangerously) that such behaviour is biologically determined. What might be represented elsewhere as a disadvantage is here turned to advantage for raw commercial purposes: how else could 'talking-time' be sold other than by reference to the stereotypical high-achievers in the area, i.e. women?

Linguistic stereotypes

Since the publication of Robin Lakoff's stereotypes about women's speech have percolated through from linguistic circles to the general public. [Lakoff R, 1975]. It is almost impossible to look through a women's magazine nowadays without finding some article popularising descriptions of women's speech, largely based on linguistic research. [U Magazine; September, 1995]. Lakoff drew up a list of features of women's speech, relating mostly to vocabulary, but also to syntactic structures. Until then, few outside hallowed linguistic circles had even heard of the tag-question or had any idea what it was. The following are examples of tag questions:

e.g. John is here, isn't he?

e.g. They will be arriving shortly, won't they?

Since then, there has been furious debate about whether women use more tag-questions than men and if so, what it means. Various women's magazines offer advice on how to rid oneself of this and other female forms of speech, with the result that a further set of stereotypes has emerged, this time based on the research

of linguists. The following is part of the most recent list provided by Lakoff:

- Women's intonational contours display more variety than men's.
- Women use diminutives and euphemisms more than men.
- Women make more use of expressive forms (adjectives, not nouns or verbs and in that category, those expressing emotional rather than intellectual evaluation) more than men: lovely, divine.
- Women use hedges of all kinds more than men.
- Women use intonation patterns that resemble questions, indicating uncertainty or need for approval.
- Women's voices are breathier than men's.
- Women are more indirect and polite than men.
- In conversation, women are more likely to be interrupted, less likely to introduce successful topics.
- Women's communicative style tends to be collaborative rather than competitive.
- More of women's communication is expressed non verbally (by gesture and intonation) than men's.
- Women are more careful to be 'correct' when they speak, using better grammar and fewer colloquialisms than men. [Lakoff R, 1990]

Debate currently rages about most of the features mentioned above. Much work has been done on pitch, intonation, hedges, politeness and `correctness'. Sociolinguists such as Peter Trudgill and William Labove have consistently shown that, on average, women speak a form of language more approaching the standard (i.e. more `correct') than men of a similar social background. [Labov W., 1972]. Again, the problem is, how should this be interpreted? Does it mean that women are linguistically more conservative than men? Attempting to answer such questions is another day's work.Let us turn to the area that has received most attention in recent times, that of 'communicative styles' or 'strategies'. Initially research was carried out on private conversation but more recently attention has focused on women's linguistic behaviour in the workplace and whether, at least in

part, it can be blamed for the existence of the 'Glass Ceiling'. Tannen's work has excited considerable controversy among linguists. Her views can be summarised as follows: men tend to employ 'contest' strategies and women 'community' strategies. [Tanner D., 1994]. If we accept such a dichotomy, it provides an easy explanation for women's lack of advancement in the workplace: women are too busy establishing 'community' or 'rapport' instead of climbing the ladder by engaging in the 'contest' strategies which are more successful in organisations founded on hierarchy. Of course, it is not as simple as that. It is not enough to study male patterns of linguistic interaction, adopt them and succeed where others have failed. Some women have done so: Margaret Thatcher lowered her pitch, spoke more slowly and reduced the variability of her intonation patterns. One has also to contend with society's expectations of women as ladies who speak politely and the fact that lower pitch is associated with greater credibility. (Studies have shown that the lower the news reader's voice, the more people are inclined to believe the news!).

Let us turn to the role of language in an academic institution of which Lakoff gives some fascinating examples in Talking Power. Lakoff considers the university a hierarchical institution par excellence, where vertical divisions are rigorously maintained, starting with the lecturer's dominance over a class of undergraduates, going on to the staff meeting where she considers that amount of talk is directly proportional to status. On the surface, it appears the rules are the same for women and men: from the students' perspective, whoever is on the podium has the floor whether male or female. It is only when you look at the administration of universities that the rules are different. [Lakoff R, 1975]. Lakoff describes her experience of committee meetings as follows: 'Here I was at one of the world's greatest universities, (The University of California at Berkeley) in the company of distinguished colleagues, and after listening to the latter for two hours or so, could not recall a single thing of substance that had been said. Worse, it would sometimes occur to me that my respected confrAres (almost always men) were spending hours on a point that could be summarised and concluded in a

sentence or two. I would attempt to provide that sentence. But once I had spoken, the discourse would close over me like the ocean enveloping a pebble. It was as if I had not spoken - in fact, did not exist. What did it mean? After a while I figured it out. My colleagues were playing by men's rules: what was important was to gain turf, control territory. That goal was achieved by spreading words around. [Lakoff R, 1975].

Lakoff puts her finger on one of the dilemmas facing women: how to deal with the expectation that it is men not women who will occupy the floor. However eloquent or convincing a woman is, it is difficult for her to gain and maintain the floor in a public fora, (of which the university committee meeting is a prime example) because of the expectation that public fora are men's, not women's domains. The public/private divide still operates: the more public the forum, the less women are likely to speak. So it is not just a question of women acquiring new speech strategies in order to succeed, it is also a question of overcoming the expectation of less talk - or even silence. A university is no different in this respect than any other institution based on hierarchy. We are indeed a long way from the societal stereotype of the loquacious woman.

There is considerable divergence between conventional stereotypes and the reality of women's speech. Since linguistic behavior is not rigidly divided along sex lines, it is easy to discount differences as non-existent or unimportant. Linguistic research in the last twenty years has done nothing if not prove that variation does exist and that women are linguistically, as well as socially, at a disadvantage. Researchers have shown consistently that women speak less than men in public for a and that men interrupt women more than the other way round.

The problem is whether it is possible or desirable for women to alter their speech patterns so that they may be judged more direct and convincing; Deborah Cameron refers to such a process as 'verbal hygiene for women' [Cameron D., 1994]. This kind of linguistic training seems like a modern equivalent for women of the old elocution lesson from the days when a particular class accent was a marker for upward social mobility. In the context of the Glass Ceiling, upward

mobility for women is a far more complex affair.

Changing women's linguistic strategies is not terribly difficult in certain areas: one can, for example, (possibly with a modicum of training), adopt lower pitch, reduce the range of intonation patterns and avoid disclaimers like: 'I'm not sure if this will work but...' Some women may have philosophical objections to being expected, yet again, to change their behaviour to fit in with a male norm. They may favour a `celebrating difference' approach, though this seems particularly unlikely to succeed in a hierarchical workplace.

Whatever one's position on the 'if you can't beat them, join them' debate, at least the time has come when doing research in language and gender and mediating it to the public is considered worthwhile, in contrast to twenty years ago when it would have been considered an unworthy, if not frivolous, subject of academic debate. More and more women appear to have cultivated elements of what some refer to as 'powerful' language, related to level of attainment rather than gender determined. One hopes that the more women participate in public life the more they will develop individual styles that no longer surprise because of their rarity.

1.2 Language of gender and its subdivisions

a) Women’s language

b) men’s language

Possible gender differences in language usage have recently attracted a lot of attention.

First, we need to sort out whether women really do speak differently from men. People's impressions are not necessarily correct: it is often assumed, for example, that women talk more than men, whereas almost all research on the topic has demonstrated the opposite, that men talk more than women. Similarly, it is sometimes claimed that women use 'empty' adjectives, such as divine, charming, cute, yet this type of description is possibly more usually used by (presumably male) writers in popular newspapers to describe women. [Aitchison J., 1992]

Furthermore, some characteristics which have been attributed to women turn

out to be far more widespread. For example, women have been claimed to use tentative phrases such as kind of, sort of in place of straight statements: 'Bill is kind of short', instead of 'Bill is short'. They have also been accused of using question intonation in response to queries: 'About eight o'clock?' as a reply to: 'What time's dinner?' Yet this insecure style of conversation seems to be typical of 'powerless' people, those who are somewhat nervous and afraid of antagonizing others. Powerless people come from either sex.

1. Observations of the differences between the way males and females speak were long restricted to grammatical features, such as the differences between masculine and feminine morphology in many languages. In earlier usage, the word gender was generally restricted to these grammatical distinctions. They cause problems for speakers of languages like English, where grammatical gender is marked mainly in pronouns, when they learn a language like French, where non-sexed items like table (la table) can be grammatically feminine. [Spolsky B., 1998].

The most consistent difference found between men and women within the western world is a tendency for women to speak in a way that is closer to the prestige standard. In colloquial terms, they speak 'better' than men. No one is quite sure why this is so, and several explanations have been proposed, which may all be partially right. [Aitchison J., 1992]. For example, women may be pressurized by society to behave in a 'ladylike' manner, and 'speaking nicely' may be part of this. Or because they are the main child-rearers, they may subconsciously speak in a way which will enable their children to progress socially. Or they may tend to have jobs which rely on communication, rather than on strength. All these factors, and others, appear to be relevant. Of the social causes of gender differentiation in speech style, one of the most critical appears to be level of education. In all studies, it has been shown that the greater the disparities between educational opportunities for boys and girls, the greater the differences between male and female speech.

Historically, these differences sometimes seem to have arisen from customs encouraging marriage outside the community. If there is a regular pattern of men

from village A marrying and bringing home to their village women from village B, then it is likely that the speech of women in village A will be marked by many features of the village B dialect. [Spolsky B., 1998].The preservation of these introduced features depends on the maintenance of social differentiation in occupations, status, and activities.

Children soon pick up the social stereotypes that underlie this discrimination. They learn that women's talk is associated with the home and domestic activities, while men's is associated with the outside world and economic activities. These prejudices often remain in place in the face of contrary evidence. Thus, while there is a popular prejudice that women talk more than men, empirical studies of a number of social situations (such as committee meetings and Internet discussion groups) have shown the opposite to be true.

"Such information-laden directions may be helpful for women because all information is relevant to the abstract concept of where to turn; however, men may require only one cue and be distracted by additional information. Studies of gender differences have shown the power of stereotyping. A poet is taken more seriously than a poetess; women's status is lowered by references to the girls. In Hebrew, only the lower ranks in the army (up to the rank of lieutenant) have feminine forms. The use of generic masculine ('Everyone should bring his lunch, we need to hire the best man available'), however well- meaning and neutral the speaker's intention may be, reinforces the secondary status of women in many social groups. [Spolsky B., 1998].

With the growth of social awareness in this area over the past decades, there have been many attempts to overcome this prejudicial use of language.The idea that men and women "speak different languages" has itself become a dogma, treated not as a hypothesis to be investigated or as a claim to be adjudicated, but as an unquestioned article of faith. Our faith in it is misplaced. If we examine the findings of more than 30 years of research on language, communication and the sexes, we will discover that they tell a different, and more complicated, story. The idea that men and women differ fundamentally in the way they use language to

communicate is a myth in the everyday sense: a widespread but false belief. But it is also a myth in the sense of being a story people tell in order to explain who they are, where they have come from, and why they live as they do. Whether or not they are "true" in any historical or scientific sense, such stories have consequences in the real world. They shape our beliefs, and so influence our actions. For example, the workplace is a domain in which myths about language and the sexes can have detrimental effects. A few years ago, the manager of a call centre in north-east England was asked by an interviewer why women made up such a high proportion of the agents he employed. Did men not apply for jobs in his centre? The manager replied that any vacancies attracted numerous applicants of both sexes, but, he explained: "We are looking for people who can chat to people, interact, build rapport. What we find is that women can do this more ... women are naturally good at that sort of thing." Moments later, he admitted: "I suppose we do, if we're honest, select women sometimes because they are women rather than because of something they've particularly shown in the interview." The growth of call centres is part of a larger trend in economically advanced societies. More jobs are now in the service than the manufacturing sector, and service jobs, particularly those that involve direct contact with customers, put a higher premium on language and communication skills. Many employers share the call-centre manager's belief that women are by nature better qualified than men for jobs of this kind, and one result is a form of discrimination. Male job applicants have to prove that they possess the necessary skills, whereas women are just assumed to possess them. But it is not only men who stand to lose because of the widespread conviction that women have superior verbal skills. Someone else who thinks men and women are naturally suited to different kinds of work is Baron-Cohen. [Cameron D., 1998].

In The Essential Difference he offers the following "scientific" careers advice:

1)"People with the female brain make the most wonderful counsellors, primary school teachers, nurses, carers, therapists, social workers, mediators, group facilitators or personnel staff.

