**HOW LANGUAGE DEFINES GENDER**

**Introduction**

The relationship between gender and language has been studied with main focus on differences between the language of male and female from different angles with different methodologies. Firstly, the scholars all hold that there are innate differences between the language of male and female. When they communicate, the differences between them still exist. Sociolinguists look gender as a social variable to study the relationship between language and gender. Most of the scholars already have deep-rooted prejudice against gender. Usually they may give a negative evaluation on the language of female and their communicative style. This kind of prejudice must influence their explanation to the language materials.

Many scholars hold males and females come from different cultures, R. A. Borker and Tannen have tried to probe the reasons for the language differences between male and female from the aspect of culture. They have conducted comprehensive researches on this topic based on social, cultural and psychological factors. In their research, they pointed out that males and females come from different cultural background

Certainly, women’s speech differs from men’s speech; and women and men use language differently due to the styles, registers, and the way of using language, interaction, thought, culture, and linguistic attitudes gender, politeness and stereotypes.

**The Pronouns**

Language is the way the titles “Mr.,” “Miss,” and “Mrs.” are used. “Mr.” can refer to any man, regardless of whether he is single or married, but “Miss” and “Mrs. “this are part of gendered pronouns. Non-gendered or non- binary pronouns are not gender specific and are most often used by people who identify outside of a gender binary. Other approaches to pronouns may include going simply by one’s name, not having a preference, or wanting to avoid pronouns altogether. There are many languages in the world that do not use gendered pronouns, genderless languages: Chinese, Estonian, Finnish, and other languages don't categorize any nouns as feminine or masculine, and use the same word for he or she in regards to humans. For people who don't identify along the gender binary, these grammatical differences can be significant.

Sex is biologically determined therefore sex differences are the differences based on biological/physical organs. Gender is a social construct involving the whole display of psychological, social and cultural differences between males and female

Gender is a construct that owes its creation to a number of social institutions. Some of these include family, educational institutions, judiciary, religion, etc. In recent times, the media has emerged as a powerful constitutive agent of gender-related ideas and notions. Gender, unlike sex, which is based on biological division.

Gender neutrality is the condition in which there is no difference between how a person is regarded as male or female. It is a way of thinking about gender that rejects any essentialist ideas about what it means to be male or female.

**Importance of Pronouns**

It is important to ask for pronouns because you cannot assume how someone identifies their gender based on their appearance. It is a privilege to not have to worry about which pronoun someone is going to use for you based on how they perceive your gender. If you have this privilege, yet fail to respect someone else’s gender identity, it is disrespectful and hurtful.

**From Gender Inclusivity to Gender Neutrality**

Respecting someone’s self-identification means using the gender pronouns with which they identify. Some people go by more than one set of pronouns. Also Normalize the process of indicating your gender pronouns in everyday use with strategies such as including them in your email signature, business cards, website profile, and nametags, or using them as you introduce yourself. This leads to the preventions of wrongful or hurtful assumptions.

Notably, the United Nations secretariat (2017) has adopted a policy on non-sexist gender-inclusive language that promotes gender neutrality among its six official working languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish). The underlying principle of gender-inclusive language is that in all communications women and men should be treated equally within the organization.

Proposals emanating from various linguistic, feminist or LGBTQIA+ circles have been made to find a more gender-neutral way of referring to human beings in gender-based languages: these may vary from country to country, or sometimes within a country, some are concerned only with the written form, most with the written and the spoken form.

Gender neutrality is a neutral presentation of gender that does not distinguish between men and women. Gender neutrality is important because it helps eliminate gender stereotypes that harm everyone. The term “gender” refers to socially constructed roles and behaviors of men, women, and all gender-diverse people.

Gender stereotypes are those expectations based on the assumption that there are only two genders (male and female) in the world. It leads to discrimination against not only men and women but also individuals who do not conform to these identities. Today gender neutrality is also about avoiding gender-specific language in writing, speech, and other forms of communication. Avoid using male and female pronouns when referring to people. For example, instead of saying “he” or “she,” use “they avoid using he/him/his pronouns when referring to a group of people unless it’s an all-male group.

**How Language Shapes our Perception of Gender**

Some cultures are more conservative than others more open minded, others with dominant figures and others hold more antiquated view. Using language comparisons like between English and Spanish there are clear male and female distinctions unlike in Spanish it would be extremely difficult to change entire cultures to avail gender neutral options in a case like the Japanese language enforces the tone of language that a female can approach or speak to the male gender to be more polite and subtle. English has led the fore front in being more inclusive gender neutrality. Whether the noun is considered female or male can alter how the speaker perceives that specific word. Most studies find that in mixed talks men tend to be more dominating than women. The dominance approach is supported mainly by variability on the basis of power. Power, on the other hand, is derived from social, economic and socio-historical status.

 Conversation is not the only area where power is an important aspect of the male/female dynamic. Power is reflected in every aspect of communication from what the actual topic of the communication, to the ways in which it is communicated. Women are typically less concerned with power more concerned with forming and maintaining relationships, whereas men are more concerned with their status. A woman's communication will tend to be more focused on building and maintaining relationships. Men on the other hand, will place a higher priority on power; their communication styles will reflect their desire to maintain their status in the relationship.

Hindi language-differences in word choice in various languages. Japanese women show they are women when they speak, with the use of the morphological inflections ne or wa. According to Sapir (1929), the Yana language of California contains special forms for use in speech either by or to women.

**Sexist language**

Robin Lakoff was the first linguist to start the discourse of the relationship between gender and language in his article called ‘‘Language And Woman’s Place” (1972). He argued that women generally use linguistic forms which are lower/subordinate to that of men with the use of tag questions (isn’t it?, am I?), questioning expressions or mitigators (sort of, I think). This suggests that there is a need to be acknowledged or a presumption that they can be wrong. Post Lackoff’s claim, a debate started as to why women’s language has such a subordinate form.

According to Tannen (1991:77), the language of conversation between women, is foremost a language of rapport (Tannen 1991:77). The purpose of it is to establish connections and negotiating relationships. Women tend to display similarities and matching experiences with each other, and in meetings, women tend to argue by using their own experience as evidence. For most men on the other hand, language is a way to preserve independence and negotiate and maintain status in the hierarchy. Language is accommodating enough for any kind of change and space so that any sex-biased expression or utterance can be made sex-neutral: chairman-chairperson, salesman-salesclerk, actor, etc. The extreme structure of dominance in the structure and use of language can also be avoided by initiating some changes in language. So language itself is not sexist.

**Conclusion**

There is a number of close relationships between Gender and language. Another word, men’s way of using language and women’s way of using language is different. It is because of structure of the language, norm of the society or people of the society who use the language. Moreover, gender (male-female) is socially constructed. Because of the social institution or taboo, we find variations/differences between men and women

Language is the primary fact which concerns contemporary philosophy. Men have been speaking and writing for a long time, but it is only recently that the task of philosophy has been said to be the analysis of language. Ethical perplexities, social anxieties, the nature of scientific knowledge, religious speculations, are held not to be directly the problems of the philosopher. They enter his study by way of a domain of languages and sub-languages. This preoccupation with language is itself an unusual phenomenon in our intellectual history

Gender Inclusion which refers to the practice and quality of including or involving people/rights holders from different social, political, and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, social-economic class, amongst other determinants. The concepts of gender inclusion and gender roles can originate during child development. Studies indicate these roles are chiefly established during adolescence. Therefore, it is important to reach out to youths and explain the significance of gender inclusion. Doing so can potentially make inroads toward eliminating the gender gap that is still unfortunately prevalent in society

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*HUGUES PETERS*