

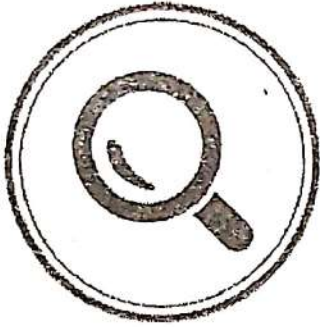
AYDI EST.

Open Learning & Translation

2021-2022

Fourth Year

Second Term



P.5



The Last Part

L9+L10

Discourse

Analysis

18.02.2022

25.02.2022

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DA 4.P5 Last

AYDI 2022/ T2



# LECTURE NO. 9

18.02.2022

HELLO EVERYONE!

## "Language and Media"

Last time, we stopped at the idea about the accents of reporters; are they differ among the programs, or between day and night times? Is there a standard accent in Arabic?

Let us continue reading.

At one time this difference was especially noticeable on British television when a particular sports journalist would modify slightly his accent depending on which program he was reporting for. On the national six o'clock evening news he would give the sports news bulletin in a mainstream RP accent, and half an hour later, on the local London South East news, he would shift into a more marked London accent.

المذيعين في بريطانيا لديهم المقدرة على تغيير اللفظة وفقاً للبرنامج الذي يقدمونه. فمثلاً البرامج الرياضية، ليس هناك داعٍ للحديث باللفظة البريطانية الرسمية، وإنما اللهجة المحلية.

Allan Bell (1984) uses the term **audience design** for speakers changing their style of speech according to the person or people they are addressing. Bell also suggests that, since radio and television presenters are addressing a distant, unknown audience of viewers and listeners, then they may design their speech according to certain linguistic 'values' or **norms**. In this case, newsreaders may be selecting one **variety** over another according to the conventionally prestigious norms of RP rather than according to the actual audience they are addressing. This is a particular type of audience design that Bell calls 'referee design'.

(Referee design) means the situations where the speaker does not accommodate to the speech style of their immediate audience, but rather "creatively uses language features.

ابتكرت هذه اللغوية اصطلاحاً اسمه (audience design)، أي يجب على المتكلم في التلفزيون أو

الإذاعة أن يغير لفظه وفقاً للجمهور.

أحياناً ليس هناك داعٍ للمتكلم في التلفزيون أو الإذاعة أن يغير لفظه وفقاً للجمهور، لأنه وفي سياقات معينة يعلم المتحدث نوعية جمهوره ويتكلم تبعاً لهم. أي أن المتحدث هو من يحدد اللفظة التي سيتحدث بها. كما يحددون نظام الكلام وطريقته بالاعتماد على القيم والأعراف اللغوية.

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## Variation in register

**Register** has been defined as **linguistic variation** according to the context of use (Halliday 1972). This means that we expect to find language used in different ways according to the situation it occurs in, and according to different types of media.

(Register) هو تنوع لغوي يختلف حسب سياق الاستخدام. ونحن نتوقع أنه يتم استخدام اللغة بطرق



For example, the register of weather forecasting in Britain depends on three features: *field*, *tenor*, and *mode*.

Its topic or **field** (the weather around the country), its **tenor** (the way it is delivered by the presenter), and its communicative **mode** (speech, writing and some visual modes in the form of maps and icons).

This is what we mean by Register in the context of weather forecasting.

We expect a weather bulletin to contain technical vocabulary relating to temperature, high and low pressure, etc., but we also expect the presenter, unlike newscasters, to address the audience directly, by saying things like 'look at this rain moving in from the west here'.

إن طبيعة النشرة الجوية ومن يقدمها لها خصائص تختلف عن البرامج الأخرى. وهذه الخصائص هي (field, tenor, mode). فمثلاً يمكن لمقدم النشرة الجوية أن يستخدم تعابير لا يستخدمها من يقدم نشرة الأخبار.

On television weather reports, there is also usually some visual representation of the weather being described, for example a small sun to represent sunshine, arrows for the direction of the wind, and snowflakes for wintry conditions. The register of weather forecasting depends also on the cultural context of the broadcast. The British format has just been described, but the format can vary from country to country.

This is also what we mean by Register in the context of weather forecasting.  
يعتمد سجل اللغة الخاص بالنشرة السياقي الثقافي للإذاعة والبلاد الذي يتكلم عنه.

The same expectations of linguistic register (language variation according to context) apply to other media **genres**, where there are conventions of appropriate language use for specific types of program.

