

# (Language and) Gender

Chapter from

**An Introduction to Sociolinguistics**  
**(Ronald Wardhaugh)**

**Presentation By**



Zubair A. Bajwa

✉ [zbr141@gmail.com](mailto:zbr141@gmail.com)

M. Phil English (Lin)



Scholar @ Department of English, University of Gujrat, Gujrat, Pakistan

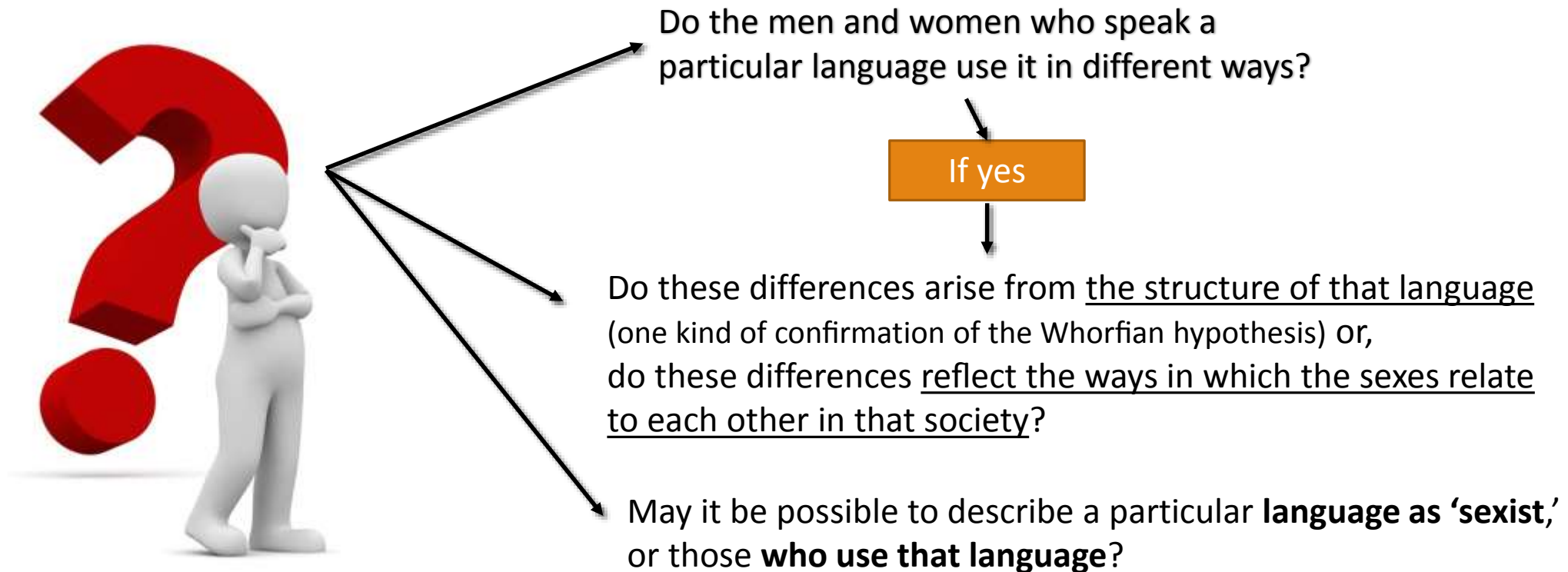
# Contents of Presentation

---

- Gender
- Gender Roles
- Differences
  - Phonological
  - Morphological
  - Grammatical
- Explanations for Differences



- Sociolinguistics also investigates
    - the connection, if any, between the structures vocabularies, and ways of using particular languages and the social roles of the men and women who speak these languages.
- 



