



THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LINGUISTIC FORM IN THE SPEECH OF MEN AND WOMEN IN "OLIVER TWIST"

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الخلاصة

يبين هذا البحث مدى اختلاف النساء والرجال في استخدام هذه الأشكال اللغوية منها التشديد والجواب الغير مباشر والأسئلة الذيلية وذلك بالاشارة الى نظرية الدراسة الأجنبية Lakoff . لكن نظرا الى نتائج تحليل الرواية الانكليزية Oliver Twist اولفر توست حيث أثبتت النتائج ان هذه الاختلافات ليس لها قيمة وان نظرية Lakoff غير دقيقة وم قدقة.

Abstract

This research was intended to determine whether men and women were different with respect the use intensifiers hedges and tag questions to conduct the study,R.lakoff's (1975):4 ideas concerning linguistic differences between males and females were taken into account .In order to gather the most natural –like data, were randomly selected from the famous English novel "Oliver Twist "The data were then analyzed utterance by utterance. The result of analysis showed no significant difference between the groups on the use of intensifiers, hedged and tag questions. The findings of study did not confirm lakff"s opinion regarding gender-bound language at least in the three areas and the corpus inspected in this research.



Introduction

From childhood males and females are different in many ways, both physiologically and psychologically. Eisenmen (1997:82) claims that women, in comparison to men, have better memory. Men are quite accurate in maintaining a sense of direction but women are not. This is consistent with the claim that men tend to do better than women on visual-spatial test and in mathematics.

That are also social different between men and women. Two of the most significant theories on social differences between males and females are "difference theory" and "dominance theory". According to the "difference theory" men and women, even those within the same group, live in different or separate cultural worlds and, as a result, they promote different ways of speaking (Uchida, 1992:61). This theory is sometimes called "two culture theory". In simple terms, although men and women live in the same environment they establish different relation with society as if each belonged to a different environment and culture, the result of which is consequently reflected in the language of both genders as in other aspects of their lives. In "dominance theory", men and women are believed to inhabit a cultural and linguistic world, where power and status are unequally distributed. In this theory, also called power-based theory, the focus is on male dominance and gender division

Gender-bound Language

Although men and women, from a given social class, belong to the same speech community, they may use different linguistic form. The linguistic forms used by women and man contrast to some extent in all speech communities. For example, Holmes (1993:72) mentions the Amazon Indians' language as an extreme example, where the language used by a child's mother is different from that used by her father and each tribe is distinguished by a different language. In this community, males and females speak different languages

Less dramatic are communities where men and women speak the same language, but some distinct linguistic features occur in the speech of women and men. These differences rang from pronunciation or

morphology to vocabulary. Holmes(1993:73) refers to Japanese, where different words, with the same meaning, are used distinctively by men and women. For example, in this language when a woman wants to say 'water', she uses the word 'ohiya' whereas a man uses the word 'miza'. Furthermore, women tend to use standard language more than men do. Climate (1997:62) believes that females generally use speech to develop and maintain relationships. They use language to achieve intimacy. Tannen (1990:31) states that women speak and hear a language of connection and intimacy, while men speak and hear a language of status and independence. Tannen (ibid) also states that such a communication resembles cross-cultural communication where the style of communication is different. According to Kaplan and Farrell (1994:81) and Leet-Peregrini (1980:21) produced by women are short and their participation is driven by their desire to keep the communication going rather than the desire to achieve consensus.

"Gender-Bound Language"

The investigation and identification of differences between men's and women's speech date back across time. Until 1944, no specific piece of writing on gender differences in language was published. As stated by Gery (1998:41), it was in the 1970s that comparison between female cooperativeness and male competitiveness in linguistic behavior began to be noticed. Mulace, et al., (2001:127) concentrated on the term 'gender as culture' and ran an empirical study on linguistic differences between men and women in the use of media for interpersonal communication, etc.