2) People with the male brain make the most wonderful scientists, engineers, mechanics, technicians, musicians, architects, electricians, plumbers, taxonomists, catalogists, bankers, toolmakers, programmers or even lawyers." The difference between the two lists reflects what Baron-Cohen takes to be the "essential difference" between male and female brains. The female-brain jobs make use of a capacity for empathy and communication, whereas the male ones exploit the ability to analyse complex systems. Baron-Cohen is careful to talk about - "people with the female/male brain" rather than "men and women". [Cameron D., 1998].

He stresses that there are men with female brains, women with male brains, and individuals of both sexes with "balanced" brains. He refers to the major brain types as "male" and "female", however, because the tendency is for males to have male brains and females to have female brains. And at many points it becomes clear that in spite of his caveats about not confusing gender with brain sex, he himself is doing exactly that. Baron-Cohen classifies nursing as a female-brain, empathy-based job (though if a caring and empathetic nurse cannot measure dosages accurately and make systematic clinical observations she or he risks doing serious harm) and law as a male-brain, system-analysing job (though a lawyer, however well versed in the law, will not get far without communication and people-reading skills). [Cameron D., 1998].

These categorisations are not based on a dispassionate analysis of the demands made by the two jobs. They are based on the everyday common-sense knowledge that most nurses are women and most lawyers are men. At its most basic it is simply the proposition that men and women differ fundamentally in the way they use language to communicate. All versions of the myth share this basic premise; most versions, in addition, make some or all of the following claims:

1. Language and communication matter more to women than to men; women talk more than men.

2. Women are more verbally skilled than men.

3. Men's goals in using language tend to be about getting things done, whereas women's tend to be about making connections to other people. Men talk

more about things and facts, whereas women talk more about people, relationships and feelings.

4. Men's way of using language is competitive, reflecting their general interest in acquiring and maintaining status; women's use of language is cooperative, reflecting their preference for equality and harmony.

5. These differences routinely lead to "miscommunication" between the sexes, with each sex misinterpreting the other's intentions. This causes problems in contexts where men and women regularly interact, and especially in heterosexual relationships.

Perhaps men have realised that a reputation for incompetence can sometimes work to your advantage. Like the idea that they are no good at housework, the idea that men are no good at talking serves to exempt them from doing something that many would rather leave to women anyway. (Though it is only some kinds of talking that men would rather leave to women: in many contexts men have no difficulty expressing themselves - indeed, they tend to dominate the conversation.) This should remind us that the relationship between the sexes is not only about difference, but also about power. The long-standing expectation that women will serve and care for others is not unrelated to their position as the "second sex". But in the universe of Mars and Venus, the fact that we (still) live in a male-dominated society is like an elephant in the room that everyone pretends not to notice. The tag question, similarly, can be interpreted as a hedging device which weakens womens' speech. Of all the linguistic forms originally listed by Lakoff, the tag has come to hold the position of archetypal women's language feature [Coates 1989].

Support for this position comes from those situations in which either verification of the statement can be made by mere inspection: John is here, isn't he? or where it reflects the opinion of the speaker: The way prices are rising these days is horrendous, isn't it? Clearly, these sentences need not be questioned and, thus, demonstrate the speaker's insecurity.There are instances as tag questions, two by the woman and one by a man:

Andy: You don't have a phone right now…do you? (falling intonation)

Jody: Mmhm.

Jody: Looks good…huh? (falling intonation)

Andy: Mmm.

Jody: You didn't get scissors, ehh? (rising intonation)

Ian: It's like talking to a machine.

She obviously had this spiel…It is not hard to see about the way men and women use language, provided those generalizations fit with already familiar stereotypes. An anecdote illustrating the point that, say, men are competitive and women cooperative conversationalists will prompt readers to recall the many occasions on which they have observed men competing and women cooperating - while not recalling the occasions, perhaps equally numerous, on which they have observed the opposite. If counter-examples do come to mind ("What about Janet? She's the most competitive person I know"), it is open to readers to apply the classic strategy of putting them in a separate category of exceptions ("of course, she grew up with three brothers / is the only woman in her department / works in a particularly competitive business"). In studies of verbal abilities and behaviour, the differences were slight. This is not a new observation. In 1988 Hyde and her colleague Marcia Linn carried out a meta-analysis of research dealing specifically with gender differences in verbal ability. [Hyde J.,1995]. The conclusion they came to was that the difference between men and women amounted to "about one-tenth of one standard deviation" - statistician-speak for "negligible". Another scholar who has considered this question, the linguist Jack Chambers, suggests that the degree of non-overlap in the abilities of male and female speakers in any given population is "about 0.25%". That's an overlap of 99.75%. It follows that for any array of verbal abilities found in an individual woman, there will almost certainly be a man with exactly the same array. As well as underplaying their similarities, statements of the form "women do this and men do that" disguise the extent of the variation that exists within each gender group. Focusing on the differences between men and women while ignoring the differences within them is extremely misleading but, unfortunately, all too common. If we are going to try to generalise

about which sex talks more, a reliable way to do it is to observe both sexes in a single interaction, and measure their respective contributions. This cuts out extraneous variables that are likely to affect the amount of talk, and allows for a comparison of male and female behaviour under the same contextual conditions. Numerous studies have been done using this approach, and while the results have been mixed, the commonest finding is that men talk more than women. One review of 56 research studies categorises their findings as shown here:

Pattern of difference found / Number of studies

Men talk more than women / 34 (60.8%)

Women talk more than men / 2 (3.6%)

Men and women talk the same amount / 16 (28.6%)

No clear pattern / 4 (7.0%) [Tannen D. 1989]

The reviewers are inclined to believe that this is a case of gender and amount of talk being linked indirectly rather than directly: the more direct link is with status, in combination with the formality of the setting (status tends to be more relevant in formal situations). The basic trend, especially in formal and public contexts, is for higher-status speakers to talk more than lower-status ones. The gender pattern is explained by the observation that in most contexts where status is relevant, men are more likely than women to occupy high-status positions; if all other things are equal, gender itself is a hierarchical system in which men are regarded as having higher status. "Regarded" is an important word here, because conversational dominance is not just about the way dominant speakers behave; it is also about the willingness of others to defer to them. Some experimental studies have found that you can reverse the "men talk more" pattern, or at least reduce the gap, by instructing subjects to discuss a topic that both sexes consider a distinctively female area of expertise. Status, then, is not a completely fixed attribute, but can vary relative to the setting, subject and purpose of conversation. That may be why some studies find that women talk more in domestic interactions with partners and family members: in the domestic sphere, women are often seen as being in charge. In other spheres, however, the default assumption is that men

outrank women, and men are usually found to talk more. In informal contexts where status is not an issue, the commonest finding is not that women talk more than men, it is that the two sexes contribute about equally. Sometimes, there are very clear differences between the forms of language typically used by women and those typically used by men. It is not an accident that all the traditionally "female" nouns have the polite or honorific prefix /**o-**/; this is one of many ways in which Japanese female speech has been characterized as being more polite than male speech.

However, explicit and categorical grammatical and or even lexical marking of speaker gender is not the norm. Instead, we usually find differences in the frequency of certain things (words, or pronunciations, or constructions, or intonations, or whatever), especially when the circumstances of utterance are taken into account.

“Linguistic gender varieties arise because ... language ... is closely related to social attitudes. Men and women are socially different in that society lays down different social roles for them and expects different behaviour patterns from them. Language simply reflects this social fact.... What is more, it seems that the larger and more inflexible the differences between the social roles of men and women in a particular community, the larger and more rigid the linguistic differences tend to be. ... Our English examples have all consisted of tendencies ... The examples of distinct male and female varieties all come from ... communities where sex roles are much more clearly delineated”.

It has often been observed that (other things equal) female speech tends to be evaluated as more "correct" or more "prestigious", less slangy, etc. Men are more likely than women to use socially-stigmatized forms (like "ain't" or g-dropping in English). On the other hand, women are usually in the lead in changes in pronunciation, typically producing new pronunciations sooner, more often, and in more extreme ways than men. A number of stylistic differences between female and male speech have been observed or claimed. Women's speech has been said to be more polite, more redundant, more formal, more clearly pronounced, and more

elaborated or complex, while men's speech is less polite, more elliptical, more informal, less clearly pronounced, and simpler. In terms of conversational patterns, it has been observed or claimed that women use more verbal "support indicators" (like mm-hmm) than men do; that men interrupt women more than than they interrupt other men, and more than women interrupt either men or other women; that women express uncertainty and hesitancy more than men; and that (at least in single-sex interactions) males are more likely to give direct orders than females are. For nearly all of these issues of stylistic and conversational differences, there are some contradictory findings, and it seems that one must look closely at the nature of the circumstances in order to predict how men and women will behave verbally. Nevertheless, it is clear that in many circumstances, women and men tend to use language differently. Within the domain of culture, two broad classes of explanations for such gender effects have been offered: **difference theories** and **dominance theories**. According to **difference** theories (sometimes called **two-culture theories**), men and women inhabit different cultural (and therefore linguistic) worlds. To quote from the preface to Deborah Tannen's 1990 popularization You just don't understand, "boys and girls grow up in what are essentially different cultures, so talk between women and men is cross-cultural communication." [Tannen D., 1989]

According to **dominance** theories, men and women inhabit the same cultural and linguistic world, in which power and status are distributed unequally, and are expressed by linguistic as well as other cultural markers. In principle, women and men have access to the same set of linguistic and conversational devices, and use them for the same purposes. Apparent differences in usage reflect differences in status and in goals. The general consensus is that both sorts of explanations are appropriate to some degree, but the discussion is sometimes acrimonious and political. For instance, Tannen has been criticized by some feminist writers as a "deeply reactionary" "apologist for men", who "repeatedly excuses their insensitivities in her examples and justifies their outright rudeness as merely being part of their need for independence." Those who criticize Tannen in this way argue

that the behavior of the men in her examples reflects a desire for domination rather rather than a different set of cultural norms. [Tannen D., 1989]

c) Children's language

To develop one's speech means to acquire essential patterns of speech and grammar patterns in particular. Children must use these items automatically during speech-practice. The automatic use of grammar items in our speech (oral and written) supposes mastering some particular skills – the skills of using grammar items to express one's own thoughts, in other words to make up your sentences.

One point in particular has become clearer: language has all the hallmarks of maturationally controlled behaviour. It used to be thought that animal behaviour could be divided into two types: that which was inborn and natural (for example, dogs naturally bark), and that which was learned and unnatural (dogs may be taught to beg). It turns out, however, that this division is by no means clear-cut and may be misleading. Many types of behaviour develop 'naturally' at a certain age, provided that the surrounding environment is adequate. Such behaviour is maturationally controlled, and sexual activity is a typical example. Arguments as to whether it is inborn or learnt are futile. Both nature and nurture are important. Innate potentialities lay down the framework, and within this framework, there is wide variation depending on the environment. When individuals reach a crucial point in their maturation, they are biologically in a state of readiness for learning the behaviour. They would not learn it at this time without a biological trigger, and conversely, the biological trigger could not be activated if there was nobody around from whom they could learn the behaviour. Human infants pay attention to language from birth. They produce recognizable words at around 12-15 months, and start putting words together at around 18 months. The urge for language to emerge at this time is very strong, and only very extraordinary circumstances will suppress it - as in the case of Genie, a Californian teenager who from the age of twenty months had been confined to one small room, and had been physically punished by her father if she made any sounds. Naturally, she was without speech when she was found. But all normal children, and some abnormal ones, will begin

to speak if they hear language going on around them. [Aitchison J.,1992].

The realization that language is maturationally controlled means that most psycholinguists now agree that human beings are innately programmed to speak. But they cannot agree on exactly what is innate. In particular, they cannot decide to what extent (if any) language ability is separate from other cognitive abilities.

All researchers agree that there is extraordinary similarity in the speech development of English children. Children who could not possibly be acquainted go through similar stages in their development, and also make similar mistakes. The implications of this coincidence are hotly disputed. On the one hand, there are those who consider that this uniformity of speech development indicates that children innately contain a blueprint for language: this view represents a so-called content approach. Extreme supporters of this view suggest that children may have a universal framework imprinted on their brains.

On the other hand, there are those who support a process approach, and argue that children could not possibly contain specific language universals. Instead, they are innately geared to processing linguistic data, for which they utilize a puzzle-solving ability which is closely related to other cognitive skills.