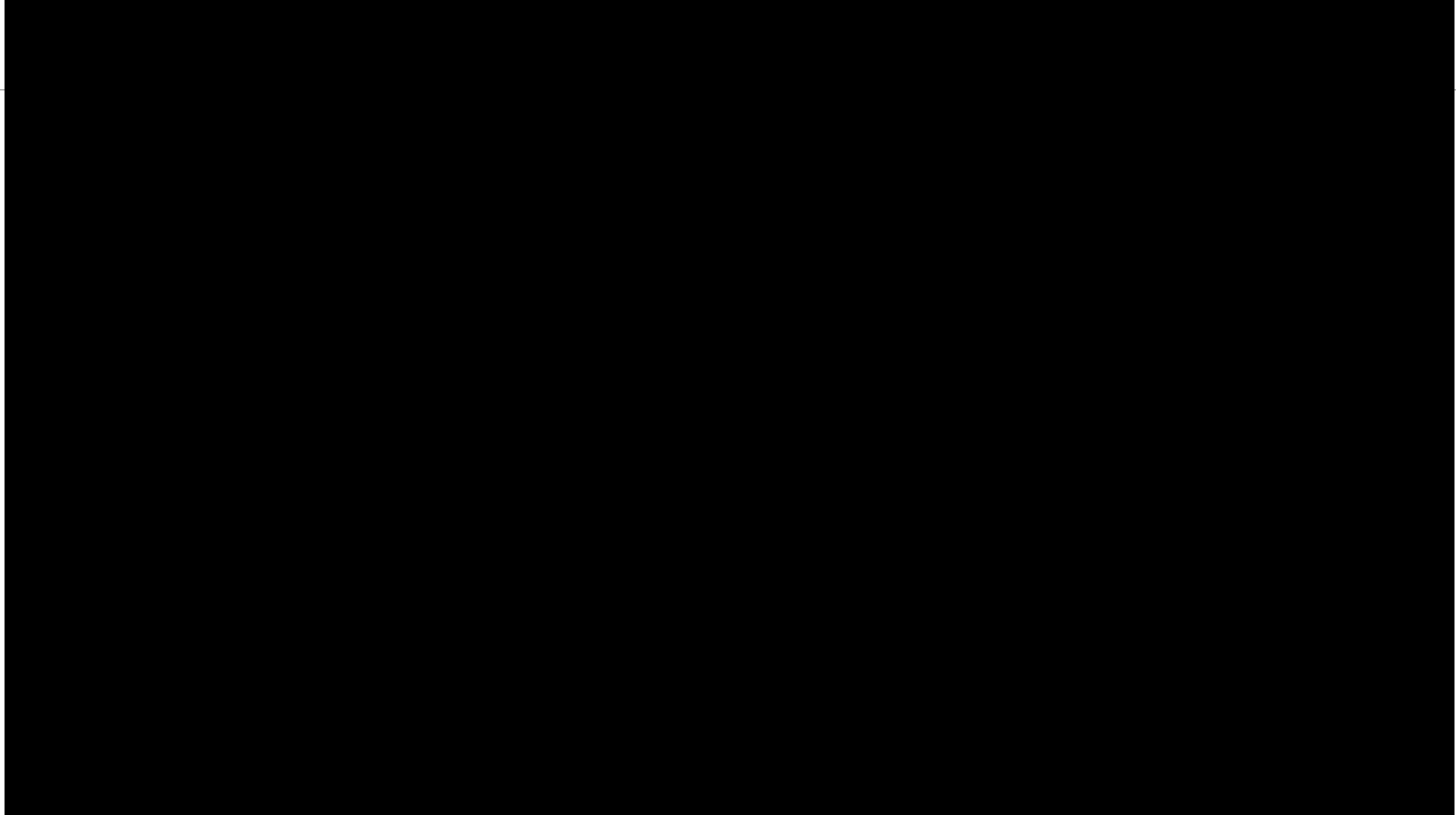
- Now, Sociolinguistics has got extensive literature is available on this area