Each program, each media genre has its own particular or specific register.  
نفس التوقعات الخاصة بسجل اللغة والتنوع اللغوي حسب السياق تنطبق على أنواع مختلفة أخرى من الإعلام، ونجد لكل برنامج مفردات خاصة فيه وتميزه عن غيره من البرامج.  
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### Public participation in the media

Programs which involve audience participation, such as *Oprah Winfrey* in the United States, have been growing in popularity and number, and achieve very high viewing ratings. There is some disagreement about whether these programs provide the opportunity for more democratic debate in the media, or whether they in fact depoliticize important issues by presenting them in this format.

Here, linguists are augmenting whether those programs that involve audience participation are they really democratic debate try to present themselves, or is it a lie.

Some theorists (e.g. Livingstone and Lunt 1994) have argued that these programs open up access to an important public domain for people whose voices and opinions are not usually heard on television, and that talk shows provide a



powerful space for the voices of ordinary, lay members of the public to be privileged over the voices of institutional representatives and experts whose opinions and views usually predominate elsewhere in other media genres.

يجادل بعض المنظرون ويقولون إن هذه البرامج تزود الناس بطريقة الوصول إلى الفضاء الإعلامي بإعطائهم دور للكلام والتعبير عن أفكارهم، وهذا لا نجده في برامج أخرى على القناة نفسها. كما يجادلون بأن البرامج الحوارية تزودنا بفضاء قوي للأشخاص العاديين ليكون لهم صوت. وهذا كل يأتي بفضل وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.

Others (e.g. Fairclough 1995) have argued against this view, saying that audience participation programs are structured in such a way that the discourse of the experts and the institution is still the framing, dominant discourse, while the discourse of lay participants is always mediated and constrained within the institutional format.

- (Lay participants) means ordinary people or ordinary participants.

In other words, democracy here is just deceptive that everything is controlled, even when we think that it is not, but everything is controlled.

عارض منظرون آخرون هذا التوجه، وقالوا بأن هذه البرامج الحوارية ليست عفوية وإنما لها صلات معينة ويتحكم خبراء فيها وبالحديث ضمنها.

An example of this can be found in a study of the interaction between host and callers to a London talk radio show. Ian Hutchby (1996) explores the strategies available to participants in argument sequences, and shows that typically the caller 'goes first', by stating their position in relation to a particular topic, while the host 'goes second', challenging the caller's opinion without necessarily having to produce one of their own.

مثال من برنامج إذاعي في لندن بين المضيف والمتصلين. حيث قام هذا الباحث باستكشاف الاستراتيجيات المتوفرة للمشاركين في البرامج الحوارية، ووجد أن المتصل هو من يساعد المضيف من خلال التعبير عن رأيه وما يريده. وخبرنا بأن المضيف يتحدى وجهة نظر المتصل دون أن يضيف أي شيء جديد.

The following transcript illustrates this phenomenon:

- 1 Caller: When you look at e:r the childcare facilities in
- 2 this country, .hh we're very very low (.) i-on
- 3 the league table in Europe of (.) you know if
- 4 you try to get a child into a nursery it's
- 5 very difficult in this country. .hh An' in fact it's
- 6 getting wor::se.
- 7 Host: What's that got to do with it.
- 8 Caller: .ph Well I think whu- what 'at's gotta d-do
- 9 with it is...

(Hutchby 1996: H:21.11.88:11.)

What is your analyze to this call between the caller and host?

These numbers indicate how many sentence the caller say.

The word words and wrong punctuation marks indicate the emphasis of



caller on what he/ she was talking about.

The host did not add anything to what the caller said.

In this example, the writer want to show us that the caller is presenting an idea, and the host does not try to give, support, or argue against. The host, basically, is repeating, not adding any new information.

The host is trying to challenge the caller opinion but without trying to produce a point of their own.

Another strategy which also contributes to the interactional power of the television host over audience participants is illustrated in the following transcript of a sequence in a British talk show, *Kilroy*. Here, the talk of the lay audience member is directed and to some extent controlled by the host's intervention and questioning:

- 1 Host: Tell me about this (.) household
- 2 Alice: erm well both my parents are very loving (.)
- 3 very accepting of lots of things (.) and (.)
- 4 therefore that rubs off (.) on my sister and
- 5 I-erm
- 6 Host: – how old are you
- 7 Alice: nineteen
- 8 Host: how old's your sister
- 9 Alice: sixteen
- 10 Host: mmm
- 11 Alice: and erm (1.0) I've lived with both separately (.)
- 12 I've lived with Dad for the last couple of years
- 13 – now
- 14 Host: – does Dad have a lover
- 15 Alice: Yes he does (.) –Paula
- 16 Host: – You live with Dad and lover
- 17 Alice: yes
- 18 Host: How old were you when you lived with Dad and
- 19 lover
- 20 Alice: erm (1.0) I was seventeen when I moved to
- 21 Melbourne
- 22 Host: cause you problems
- 23 Alice: no
- 24 Host: did you find it strange
- 25 Alice: no

(Thornborrow 1997: Adoption/Kilroy/1994)

هذا المثال عن مضيف في التلفاز وعلاقته بالمشاركين من الجمهور في برنامج حوارى. كان يتم توجيه مداخلة الشخص العادي من الجمهور والسيطرة عليها من قبل تداخلات المضيف وأسئلته.