A further group of people point to the social nature of language, and the role of parents. Children, they argue, are social beings who have a great need to interact with those around them. Furthermore, all over the world, child-carers tend to talk about the same sort of things, chatting mainly about food, clothes and other objects in the immediate environment. Motherese or caregiver language has fairly similar characteristics almost everywhere: the caregivers slow down their rate of speech, and speak in slow, well-formed utterances, with quite a lot of repetition. People who stress these social aspects of language claim that there is no need to search for complex innate mechanisms: social interaction with caring caregivers is sufficient to cause language to develop.

This latter view is turning out to be something of an exaggeration. The fact that parents make it easier for children to learn language does not explain why they are so quick to acquire it: intelligent chimps exposed to intensive sign language

rarely get beyond 200 words and two-word sequences. Furthermore, language seems to be due to something more than a desire to communicate. There is at least one strange child on record who acquired fluent language, but did not use it to communicate. He spoke only monologues to himself, and refused to interact with others.

The whole controversy is far from being solved, though psycholinguists hope that the increasing amount of work being done on the acquisition of languages other than English may shed more light on the topic. It seems likely that children use an inbuilt linguistic ability to solve general intelligence problems, and also their natural puzzle-solving abilities to solve linguistic problems. With this kind of intertwining, the various strands may be inextricably interwoven.

In spite of the numerous controversies surrounding child language, psycholinguists are at least in agreement on one major point. Children are not simply imitating what they hear going on around them as if they were parrots. The learning processes involved are far more complex. From the moment they begin to talk, children seem to be aware that language is rule-governed, and they are engaged in an active search for the rules which underlie the language to which they are exposed. Child language is never at any time a haphazard conglomeration of random words, or a sub-standard version of adult speech. Instead, every child at every stage possesses a grammar with rules of its own even though the system will be simpler than that of an adult. For example, when children first use negatives, they normally use a simple rule: 'Put no or not in front of the sentence.' This results in consistent negative sentences which the child could not possibly have heard from an adult:

No play that.

No Fraser drink all tea.

This rule is generally superseded by another which says: 'Insert the negative after the first NP.' This also produces a consistent set of sentences which the child is unlikely to have heard from an adult:

Doggie **no** bite.

That **no** mummy.

A rather more obvious example of the rule-governed nature of child language are forms such as mans, foots, gooses, which children produce frequently. Such plurals occur even when a child understands and responds correctly to the adult forms men, feet, geese. This is clear proof that children's own rules of grammar are more important to them than mere imitation.

Children do not, however, formulate a new rule overnight, and suddenly replace the old one with this new one. Instead, there is considerable fluctuation between the old and the new. The new construction appears at first in a limited number of places. A child might first use the word what in a phrase with a single verb,

What mummy doing?

What daddy doing?

What Billy doing?

then only gradually extend it to other verbs, as in

What kitty eating?

What mummy sewing?

This process is somewhat like the way in which an alteration creeps from word to word in language change. Attention to the ways in which children move from one rule to another has shown that language acquisition is not as uniform as was once thought. Different children use different strategies for acquiring speech. For example, some seem to concentrate on the overall rhythm, and slot in words with the same general sound pattern, whereas others prefer to deal with more abstract slots. Of particular interest is work which looks at how children cope with different languages. This enables researchers to see if children have any universal expectations about how language behaves, or whether they wait and see what their own particular language offers.

Children have to learn not only the syntax and sounds of their language, but also the meaning of words. This turns out to be more complicated than some people suppose. For a start, it probably takes some time for children to discover

that words can refer to separate things. At first, they probably think that a word such as milk refers to a whole generalized ritual, something uttered as a mug is placed in front of them. Later they, discover that words have meanings which can be applied to individual objects and actions.

At first, children may be able to use words only in a particular context. One child agreed that snow was white, but refused to accept that a piece of paper was also white. This tendency to undergeneralize usually passes unnoticed. But it is probably commoner than over- generalization, which attracts much more attention.

For the first time researchers from Northwestern University and the University of Haifa show both that areas of the brain associated with language work harder in girls than in boys during language tasks, and that boys and girls rely on different parts of the brain when performing these tasks

Our findings - which suggest that language processing is more sensory in boys and more abstract in girls - could have major implications for teaching children and even provide support for advocates of single sex classrooms," said Douglas D. Burman, research associate in Northwestern's Roxelyn and Richard Pepper Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders.

Using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), the researchers measured brain activity in 31 boys and in 31 girls aged 9 to 15 as they performed spelling and writing language tasks.

The tasks were delivered in two sensory modalities – visual and auditory. When visually presented, the children read certain words without hearing them. Presented in an auditory mode, they heard words aloud but did not see them.

Using a complex statistical model, the researchers accounted for differences associated with age, gender, type of linguistic judgment, performance accuracy and the method - written or spoken - in which words were presented.

The researchers found that girls still showed significantly greater activation in language areas of the brain than boys. The information in the tasks got through to girls' language areas of the brain - areas associated with abstract thinking through language. And their performance accuracy correlated with the degree of

activation in some of these language areas.

To their astonishment, however, this was not at all the case for boys. In boys, accurate performance depended - when reading words - on how hard visual areas of the brain worked. In hearing words, boys' performance depended on how hard auditory areas of the brain worked.

If that pattern extends to language processing that occurs in the classroom, it could inform teaching and testing methods.

Given boys' sensory approach, boys might be more effectively evaluated on knowledge gained from lectures via oral tests and on knowledge gained by reading via written tests. For girls, whose language processing appears more abstract in approach, these different testing methods would appear unnecessary.

This could result simply from girls developing faster than boys, in which case the differences between the sexes might disappear by adulthood. Or, an alternative explanation is that boys create visual and auditory associations such that meanings associated with a word are brought to mind simply from seeing or hearing the word.

While the second explanation puts males at a disadvantage in more abstract language function, those kinds of sensory associations may have provided an evolutionary advantage for primitive men whose survival required them to quickly recognize danger-associated sights and sounds.

d) Age-graded language – (old-graded language)

Understanding speech is not the simple matter it appears to be at first sight. Most people assume that comprehension involves being a passive recipient of someone else's message. Hearers, it is often supposed, behave like secretaries taking down a mental dictation. They mentally record the message, then read it back to themselves.

This assumption turns out to be quite wrong. For a start, it is physically impossible to recognize each separate sound, speech is just too fast. Understanding language is an active, not a passive process. Hearers jump to conclusions on the basis of partial information. This has been demonstrated in various experiments.

For example, listeners were asked to interpret the following sentences, in which the first sound of the final word was indistinct:

Paint the fence and the ?ate.

Check the calendar and the ?ate.

Here's the fishing gear and the ?ate.

The subjects claimed to hear gate in the first sentence, date in the second, and bait in the third.

Since recognizing words involves quite a lot of guesswork, how do speakers make the guesses? Suppose someone had heard 'She saw a do -'. Would the hearer check through the possible candidates one after the other, dog, doll, don, dock, and so on (serial processing)? Or would all the possibilities be considered subconsciously at the same time (parallel processing)?

The human mind, it appears, prefers the second method, that of parallel processing, so much so that even unlikely possibilities are probably considered subconsciously. A recent interactive activation theory suggests that the mind is an enormously powerful network in which any word which at all resembles the one heard is automatically activated, and that each of these triggers its own neighbours, so that activation gradually spreads like ripples on a pond. Words that seem particularly appropriate get more and more excited, and those which are irrelevant gradually fade away. We now know quite a lot about word recognition. But it is still unclear how separate words are woven together into the overall pattern. To some extent, the process is similar to word recognition, in that people look for outline clues, and then actively reconstruct the probable message from them. In linguistic terminology, hearers utilize perceptual strategies. They jump to conclusions on the basis of outline clues by imposing what they expect to hear onto the stream of sounds. For example, consider the sentence:

The boy kicked the ball threw it.

Most people who hear this sentence feel that there is something wrong with it, that there is a word left out somewhere, and that it would preferably be:

The boy **who** kicked the ball threw it. The boy kicked the ball, **then** threw it.

However, they realize that it is in fact perfectly well-formed when shown a similar sentence:

The boy thrown the ball kicked it. (The boy to whom the ball was thrown kicked it).

The problem arose because when interpreting sentences, children tend to impose a subject-verb-object sequence on them. It is hard to counteract this tendency, and accounts for a number of garden-path sentences, situations in which hearers are initially led 'up the garden path' in their interpretation, before realizing they have made a mistake, as in:

Anyone who cooks ducks out of the washing-up.

(Anyone who cooks tries to avoid or ducks out of the washing-up).

In other cases, however, people's interpretation varies depending on the lexical items. In:

Clever girls and boys go to university.

People usually assume that clever refers both to girls and boys. But in:

Small dogs and cats do not need much exercise.

Small is usually taken to refer to the dogs alone.

The relationship between lexical items, the syntax, and the overall context therefore is still under discussion. A further problem is that of gaps**,** situations in which a word has been brought to the front of the sentence, and left a 'gap' after the verb, as in:

Which wombat did Bill put in the cage?

Do hearers mentally store which wombat until they find the place in the sentence which it slots into (in this case, after the verb put)? Or what happens? This matter is still hotly disputed.

Speech production involves at least two types of process. On the one hand, words have to be selected. On the other, they have to be integrated into the syntax.

Slips of the tongue - cases in which the age-graded speaker accidentally says something such as par cark instead of 'car park' - provide useful clues to these processes, and so do pauses: they can tell us where a speaker stops to think -

though it is difficult to separate out pauses caused by searching for lexical items, and pauses due to syntactic planning. Slips of the tongue are part of normal speech. Everybody makes them. There are two main kinds of slips: on the one hand, there are selection errors, cases in which a speaker has picked out the wrong item, as in:

Please hand me the tin-opener (nut-crackers). Your seat's in the third component (compartment).On the other hand, there are assemblage errors, cases in which a correct choice has been made, but the utterance has been wrongly assembled:

Dinner is being served at wine (Wine is being served at dinner).

A poppy of my caper (A copy of my paper).

At first sight, such slips may seem haphazard and confused. On closer inspection, they show certain regularities, so much so that some people have talked about tongue slip 'laws' - though this is something of an exaggeration. We are dealing with recurring probabilities, rather than any real kind of 'law'.

Selection errors usually involve lexical items, so they can tell us which words are closely associated in the mind. For example, people tend to say knives for 'forks', oranges for 'lemons', left for 'right', suggesting that words on the same general level of detail are /tightly linked, especially if they are thought of as a pair. Similar sounding words which get confused tend to have similar beginnings and endings, and a similar rhythm, as in antidote for 'anecdote', confusion for 'conclusion'.

These observations were possibly first made by the two Harvard psychologists who devised a now famous 'tip of the tongue' experiment, first carried out over 25 years ago. The experimenters assembled a number of students and age-graded people, and read them out definitions of relatively uncommon words. For example, 'A navigational instrument used in measuring angular distances, especially the altitude of sun, moon and stars at sea'. Some of the students and age-graded people were unable to write down the word sextant immediately. The word was on the tip of their tongue, but they could not quite remember it. Those in a 'tip of the tongue state' were asked to fill in a questionnaire

about their mental search. They found that they could provide quite a lot of information about the elusive word. They could often say how many syllables it had, what the first letter was, and sometimes, how it ended. They could think up similar-meaning words such as astrolabe, compass, and also similar-sounding words such as secant, sexton, sextet. This suggests that adults store and select words partly on the basis of rhythm, partly by remembering how they begin and end.

A considerable number of selection errors tend to be similar both in sound and meaning, as in component for 'compartment', geraniums for 'hydrangeas'. This suggests that an interactive activation theory, of the type proposed for speech recognition, may also be relevant in speech production. The mind activates all similar words, and those that have two kinds of similarity, both meaning and sound, get more highly activated than the others, and so are more likely to pop up in error.

Furthermore, when sounds are switched, initial sounds change place with other initials, and final with final, and so on, as in

Reap ofhubbish (heap of rubbish).

Hass orgrash (hash or grass).

All this suggests that speech is organized in accordance with a rhythmic principle - that a tone group is divided into smaller units (usually called feet), which are based (in English) on stress. Feet are divided into syllables, which are in turn possibly controlled by a biological 'beat' which regulates the speed of utterance. The interaction between these rhythmically based tone groups and syntactic constructions is a topic which still needs to be carefully examined.