From among these researchers, Lakoff(1975:67) proposed theories on the existence of women's language. Her book 'Language and Women's place' has served as a basis for much research on the subject. She mentions ten features for women's language. As cited in Holmes (1993,p.314), these ten features are as follows:

- 1- Lexical hedges or fillers, e.g. you know, sort of,...
- 2- Tag questions, e.g. she is 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, acqamarine
- 6- Intensifiers such as just and so
- 7- Hypercorrect grammar, e.g. consistent use of standard verb forms.
- 8- Superpolite forms, e.g. indirect requests, euphemisms.
- 9- Avoidance of strong swearwords, e.g. fudge, my goodness.
- 10- Emphatic stress, e.g. it was a BRILLIANT performance.

Lakoff's hypotheses have both pros and cons. Men's language as put by Lakoff is assertive, adult, and direct, while women's language is immature, hyper-formal or hyper-polite and non-assertive. But such statements have their own pros. Michaelson and Poll (2001:23), for example, emphasized on the dynamic nature of speech of men and women by stating that 'rule of politeness' governing face-to-face conversation seems to be less binding when there is no physical presence. They also state it is this bodily presence of conversational dyads that lead to a weakening of gender roles. While analyzing the electronic mails of a number of men and women, Bunz and Campbell (2002:26) stated that social categories such as age, gender, etc. do not influence politeness accommodation in e-mail. Canary and Hause (1993:46) as cited in Mulac (1998:51) have argued that meaningful differences in the communication strategies of men and women have not been found with any degree of consistency.

Despite such and many other similar observation, Lakoff believes that the use of tag question by women is the sign of uncertainty. Dubois and Crouch (1975:68) launched a critique on Lakoff's claims, especially on tag questions. They examined the use of tag questions within the context of a professional meeting and concluded that at least in that context males used tag questions more than females did. Their conclusion was that Lakoff's hypothesis might be biased in favor of highly stereotyping beliefs or folk linguistics.

Dubois and Crouch (Ibid) questioned Lakoff's findings as Lakoff had used introspective method in her study. They argued that her conclusions were made on uncontrolled and unverifiable observation of



others and were based on a highly skewed and non-random sample of people.

To examine Lakoff's hypothesis, the researchers selected three grammatical categories, from the above list, namely tag questions, hedges and intensifiers as the basis of analysis. The following research question was the basis for this study. Do women use intensifiers, tag questions and hedges more than men do in English Novel "Oliver Twist"? this research question gave way to three null hypotheses as follows:

- (1) There is no significant difference between the groups under study on the use of hedges.
- (2) There is no significant difference between the groups under study on the use of intensifiers.
- (3) There is no significant difference between the groups under study on the use of tag questions.

Data for the Study

Carry out the Analysis, the researcher made use of the following Novel "Oliver Twist". The research made use of novel in print so as to get to results, which could closely represent the linguistic performance of ordinary people in natural situations. In this study , I believed that data extracted from novel were very close, if not exactly the same, to natural data.

Poems were not used, since they were considered to be quite different from the ordinary language especially with respect to structure and sequences of elements.

Data Collection Procedures

To collect the relevant data, the , researcher first read all the English novel with great care (The researchers used the written books and did not watch the movies for the ease of analysis). Then, the total number of utterances in the whole book was counted .Later, the utterances were divided into two parts, those produced by females and those produced by males. This data is summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1 : Frequency of Intensifiers, Hedges and Tags as produced in "Oliver Twist" by Males and Females.

English novel "O.T"		
	Males (U= 208)	Females(U=112)
I	19.23) (40	17.85) (20
H	27.40) (57	(20.5) 23
T	10.09) (21	8.03) (9

I=Intensifier, H=Hedge, T=Tag, U= Utterance

In this study, was used as the unit of speech, since there were quite a number of cases in the novel where a sentence did not end in a full stop but in a comma. Or, where two or three sentence were combined using a conjunction like 'and'. Furthermore, the definition of sentence was quit vague and, thus, not suitable for doing a comparative study between two groups. groups. For these reason, the researcher considered 'utterance' to be a better device to pursue a comparative study. In fact, utterance has a clear cut definition referring to the whole linguistic production of each person, in a conversation, in each turn, be it a single sound, a word, sentence, or even a series of sentence. In simple speaking, there are at least two persons in each conversation who take their turns as speakers and listeners. All the linguistic production of each person in each turn is considered as a single utterance (For example, in the extraction, Jack: How are you John? John: Fine, thanks. There are two utterances which have been italicized for ease of identification.) .