As you can see in this conversation, the host is interfering all the time,



controlling which is going to say and what kind of questions he wants to ask in, therefore he is controlling the answers, and he does not give Alice the chance to express her opinion freely.

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### Language, society and virtual power

So far, we talked about television and radio, and now we will talk about social platforms on the Internet.

To conclude this chapter we look briefly at the development of computer mediated communication (CMC) over the past two decades. This new form of communication can take a variety of forms, from email exchanges to synchronous (real-time) interaction in chat rooms and MUDs (Multi-User Dimensions), to asynchronous (postponed-time) interaction in newsgroups. David Crystal (2001) provides a comprehensive overview of the linguistic features of CMC, and the language we use to communicate on the web.

- (Computer mediated communication) means (التواصل الذي يتم عن طريق الحاسب); it is defined as any human communication that occurs through the use of two or more electronic devices.

This has been given various names including 'netspeak', 'netlish', 'weblish', 'wired-style' and 'cyberspeak',

They all refer to our use of Internet, especially social platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc.

...and some of the words and expressions first coined in this context have now become part of the language we use every day. Crystal gives examples of terms such as 'multi-tasking', 'dot.com', and 'he's 404' (2001: 19) which are used 'offline' as well as 'online'.

تم اصطلاح هذه الكلمات وتركيبها عن قصد لوصف هذه اللغة المستخدمة في العالم الافتراضي. وأصبح لدينا عبارات تُستخدم في العالم الافتراضي ونبتناها في الواقع وأصبحت هي العبارات جميعاً متداخلة.

But many of the questions we ask in this book about how language can be powerful apply to social relations in virtual realities just as much as they do to social relations in 'real' life. What are some of the issues involved?

*What do you understand from this paragraph? What is the main idea?*

About communication in both real and virtual life, and the relationship how the Internet or the virtual world that social platforms have provided and have become inseparable from our real world today. Also the certain vocabulary or words we use online and how they become part of everyday communication, such as (تشبيك).

### 1. Social identity

In the early days of CMC it was thought that this new medium would result in more democratic communication,

The fact we have now social platforms they told us this will pave the way for



more freedom of speech. However, it is not the case. It has opened the window to express ourselves but it is limited and has restrictions.

...because a person's social identity (their gender, ethnicity, age) can be hidden in the virtual world.

In Facebook, you can choose your age, name maybe (now they have restrictions), etc. You can create a fake account.

In cyberspace, people can also play with identity and present themselves in different personas,

For *Identity*, you can make yourself a male or female. For *Personas*, instead of saying you are a student you could say I am a professor or doctor.

so the internet would be a place where social hierarchies become levelled out, and people could encounter each other in a more equal way. However, this has turned out to be not quite so simple. As Nancy Deuel found in her study of virtual sex interactions, stereotypical interpretations of gendered behavior still prevail:

- (Levelled out) means becoming equal.

لقد سمح الإنترنت بالتخلص من الهرمية، حيث أصبح باستطاعة أي شخص اختلاق هوية جديدة والتخفي خلفها، وأصبح باستطاعة الناس أيضاً للتفاعل مع الآخرين بطريقة متساوية وراء هويتهم الزائفة.

في دراسة جرت، تم إيجاد ضمن التفاعلات الافتراضية الجنسية أن هناك صورة نمطية معينة مرتبطة بالذكر وأخرى مرتبطة بالأنثى. بمعنى أن للذكر طريقة معينة في الكلام تختلف عن الطريقة التي تتحدث فيها الأنثى.

### Example.

Sexual aggression is assumed to be a male trait and one participant notes: 'It seems to me that if a female character shows any bit of intelligence and sexual recognition, people will think she's a male IRL. If she flirts shamelessly and has a smutty description, people will think she's a male IRL.' (1996: 134)

- (IRL) is used in social media to distinguish between online activity (in games, on social media, or on TV) and the real world.