CHAPTER II. Gender differences in learning foreign language

2.1 Characteristic features of language learning strategies

Learning strategies today represent a topical field of research in glottodidactics. Oxford (1990) defines them as specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, and more transferrable to new situations of language learning and use. Deployment of appropriate strategies ensures greater success in learning and more confidence. The first part of the paper lists the key definitions of learning strategies, while the second part presents the results of a quantitative survey that was conducted at the American College of Management and Technology in Dubrovnik on a sample of 181 respondents learning German, Spanish, French and Italian. The learning strategies were tested using a questionnaire based on Oxford's SILL (*Strategy Inventory for Language Learning*, Oxford, 1990). The survey was aimed at determining gender differences in the use of learning strategies and differences in the application of certain types of learning strategies. The results have shown that there are statistically significant differences in the frequency of the learning strategy use: memory strategies are most frequently used ones, while cognitive strategies are the least frequently used. However, there are gender differences in the use of learning strategies, where the female sex more frequently use all types of learning strategies, apart from socio-affective strategies. The final part of the paper lists the implications for teaching practice and provides guidelines for future research.

Foreign language learning strategies have been the subject of interest in the scientific research discipline studying the process of second language acquisition for several decades. When learning a foreign language, learners use a number of different strategies serving as a tool that helps learners to independently master the effectiveness of foreign language learning (Oxford and Nyikos, 1989; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993). The term "strategy" is differently defined in glottodidactic literature. Oxford (1990) defines language learning strategies as specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, and more transferrable to new situations of language

learning and use. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) believe that these are special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning, or retention of the information. Learning strategies assist learners in mastering the language forms and functions necessary for understanding and production in the second language acquisition (Rubin, 1981), while they also affect achievement (Bialystok, 1981, Oxford and Nyikos, 1989, Ehrman and Oxford, 1989, Bedell and Oxford, 1996, Dreyer and Oxford, 1996; Kaylani, 1996; Wharton, 2000; Bremner, 1999; Cohen, 1998; Hoang, 1999; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Yu, 2003; Shmais, 2003). The above-mentioned research indicates that the more successful learners use a larger number of strategies than the less successful learners. The element of choice seems to be one of the key features of learning strategies. Learners employ strategies intentionally with the aim of making learning more effective. They consciously choose the strategies that suit them most.

Learning strategies represent a topical field of research in glottodidactics and constitute one of the most significant individual differences among learners of foreign languages. Research of foreign language learning strategies began back in the nineteen seventies (Rubin, 1975; Savignon, 1972; Stern, 1975), while during the eighties and the nineties, learning strategies posed one of the most intriguing areas of study in foreign language learning (MacIntyre, 1994). The main research issues addressed by the researchers dealing with language learning strategies are related to the role of strategies in language acquisition, the connection of strategies to other individual traits of learners, such as learning style, attitude towards learning, motivation, foreign language anxiety and other factors, and to the impact of strategy instruction.

Various definitions of the learning strategies notion derive from the literature and the term itself has not been uniformly defined. In early works we can find a wide range of terms defining learning strategies, such as techniques, tactics, conscious plans, study skills, functional skills, cognitive abilities, while Oxford (1990) expands the array of terms by specifying the terms such as opinion-forming skills, reasoning skills, and the skill of "learning how to learn." Stern (1986) points

out the difference between learning strategies as general features of learning approach and techniques as specific procedures. The dichotomy between strategies and techniques does not realistically exist today, while techniques as specific processes are considered to be individual learning strategies. Learning strategies tend to be mental processes over which students have conscious control and which they can choose to use when performing tasks (O'Malley and Chamot 1990; Chamot, 1996 *in* Gimeno, 2002). Chamot (1987, *in* Gimeno, 2002) states that learning strategies are techniques, approaches or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate learning, recall of both linguistic and content area information. Wenden (1991) pointed out the importance and role of metacognition in foreign languages learning, making a difference between metacognitive knowledge, i.e. what learners know about learning a foreign language, and the metacognitive strategies, as a way in which learners plan and regulate their own knowledge. The same author believes that strategies are mental steps or operations that learners use to learn a new language and to regulate their efforts to do so. Weinstein and Mayer (*in* O'Malley and Chamot, 1990) see strategies as behaviours or thoughts that a learner engages in during learning that are intended to influence the learners' encoding process. Oxford (1990) defines strategies as behaviours or specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self- directed, more efficient, and more transferable to new situations. Ellis (1995), however, states that strategies are related to some kind of mental activity or behaviour that can occur in a particular phase of the learning and communication process. Cohen (1998) emphasizes that these are operations selected by the learner part consciously in order to enhance learning or use of an L2, through storage, recall and application of information about that language.

Early studies of learning strategies are associated with the strategies used by good foreign language learners. Good language learners have a wide repertoire of learning strategies and use a series of strategies, rather than a single one, when engaged in a learning task. One fact is obvious – good language learners use a larger number of strategies in the process of foreign language learning, unlike not

so successful learners (Rubin, 1975, Bialystok, 1979, *in* Gimeno, 2002; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; McDonough, 1999 and Skehan, 1989 *in* Harris and Grenfell, 2004). Their purpose is to help less successful learners to master strategies used by good learners (Hosenfeld, 1979, Bialystok, 1984, Faerch and Kasper, 1983, Oxford, 1989, *in* Gimeno, 2002). In this context it is necessary to emphasize the importance of learning strategy instruction (Oxford and Nyikos, 1989, *in* Gimeno, 2002). The importance of explicit strategy instruction is also highlighted by many researchers. Wenden (1998) believes that strategy training will be much more effective if learners are informed about the value and purpose, and a possible transfer to non- linguistic tasks. A similar attitude is expressed by Oxford (1990), Cohen (1998), O'Malley and Chamot (1990) who stated that explicit strategy instruction involves the raising of students' awareness of the strategies they use, modelling of strategic thinking, naming of individual strategies, practice and student self-evaluation. The aim of explicit strategy instruction and the development of individualized strategy systems refers to the help provided to learners in raising their awareness of the strategies they already use and to the encouragement to develop a set of new, adequate and effective strategies within a particular language context. Another objective of strategy instruction is to encourage leaner's autonomy and self- direction, to enable learners to choose their own strategies in a spontaneous way, without constant teacher's intervention. Learners should be able to oversee and evaluate the effectiveness of strategy use and to develop problem-solving skills. The teacher can teach strategies and practice them, but each learner is individually responsible for the selection and implementation of an adequate strategy. A learner will select a strategy that suits him/her best and the focus is on how to learn and not what you learn. Oxford (1990) believes that the main purpose of strategic training is to make language learning effective, to foster team spirit among learners and teachers, to learning to learn language and how to practice strategies that raise self- confidence.

There is a significant link between the use of various learning strategies applied by foreign language learners and their learning achievement (Chamot and

Kupper, 1989). Good language learners use a large number of effective learning strategies, unlike the less successful learners (Hosenfeld, 1977). Good learners are also able to select and combine strategies that are appropriate to the task at hand (Vann and Abraham, 1990). It is evident that successful learners combine certain cognitive strategies (translation, analysis, noting) with specific metacognitive strategies (self-evaluation, planning and organizing) (Oxford and Crookall, 1989). Less successful learners use fewer strategies, as opposed to successful learners, and their strategies are limited by the type of strategy to a large extent (Nyikos, 1987, *in* Gimeno, 2002). Often, less successful learners are not aware of the strategies they use (Nyikos, 1987, *in* Gimeno, 2002). If a less successful learner is aware of his/her use of strategies, he/she can combine them and use them in a successful way (Lavine and Oxford, 1990). Stern (1975) conducted a very interesting study of good foreign language learners and identified learning strategies used by good learners. For good learners, according to Stern (1975), personal learning style, i.e. encouragement of positive learning strategies is of great importance, as well as an active approach to the learning task, a tolerant approach to the target language, and empathy with the speaker. Stern (1975) also mentioned the importance of the technical know-how of how to tackle a language, the importance of experimentation and planning strategies in an attempt to develop the target language into an ordered system, and the willingness to constantly revise that system.

The taxonomy of learning strategies proposed by Oxford (1990) comprised six categories of learning strategies and the author classified them into direct and indirect strategies. The author included memory, cognitive and compensation strategies into the category of direct strategies, while the indirect strategies include metacognitive, affective and social strategies. Indirect strategies do not directly affect the target language, but have a significant role in language learning. Classification provided by Oxford was subjected to criticism, primarily because it was not based on factor analysis and achievements of cognitive science. In addition, no clear distinction between the strategies of language use and strategies

of language learning had been established. Many strategy researchers (Dörnyei, 2005, Purpura, 1999, *in* Dörnyei, 2005) do not believe that 'compensation' strategies belong to the language learning strategies, but communication strategies, and that it is problematic to separate communication strategies from memory strategies since the memory strategies actually constitute a subclass of cognitive strategies. This separation was motivated by the observation that most memory strategies (especially mnemonic devices, such as imagery, rhyming, and keywords) are associated with shallow processing, whereas most cognitive strategies are associated with deep processing (Dörnyei, 2005).

Nowadays the most widely accepted classification of learning strategies was offered by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), which is actually similar to the classification proposed by Oxford (1990). O'Malley and Chamot (1990) differentiate between cognitive, metacognitive and social/affective strategies. Cognitive strategies correspond to Oxford's (1990) memory strategies and cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies are a direct equivalent to Oxford's system, while social/affective strategies correspond to Oxford's social, affective and communication strategy categories. The empirical analysis conducted by Hsiao and Oxford (2002) confirmed that the explanatory power of the model proposed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) would be increased, provided that the social/affective strategies were classified as distinct groups of strategies. However, literature usually classifies social and affective strategies as a common group of strategies, and they are called socio-affective strategies. We can conclude that the typology of strategies proposed by Oxford (1990) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) is highly compatible, Dörnyei (2005) emphasized that the compatibility would be important if three changes were made, namely if communication strategies were excluded from the framework of learning strategies, if Oxford memory strategy and cognitive strategy were combined, and if social/affective strategies were separated as proposed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990). This is why Dörnyei (2005) proposes a typology of strategies that includes four main components of strategies: cognitive strategies (1) that include a specific manipulation or transformation of

material to be learned, i.e. language input, such as repetition of material, summarizing of information, use of mnemonics, etc.; metacognitive strategies (2) as higher-order strategies which comprise analysis, monitoring, evaluation, planning and organizing one's own learning process; social strategies (3) which include interaction with other learners, the goal of which is to increase the amount of L2 communication and practice in a foreign language (initiating interaction with native speakers, cooperation with peers); affective strategies (4) which include the user's control over one's own emotions and experiences that reflect the user's subjective involvement in the learning process.

According to the interpretations of researchers there is no clear boundary between the metacognitive and cognitive strategies; therefore, most researchers agree that the metacognitive strategies are executive and cognitive strategies are operational strategies (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). The above implies that metacognitive strategies include thinking about the learning process, planning of learning, observation of understanding or production, and self-evaluation of learning. On the other hand, cognitive strategies refer to direct and specific tasks in the learning process and involve a direct manipulation or transformation of the content learned. Cohen and Dörnyei (2002) point out to the extreme importance of metacognitive strategies and define them as processes which learners consciously use to oversee their own learning and manage it. Metacognitive strategies allow you to control your own cognition so that learners plan their activities, check them and then evaluate. Numerous studies were conducted in the area of metacognitive and cognitive strategies, and their application and transfer to the new language tasks. The importance of metacognitive strategies crucial for successful learning has been emphasized in these studies. Learners who do not have a metacognitive approach or do not know how to apply it remain without a real goal and direction, without the possibility of planning their own learning, monitor their own progress and their achievements, and future goals of learning (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990).

Oxford (1990) lists the basic features of learning strategies emphasizing that strategies are oriented towards the development of communication competence in a

foreign language and include interaction between learners. Oxford (1990) lists 12 basic features of a foreign language learning strategy:

1. strategies contribute to the main goal – communicative competence;
2. strategies allow learners to become more self-directed and to develop autonomous learning and take responsibility for their own learning; they affect the process of learning, the learner's success or failure in learning;
3. strategies expand the role of foreign language teachers in a way that the traditional role of the teacher in the educational process changes and the teacher assumes the role of person facilitating the learning, helping, advising, diagnosing, coordinating learning, and participating in communication;
4. strategies are problem-oriented;
5. strategies are specific actions taken by the learner;
6. in addition to the cognitive, strategies involve many other aspects of learning, such as metacognitive, affective and social aspects;
7. support learning, both directly and indirectly;
8. strategies are not always observable, they can be concealed;
9. strategies are often conscious;
10. strategies can be taught;
11. strategies are flexible;
12. strategies can be influenced by a variety of factors.

