Some Aspects of Women's Linguistic Behavior in English Speech Forms - A Sociolinguistic Study -

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——A Sociolinguistic Study——

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I Sexual Differentiations Language in Non-European Context

Languages with major or minor differences between the speech of men and women are not so rare as we might imagine. The phenomenon has been investigated and discussed for centuries in an anthropological as well as linguistic context among scholars. As shown by Bodine in "Sources for Cross-Cultural Survey,"[1] sex differentiation is found in the languages of non-European societies: a number of Americal Indian languages, Hebrew-Semitic, Asian languages such as Bengali (in Eastern India), Chukchee (a Mongoloid tribe in Siberda), Japanese, and also in Eskimo dialects. In addition to these, Japanese, Korean and some Afrian languages are reported to have sex variants. Jespersen refers in his *Language : Its Nature, Development and Origin* to an old Indian drama in which women speak *Prakrit* (the natural or vulgar language) while men are permitted to speak *Sanskrit* (the well-made, refined language). However, the distinction in this case was not only of sex, but of social stratification, since *Sanskrit* was the language of the superriors—gods, nobles, Brahmans—while *Prakrit* was spoken by people of an inferior class—shopkeepers, policemen and minority groups including most women. In this case, the difference between the two languages is only in degree ; they are considered to be two varieties of the same language.

Classical example of the way men and women speak differently, is that of the Caribs and Caribbeans of the Lesser Antilles. This example is referred to in many ethnograghic and linguistic works, including Jespersen's. It was first mentioned by the Dominican Breton in his Dictionnaire Caraîbe-Francais (1664), followed by Rochefort who spent a long time among the caribbeans in the middle of the seveteenth century.[2] Rochefort is quoted as saying about the tribe:

> ... the men have a great many expressions peculiar to them, which the women understand but never pronounce themselves. On the other hand, the women have words and phrases which the men never use, or they would be laughed to scorn. Thus it happens that in their conversations it often seems as if the women had another language than the men...[3]

What are the differences between the men's and women's languages? It seems the two sexes do not speak entirely different languages or dialects, but they speak with certain differences in form. It seems most types of sex-based languases reported so far can be displayed in a chart[4] with one axis of classification by the type of language (i. e., difference in pronunciation and difference in form : interjections, particles, personal pronouns, titles, kinship terminology, nouns, verbs, noun modifiers). It is reported there is no profound difference in syntactic patterning,[5] such as difference in word order, between the sex-based versions of any language. As for the Carib language the distinct features that distinguish men's language from that of women are in their vocabulary (about one-tenth of the vocabulary is sex-exclusive) and in most cases of kinship terminology. Thus when a man speaks about his father he says *youmâan* while *nonkôuchili* is used by a women. All of the terms are different for grandfather, maternal uncle, son (older or younger), brother-in-law, wife, mother, daughter, cousin depending on the sex of the speaker. It has been observed that this sex-exclusive differentiation in vocabulary is not made by adding suffixes, but by using entirely different roots. As with

other sex differentiation, the grammar is common to both male and female variants.

Then why did differentiation occur? There are two explanations: the "invasion" theory and the "taboo" theory. The former theory, provided by the Indians themselves has been widely supported. Quoted in Jespersen it is as follows:

> The savage natives of Dominica say that the reason for this is that when the Caribs came to occupy the islands these were inhabited by an Arawak tribe which they exterminated completely, with the exception of the women, whom they married in order to populate the country. It is asserted that there is some similarity between the speech of the continental Arawaks and that of the Carib women.[6]

The differences were believed to be the result of a mixing of the two tribes caused by the invasion. However, since this phenomenon is also found in other Americal Indian languases we cannot accept this as the only reason. A second explanation, the "taboo" theory is suggested by Jespersen. He says that differences in speech of the Caribian men and women arose through the practice of "verbal taboo" which was common among them. He refers to the fact that when Carib men were on the way to war, they would use a number of words prohibited for women. If women used these words they were supposed to invite bad luck. Instead of supporting the first theory, Jespersen justifies his "taboo" theory by citing a similar example in Zulu in which a wife is not allowed to mention the name of her father-in-law or his brother. Thus, taboo may have a powerful influence upon the growth of separate sex vocabularies, but it is not always a general explanation for the origin of sex dialects.[7]