# Introduction



- As we study language we study it in **relation to the society**, i.e. the contexts of situation and the contexts of culture in which it occurs. So we could say that **language is 'in' rather than 'alongside of' society, and inseparable from it.**
- **Gender** refers to society's expectations about how we should think and act as girls and boys, and women and men. It is our biological, social, and legal status as women and men.
- **Gender roles** are the way people act, what they do and say, to express being a girl or a boy, a woman or a man. These characteristics are shaped by society.
  - Gender roles are the social and behavioral norms that are generally considered appropriate for either a man or a woman in a social or interpersonal relationship.
  - the product of socialization
    - **Feminine**
    - **Masculine**

# Construction of Gender roles



## WORDS COMMONLY USED TO DESCRIBE

### ▪ FEMININITY

- dependent
- emotional
- passive
- sensitive
- quiet
- graceful
- innocent
- weak
- flirtatious
- nurturing
- self-critical
- soft
- sexually submissive
- accepting

### ▪ MASCULINITY

- independent
- non-emotional
- aggressive
- tough-skinned
- competitive
- clumsy
- experienced
- strong
- active
- self-confident
- hard
- sexually aggressive
- rebellious

- **categories are unrealistic.** They may not capture how we truly feel, how we behave, or how we define ourselves. All men have some so-called feminine traits, and all women have some so-called masculine traits. And we may show different traits at different times.
- **Our cultures teach women and men to be the opposite of each other in many ways.** The truth is that we are more alike than different.

# ■ Differences

---

- Genetic differences
- Physical differences
- Women speech is trivial gossip-laden, corrupt ,illogical,idle euphemistic or deficient highly suspect, nor is it necessarily more precise ,cultivated or stylish or less profane than men's speech.
- Men gossip just as much as women do but men's gossip is just different.
- Men indulge in a kind of phatic small talk that involves insults, challenges, and various kind of negative behavior to do exactly what women do by their use of nurturing, polite, feedback-laden, cooperative talk .

## ■ Our concern is Language

- In the linguistic literature perhaps the most famous example of gender differentiation is found in the **Lesser Antilles of the West Indies among the Carib-Indians**.
- 
- Male and female Caribs have been reported to **speak different languages**.
  - conquest in which a group of invading Carib-speaking men killed the local Arawak-speaking men and mated with the Arawak women. The descendants of these Carib-speaking men and Arawak-speaking women have sometimes been described as having different languages for men and women because boys learn Carib from their fathers and girls learn Arawak from their mothers.



# • Phonological Differences

- between the speech of men and women have been noted in a variety of languages.
- 

## 1 ☐ In Gros Ventre, an Amerindian language of the northeast United States

- women have palatalized velar stops where men have palatalized dental stops, e.g.,
  - female kjatsa 'bread' and male djatsa.
- When a female speaker quotes a male, she attributes female pronunciations to him,
- when a male quotes a female, he attributes male pronunciations to her.
- any use of female pronunciations by males is likely to be regarded as a sign of effeminacy (زنانه).

## 2 ☐ Yukaghir, a northeast Asian language

- women and children have /ts/ and /dz / where men have /tj/ and /dj/.
- Old people of both genders have a corresponding /cj/ and /jj/.
  - difference is not only gender-related, but also age-graded.
  - Consequently, in his lifetime a male goes through the progression of /ts/, /tj/, and /cj/, and /dz/, /dj /, and /jj/, and a female has a corresponding /ts/ and /7j/, and /dz/ and /jj/.

- 
- Example from English of a woman being advised to speak more like a man in order to fill a position previously filled only by men.

- **Differences in morphology and vocabulary**

- 
- Lakoff (1973) claims that **women use color words** like *mauve*, *beige*, *aquamarine*, *lavender*, and *magenta* but most men do not.
  - **adjectives** such as *adorable*, *charming*, *divine*, *lovely*, and *sweet* are also commonly used by women but only very rarely by men.
    - Women are also said to have their own vocabulary for emphasizing certain effects on them, *fun*, *exquisite*, *lovely*, *divine*, *precious*, *darling*, *fantastic* .