Learning strategies have been studied from different perspectives, based on which it was concluded that numerous individual variables affect the selection of learning strategies, such as gender, age, motivation for language learning, cognitive learning style, maturity level, previous experience in language learning, learner's beliefs and other factors. Therefore, strategies are the cause of differences among learners and they interact with the aforementioned variables as personality traits. Cohen and Dörnyei (2002) believe that the most important individual differences among learners relate to their age and gender.

2.2 Influence of the gender factor on the students' achievements in language learning

Investigations of gender differences in proficiencies and skills have a long history, but there is still need for further analyses. There is always a need for information regarding reasons why differences emerge, how they are developed, how they influence on individual learning style, human cognitive abilities and achievements.

Educational interest in language is also not new. Studies of rhetoric and grammar go back as far as the Greeks. Many questions are connected with the theme of the present research, for example, both about the nature of language as an aspect of human experience, and about language as a resource of fundamental importance in the building of human experience.

The tendency to dissociate language and experience was mostly introduced in the western intellectual tradition in such a way where language was seen as rather neutral, merely serving the fruit of experience (Barnes, 1996; Bernstein, 1993; Christie, 2005).

According to the views of scientists (Mathiot, 1999; Oakley, 1992; Plum, 1994), language itself is not only a part of experience, but is intimately involved in the manner in which one constructs and organizes experience. As such, it is never neutral, but deeply implicated in building meaning.

The point at issue is the essence of language. Such researchers as Plum (1994),

Archer & Lloid (2002) believe that language is a political institution, and those who are wise in its ways, capable of using it to shape and serve important personal and social goals, will be the ones who are able not merely to participate effectively *in* the world, but able also *to act upon it*, in the sense that they can strive for significant social change.

One of the most interesting questions is how these two notions-languages and gender – are bound with each other. The distinction between *sex* and *gender* is a frequent topic for debates within research and epistemology. A common use of the

term *sex* is to restrict it to referring to biological distinctions between *males* and *females*, while reserving the term *gender* to refer to the psychological features or attributes associated with such categories as *feminine* or *masculine* (Deaux, 2005; Oakley, 1992).

The use of the term *gender* is also more accurate for the connection to the *gender system* identified by feminist researchers (Hirdman, 1998; Harding, 2006; Scott, 1999), since it marks the cultural and structural dimension.

The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all humans, equality between women and men are those values the higher school should form and bring about (Lpo, 2004).

A gender aspect of cognitive performance is one important part of this goal. There is always a need for investigations regarding reasons why differences emerge and are developed, what the consequences may be in the process of learning. The research on human cognitive abilities or intelligence many years ago showed the assumption of female intellectual interiority (e.g.Shields, 1995; Rossiter, 1992; Dijkstra, 2006). But some investigations produced scientific evidence which shoved females and males to be equally intellectually capable (Elliot, 1991; Gadwa & Griggs,1995).

We have to be aware that if gender is a social phenomenon one should be able to find linguistic evidence of it, since language is the primary means by which we create the categories which help our students to learn.

Such an evidence is indeed to be found: from the different treatment by parents of babies, depending on sex; through the messages that women and women's activities are marginal, through the social approval of writing of little girls about home and family, elves and fairies, while their male classmates get on with the business of finding out how the world outside school is, how people in family work, what the power of the world is. (Hallberg, 1992)

According to Florin & Johanson (2003), knowledge is power, and equal levels of competence should remove any legitimate argument for female subordination. The maintenance of female subordination may be understood by two principles:

- the rule of the distinctive separation of two sexes, and
- the rule of the *male norm*.

The later principle is also referred to as the *hegemonic masculinity* principle (Connel, 1997), which states that a higher value is automatically assigned to things masculine (Hirdman, 1998).

Patterns of gender differences are deeply rooted in public media as well as in national belief systems. Many of the beliefs reflected address notions of gender differences in cognitive abilities, proficiencies and achievements.

Francis Galton was the first who claimed the empirical scientific ground for the conclusion that women tend to be inferior to men in all their capacities (Galton, 1907, referred in Shields, 1995). One of many examples from Shields illustrates the logic of that time: ”That men should have greater cerebral variability and therefore more originality, while women have greater stability and therefore more common sense, are facts both consistent with the general theory of sex and verifiable in common experience (Shields, 1995).

Females who were seen as the opposite to males by default, were seen more restricted or even invariable intellectually: “A woman is a rule, typical, a man is an individual. The former has the latter exceptional features... there is incomparably less variation among women than men. If you know one, you know them all, with but few exceptions” (Dijkstra, 2006).

There are two major reasons for the author’s interest of patterns of language and gender – firstly, educational and social reasons mentioned above, secondly, the lack of research connected with this educational field.

It was early acknowledged that this field had numerous misinterpretations and prejudices against women (Shields, 1995; Rossiter, 2002). Gender differences are often given biological explanations which sometimes refer to previously abandoned theories- as, for example, “a man is the hunter, and a woman is the gatherer”.

It seems particularly important to contrast such ideas with well-founded results of what the socially constructed reality is. This problem always to be

present when gender differences, their influence on individual learning style and achievements are in focus.

Let's return to the title of the paper and analyse how gender differences influence on students' learning styles and achievements in language learning. The following examples provide a useful overview of a range of definitions of individual learning style.

The learning style is as follows:

- the unique complex of conditions under which an individual concentrates on, obtains, processes, retains and applies new and difficult information (Milgram, 2000);
- the composite of characteristic cognitive, affective, and psychological traits that serve as relatively stable indicators of how an individual perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment (Keefe, 1979);
- the preferences in use of abilities (Sternberg, 1999);
- the predisposition of an individual to learn in a particular way (Parrot, 1998);
- a student's individual reaction to 23 elements of instructional environments is the following:

1) immediate environment (noise, temperature, light, design);
2) emotionality (general motivation, being motivated by a teacher, parents, a peer, persistence, responsibility, the attitude to the structure of a learning task);
3) social preferences (learning alone, with peers, in a group, learning in combined ways);
4) physical characteristics (auditory, visual, tactile/kinaesthetic preferences, time of day, intake, mobility);
5) psychological inclinations (global/analytic, hemispheric preferences, impulsive/reflective (Dunn & Price, 1998).

- an identifiable individual approach to a learning situation, a learning task (Spolsky, 1990);
- the way that an individual use to focus his knowledge and skills on problem situations that have not been encountered (Gagne, 1997);

- the generalized difference in learning orientations based on the degree to which people emphasize four stages of the learning process:

1) concrete experience;
2) reflective observation;
3) abstract conceptualisation;
4) active experimentation, as measured by a self-report test called Learning Style Inventory (Kolb, 1985).

- a characteristic manner in which an individual chooses an approach to a learning task (Skehan, 1998);
- a typical mode or manner of an individual of acquiring , retaining and applying knowledge, skills, the way of perceiving, organizing and retaining experiences, responding to particular methods of instructions (Kolesnik, 1996);
- general cognitive and learning characteristics of self-consistent mode of functioning which an individual shows in his perceptual and intellectual activities (Stern, 1996);
- an instrument of an individual's reflection of reality founded in ontogenesis on the basis of his/her peculiarities of sensory, cognitive and psychic organization, and interaction with social environment in activities (Karpova, 1995);
- the whole, unique, genetically predetermined complex of characteristic conditions under which an individual functions in his/her conscious intellectual activities- concentrates, perceives, processes, retains, and applies new and difficult information- in the unity of progress in learning and acquisition of learning objectives of curriculum with the help of successful interaction with the learning environment and creative use of one's own potential -capacities (Tatarinceva, 2005).

Any student has a characteristic learning style regardless of intelligence or socio-economic status. Psychologists have identified which elements of individual learning style are biologically imposed, stable, and which can be developed during individual life experiences.

The following elements of individual learning style are genetically predetermined:

- the type of information processing (the dominance of the left/right hemisphere of human brain);
- perceptual strengths (the level of the development of auditory, visual, tactile, kinaesthetic sensory canals) (Milgram, 2000; Dunn, 1998; Griggs,1991).

Learning style is a reasonably stable characteristic, only some elements of it such as motivation, responsibility for learning and social preferences can be changed as a result of maturation and strong personal efforts.

At least three-fifths of learning style is genetic, and the biological component of individual learning style works for an individual's whole life-time (Karpova, 1994; Milgram, 2000; Griggs, 1991). Individuals' responses to sound, light, seating arrangements, intake, the optimal time of day for learning, closely connected with the process of information processing, are also biologically predetermined (Anastasi, 1988; Dunn, 1998; Restak, 1999; Thies, 1999).

Such factors as age, achievement level, gender, and culture can influence on individual learning style and his/her achievements of learning (Ebel, 1999; Milgram & Price, 2003; Cavanaugh, 2002; Grebb, 1999).

Let's analyse the influence of the gender factor on a student's learning style and his/her achievements in learning more in detail.

Males and females learn differently from each other (Grebb, 1999; Ebel, 1999; Cavanaugh, 2002). Males tend to be more kinaesthetic, tactual, and visual, and they need more mobility in a more informal environment than females. Males are more nonconforming and peer motivated than female. Males tend to learn less by listening. Females, more than males, tend to be auditory, authority-oriented, need significantly more quiet while learning, they are more self- and Authorities – motivated, and are more conforming than males (Marcus, 1999; Pizzo, 2000).

There are fundamental differences among males' and females' ways of communicating, the so-called, *genderlects*, as a takeoff on language dialects (Thomson, 1995). She believes that a male's learning focuses on competition, status and independence. On the contrary, a female's world focuses on intimacy, consensus, sometimes and independence as well.

Social preferences of males and females are also different during the process of learning.

Male students prefer learning tasks connected with competitions in hierarchical groups, while female students learn by collaboration in small groups in which mutual liking is important (Dorval, 2000).

Studies conducted by Aries (1996), Leet-Pellegrini (2000) and Fox (1999) suggest that males feel more comfortable in a lecturing role, which is a demonstration of expertise and status, but females feel more comfortable in a listening role, which show a desire to collaborate, bond and to be liked by products of a world of connections, not status. Females prefer to share their expertise with others, rather than rivalling with them.

One of the most important parts of language learning is the ability of decision making, and we can see again contrasting worlds. Ong (1999) suggests that males' world is based on *adversativeness*,

On the contrary, females prefer to keep peace.

Female students see the orders that males give them as unnecessarily provocative, challenging and aggressive, while male students see the suggestions that females make as infuriating and bossy (Cavanaugh, 2002).

Doing the language learning tasks connected with problem-solving, male students and female ones show clear differences in their approaches to learning tasks (Dorval, 2000).

As far as a conversation was concerned, students-males produced mass of short spurts of speech. There was much teasing, which Leaper (1988) termed *negative reciprocity*, and much defiance, meanwhile students-females produced big blocks of talk, they were obedient, there was much attentive listening and sympathizing.

Tannen(1992) suggests that male students prefer to get learning tasks which give them the possibility to talk more in public settings(*report-talks*) because they feel compelled to establish or maintain their position in the group. Female students,

on the other hand, prefer to talk more in private settings (*rapport- talk*), because they see conversation as an important way of maintaining relationships.

When specific language tasks are considered, females do better on some of them and males do better on others. For example, females exceed on tasks requiring perceptual speed but males do better on the general information tasks.(Feingold, 1999; Lynn &Irwing, 2002).

Females are better than males on language learning tasks connecting with remembering verbal information, faces, names, object locations, and landmarks along a route, they have better episodic memory than males, but males do better with the travel directions tasks (Colley, 2001; Ong, 1999; Larrabee & Crook, 1993).

Kraft & Nichel (1995) in their investigation proved females' advantages on measures of verbal fluency, vocabulary and quality of speech, but students-males were better on writing.

Males more often than females have difficulties on language learning tasks connecting with the perception of speech. According to Shapiro, Church, & Lewis (2002), Maccoby and Jacklin (2004), males more often than females experience reading disability, troubles with language and speech.

On the other hand, males do better on tasks connected with logic, solving problem situations (McMahan, 2002, Petrovskiy, 1999).