We have other cases where taboo does not seem to be involved. For example, in the case of Japanese, differences in sex-dialects is partly a result of the Japanese kinship and gender system. Just as we distinguish in English between the sex of close relatives referred to or adressed (brother, sister, uncle, aunt), so Japasese has different terms according to the sex of the person referred to or addressed: *ani* (older brother), *ane* (older sister), *otōto* (younger brother), *imōto* (younger siter). We find this kind of differentiation in the pronominal systems: the third-person singular in English (*he ; she*) ; *il*(s), *elle*(s) in French. In Japanese, sex differentiation extends to the first person and the second person. It has been pointed out that Thai[8] and Japanese are examples of languages in which some sex-exclusive particles and personal pronouns are used in addition to those terms commonly used by both sexes. In Japanese the common and polite term *watakushi* (I) may be used by any speaker. An abbreviated form of *watakushi—atashi* (and several other equivalent forms: *uchi, watashi, atai,* all meaning 'I' whose usage depends upon the relationship between the speaker and the hearer) is exclusively used by women. A completely different word, *boku* (or *ore, washi*), is used by men. In present-day Japasese there also is sex distinction in usage in second person pronouns (although in most case the second-person pronoun is omitted). While *anata* (polite term for "you") or *anta* (less polite) may be used by both sexes, *kimi* (polite fotm for "you") or *omae* (less polite) is exclusively used by men, in speaking to either sex or inferiors.

Another case that shows that taboo is not the sole cause of sex differentiation in language is the research done by Haas[9] on Koasati, on American Indian language spoken in Louisiana. In Koasati it was only the older women who preserved the distinct forms. This research was remarkable in that it involved morpho-phonemic studies. Taboo did not operate in this case. Both the male and female varieties of Koasati were learned from parents who were equally familiar with both languages and would correct children when necessary. In relating stories to children a women was not prevented from using male forms when quoting a male character.

So far we have discussed the presence of sex different situations in many langauges in non-European countries and some possible explanations of the causes for these differences. Among the many studies on this topic, Jespersen's stands out because he analyzed the Carib situation from a sociolinguistic viewpoint. Until his time those who studied female-male speech differences in non-European societies did not attempt to find

similar phenomena in their own society. To the extent that there was no interest in sexual differentiations in European languages, the roles of male and female were separated, and consequently any linguistic differences that did exist provoked no interest whatever. Differences in male-female linguistic behavior was out of the question. Most scholars made only passing reference to cultural stereotypes of how women spoke. Only Jespersen devoted much discussion to what everyone knew but refused to recognize—that women's speech was different. Jespersen's work remains the classic breakthrough in this field of study. His studies deserve to be highly appreciated; he related the difference of women's language to their social context. He did this without any ontside impetus like today's feminist movement.

II Characteristics of Language Use of Men and Women in English Speech

Overview

Apparently, the English language does not possess differences in the ways men and women use it to the same extent as Japanese does. However, recent concerns about this phenomena, motivated by the feminist movement in the United States, has produced much literature[10] which shows the possibility of distinctions in linguistic performance between the sexes. Sex variety in language is considered to be one of the many facets of linguistic variation, like class, religion, ethnicity, etc., that affect heterogeneous communication systems, especially at the speech level. Unlike Japanese and other non-European languasges which possess the "sex-exclusive" linguistic distinctions as we discussed in the previous chapter, most of sex differentiation in English seems "sex-preferential," which means *frequency* of occurrence. For example, the intensifier *so* ("The sunset was *so* beautiful.") may be used by both sexes expressively, but is likely to appear more often in female speech.

Then, how is the language performance of women and men described in Jespersen's remakable book? He claims women are more conservative than men, avoiding innovations and "coarse and gross expressions,"[5] instinctively preferring refined, standard, euphemistic expressions; men invent new words and expressions, using slang and substandard terms. With a less extensive vocabulary than men, women are given to hyperbole (e. g., "My goodness," "Oh, dear," etc), to intensive words (so, ever, such). According to the linguist, scarcity of vocabulary is responsible for the tendency of women to be linguistically "quicker" (that is, talkative) than men: quicker to learn, to hear and answer. As for sentence constructing skills, Jespersen claims that men use more complicated sentences with more clauses "like a set of Chinese boxes," while women build sentences on the same plane "like a string of pearls, jointed together on a string of *ands* and similar words." The only reference in Jespersen to phonology is his claim that women use "the exggeration of stress and tone-accent to mark emphasis." Frequent occurrence of syntactic looseness—breaking off sentences without finishing them, is also singled out as women's usage. His examples were taken from a number of literary works of his age. As for the causes, he suggests that these phenomena may be traced to the separate activities and social roles of each sex as well as to their status differences.

Although what was presented by Jespersen in 1922 may be a mixed picture of women's (and men's) speech in English and a few other languages, he analyzed extensively the general characteristics of their speech in terms of vocabulary, word taboos, some grammatical forms and language attitudes. Whether one accepts his observations and views or dismisses them, one cannot ignore his contributions to this subject. Frequent references to his book are found in the recent studies of this topic. In this way, Jespersen is said to be a pioneer in the study of sexual differentiations in the English language.

Before going into a detailed analysis of the subject, it would be expedient to refer here to some of the popular methodologies employed in this kind of sociolinguintic study. As research in linguistic sex varieties involves multilayered aspects, to the same extent methodologies to be employed are diverse, since researchers are from a variety of fields as is found in the practice of sociolinguistics investigations.