Scope of the Study

Lakoff (1975:Ibid)had put forward ten elements showing lack of confidence and tentativeness in the speech of women. Some of these items were related to the domain of phonetics such as rising and falling intonation . Collecting data concerning pitch and intonation as well as a discussion of hypercorrect grammar and super polite forms were not only difficult to handle but also of little significance given the research question stated by the researcher.

What the researcher had first in mind was include swear words as well . But, this category was taken out from the final analysis since the use made by people of these words was dependent on many variables ,such as the status of the speaker, the status of the listener, their gender, etc, If swear words were included in this study, a large number of other factors had to be controlled which was beyond the scope of the present study .

It was planned to look for empty adjectives as well but unfortunately not a single example of this was found in the total corpus . For this reason , the researcher excluded the discussion of this category as well as that of the swear words . This left the researcher grammatical categories namely , 'tag questions' , 'hedges' and 'intensifiers' , which were used as the basis for analysis.

Finding and Result

Results of analysis of data have mentioned in table (1). In this part, the main purpose was to find out and compare the performance of each gender in English regarding the use of intensifiers, hedges and tag questions differently . There fore , comparisons were made between the utterances produced by males in English and females .

	Cross gender, same culture
	English novel "Oliver Twist"
	Males vs.Females
I	X = 0.23 Ns
H	X = 0.02 Ns
T	X = 0.3 Ns

Ns=Not significant $P>0.03$

Cross gender= different gender (males Vs Females)

Same culture = same environment , same in habitsetc.

This shows that there is no difference between English males and females with regard to the use or the three linguistic categories mentioned above.

Discussion and Conclusions

As we mentioned earlier, Robin Lakoff has put forward the most complete analysis concerning linguistic differences between males and females . She believes that gender differences in language usage reflect different and unequal roles and status . She proposed that because of the low status of women and the social pressure on them to talk like a lady , women as compared to men tend to use more hedges , intensifiers , super polite forms , question intonation , etc.. Results obtained in this study indicate that Lakoff's ideas concerning tag questions , hedges and intensifiers cannot be held ,given the corpus under study and thus the three null hypotheses stated earlier can be upheld.

In lakoff's opinion , the function of tag questions are two-fold : they soften the impact of assertions and they express uncertainty . If we accept this idea , we must accept that women are usually uncertain, but for two reasons Lakoff's findings are unacceptable:(1) As stated by Dubois and Crouch (1975:69) Lakoff mad these ground-breaking ideas based on her intuition. In fact, she did not conduct a scientific research. (2) Other research did not confirm what Lakoff had proposed. For example, Holmes (1993:80) found out that certain types of tag question are used more by men than by women, i.e. modal tags, and certain other types are used more by women, i.e. facilitative tags.

Holmes (ibid.) states that facilitative tags are addressee. On the contrary, modal tags are addressee—oriented, expressing the speaker's solidarity or positive attitude to the addressee. On the contrary, modal tags are speaker- oriented and signal speaker's desire for confirmation. Furthermore, in a research carried out by Cameron et al. (1998:72), it was found that men used more facilitative and model tags than women did. But, as was mentioned before, the analysis computed in this paper revealed no significant difference between males and females with regard to the use of tag questions.



Lakoff (1975:Ibid) also believes that women use more hedges than men do. She identifies three types of hedges as follows: those showing that the speaker is unsure; those used for the sake of politeness and finally those characterizing women's language- the language of those who are out of power in society. But, like what was found concerning tag questions in this study, again Lakoff's ideas concerning hedges could not be upheld. The analysis computed in this study confirmed no significant difference between males and females with regard to the use of hedges. This finding is in line with what Holmes (1986:82) found concerning the use of 'you know' in the speech of men and women. Holmes did not find any significant difference between the two genders. Similarly, what was found concerning intensifiers, in the research, did not confirm Lakoff's ideas. No significant difference was found between the groups under study with regard to the use of intensifiers.



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