- English makes certain distinctions of a gender-based kind,

---

  - *e.g., actor–actress, waiter–waitress, and master–mistress.*
- Some of these distinctions are reinforced by entrenched patterns of usage and semantic development.
  - For example, *master and mistress have developed quite different ranges of use and meaning*, so that whereas Joan can be described as Fred’s mistress, Fred cannot be described as Joan’s master.
- **Other pairs of words which reflect similar differentiation** are *boy–girl, man–woman, gentleman–lady, bachelor–spinster*, and even *widower–widow*.

- One particular bit of sexism in languages that has aroused much comment is the **gender systems**

## Examples

- English Pronouns

→ Has three gender system

He – she - it

- Urdu

→ Has two gender system

- Verbs

### Masculine

Jata hai جاتا ہے  
(he goes)

### Feminine

Jati hai جاتی ہے  
(he goes)

- adjectives

Pyara bhai پیارا بھائی  
(Beautiful brother)

Pyari behan پیاری بہن  
(beautiful sister)

- postpositions

Ka کا  
(of)

Ki کی  
(of)

# • Grammatical Differences

- English

---

- **intonation patterns** of men and women vary somewhat, women using certain patterns associated with surprise and politeness more often than men (Brend, 1975) .
- **Lakoff** says women may answer a question with a statement that employs the rising intonation pattern usually associated with a question rather than the falling intonation pattern associated with making a firm statement.
- According to Lakoff, women do this because they are less sure about themselves and their opinions than are men.

## ▪ Status vs. support

### Examples

When members of both gender have some intension for doing something they talk like this.

- ہم گرمیوں کی چھٹیاں مری میں گزاریں گے۔ (مسکراہٹ کے بغیر) (tag question which shows unassertiveness)
- ہم گرمیوں کی چھٹیاں مری میں گزاریں گے نا؟ (مسکراتے ہوئے)

▪ While observing the language that our parents speak at home, it can be observed.

- that whenever the father talks, he uses such words in an intonation which asserts superiority.
- When mother speaks she uses submissive language and intonation which shows that she doesn't want superiority or status so that she is not taken as rude to elders of the family.

▪ But this situation can also be seed reversed. When children are grown up, mother uses authoritative tone and language to subdue her husband.

She might be seen using such language.

تمہیں کچھ نہیں پتا ، تم چپ رہو۔

Still other gender-linked differences are said to exist.

- Women and men may have different **paralinguistic systems** and move and gesture differently

- 
- women to appear to be **submissive** to men.
  - Women are also often **named, titled, and addressed differently** from men.
  - Women are more likely than men to be **addressed by their first names** when everything else is equal,  
or, if not by first names, by such terms as *lady*, *miss*, or *dear*, and even *baby* or *babe*.
  - Women are also said not to employ the **profanities and obscenities** men use, or, if they do, use them in different circumstances or are judged differently for using them.



## ‘sociolinguistic universal tendencies

Holmes (1998) does offer some testable claims. There are five of these:

---

1. Women and men develop **different patterns of language use**.
2. Women tend to focus on the **affective functions** of an interaction more often than men do.
3. Women tend to use **linguistic devices** that stress solidarity more often than men do.
4. Women tend to interact in ways which will maintain and increase **solidarity**, while men tend to interact in ways which will maintain and increase their **power and status**.
5. Women are **stylistically more flexible** than men.

## Advice vs. understanding

مجھے بھوک نہیں ہے۔

When a woman says this, it does not mean that she is not hungry. It means that if you say she will eat. This is just because she wants your attention. It might be so that she has felt to be neglected or something like this.

نہیں میں ناراض نہیں ہوں!