Jespersen draws on a variety of sources for supporting his findings: old *ethnographical* records (e. g., by Rochefort), literary works (by Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde, etc.), statements by the American Professor

Jastrow referred in Jespersen's work), and anecdotal materials (this involves the use of tape recorders, a popular practice in recent years), etc. Yet in his case, most of the generalizations are based on own *observation* without sufficient supporting evidence, which is vulnerable to criticism (as self-observations are assured to be easily influenced by preoccupation).

The method in past traditional linguistics studies and/or commentaries included the use of *informants, anecdotes* and self-observations. The use of infomants and sampling is currently conventional; for example, Shuy et. al. (1967) and Labov(1972) investigated sex differedtiation in urban varieties of American English in Detroit and New York, respectively, while Trudgill (1973) conducted research on the same topic in the urban British English of Norwich, all by this method. Lakoff(1973) uses herself as an informant in her study of sexual differentiation in American English. *Structural analysis* (or textual analysis) based on the dictionary is often used to search semantic features in literary sources. *Numerical analysis* with the aid of a computer is also available. A number of reserchers rely on the results of *experiments* and *tests*. The method taken for the present paper was by textual analysis, personal observations as well as study of others' works.

It would be impossible to point out which of these methodologies is most appropriate, since each has abvantages and disadvantages of its own. Nevertheless, one thing may be pointed out in this respect; that is, as male speech has long been assumed as the norm in the past, male speech (necessarily given by male infomants) has been emphasized. Thus selection of the appropriate informants is crucial for providing plausible evidence.

Now we have come to the stage of analysis of male and female languages in the English context, and their reflection in society. First we will consider a number of specific aspects of language use by both sexes based on traditional linguistic distinction: (1) phonecics (e.g. pronunciation, intonation patterns, pitch); (2) vocabulary and syntactic usage (the choice of words like adverds and adjectives); (3) semantics[6] (e.g., supposedly parallel words like he/she, man/woman). As stated previously, our topic involves such an extensive area that we must narrow our focus to a limited number of features; thus, after giving a rough description of the characteristics of female language use, we will consider speculative causes relating to their linguistic behavior: Why do such differences occur in English?; Do sex differences in language and language use reflect social differentiation of sex roles in society?

(1) Phonetics

In this section, men's and women's differences in pronunciation, intonation patterns and pitch will be discussed. It is assured that at this level the most detailed as well as the best documented differences are obtained by means of informant, sampling, observations, and tests. at other levels, assumed discrepancies are more vulnerable to attack because they are based on less direct evidence. But what is presented here is not about hundred percent correlations but general tendencies: *if one is a woman she would more likely speak a certain way.*

Biologically, there is not much distinction between the sexes' vocal organs except that women's vocal cords are, in general, shorter, lighter and stretched more tightly than men's. Although Jespersen doesn't refer to features peculiar to women at the phonological level, studies[11] have shown that important linguistic differentiations of the sexes exist in English speech: (1) Women, allowing for other variables, such as age, social class, ethnicity, education, etc. consistently choose the form closer to the *prestige* or *hypercorrect* phonetic variants (e.g., [−ing] vs [−in'] : the fronting the vowels, /æ/, /a/, and /ɔ/; presence or absence of post-vocalic /r/), while men seem to place a higher value on less standard forms. (2) Most female speakers of American English generally have *four* contrastive levels of intonation, while many men have only *three*. Certain patterns are preferred by men and women in different ways. Women have a wider intonational range than men. (3) Women use question intonation more often than men where declarative intonation might be expected; for example, tag question ("It's so lovely, isn't it?" ↑), and also rising intonation

in statement contexts: ("Where's Mary, dear?" "In the garden" ↑)

Pronunciation

Stable sociolinguistic variables, called markers (such as [−ing], [r]) not only show social distribution, but also stylistic differentiations, as observed by Labov[12]. Fasold found, based on data from Detroit dialect study, that the fronting of the vowels, /æ/, /a/, and /ɔ/ was more characteristics of lower-middle-class, women speakers.[13]

Based on the hypothesis that salesgirls in large department stores in the big city are likely to learn prestige forms from their customers, or at least tend toward imitating their customers' speech, Labov studied the social stratification of (r) in three big department stores in New York: Saks, Macy's and Klein−department stores that rank in working conditions (including wages) of the store employeés and prestige in a descending order. The hypothesis predicted: the salespeople in the highest-ranked store will have the highest value of (r); those in the middle-ranked store will have intermediate value of (r); and those in the lowest-ranked store will show the lowest. The method used was by means of informant, observation with tape recorder, tests, etc. The interviewer asked, "Excuse me, where are the women's shoes?" The expected answer was: "Fou*r*th floo*r*." Thus the store, floor within the store, sex and age, occupation (cashier, floorwalker, etc.) race and foreign accent as independent variables, the use of (r) in four occurrences is assured to be the dependent variable.

As the hypothesis predicted, the three groups are ranked by their differential use of (r−1) in the same order as their stratification by extralinguistic factors.