The style of dealing with difficult language learning problems continues during the language course. Male students downplay or dismiss the problems of other people or they change the subject. They do this in order to minimize the problem. In contrast, female students listen to, confront problems, and reinforce other people. These two approaches to language learning problems are poles apart (Bress, 2000).

Particular interest in the area of language learning has been paid to students' approaches based on gender differences to a reading task, since reading plays a significant role in achieving high results in foreign language learning, and in

promoting an individual's ability to function in our modern society closely connected with successful applying the English language in many spheres of life. There are three text types in reading proficiency in the process of foreign language learning:

- *Expository* prose, refers to text materials designed to describe or explain something;
- *Narrative* prose, refers to text materials where a writer's aim is to tell a story, a fact, or a fiction;
- the so- called *Documents*, requires the students to process information organized in matrix formats, such as maps, tables, charts, graphs, diagrams, sets of instructions.

According to Rosen (2005), a consistent female students' advantages were found in Expository and Narrative item types whereas gender differences in performance in Document tasks tended to be either smaller or shift direction.

The author shares the point of view of Elley (2004), Gustafsson & Undheim (1996), who believe that the students' approach to Document reading is based on a psychometric theory of cognitive abilities according to which, differences in performance in any cognitive task are caused by differences in several underlying abilities and contextual dimensions, which in turn have various degrees of generality.

This theory is supported by a vast amount of empirical evidence. One reason why females studying English do not have so much advantage on Documents as they have on Narrative and Expository may well be due to the fact that Document tasks besides written words often involve numerical and spatial content, that is why males excel at these reading tasks (Carrol, 2003).

Another explanation is that the performance is affected by the actual topic in each Document task (Halpern, 2002). Reading belongs to the verbal domain, though in language learning practice reading is a key skill in almost any cognitive task. A student's reading proficiency has not been interpreted as a single ability, but rather as a reflection of several certain cognitive abilities depending on the

nature of the reading material used for the language study and individual differences in cognitive abilities and perception, that is learning style.

The visual search in Documents demands more students' attention, perceptual skills, further more, Documents require a reader to follow directions, some language reading tasks require a student to connect different pieces of information to each other in order to integrate and compare.

Documents often involve the requirement of processing numbers. Numbers have a strong negative emotional loading for some students. This factor is connected more with females than with males, and it may affect their performance (Thompson, 2005). Gates (2001) found female students' advantages in three measures of reading:

- speed,
- reading vocabulary,
- a level of comprehension.

Taube & Munsk (1996) reported different students' achievements based on the Gender Factor as a function of the themes for text tasks. A rather consistent pattern was found with female students achieving better on narrative texts, where the themes were connected with human beings, romantic love, strong feelings and human activities. This study supported the hypothesis that the topic addressed in the reading task is important for a student's achievement as well as for understanding gender differences in students' learning styles.

As it was mentioned at the beginning of the paper, at least three-fifths of learning style is genetically stable, the processes of information processing and perception are biologically predetermined. However, there is really no evidence to suggest that gender differences in cognitive abilities are inherited. Human behaviour is most influenced by hormones which are related with gender activities. And the hormone that seems to have the greatest impact is testosterone.

Prenatal hormones contribute much to the development of human brain and sensitise certain parts of brain, namely, the hypothalamus, which helps to regulate the activity level. Male and female get different amounts of prenatal hormones,

which may lead to differences in males' and females' brains. Prenatal hormones significantly shape cognitive abilities (Luria, 1975; Sperry, 1989).

Some researchers have looked for gender differences in overall size of the brain (Springer & Deutsch, 1997; Rogers, 2000; Fausto-Sterling, 2000), others have concentrated on the specific parts of the brain.

One area that has been the focus of much study is the area of the brain, called the corpus callosum. Some research shows that a portion of this bundle of nerve fibres towards the back of the brain (the splenium) is larger and more rounded in females than males. The function of this part of the corpus callosum links together parts of the left and right hemispheres that control speech and spatial perception. The larger splenium may account for females' advantage on some measures of speech production and comprehension. The organization of males' brains may give the advantages on visual-spatial tasks (Allen & Gorski, 1990; Halpern, 1992; Wood, 2003).

Some investigations suggest that both hemispheres of a female's brain may be active during certain tasks, while only one hemisphere of a male's brain is active during the same tasks (Rogers, 2001; Rider, 2005). Part of the band of fibres connecting the two hemispheres is thicker in a female's brain that allows the greater interaction of the hemispheres. It could explain why males excel on visual-spatial tasks and females on verbal tasks (Rider, 2005; Fausto-Sterling, 2000).

According to Halpern (2000), Geschwind &Galaburda (1999) the right hemisphere of the brain normally is developed faster than the left hemisphere, that is why the left hemisphere is more vulnerable to the relatively high level of prenatal testosterone that male foetuses are exposed to.

As a result, the right hemisphere of a male's brain is thought to be stronger; i.e., it assumes more control than the left hemisphere. Females, on the other hand, have more balanced left and right hemispheres in terms of control.

That is why males do worse than females on tasks associated with more left hemisphere activities and better on tasks associated with more right hemisphere activities. Many verbal tasks are associated with greater left hemisphere activities,

whereas solving spatial tasks and some logical tasks are associated with greater right hemisphere activities, as a result, males do perform better on spatial and logical tasks, but females with tasks that are mostly connected with the humanities and music.

Summing up, the research suggests that hormones, especially, testosterones have impact on cognitive abilities, but much more research needs to be done before we can make any clear conclusions about hormones, gender differences in performance and cognitive abilities in general.

Each student of a higher institute of education can learn effectively, if her/his learning needs and goals are appropriately diagnosed and prescribed.

A student's development in the cognitive and affective domains occurs if a language learning task, instructions, methods, variative learning programs and a mode of presentation of new and difficult information corresponds to a gender-based student's learning style and his/her cognitive level, and a student has a possibility to choose completely own way of implementing the learning task.

According to the Dual Coding Theory (Pavio, 1986), if new information introduced through the primary sensory canal, further on is deliberately reinforced through the secondary sensory canal, it will be acquired significantly better.

Thus, we can significantly improve a student's achievements in language learning taking into account her/his gender, approaches to learning, preferences to the certain type of tasks, peculiarities and the development of sensory canals, the type of information processing, and developing the emotional and social factors of a student's learning style.

The more we know our students, their needs, goals, learning styles, considering their gender differences, the more we can help them to improve learning achievements.

CHAPTER III. The linguistic features of gender issue in language learning

3.1 Linguistic features of women's speech

Some of the earliest work on gender differences suggested that women's speech isn't as effective as men's because women tend to use certain negatively evaluated forms more than men do. The next wave of linguistic research suggested that often linguistic forms that were negatively evaluated when used by women were sometimes positively evaluated when used by men, and that where linguistic forms were consistently negatively evaluated, people of lesser status (whether male or female) used such forms more than people of greater status (male or female).

All this suggested that it isn't a linguistic form itself which should be considered to have an inherent meaning, but rather the social position of the speaker, and the context in which that speaker is speaking. Recently this has been used as evidence for the necessity of studying the use and interpretation of linguistic forms within the norms of a given community by scholars like Penny Eckert, Marjorie Goodwin and Cindie McLemore. They've suggested that the categories of 'men' and 'women', unless defined within the context of a given community, are too abstract to be useful in understanding why people use a given linguistic form and what it means. Coates surveys studies of a number of linguistic forms (intonation, hedges, tag questions) associated with sex differences in English. [Coates, 1989].

It is quite easy to make the claim that men and women differ in their linguistic behavior. Assumed gender roles are contrastive, with men often thought as dominant speakers, while women are placed in a subordinate role during the conversation process. Important to realize in this issue, however, is the different perspectives the two sexes have in casual speech. 'If women speak and hear a language of connection and intimacy,' a clash of conversation styles can occur, when confronted with a men's language concerned with status and independence. [Tannen D. 1990]. Misinterpretation of the use of linguistic functions, thus, often arises.

Sociological studies have shown that women are more likely to use linguistic forms thought to be ‘better’ or more ‘correct’ than those used by men. Trudgill (1983) provides two reasons for this. Firstly, women in our society are generally more status-conscious than men, and therefore more sensitive to linguistic norms- an idea known as hyper-correction. Secondly, “working-class speech…has connotations of or associations with masculinity, which may lead men to be more favorably disposed to non-standard linguistic forms than women.” [Trudgill, 1983]. This lower-class, non-standard linguistic variety has been defined by sociolinguist W. Labov as covert prestige. Linked to social class, the differences in how men and women gain, or attempt to gain status through opposing speech patterns is noticeable. There are two cases in which the woman has self-corrected herself as a show of sensitivity toward standard speech, while the men show no such effort. According to Montgomery, self-correction can be defined as the various ways utterances are reworked in the process of uttering them.

Jody: Ummm. I have to do gas…uh…call Mira and get them to do thegas…uhh…electricity…water…What else is there? I don’t know.

Jody: Telephone. Everything has to be about six. I mean…I get six billsevery month…so I guess all the bills have to be…Studies in hyper-correction and covert prestige are generally concerned with gender in relation to social class. [Trudgill 1972, 1983; Macaulay 1977; Milroy 1980; Nichols 1983].

Two participants are of equal social status, all working at the same university as language teachers. It is difficult, therefore, make the claim that Jody’s self-corrections are a reflection of being status-conscious. A more likely explanation is that her standard language use stems from the social role that are expected from men and women, and the behavior patterns that fit those assumptions. As Trudgill states, women’s language is not only different, it is ‘better,’ and is a ‘reflection of the fact that, generally speaking, more ‘correct’ social behavior is expected of women.’ (1983).

Early attempts to distinguish speech norms of different communities focused on sociological factors such as economic status, ethnic minorities and age. Through

this research, the belief that male and female speakers may somehow differ in their communicative behavior, and thus compose different speech communities, became the focus of researchers in the early 1970's. Although lacking in empirical research, and influenced by bias about gender roles [Coates, 1989], this initial work on women's language, specifically the usage of several linguistic features, proved influential toward becoming an important issue in the study of linguistics.Sociolinguistics provided mechanisms for the scientific investigation of language variation on the basis of both socio-economic and gender factors. With respect to a number of sociolinguistic factors including gender these studies investigated linguistic features such as phonological variability of male and female differences. The goal, on the one hand, was to determine the stratification of these variables and, on the other hand, to find support for a mechanism of synchronic change. The differential use of these variables was interpreted as constituting a gender pattern. Women were found to be closer to a prestige norm (i.e. received pronunciation) than men. In particular, studies by Martin (1954), the Norwich studies by Trudgill (1972, 1978, 1998) and Portz (1982), and Fasold (1990) provided support for this position. As Martin [1954] put it: "Women, it seems, are considerably more disposed than men to upgrade themselves into the middle-class and less likely to allocate themselves to the working-class - a finding which confirms the common observation that status consciousness is more pronounced among women. [Martin 1954].

Lakoff [1975] claimed that the differential use of language needed to be explained in large part on the basis of women's subordinate social status and the resulting social insecurity. Lakoff observed that women's use of color terms (mauve, ecru, lavender), of adjectives (divine, adorable), their frequent use of tag-questions (John is here, isn't he?) and weak expletives (Oh fudge I've put the peanut butter in the fridge again!) differed radically from male use. Taking her cue from Bernstein's [1972] theory of language codes she claimed that women's linguistic behavior is deficient when contrasted with male speech behavior. As one explanation for this deficiency she pointed to the differences in the socialization of

men and women. At the same time another qualitative approach to male-female speech variation developed [Thorne/Henley 1975, Maltz/Borker 1982]. Cultural rather than factors of socialization were seen as being responsible for speech differentiation. Women and men are seen as constituting subgroups of the speech community. Minimal responses (also known as back-channel speech, positive feedback and assent terms) can be defined as the brief, supportive comments provided by listeners during the conversation interaction. They are a feature of jointly produced text, and show the listener's active participation in the conversation. [Coates 1989]. Common examples include mmm, uh huh, yes, yea and right.

For examples:

Ian: It's laying on my mind

Jody: Mmm.

Ian: So I think if I do it now and get it over and done with I can relax.

Jody: Yea…I have to.

Ian: Pay ever after the phone.

Jody: Mmm.

Andy: High energy…You probably know him…Australian.

Ian: Mmm.

Andy: Is he a national hero or…does anyone really care?