This is a part of stereotypical interpretations of gendered behaviour.

نحن نفترض أن (الاعتداء الجنسي) هو أمر مرتبط بالذكور.

So while it may be possible to disguise your identity on the Net, the people you interact with will still make assumptions about who you are based on what you say and how you say it.

من الممكن إخفاء الهوية عن الآخرين، ورغم ذلك سيتمرون في تخمين هوية الشخص وجنسيته ومعلوماته، وذلك من خلال قراءة ما تكتبه أو تقوم به في هذا العالم الافتراضي.

## 2. 'Netiquette'

The internet makes it possible for people who are geographically scattered thousands of miles away from each other to interact either in real time or with a very small time delay. This has led to the concept of cyberspace as a 'global village' (Crystal 2001: 5) where people who use the Net are members of a virtual



community.

(Netiquette) comes from the word (Etiquette), and it refers to the behaviour that is expected to follow on social media. For example, you should not use swore or aggressive words and words that show discrimination, whether sexual or ethnical. You will be reported and later be blocked if you use them.

*Are there any advantages to the fact that we have become living in a virtual community somehow?*

Knowing and communicating with other people, learning about the cultures' habits, sports.

سمح الإنترنت للناس (بغض النظر عن مكانهم الجغرافي) أن يتواصلوا مع بعضهم البعض، سواء بنفس اللحظة أو في لحظة مؤجلة، وهذا ما أدى لإيجاد مفهوم "العالم الافتراضي" وأصبح لدينا مصطلح لهذا العالم "القرية العالمية". كما أصبح هناك تشارك وتبادل بين مختلف الثقافات.

As in any other community, rules and codes of behavior have developed in order to control the way that members of the community behave.

مثل أي مجتمع آخر، تحكم هذا المجتمع مجموعة من ضوابط وقواعد.

Entering a chat room as a 'newbie' means having to learn the conventions and rules of interaction in that space.

- (Newbie) means a new member.

Each Facebook group, for example, has its rules, which you really need to read first and sign to agree these rules because if you disagree with them and later on you reach these laws, you will be banned from this group.

إذا أردنا الدخول لغرف الدردشة كمستخدم جديد، يتطلب ذلك معرفة قواعد هذه الغرفة واستخدامها وكيفية التصرف ووقت الكلام.

Many newsgroups have a FAQ (frequently asked questions) file which sets out what these rules are, some even have moderators or 'wizards': people who are prepared to spend time monitoring the use of a group and making sure that rules are kept.

It is very important and a part of Netiquette.

يوجد ملف للأسئلة التي تتكرر كثيراً مع أجوبتها، كما يوجد أشخاص يشرفون على المجموعة ويتأكدون من أن المشتركين يتبعون قواعد هذه المجموعة.

Inappropriate behavior can get you sanctioned, and possibly excluded from, a group. 'Flaming' (aggressive verbal behavior), 'spamming' (sending unwanted long messages) and 'grandstanding' (posting your opinions widely with no respect for the topic of a newsgroup) are all activities that can lead to sanctions.

إن أي تصرف غير لائق أو غير مناسب يعرض صاحبه للعقوبة والاستبعاد من المجموعة.

One example of this is using a 'kill file', a kind of shield which can be used to prevent unwanted, offensive messages from getting through to you. Kollock and Smith (1996) describes this kind of shield as a powerful interactional device, one that can 'make invisible any objectionable person' (120).

However, it works only on an individual, not a community, level, and, even if you banish someone from your screen, other users may not, so you will still see future



postings if other participants comment on them. What is particularly interesting about the rules that attempt to control social interaction in cyberspace is that it is the people who use the Net who establish those rules. Cyberspace is a community regulated not yet by a 'top-down' authority but by a 'bottom-up' process developed by internet users.

So, there is a hierarchy inside the space of Internet, but this hierarchy is controlled by the users of Internet. Recently, in worldwide there become cybercrimes (جرانم إلكترونية), if you spread lies about governmental issues for example, you will end up in jail. So, there are rules.

عند حجب شخص ما، لا يعني ذلك حجب المستخدمين الآخرين لهذا الشخص، وهذا يؤدي لأنه من الممكن أن ترى محتوى وإعلانات هذا الشخص أو هذه الجهة.  
في العالم الافتراضي، المستخدمون هم من يتحكمون بقواعد اللعب.

### 3. Cyberspace: a socially powerful community?

هل العالم الافتراضي قوي اجتماعياً؟

In her study of a community protest, Laura Gurak (1996) explains how a database called 'MarketPlace: Households' (listing details about millions of American households and produced by a company called Lotus) was prevented from becoming commercially available.