Fig 1-2 shows the percentages of (r-1) used by white saleswomen of the stores, with the same group as in Fig. 1-1. The stratification is practically the same both in direction and outline, although smaller in volume. New York City was an r-pronouncing region in the 18th century, but in the 19th became completely "r-less," due to the influence of London speech.[16] Now r-pronouncing has become for most New Yorkers, a function of both the formality of the context and the social status of the speaker.[17] How does this phenomenon− namely, lower-middle class women tending to use more prestige patterns− correlate with social context?

Another piece of data that will support the phenomenon was presented by Trudgill,[18] based on the study of the (−ing) variable in Norwich English. The generality of this variable is shown as follows:

Table 1 The percentage of Non-R-P-*in'* forms in men and women in Norwich

	MMC	LMC	UMC	MWC	LMC
Male	4	27	81	91	100
Female	0	3	68	81	97

R-P=Received Pronunciation (RP)
MMC=Middle Middle Class
LMC=Lower Middle Class
UMC=Upper Middle Class
MWC=Middle Working Class
LMC=Lower Working Class

Again we can pinpoint the fact that women, especially those of the lower-middle-class, use a higher percentage of RP(in the United States "General American" r-pronunciation). Based on his own extensive investigations and confirmed by others on the social stratifications of stable varieties, such as /r/, /eh/, (−ing), Labov concludes that in speech (especially careful speech) "women tend to be more sensitive than men to the prestige pattern."[19] They tend to "correct more sharply (hypercorrect) than men in formal contexts."[20] In other words female speech tends toward standard norms (upper-class oriented) while male speech tends to

diverge from them. (working-class oriented). As for the latter, masculinity is associated with this trait, which is related to the greater use by men of slang in working-class cultures, or substandard forms.

The finding that women are more sensitive than men to prestige forms corresponds to Jespersen's observations: "Woman as a rule follows the main road of language, while most boys and men have a dislike to some words merely because they feel they are used by everbody and on every occasion."[21] Moreover, as Trudgill writes on the women's language in Koasati[22] where women's speech is considered to be "better," this phenomenon is not restricted to American and British English, but is found in different parts of the world.

Intonation Patterns and Pitch Levels

If "an *intonation meaning* in English modifies the lexical meaning of a sentence by adding to it the *speaker's attitude* toward the content of the sentence"[23] (or as an indication of the attitude to which the speaker expects the hearer to react), then it is worth considering some of the intonation patterns that are differently used by men and women.

While some books[24] on the pitch and intonation of American English imply there are little differences in the use of all intonation (or pitch) patterns between the sexes, differences do seem to exist in certain intonation levels or patterns in general communication situations. Brend[25] claims, based on her recent empirical studies, that certain patterns and levels seem to be entirely lacking from men's speech while others are differently preferred by men and women. For example, she finds men rarely use the highest level of pitch that women use in:

(1) Yes, yes, I see,

Men prefer:

(2) Yes, yes, I see.

Although the tendency may vary to some extent from speaker to speaker, the observations show most men have *three* contrastive levels of pitch while women, generally have at least *four*. In fact, high-pich is a stereotyped attribute of women as we see in children's TV programs like "Sesame Street" where the girl monster timidly speaks with a high pitched voice. The difference may be attributed to differences in the vocal system between the sexes.

Another finding presented by Brend is that although the incomplete and non-final pattern-medial-upstep as in:

(3) When I went to town, I saw you.

When I went to town, I saw you.

is used equally by men and women, the various non-final patterns (labels by Pike) are likely to be used only by women:

(4) I think she has gone.

He's coming soon? (implication pattern)

(5) I'm not sure ... (hesitation pattern)

As for (5) Pike states this pattern implies "endearment" especially when women use it.[26] Another distinction referred to by Brend is that while men use short down-glides (e. g., What are you doing?) they rarely

seem to use the one-syllable, long pitch slides and the reverse glides on one syllable as follows:

(6) Oh my Goodness! ("unexpectedness" and "surprise" patterns)

(7) Oh no.

Moreover, the following patterns are said to be found only in women's speech.

(8) You are coming? ("potite, cheerful" pattern)

and

(9) Don't you like it? ("polite, and cheeful, incomplete sequence and surprise" pattern))

Good bye.

They are used in special contexts, such as speaking to small children.

From the above it might be generalized that women tend to speak with more expressive intonation than men, using a variety of pitch levels. Also, we may say women are more likely to use the rising intonation form, not only for interrogative sentences, but for supposedly special effects: to be cheerful, polite and or to show hesitation, incompleteness or uncertainty. (It seems American Southern women's feminimity can be partly explained by this sentence-final rising intonation which is peculiar to them.)

The fact that the rising intonation conveys certain shades in meaning is pointed out by Pike who interpretes the meaning of incompleteness (or hesitation) added by rising contour as: (1) the necessity for information from the hearer; or (2) doubt on the part of the speaker. The effects of incompleteness or hesitation brought above by the rising rising contour may be better explained by the following examples which Lakoff[27] presents as preferred by women.

