**How Language Defines Gender**

According to (Büyükahıska, 2018) “Language and gender” is a notion that describes the connection between language and masculinity in respect to speech, lifestyle and attitude. Language plays an important role in human communication by enabling effective expression of human concepts, thoughts and most vitally emotions. But language not only foster effective communication, it also contributes towards shaping of societal customs including but not limited to the shaping of gender.

Beyond reasonable doubts, the link between language and gender tends to be complicated and complex; in that language does not only reflect existing gender dynamics but also contributes towards their continuation. This article looks forward to discovering how language defines gender through careful review of various ways in which linguistic constructions, gendered language and societal influences connect and impact on human perceptions of gender and its identities.

Our comprehension of gender is attributed to the key tenets of language such as vocabulary, syntax and grammar. Many languages make use of grammatical gender, assigning gender-specific nouns, pronouns as well as some adjectives. For instance, in Spanish, the word "Niño" is used to refer to male child, while "Niña" is used to refer to female child. This grammatical gender can contribute to the maintenance of gender categorizes by joining various characteristics or roles to specific genders. The link imparts human perception of gender and the expectations involved.

In many cases, language makes use of gendered terms and expressions that stabilize societal categorization and expectations. For instance, roles and career are mostly labeled with gendered terms e.g. “watchman” and “hostess,” are two gendered roles that indicates that they are mostly held by a specific gender. Such linguistic choices can reduce opportunities and insinuate gender prejudices (Gu, 2013).

Acknowledging gendered language is important for creating a more inclusive society that is unrestricted. Gender identity is brought about by language. Language greatly contributes towards socialization, as it is through language that children get to learn their expectations and sustainable behaviors. In most cases, girls are expected to maintain cleanliness of both the body and their environment and ensure they look “pretty” and/or “caring” and on the other hand boys are expected to be “courageous”/ “brave”. These societal linguistic connotations shape the kid’s knowledge of their gender roles and responsibility, hence, gender identity.

In most cases, men tend to be bold enough by their ability to express their urge to detail, the male character have the ability to ask questions, stress on opinions and express their reactions directly as compared to the female characters. Males are not only considered bold in terms of physic but also bold in expressions. This comes as a result of the African historical call for independence, the African leaders were majorly males and based on their natural language, they could understand each other better and air out their grievances. During this time, women were assigned other duties that did not require so much of opinions and decision-making.

Right from childhood, women uses emotions to express themselves, they could extensively cry, frown and or throw tantrums to indicate their level of dissatisfaction, and during this time, any adult is capable of realizing their gender as early as this. Emotions results into communication, this is why the emotional language would be a sign of gender reveal. Men on the other hand show their masculinity through physical language, either through shouting, knocking or destroying things.

Whereas women love to “just” talk, men are considered to talk only when it’s necessary and vital. Women can speak too many words with no simple trait of useful information, this happens when they are in salon, gym or in similar-gender events, Men on the other hand would meet and spend the shortest time possible to discuss a vital issue.

Such phrases used in the past like “mankind” and “chairman” were gender based, they led into belief that male characters were superior unlike their female counterparts, instead, language would have employed the usage of “humankind” and “chairperson” respectively to ensure uniformity in power and representation.

Language is a powerful instrument that both mirrors and shapes our perceptions of gender. Linguistic structures, gendered language, and societal influences interlink to define our understanding of gender roles, expectations, and identities. Recognizing the influence of language is crucial for creating a more equitable and inclusive society, where individuals are not confined by traditional gender norms and stereotypes. By embracing gender-inclusive language and challenging linguistic constructs, we can take significant steps towards a more diverse and equal future.

**References**

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