Ian: Uhmm…He was for a while but…I dunno. I think he's more popular outside Australia now

Andy: Mmm…an export.

Ian: Yea.

Jody: How do you think about this now? Do you think it's ready?

Ian: It probably is ready and its beef so…

Jody: Yea.

Several researchers have found that, in casual conversation, it is women who take on the role as facilitator. [Zimmerman and West 1975; Fishman 1980; Holmes 2001; Tannen 1990].

Men, it has been demonstrated, are less sensitive to the interactional process. One study which Holmes recounts found that women gave over four times as much of this kind of positive feedback as men [Holmes 2001]. For women, then, ‘talk is for interaction. [Tannen 1990].

A deeper analysis of this view, however, should consider the influence of context. Being a small group conversation in a casual context, the goals of this conversation sample are most likely focused on group solidarity (rather than control), which follows women’s strategy of being cooperative conversationalists. According to Holmes, ‘the norms for women’s talk may be the norms for small group interaction in private contexts, where the goals of the interaction are solidarity stressing maintaining good social relations. Agreement is sought and disagreement avoided.’ [2001].

It is now understood that men and women differ in terms of their communicative behavior [Coates, 1989]. In explaining these differences, however, Montgomery [1995] warns that there is a sense of variation in speech differences between men and women. One sociological point to be remembered, he states, is that ‘speech differences are not clear-cut’ and a set of universal differences does not exist. [Montgomery, 1995]. Gender, as a ‘dimension of difference’ between people should always be thought of in relation to other dimensions of difference, such as those of age, class, and ethnic group. A second point hestresses is that linguistically one must be clear as to what is being identified as adifference between the sexes. Unless examining identifiable linguistic behavior, such as interruptions or tag questions, it is difficult to validate generalized claims of dominance, politeness or subordinance. Even then, ‘the formal construction of utterances is no consistent guide to what function they might be performing in a specific context. [Montgomery, 1995]. Reinterpretations of gender-differentiated language fall into one of two approaches, which reflect contrasting views of women in society. The dominance approach considers language differences to be a reflection of traditional social roles, that of men’s dominance and women’s subordination. The difference approach, in contrast, focuses on sex speech

differences as outcomes of two different subcultures. Women, it is claimed, come from a social world in terms of solidarity and intimacy, while men are more hierarchal and independent minded. Contrasting communicative styles are born out of these two subcultures.

The dominance approach to sex differences in speech is concerned with the imbalance of power between the sexes. Powerless speech features used by women help contribute to maintaining a subordinate position in society; while conversely, men's dominance is preserved through their linguistic behavior.

Early research that regards imbalance of power as a main factor toward gender speech differences can be attributed to Robin Lakoff, and her influential work 'Language and Woman's Place' [1975]. Although relying heavily on personal observation, and later criticized for its feminist bias and lack of empirical research, Lakoff's definition of 'woman's language'-both language used to describe women and language typically used by woman [cited in Fasold 1990], created an initial theoretical framework which would be critiqued and expanded by future researchers. Lakoff provides a list of ten linguistic features which characterize women's speech, as follows:

1. Lexical hedges or fillers, e.g. you know, sort of, well, you see.
2. Tag questions, e.g. she's very nice, isn't she?
3. Rising intonation on declaratives, e.g. it's really good?
4. 'Empty' adjectives, e.g. divine, charming, cute.
5. Precise color terms, e.g. magenta, aquamarine.
6. Intensifiers such as just and so, e.g. I like him so much.
7. 'Hypercorrect' grammar, e.g. consistent use of standard verb forms.
8. 'Superpolite' forms, e.g. indirect requests, euphemisms.
9. Avoidance of strong swear words, e.g. fudge, my goodness.
10. Emphatic stress, e.g. it was a BRILLIANT performance. [cited in Holmes 2001].

As in English, the Kyrgyz employ many wordless sounds to express meanings :… as they listen to somebody else they make sounds like "un hun",

“aah” or “mmm”. … to indicate No, they may utter “uh uh” and shake their heads … “oy” is used like “oops” in English to indicate a mistake … “ahyee” or “oy voy yuy” is used to express surprise or amazement – equivalent to “really” or “wow” in English … “erah” is used to show disappointment, … “hunh” indicates pain, … “oof” suggests that they are tired, and … “erf” that something is terrible or disgusting.

Consistent in Lakoff’s list of linguistic features is their function in expressing lack of confidence. Holmes [2001] divides this list into two groups. Firstly, those ‘linguistic devices which may be used for hedging or reducing the force of an utterance,’ such as fillers, tag questions, and rising intonation on declaratives, and secondly, ‘features which may boost or intensify a proposition’s force’ [Holmes, J., 2001], such as emphatic stress and intensifiers. According to Lakoff, both hedging and boosting modifiers show a women’s lack of power in a mixed-sex interaction. While the hedges’ lack of assertiveness is apparent, boosters, she claims, intensify the force of a statement with the assumption that a women would not be taken seriously otherwise.The use of compliments and apologies by women showed that women are more personal-oriented and show greater concern for the other, while men are more task oriented and assert more power than the other. Many researchers also agree that polite and collaborative styles of communication are powerless when they are not reciprocated such as how women could not easily compliment men as men could do to them. Women also use apologies more than men, showing their intention to restore the balance between speaker and hearer, whereas men prefer formal strategy or some ambiguous explanation type of apology to maintain their ‘one-up’ position.

Herbert [1992] found that women’s compliments were more personal in focus, whereas men’s compliments were more impersonal, especially when speaking to men. He also suggested that ‘subjective’ compliments such as “I really like your shirt”, have less force than the ‘objective’ form such as “That’s a nice shirt.”When seen from the syntactic structure both men and women were generally consistent with the patterns:

1. NP is/looks (really) ADJ (e.g., “That shirt is so nice”)

2. I (really) like/love NP (e.g., “I love your hair”)

3. PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP (e.g., “This was really a great meal”)

The adjectives nice, good, pretty, beautiful, and great are more often used. Verbs such as like and love are also more prominent. However, women rely more heavily than men on the I like NP pattern which indicates a personal focus, while men use ADJ NP pattern more often. Herbert mentioned that there is a general belief that women prefer personalized to impersonalized forms, parallel with the characterization of women’s style as social, affiliative, other-oriented, socioemotional, and supportive. He also states that compliments from females are longer than compliments from males.What is more interesting in the study of compliments is to see how compliments are responded by the addressees. Herbert [1990], based on his study done in 1986 and 1989 distinguished 12 types of compliment responses:

1. Appreciation token. A verbal or non verbal acceptance of the compliment. (e.g. Thanks, Thank you, [nod])

2. Comment acceptance. Addressee accepts the complimentary force and offers a relevant comment on the appreciated topic (e.g., Yeah, it’s my favorite too).

3. Praise Upgrade. Addressee accepts the compliment and asserts that the compliment force is insufficient (e.g., Really brings out the blue in my eyes, doesn’t it?).

4. Comment history. Addressee offers a comment(s) on the object complimented. (e.g., I bought it for the trip to Arizona).

5. Reassignment. Addressee agrees with the compliment assertion, but the complimentary force is transferred to a third person (e.g., My brother gave it to me) or to the object itself (e.g., It really knitted itself).

6. Return. As with number 5 except that the praise is shifted (or returned) to the first speaker (e.g., So’s yours).

7. Scale down. Addressee disagrees with the complimentary force, pointing

to some flaw in the object or claiming that the praise is overstated (e.g., It's really quite old).

8. Question. Addressee questions the sincerity or the appropriateness of the compliment (e.g., Do you really think so?).

9. Disagreement. Addressee asserts that the object complimented is not worthy of praise (e.g., I hate it).

10. Qualification. Weaker than number 9: addressee merely qualifies the original assertion, usually with though, but, well, etc. (e.g., It's alright, but Len's is nicer).

11. No acknowledgment. Addressee gives no indication of having heard the compliment: The addressee wither (a) responds with an irrelevant comment (i.e. topic shift) or (b) gives no response.

12. Request interpretation. Addressee, consciously or not, interpretes the compliments as a request rather than a simple compliment. Such responses are not compliment responses per se as the addressee does not perceive the previous speech act as a compliment (e.g., You wanna borrow this one too?)

For women, she argued, compliments are positively affective speech acts, serving to increase or consolidate the solidarity between speaker and addressee. Across cultures, one's perception on compliments also varies. In Indonesia, for instance, a compliment on someone's possession may indicate the complimenter's envy to what the addressee has. The recipient of the compliment may also feel obliged to offer the complimented object to the complimenter. As to how the perception differs between men's and women's in Indonesian, there has not been any published research found so far. [Johnson, D.M. & Roen, D.H., 1992].According to Maltz and Borker [1982], who introduced this view which values women's interactional styles as different, yet equal to men's, "American men and women come from different sociolinguistic subcultures, having learned to do different things with words in a conversation" [cited in Freeman and McElhinny1996]. They cite as an example the different interpretations of minimal responses, such as nods and short comments like umhm and yes. For men, these

comments mean ‘I agree with you’, while for women they mean ‘I’m listening to you - please continue’ Rather than a women’s style being deficient, as Lakoffwould believe, it is simply different. Inherent in this position is that cross-culturalmisunderstanding often occurs in mixed-sex conversation, as ‘individuals wrongly interpret cues according to their own rules”. [Lakoff, 1975]. Like compliments, apology is also another form of politeness strategy. Holmes [1990] differentiates compliments and apologies as: Compliments focus on the addressee’s positive face wants, whereas apologies are generally aimed at face redress associated with face threatening acts (FTA) or offences which have damaged the addressee’s face in some respect and can therefore be regarded as what Brown and Levinson called as negative politeness strategies. There have been a number of classification systems of apology devised by many researchers. Holmes [1990] formulated them based on her naturally occurring data in her New Zealand corpus as follows:

1. An explicit expression of apology

- Offer apology, e.g., “I apologize”
- Express regret, e.g., “I’m sorry’
- Request forgiveness, e.g., “excuse me”; ”forgive me”

2. An explanation or account, an excuse or justification

- e.g., “I wasn’t expecting it to be you”; “we’re both new to this”

3. An acknowledgment of responsibility

- Accept blame, e.g., “it was my fault”
- Express self-deficiency, e.g., “I was confused”; “I didn’t see you”
- Recognize H as entitles to an apology, e.g., “you’re right”; “you deserve an apology”
- Express lack of intent, e.g., “I didn’t mean to”
- Offer repair/redress, e.g., “we’ll replace it for you”; “I’ll bring you another”

4. A promise of forebearance

- e.g., “I promise it won’t happen again”

Holmes found that apologies used more frequently by women in speech to other women, and least frequently in the speech of men to other men. Women apologize more to other women is a mark of positive politeness but it is realized through negative politeness strategy. In unequal and distant relations, men's apologies are to assert the position of social authority, hierarchy and control. Women therefore use more strategies which focus on a harmonious relationship with the other person by expressing lack of negative intent and recognizing the other person's right to an apology.

Tannen [1990] provides much research on the concept of misunderstanding in the dual-culture approach. According to her, the language of women is primarily 'rapport-talk', where establishing connections and promoting sameness is emphasized. Men, on the other hand, use language described as 'report-talk,' as a way of preserving independence while exhibiting knowledge and skill. [Tannen D.1990]. The contrasting views of relationships are apparent: negotiating with a desire for solidarity in women, maintaining status and hierarchical order in men.The function of a command can be described as an utterance designed to get someone else to do something [Montgomery, 1995]. Several studies [Goodwin 1980; Cameron, McAlinden and O'Leary 1989; Tannen 1990, 1994; Holmes 2001] have commented on the different ways men and women phrase commands. Men tend to use simple, direct statements, whereas women rely on 'couching their commands as inclusive suggestions for action.' [Montgomery 1995]. Consider the following examples:

Jody: Mmm…home phone.Andy: What home?Jody: My home. What's my phone number? Are you gonna plug it in?Jody: Mmm…How many? Do you want it small?Andy: Smallish.Ian: I like this stuff.Jody: Like that?Andy: Mmm…even smaller.Jody: Smaller? Do you want to put it here? Why don't you just bite it?

Jody has chosen to couch her commands in the form of questions. Rather then stating the bald commands, 'Here's my phone number. Plug it in,' and 'Put ithere. Bite it,' she opted for a more indirect approach. Lakoff [cited in Tannen 1994] describes two benefits of indirectness: defensiveness and rapport.