(a) Question: How soon are you coming back?
(b) Answer : Oh, ... around five o'clock?

(b) has the form of a declarative answer to a question, yet it has the terminal rising intonation. (_⌐‾). Lakoff interprets this as follows: It is as though (b) were saying. "Five o'clock, if that's OK with you, if you agree." (a) is put in the position of having to prove confirmation, and (b) sounds unsure. In effect, although the answer is the only person that has the required information, he/she appears to be seeking confirmation.

Supporting evidence for this interpretation is the question intonation used for tag questions which are, according to Lakoff, more preferred by women.

(a) It is cheap.
(b) Is it sheap?
(c) It's cheap, isn't it? ↑

(c) is a combination of (a) and (b): it is midway between a definite statement and a yes-no question; it is less positive than (a) but more positive than (b). Speakers of English use this form when they are stating a claim but are not fully confident in the truth of that claim. In this stituation the speaker might have a particular answer in mind —"yes" or "no"—but would rather avoid declaring their feeling directly and leave it open to the person addressed. Lakoff's claim that women use this form more often than men is vulnerable to criticism,[28] because sufficient data is not presented.

Still, do such features—politeness, indefinitness, uncertainty, hesitation (called "patterns of *plight*") in women's intonation patterns in English reflect something about the attitudes which can be explained in terms of social context? These features might be related to the differences in the vocabulary and syntax of men and women to be discussed in the next section.

(2) Vocabulary and Syntax

Vocabulary is a field to which much attention has been paid in studies of men's and women's speech in English. In this section we will explore some of the characteristics of vocabulary usage between the sexes in terms of nouns, particles and adverbs.

As we have observed in the previous chapter it is obvious that the vocabulary used by men and women is different in a number of non-European languages. Distinct differences in vocabulary are found in Japanese too, in which approximately 5,000 words out of a selection of 30,000 common words are used exclusively by women. Consider the following modern Japanese sentences:

Male : Oi meshi kuwanai ka? (Boku) hara hetta yo.
Female : *Nē gohan tabenai? (Atashi) onaka suita wa.*

This casual phrase meaning "Let's eat a meal. I'm hungry," might be heard in any group : in a mixed group or any peer-group, regardless of age. Notice how each sex uses a completly different sentence composed of different words: *Oi* vs *Nē* (address) ; *meshi* vs *gohan* (noun, meaning "meal") ; *kuwanai* vs *tabenai* (verb meaning "don't we eat") ; *Boku* vs *Atashi* (nominativepronoun "I") ; *hara* vs *onaka* (noun, meaning "stomach") ; *hetta* vs *suita* (past form of verb "to be hungry") ; *yo* vs *wa* (particle). Thus, in Japanese sexual differentiation in the use of speech vocabulary is found. In fact, the first words that Japanese children learn are the different pronouns for "I", which they start to learn when they are about three years old.[32]

When about five or six years old, children experience what is called "the second weaning."[33] In English, boys talk rough to identify themselves with their fathers and male culture, while girls continue with female identification and speech patterns under the influence of their mothers, who possess women's linguistic traits — euphemistic avoidance of substandard vocabulary thus staying in the most accepted linguistic area.

In the choice of words, it seems women choose refined, standard words to "give a great and universal influence on linguistic development" as Jespersen claims ; while men avoid words that sound feminine or weak, crtilizing English with many types of slang, taboos, derrogatory terms regarding sex,[34] women, business, drinking,[35] politics, sports, etc. Flexner claims that in his Preface to *Distionary of American Slang* : "In my work on this dictionary, I was constantly aware that most American slang is created and used by males."[36] Men belong to many subgroups which possess specific subcultures, some richer in masculinity (as we have seen at phonetic level). Men create and use such vocabulary to convey emotion ; they select words to express joy, anger, contempt, disappointment. In this respect slang words express personal feeling). To illustrate this in Hemingway's works, well-known for their masculine flavor we find a lot of examples of *macho* speech by the male characters ; "... he's a *bloody four-letter* man as well as a *bloody* coward ..." (*The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber*) : "You *squaw bitch*!" (*Indian Camp*) ; "It was a *damned* find fiesta ... I've had a *swell* time." (*FIESTA*)[37] These men cannot be satisfied with standard words frequently used in teaching and habit.

On the other hand, the vocabulary of women is said to be much less extensive than that of men. As Flexner states, women's slang words in English so far found have been only among nurses, waitressess, stewardesses and prostitutes. Compared to that of men, women's vocabulary is still restricted to topics such as family, housework, clothing, colors,[38] hairstyles, food, and the individual, in spite of comprehensive education and mass media. However, as the rigidity of social differentiation between the sexes decreases, the vocabulary of women should become more extensive ; the more open the occupational chances for women, the more exposed they will be to diverse vocabulary. In this way, women are beginning to share men's slang.and accordingly

the volume of their vocabulary is growing. Along with their restricted vocabulary, women do not seem to cultivate a sense of humor. As a matter of fact, women on the whole don't tell jokes as much as men.