کسی عورت کو ناراض کر دینا اتنا بڑا جرم نہیں ہے مگر اس کے اس جملے کو غلط سمجھنا مصیبت اور مشکل کا سبب بن سکتا ہے۔ کیوں کہ دراصل ان جملوں میں ناراضگی کا اظہار ہی چھپا ہوتا ہے۔

## Information vs. feelings

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If a man often smiles, he is taken as a good/nice fellow.</li> </ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If a women often smiles, others get the wrong idea.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Men are happy because women give active attention to what they are saying.</li> </ul>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women are mostly found unhappy just because the men don't understand them.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For shopping, goes to bazaar, enters in one of the first shops and buys and let's go home.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>But you know I am not sure I like that black dress... hmm. In fact, maybe I need to wear 'cause it's spring time. And I'm gonna need to look for some cute sandals and earrings. And this is gonna take us a while so why don't we some coffee.</li> </ul> |

■ اکیلا رہنے میں زیادہ مزہ ہے :اگر آپ کسی گرل فرینڈ آپ کے سامنے برعلا اس بات کا اظہار کر دے کہ جو لطفہ اکیلے زندگی گزارنے میں ہے وہ ساتھ رہنے میں نہیں تو ان جملوں کے چھپے پیغام کو آپ آسانی سے سمجھ جائیں گے کہ وہ آپ سے قطعی طور شادی کا ارادہ نہیں رکھتی۔

■ کیا میں موٹی نظر آ رہی ہوں :خیال رکھیں گے گا کہ وہ میں آپ اس بات کا جواب غلطی سے بھی ہاں میں نہ دے دیں کیونکہ وہ سے حقیقت میں یہ پوچھنا چاہ رہی ہوتی ہیں کہ دیکھو کہ میرا ہورہا ہے تو آپ کو نہ چاہتے ہوئے بھی یہی کہنا پڑتا ہے کہ دہلی لگے رہی ہیں۔

■ یہ آدمی تو بہت اچھا لگے رہا ہے :اگر کسی محفل یا پارٹی کے دوران آپ کسی اہلیہ یا گرل فرینڈ آپ کو یہ جملہ کہے تو وہ آپ کو یا جلن میں مبتلا کرنا چاہتی ہے۔

## Orders vs. proposals

Random Examples	
Sit down.	Why don't you sit down?
We should save some money.	I was wondering it would be good for us to save some money.
Can I sit here?	If you don't mind, can I sit here please?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ کیا آپ مجھ سے محبت کرتے ہیں: خواتین یہ جملہ اکثر اپنے خاص مقاصد کو پورا کرنے لے بولتی ہیں اس لیے اگر آپ سے کہہ دیں جملہ کا اظہار کیا جائے تو آپ تیار ہو جائیں گے تو وہ آپ کی جیب خالی کرنے کا ارادہ رکھتی یا پھر کوئی بات منوانا چاہتی ہے۔</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ پارٹی کو انجوائے کرو: اگر آپ کی اہلیہ یا گھر فرینڈ کسی محفل میں آپ کو اس طرح کی ہدایت دے تو آپ سمجھ جائیں گے وہ آپ پر نظر رکھ رہے ہوئے ہیں اس لیے آپ ادھر ادھر دیکھیں</li></ul>

## Conflict vs. compromise

### Random Examples

■ میں آپ کے لیئے کیا حیثیت رکھتی ہوں؟  
جب کسی خاتون سے کوئی غلطی سرزد ہو جائے تو وہ اسے دور کرنے کے لیے اپنے شوہر کو جذباتی طور پر پرکھتی ہے اور کنہا چاہتی ہے کہ میں تو آپ کی خواہش کے مطابق کام کرنا چاہتی ہوں۔

■ یہ آپ کا اپنا فیصلہ ہے۔  
اکثر و بیشتر شوہر کوئی فیصلہ کرے اور محفل میں بیٹھ کر اس کا تذکرہ کر دے تو اہلیہ اسے شوہر کا فیصلہ قرار دے کر فی الحال تو جان چھڑا لیتی ہے لیکن ان جملوں کے پیچھے کوئی اور ہی مطلب چھپا ہوتا ہے کیوں کہ اس وقت کے بولے ہوئے جملے میں اصل پیغام یہی چھپا ہوتا ہے کہ آخری فیصلہ میرا ہی ہو گا۔