Defensiveness ‘refers to the speaker’s preference not to go on record with an idea in order to be able to disclaim, rescind, or modify it if it does not meet with a positive response’ Rapport refers to getting one’s way not by demanding it, but because the listener is working toward the same end, indirectly encouraging the common goal.

Sociological studies have shown that women are more likely to use linguistic forms thought to be ‘better’ or more ‘correct’ than those used by men. Trudgill [1983] provides two reasons for this. Firstly, women in our society are generally more status-conscious than men, and therefore more sensitive to linguistic norms- an idea known as hyper-correction. Secondly, “working-class speech…has connotations of or associations with masculinity, which may lead men to be more favorably disposed to non-standard linguistic forms than women.” [Trudgill, 1983]. This lower-class, non-standard linguistic variety has been defined bysociolinguist W. Labov as covert prestige. Linked to social class, the differences in how men and women gain, or attempt to gain status through opposing speech patterns is noticeable. [Labov W., 1972].

3.2 Age-graded language and the way of improving it in language learning

It is well known that human culture, social behavior and thinking cannot exist without language. Being a social and national identity, and a means of human communication, language cannot help bearing imprints of ethnic and cultural values as well as the norms of behavior of a given language community. All is reflected in the vocabulary of a language. But it should be noted that the grammatical structure of a language more exactly reflects the mentality of a nation as it is closer to thinking. "While the number of words in a language represents the volume of its world, the grammatical structure of a language gives an idea of the inner organization of thinking". [Gumboldt V. 1984]. Language and man are inseparable. Language does not exist outside man and man as Homo sapiens does not exist outside language. So, man cannot be studied outside language and vice versa. Language reflects the world around us - through man and for man, language likewise reflects the culture created by man, preserves it for posterity and hands it down from generation to generation, from father to son. Language is a cognitive tool through which man perceives the universe and culture. And, finally, language is a cultural tool: it forms man, determines his behaviour, way of life, outlook, mentality, national character and ideology. Language is a strict and incorruptible teacher; it imposes upon man the ideas, concepts, models of cultural perception and behaviour that are inherent in it. In a sense, man is slave to his language: from the cradle, he is subjected to the influence and power of the language spoken by his parents and together with this language he assimilates the culture of the speech community to which he belongs through no choice of his own. A lot has been written by psychologists, culturologists and sociologists on the correlation between national culture and personality. In their book, "Language and Culture", E.M. Vereshchagin and V.G. Kostomarov, comment as follows in this connection: "A man is not born a Russian, German or Japanese etc., but becomes one as a result of living in the relevant national community of people. In its upbringing, a child is exposed to the impact of the national culture to which, the people surrounding it,

belong". However, one should not forget the huge role played by language, in direct association with culture, in upbringing and personality formation. The well-known aphorism by the Soviet psychologist, B.G. Ananev, quoted by Vereshchagin and Kostomarov, "personality is a product of culture", should be altered to read: personality is a product of language and culture. As soon as man is born, he hears the sounds of his future mother tongue; language introduces him to the surrounding world and forces upon him that perception, that picture (model) "painted" before he was born and without him. At the same time, language forms a man's idea of the world and community to which he belongs, of its culture, i.e. of the rules of co-existence within this community, system of values, moral standards, conduct, etc.More than 6% of all adults in the United States have speech difficulties that involve articulation, language, voice, fluency, hearing, or swallowing. In addition, 5% of all children exhibit impaired speech, language, or hearing. Many of these individuals can be helped by speech therapy. Speech and language disorders affect the way people speak to and understand each other. These disorders may range from problems with simple sounds to not being able to speak or use language at all. Speech and language disorders include stuttering, characterized by interruptions in the regular flow or rhythm of speech; articulation disorders, involving difficulties in forming or stringing sounds together; voice disorders, characterized by inappropriate voice pitch, loudness, or quality; aphasia, or the loss of speech and language abilities resulting from stroke or head injury; and delayed language disorder, characterized by slow development of the vocabulary and grammar required to express and understand thoughts and ideas.

Older and younger adults can guess fairly accurately the chronological age of elderly individuals by listening to them speak [Caruso, Mueller, and Xue, 1994]. However, physiological age rather than chronological age may be a better predictor of who is perceived as having an ‘‘aging voice’’ [Ramig and Ringel, 1983]. Respiration and phonation are most affected by the aging process. Older people may have a restricted loudness range due to reduced vital capacity.

Similarly, consider the words: burglar, loudly, sneezed, the. Here, only three

combinations are possible: The burglar sneezed loudly, Loudly sneezed the burglar and (perhaps) The burglar loudly sneezed. All others are impossible, such as *The loudly burglar sneezed, or *Sneezed burglar loudly the. Note also that had the four words been burglars, a, sneezes, loudly, there is no way in which these could be combined to make a well-formed sentence. *A burglars is an impossible combination, and so is * burglars sneezes. In brief, English places firm restrictions on which items can occur together, and the order in which they come. From this, it follows that there is also a fixed set of possibilities for the substitution of items. In the word bats, for example, a could be replaced by e or i, but not by h or z, which would give *bhts or *bzts. In the sentence The burglar sneezed loudly, the word burglar could be replaced by cat, butcher, robber, or even (in a children's story) by engine or shoe - but it could not be replaced by into, or amazingly, or they, which would give ill-formed sequences such as *The into sneezed loudly or *The amazingly sneezed loudly. Every item in language, then, has its own characteristic place in the total pattern. It can combine with certain specified items, and be replaced by others (Figure 4).

The - burglar - sneezed – loudly
A - robber - coughed - softly
That - cat - hissed - noisily
Figure 4

Language can therefore be regarded as an intricate network of interlinked elements in which every item is held in its place and given its identity by all the other items. No item (apart from the names of some objects) has an independent validity or existence outside that pattern. The elements of language can be likened to the players in a game of soccer. A striker, or a goal-keeper, has no use or value outside the game. But placed among the other players, a striker acquires an identity and value. In the same way, linguistic items such as the, been, very, only acquire significance as part of a total language network.Let us now look again at the

network of interlocking items which constitutes language. A closer inspection reveals another, more basic way in which language differs among the speakers.Look at the sentences: The penguin squawked, It squawked, The penguin which slipped on the ice squawked. Each of these sentences has a similar basic structure consisting of a subject and a verb (Figure 5).

Figure 5

The penguin It The penguin which slipped on the ice	squawked

The number of words in each sentence is no guide whatsoever to its basic structure. Simple counting operations are quite irrelevant to language. For example, suppose someone was trying to work out how to express the past in English. They would have no success at all if they tried out a strategy such as 'Add -ed to the end of the third word'. They might, accidentally, produce a few good sentences such as:

Uncle Herbert toasted seventeen crumpets. But more often, the results would be quite absurd:

*Clarissa hatefrogs-ed.

*The girl who-ed hate frogs scream.

In fact, it is quite impossible for anybody to form sentences and understand them unless they realize that each one has an inaudible, invisible structure, which cannot be discovered by mechanical means such as counting. Once a person has realized this, they can locate the component to which the past tense -ed must be added even if they have never heard or said the sentence before, and even if it contains a totally new verb, as in:

The penguin shramped the albatross.

In other words, language operations are structure dependent - they depend on an understanding of the internal structure of a sentence, rather than on the number of elements involved. This may seem obvious to speakers of English. But the rarity, or perhaps absence, of this property in animal communication indicates its

crucial importance. Its presence has not been proved in any animal system (though birdsong may turn out to be structure dependent, according to some researchers). Moreover, the types of structure dependent operations found in language are often quite complicated, and involve considerably more than the mere addition of items (as in the case of the past tense). Elements of structure can change places, or even be omitted. For example, in one type of question, the first verbal element changes places with the subject:

[That dirty child] [must] wash,

has the related question

[Must] [that dirty child] wash?

And in the sentence, Billy swims faster than Henrietta.

It is generally agreed that the sentence means 'Billy swims faster than Henrietta swims', and that the second occurrence of swims is 'understood'.

In human language, the symbols are mostly arbitrary, and the system has to be painstakingly transmitted from one generation to another. Duality and displacement - the organization of language into two layers, and the ability to talk about absent objects and events - are usual in the human society. Language is a patterned system of arbitrary sound signals, characterized by structure dependence, creativity, displacement, duality, and cultural transmission.

This is true of all languages in the world, which are remarkably similar in their main design features. There is no evidence that any language is more 'primitive' than any other. There are certainly primitive cultures. A primitive culture is reflected in the vocabulary of a language, which might lack words common in advanced societies. But even the most primitive tribes have languages whose underlying structure is every bit as complex as English or Russian or Chinese.

CONCLUSION

As conclusion the linguistic features in a casual conversation context has been a conscious choice, supporting the difference approach in gender issues in language learning. Rather than acknowledging an imbalance of power between the sexes, we have supported the claim that speech styles are different due to contrasting interaction purposes. For women this includes the payoff of connection and solidarity. Often evaluated with men's language as the norm, misunderstanding of women's speech intentions is common. There are problems, however, with any research that attempts to define characteristics of men's or women's speech. First is the interpretation of differences. Associations that are found between specific feature use and women's language should not be assumed to take place in all situations or contexts. Gender differences are not absolute. Secondly, many conversational features, such as tag questions and interruptions, do not have set functions (not to mention researcher's varied definitions). An interpretation of a particular feature, in addition to a speaker's intention, can only be done within the setting of the interaction.There was an interesting finding on interaction of status and gender based on non-verbal communication. Nancy Hoar [1992] pointed out that women's high pitch voices connote childhood rather than adulthood. And this connotation suggests the lower status and power, for children are typically concerned with trivial matters, whereas adults are concerned with more serious matters. Also, children are expected to defer to adults. She convinced this finding with the fact that women who aspire to influential positions are often adviced to cultivate lower pitched voices, ones that communicate authority. Other non-verbal aspects such as how often women smile, how much they listen and give more eye contact, are among other non-verbal aspects that may contribute to the studies of gender.

The most consistent difference found between men and women is a tendency for women to speak in a way that is closer to the prestige standard. In colloquial terms, they speak 'better' than men. No one is quite sure why this is so, and several explanations have been proposed, which may all be partially right. [Aitchison J.,

1992]. For example, women may be pressurized by society to behave in a 'ladylike' manner, and 'speaking nicely' may be part of this. Or because they are the main child-rearers, they may subconsciously speak in a way which will enable their children to progress socially. Or they may tend to have jobs which rely on communication, rather than on strength. Women's speech has been said to be more polite, more redundant, more formal, more clearly pronounced, and more elaborated or complex, while men's speech is less polite, more elliptical, more informal, less clearly pronounced, and simpler. All these factors, and others, appear to be relevant. Of the social causes of gender differentiation in speech style, one of the most critical appears to be level of education. In all studies, it has been shown that the greater the disparities between educational opportunities for boys and girls, the greater the differences between male and female speech. Children soon pick up the social stereotypes that underlie this discrimination. They learn that women's talk is associated with the home and domestic activities, while men's is associated with the outside world and economic activities.

As for the children’s speech we can conclude, that different children use different strategies for acquiring speech. For example, some seem to concentrate on the overall rhythm, and slot in words with the same general sound pattern, whereas others prefer to deal with more abstract slots. Children have to learn not only the syntax and sounds of their language, but also the meaning of words. This turns out to be more complicated than some people suppose. For a start, it probably takes some time for children to discover that words can refer to separate things. At first, they probably think that a word such as milk refers to a whole generalized ritual, something uttered as a mug is placed in front of them. Later they, discover that words have meanings which can be applied to individual objects and actions.

Children may be able to use words only in a particular context. One child agreed that snow was white, but refused to accept that a piece of paper was also white. This tendency to under generalize usually passes unnoticed. But it is probably commoner than over- generalization, which attracts much more attention. Language processing is more sensory in boys and more abstract in girls.

Girls showed significantly greater activation in language areas of the brain than boys. The information in the tasks got through to girls' language areas of the brain - areas associated with abstract thinking through language.

The study of gender, however, should not suggest that women need to adopt a ‘masculine’ style of communication, for one need not avoid being inferior in order to become superior, and need not be impolite in order to avoid being powerless. Gender differences in communication should be considered as alternatives rather than a powerless or ineffective style versus authoritative, assertive style. Perhaps a change in social attitude would be much more beneficial for a boy thrown the more equal approach of women and men.

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