While slang is a field of usage dominated by men some parts of the English language are dominated by women. Some adjectives found in cartoons, magazines and heard in the daily life are primarily used by women. Men rarely use adjectives such as "heavenly," "divine," "cute," "adorable," "lovely," "pretty," etc. (Lakoff calls these "empty adjectives"); men prefer more neutral ones like: "very", "terrific", "great" as in:

Men: What a *terrific* idea!
Women: What a *divine* idea!

According to Lakoff, women's adjectives are used appropriately when the speaker considers the context trivial —unimportant to the world. She illustrates this by saying that a women executive will never use these expressions to show her approval at an important conference. Lakoff's suggestion on women's adjectives is that these words are not essentially "feminine"; rather they imply "uninvolvement."or "lack of power." It is interesting that academic men, hippies, and upper-class British men can be included in these groups. Lakoff claims "any group in a society to which these labels are applicable may presumably use these terms."[39]

In addition to adjectives, some adverbs, particularly, those of intensity like "awfully", "terribly", "vastly," "just", "quite" and "so" (all used in the sense of "very") are more extensively used by women. For example:

It is *just* adorable.
It is *so* kind of you to say so.
It is *terribly* sorry to be late.

These hyperbolic intensifiers are said to be found not only in the English world, but also in a number of European languages such as French, German, Dutch, etc. As for present day Japanese, women use hyperbolic expressions like *sugoku, monosugoku* (meaning "very") and used in casual speech. This is one of the features of women's speech in Japan. It is interesting to note that in the 11th century Japasese literature in *kana* (which was considered to be a women's alphabet in contrast to the men's *kanji*) by female writers, one of the most frequently used intensifiers by court ladies was *ito* a kind of refined intensifier as in "*ito ureshi*" (meaning "so very glad"). A Japasese female linguist surveyed the frequency of this term in the typical classical works by women in those days, including *Genji Monogatari,* and *Makuranososhi* (The Pillow Book of Sei Shônagon) She found approximately 20% of the whole vocabulary consisted of this term.[40]

Part of the explanation for the female preference for intensifiers might be found in women's less extensive vocabulary. This interpretation is based on my learning and teaching experience in foreign langauges — English and French. As we observe present day adolescents, they seem to resort to intensifiers more than ever, instead of finding proper terms and expressions when they want to express strong feeling. Scarcity of vocabulary might be considered a partial cause for this phenomenon. Jespersen attributes the frequent use of *so* (and *such*) to women's syntactic looseness; namely to leave sentences unfinished. He insists: "Because women tend to start talking without having thought out what they are going to say,"[41] they cannot follow something like "that I must treat you to something extra" saying for example, "I'm so glad you've come."

My interpretation of this phenomenon is related to the occurrence of unfinished endings frequnetly used by Japasese women. One example is quoted in Kindaichi's *The Japanese-Language* (p.212), in which the writer refers to Japanese women who often say, in answer to a telephome call: *Hai, hai,* So-and-So *de gozaimasu ga* (or *keredomo*) which means "Yes, yes, this is So-and-So, but". *Ga* or *keredomo* ("but") do not actually mean anything. They are added merely to avoid being stiff or dry. The clause might be followed by, for example, "What can I do for you?" but it is left unsaid. Some expressions of this sort have become so common that they give no impression of elipsis.

Avoidance of being definite or conclusive in speech and preferring to be hesitant and be inconclusive is a trait

in women's speech. To support this view, Lakoff refers to women's more frequent use of "hedges" of various kinds: "well," "y'know,"; "sort (or kind) of" and "I think," "I guess," "I wonder."

Bill is *sort* of nice.

or

I *guess* you can do it.

can be legitimately used in any appropriate context. But the female speaker especially seems to use "hedges," even if she is perfectly certain of the truth of the assertion. Lakoff states this is because the female speaker wants to give the impression that the speaker lacks authority and is in no position to talk definitely. It is obvious that "hedges," like rising intonation and unfinished endings, are effective in reducing the friction between the speaker and the addressee. By avoiding precise statements with euphemistic expressions on the part of speaker, we leave interpretation open to the addressee and politeness. Let's consider the following:

(a) Help me!
(b) Please help me.
(c) Will you help me?
(d) Will you please help me?
(e) Help me, won't you?