■ مجھے آپ سے بات کرنا ہے :  
اگر آپ کی اہلیہ یا گھر فرینڈ آپ سے یہ بات کہے تو آپ یہ نہ سمجھیں کہ وہ آپ کو کچھ بتانا چاہ رہی ہے سمجھ جانا چاہیے کہ وہ آپ کو اپنی لمبی چوڑی شکایت سنانے والی ہے۔

■ دیکھتے ہیں آگے کیا ہوتا ہے  
کافی گھٹگو کے بعد اگر خاتون یہ کہے کہ بعد میں دیکھیں گے کہ کیا ہوتا ہے تو اس کا مطلب ہے کہ اب اس معاملے کو ختم کرو۔



Can you tell which one women use?

---

- 1a. Oh dear, you've put the peanut butter in the refrigerator again.
- 1b. Shit, you've put the peanut butter in the refrigerator again.
- 2a. What a terrific idea!
- 2b. What a divine idea!



1. What is your opinion? How do you explain any difference in usage?

---

2. When do you use the words boy(s) and girl(s) to refer to members of your own sex or of the other sex? Are there any uses of these words that you hear but refuse to employ yourself? Why? Has this always been the case? If not, why not?

3. How do you use the words lady and woman? Do you ever use combinations such as lady doctor or woman executive? Do you use cleaning lady, cleaning woman, or some other term? Are lady and woman synonymous?

---

4. Whereas a young man may sometimes be referred to as a *stud*, *dude*, or *guy*, a young woman may be referred to as a *broad*, *chick*, *dame*, *doll*, *fox*, or *dog*.

You might know some other terms too. Are there any fairly clear semantic differences between the two sets? If there are, what would you say they indicate?

5. What are your views of proposed new words *like chairperson, anchor-person, spokesperson, craftsperson, personslaughter, personhandle, and personhood*?



---

# Possible Explanations

- 
- many researchers agree that men speak more than women do
  - when men talked to men, the content categories of such talk focused on *competition and teasing, sports, aggression, and doing things*.
  - when women talked to women, the equivalent categories were the *self, feelings, affiliation with others, home, and family*.
  - Women are also reported to use more polite forms and more compliments than men

- two genders interacted

- men tended to take the initiative in conversation, but there seemed to be a desire to achieve some kind of accommodation so far as topics were concerned: the men spoke less aggressively and competitively and the women reduced their amount of talk about home and family.
- 

- cross-gender conversations

- men frequently interrupt women but women much less frequently interrupt men
- women ask more questions than men
  - encourage others to speak,
  - use more back-channeling signals like *mhmm* to encourage others to continue speaking,
  - use more instances of *you* and *we*

- men interrupt more,
    - challenge, dispute, and ignore more,
    - try to control what topics are discussed, and
    - inclined to make categorical statements
-

- According to Lakoff, women's talk has the following properties:

---

  - **A large set of words specific to their interests:** e.g. color words like magenta, shirr, dart (in sewing), etc.
  - **“Empty” adjectives such as divine**, precious, lovely, cute, etc.
  - **Tag questions and rising intonation in statement contexts:**
    - What's your name dear? Mary Smith?
  - **Use of hedges**
  - **Use of intensive “so”**
  - **Hypercorrect grammar:** women are not supposed to talk rough
  - **Super-politeness**
  - **Ask more questions**

Women's talk is a cultural product

- Women speak a language of connection and intimacy
- Men speak a language of status and independence

# Explanations

---

- languages can be sexist

- The first claim is that men and women are biologically different and that this difference has serious consequences for gender
- The second claim is that social organization is best perceived as some kind of hierarchical set of power relationships
- The third claim is that men and women are social beings who have learned to act in certain ways.
  - Language behavior is largely learned behavior. Men learn to be men and women learn to be women, linguistically speaking.

# Activity

---

- Neutralize the following terms

early man

*Man and His World*

mailmen

the common man

the motorist . . . he

the farmer and his wife

Mary Smith is a highly

successful woman executive

the fair sex



---