(a) is a direct order or command. The speaker usually is superior in status. (b) and (c) are simple requests. The latter is similar to the inquiry: "Are you willing to help me?" and though the decision is left up to the addressee, a "yes" answer is expected to the.positive question "will you" (d) is more polite than (b) or (c) because it is a combination of the two, suggesting the addressee retains the final decision. (d) is a kind of tag question, which we have previously discussed. Here the speaker expects an affirmative answer, although giving the impression that the option is entirely left to the addressee. As for (f), the question is in the form of a negative "won't you." The speaker implies the strong possibility of a negative answer from the addressee, thus leaving the addressee open to refuse. (e) and (f), the forms most favored by women, are the politest requests and "politeness involves an absence of a strong statement, and women's speech is devised to prevent the expression of strong statements."[43] This fact is reinforced by the terms of respect in Japanese, a large part of which includes women's language. They are very much related to social context. However, this is beyond the scope of the present paper.

Conclusion

We have been concerned with some of the properties of language use and attitudes observed in the speech of women in terms of phonetics, vocabulary and syntax. A brief summary follows:

(1) Hypercorrect and pretstige forms: Generally women speak more grammatically, avoiding non-standard form: they tend to use the more widely spread national prestige norms.

(2) Polite forms: Women speak more politely than men. This is related to hypercorrectness in grammar.

(3) Restricted vocabulary: The frequent use of hyperbole (Oh, my!), or intensifiers (terribly, so, such) by women might be considered compensation for their generally "correct" usage.

(4) Use of feminine words such as "divine" and "cute" is a singnal of "uninvolvement."

(5) Avoidance of accuracy or certainty by the speaker — the use of question intonation for tag questions (It's so lovely, isn't it ↑) and in declaratives (You saw it?), as well as "hedges" (She's sort of cute!). This is also related to politeness.

The sexual differences in language reflect the attitudes that men and women themselves have toward their language and society. At the same time, social values and sex roles affect speaker's attitudes toward

linguistic differences. Using women's language identifies one as a women. It represents "proper" behavior. In English speaking societies, standard English has high prestige and the speaker of this variety is rewarded accordingly. Women are generally more conscious about this social value. In other words, they are more status-conscious than men. In Koasati, as we have seen earlier, women were reported to speak better than men; women spoke with a soft and pretty accent—a symbol of feminimity. This would have been appropriate language. (In an extreme case—in a primitive tribe—the use of inappropriate language, namely, taboo forms, may even lead to execution.) To the extent a society expects women to behave in a "feminine" way, women's speech tends toward that end. As women are socialized, through the influences of their mothers, teachers and popular TV figures with socially stereotyped sex roles, from early girlhood they are taught to believe that asserting themselves strongly isn't "nice" or "ladylike." They prefer to say "I guess that dress is so adorable. ↑" (even if they are confident) instead of "That dress is pretty."

The degree of politeness used in women's speech is related, to a great extent, to the social roles of the sexes: it seems the larger and more inflexible is the difference between the social roles of men and women, the larger and more rigid linguistic differences tend to be. This is explicit, for example, in Japan where the social roles of men and women used to be and still rigidly stratified. Accordingly, sex variants of language are strongly differentiated. The use of polite forms or terms of respect is a social symbol expected of Japanese women. What is reported in *Keigo to Keigo-ishiki* (Honorifics and Awaraness of them)[44] illustrates this clearly: in Japan women are supposed to talk politely to men. They are expected to be submissive to men. The complicated system of term of respect in the Japanes language, which lnvolves the use of different words, suffixes or prefixes, is significantly related to social context—social class, age, sex and attitudes of the speaker and the addressee. In Japan it is an asset, especially for women to be able to use honorifics properly.

Although American society is far less socially and sexually stratified, politiness forms exist implicitly. All in all, politeness forms involve an absence of strong statement, and women's language avoids expressions of assertion. It is true that correctness and politeness, hesitance and indefinitness in women's langauge contribute to make it "better" and "more refined"; soft and delicate. However, the differences, at the same time imply that women are socailly "separate but unequal." Through the analysis of women's linguistic attitudes in English and some other languages we have seen how the speakers' attitudes toward linguistic variants—and hence their actual usage of those variants are affected by social values and sex roles.

Note:

This is a part of my unpublished paper: "Women's Language: A Study of Language in Social Context." My interest in this topic was stimulated and developed during my stay in the United States from 1974-1977. Findings and reasonings are based on my personal observations as well as on the study of others' works in this field. I am especially grateful to several members of The Association of Americal University Women and Jim Russell for their valuable assistance and suggestions.

Notes:

1. Ann Bodine, "Sex Differnetiation in Language," Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley, eds., *Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance,* Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1975, 134-6.
2. Otto Jespersen, *Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin,* New York: Norton & Company Inc., 1964, 237-8. (First printed 1922)
3. *Ibid.*
4. See Cross-Cultural Summary of Sex Difference in Language in Bodin, "Sex Differentiation in Language," 134-5.
5. *Ibid.*

6. Discussion on sexism in semantics is briefly referred in this paper. More is found in my unpublished paper: "Women's Language: A Study of Language in Social Context"
7. Jespersen, *op. cit.*, 237.
8. Peter Trudgill, *Sociolinguistics; An Intoduction,* Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1974, 87.
9. *Ibid.*, 12-19.
10. The rapid increase in interest in this field in recent years is shown by the extensive literature published on this topic. See Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley eds., *Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance.*
11. Ralph W. Fasold, "A Sociolinguistic Study of the Pronunciation of Three Vowels in Detroit Speech," Washington, D. C., Center of Applied Linguistics, Mimeo, 1968; William Labov, *Sociolinguistics Pattern,* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972; R. W. Shy et. al., *Linguistic Correlates of Social Stratification in Detroit Speech* Final Reprt, Project 6-1347, Washington, D. C., U. S. Office of Education. 1967, 241; Peter Trudgill, "Sex, Covert Prestige, and Linguistic Change in the Urban British English of Norwich, "*Language in Society,* 1, 1972, 179-90.
12. Labov, *op. cit.*, 237.
13. Fasold, *op, cit.*
14. Labov, *op. cit.*, 51.
15. *Ibid.*, 56.
16. *Ibid.*, 145.
17. But the writer was told recently by a while male New York linguist that the trend is getting in reverse.
18. Trudgill, *op. cit.*, 92.
19. Labov, *op. cit., 243.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. Jespersen, *op. cit.*, 247.
22. Trudgill. *op. cit.*, 92-3.
23. K. l. Pike, *The Intonation of American English,* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1945, 21.
24. K. L. Pike & R. S. Wells, "The Pitch Phonemes of English," *Lasguage,* 21, 27-39.
25. Ruth M. Brend, "Male-Female Intonation Patterns in American English," *Proceedings* of the Seventh *Intonational Conpress of Phonetic Sciences,* 1971, The Hague, Mouton, 1971, 866-870. Reprinted in Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley, eds., *Language and Sex Difference and Dominance.*
26. *Pike, op. cit.*
27. Robin Lakoff, *Language and Woman's Place,* New York: Haprper and Row, 1975, 17.
28. Lakoff's claim is openly attacked for several reasons including errors of reasoning by Berry Dubois and Isabel Crouch, "The question of tag questions in women's speech; they don't really use more them, do they?", *Language in Society,* Cambridge University Press. Vol. 4 No.3, Dec. 1975, 289.
29. Mary Ritchie Key, "Linguistic Behavior of Male and Female," *Linguistics* 88 (Aug. 15, 1972), 15-31.
30. Lakoff, *op, cit., 53.*
31. Brend, *op. cit.*
32. Etsutaro Iwabuchi, *et. al., Kotoba no Tanjo* (The Birth of a Word), Tokyo, NHK Press, 1968, 139-42. According to the statistics in the book, at the age of three, 74 % of the boys use "Boku" for "I" and 39.5% of the girls call themselves "Watashi" for "I".
33. Margaret Mead, *Male and Female,* New York: Morrow, 1949, 135-6.
34. More than 1,200 words are said to be created for word "fuck."
35. The word having the most synonyms is said to be "drunk."
36. Harold Wentworth & Stuart Berg Flexner, Preface to *Dictionary of American Slang* (second edition), New York: Thomas Y. Growell Co., 1975.
37. Quotations are all from Ernest Hemingway, *The Essential Hemingway,* Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1972.

38. Lakoff refers to color terms like "lavender", "mauve," "beige" as being used by females because of their triviality.
39. Lakoff, *op. cit.*, 14.
40. Akiko Jugaku, *Nihongo to Onna* (Japanse and Japanese Women), Tokyo : Iwanami Shinsho, 1979, 66.
41. Jespersen, *op. cit.*, 250.
42. Lakoff, *op. cit.*, 19.
43. *Keigo to Keigo-Ishiki* (Honorifics and Awareness of them), Tokyo : Kokuritsu Kokugo Kenkyujo Report No.11, 1957.

Some Aspects of Women's Linguistic Behavior in English Speech Forms

——A Sociolinguistic Study——

Hisako Sukegawa

Sociolinguistics involves studying the relations between language and society. It has been recognized that there is reciprocity between them: our behavior and thought in society unconsciously pattern and are patterned by our language use. In dealing with social dialects in English, three primary factors are considered relevant for categorizing varieties—social class, race and sex.

In this paper we observe, based on an analysis of sexual speech variations in English, how language interacts with society. Following a brief discussion of speech differentiations related to sex in a non-European context, some characteristics of language use by men and women in English (particularly in American English) are presented in terms of (1) phonetics, (2) syntax and vocabulary. An occasional reference is made to Japanese. Most of the linguistic distinctions which are referred to for English here are "sex-preferential" rather than "sex-exclusive."

Although Jespersen referred to sex varieties in English and in some other European languages early in this century, it was not until the U. S. feminist movement and sociolinguistics came into being in the late '60's that the study of women's linguistic behavior became a serious topic.

Basically, the re-definition of male and female roles in society influence their linguistic behavior. We should carefully observe how the changes in their attitudes in society are illuminated by language and how language use by men and women consequently influences their social behavior.