The release of this product became the subject of an intense debate about privacy, not just in newspapers but across internet newsgroups and bulletin boards. For two months across the United States, people were posting information about the database, and how to contact Lotus to complain about the violation of their privacy. The speed and efficiency of this medium resulted in a highly effective campaign to stop the database going on sale.

Facebook or other social media platforms are very important nowadays because you can launch a complaint online against a certain kind of behaviour, against a certain kind of actions, and you can stop it, if there are a good number of people that support you.

Gurak makes the point that what she calls 'rhetorical communities', diverse groups of people who participate in protests and campaigns via the internet, can be socially and politically powerful. In cases such as this, CMC can provide a public forum for action and protest, as so many participants can become involved very quickly in a campaign.

Recently, I am sure that there are many hashtag campaigns, for example, #MeToo campaign about sexual harassment, it started in Europe and nowadays it is taking part in the Arab world, with many women protesting online, especially those who are suffering from sexual harassment by their relatives, or strangers. They opposing this very bravely on Internet asking for help because sometimes the police cannot help them in their own countries or they are asking for the attention of the police to come and rescue them. It is amazing how people recently, women and children, have been using Internet to ask for help.



Facebook or any other media platform can be used to help each other as well.

There is a Syrian program called (نقطة ع السطر), they give support to women and children who are victims of domestic violence. So, recently, there are many people are contacting them, reporting, and complaining that other neighbours are victims of domestic violence.

بإمكان مجموعات متنوعة من الناس، يشاركون بحملات واحتجاجات على الإنترنت، أن يكون لهم دور وأثر اجتماعي وسياسي في العالم الحقيقي. وفي هذه الحالة يزودنا الـ (CMC) بمنتدى لعامة الناس وبهذه الطريقة نستطيع أن ننخرط في نشاط معين.

### Activity

If you regularly use internet sites such as chat rooms, or post to a newsgroup, what are the rules that govern behavior in these cyberspaces? How do you know what they are, and what happens if you break them?

*Can you name rules that you are aware of in chat rooms, or newsgroups, according to your experience?*

The rules differ from a group to another, and they are depending on the group topic and its members:

- It is not allowed to use violence words, and no aggressive language.
- To stay away from politics, religious, and sexual topics and issues.

*How do you know what they are, and what happens if you break them?*

There is a rules file written, and you should submit agreement about it. If you break them, you will be sanctioned, and possibly excluded from this group.

### Summary

In this chapter we have discussed the power of the media to determine what counts as news, and also how it gets represented.

لقد ناقشنا كيف يحدد الإعلام ما يُعدّ من الأخبار وما لا يُعتبر خبراً، وكيف يتم تمثيل هذا الخبر وتجسيده ونقله.

We have outlined the conflicting views of the media, on the one hand as organs of democracy, providing essential public information and on the other as powerful monopolies which relentlessly pursue their own interests.

This shows that who the monopolies on the media are. They have actually their own interests, never about the people, but about making money. It is about the ideology in these institutions that they want the people to follow.

تحدثنا عن وجهات النظر المختلفة في الإعلام، حيث ممكن أن نرى هذا الموضوع على أنه أحد أشكال الديمقراطية وتفعيل دور الناس، وآخرون يرونه أحد أشكال الاحتكار بيد أشخاص معينين. وتوجد سياسة محددة لكل برنامج دون وجود أي شيء عفوي على الإطلاق.

With the increase of public access to broadcasting space, and particularly with the arrival of the World Wide Web, and its potential for unregulated mass communication, these questions remain central to the debates about the function and power of the mass media. Are they providing an emerging forum for public discourse, or are they still closely monitored institutions with hierarchies of discourse?



and systems of 'gatekeeping' which continue to control who gets to say what, and how?

*Do you think media has changed since the invention of social platforms? Do you think radio and television in the Arab world have changed somehow because of Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc.?*

Yes, a little bit.

People or the participants (the virtual community on Facebook, or WhatsApp) now they have become more active participants, they have a voice somehow, and their voice is somehow to a certain extent is being heard. It is different from one country to another and from one program to another, depending on the policies and politics of the institutions.

An analysis of the language and discourse used in mediated contexts provides a valuable way of finding evidence to support or counter these claims.

There are always these two camps, one arguing that media is changing and it has become more democratic, and the other thinks that it is all again it is very controlled by the institution, where what you say and how you say it is being monitored all the time.

مع انتشار الشبكة العنكبوتية، ستبقى هذه الأسئلة في أذهاننا لفترة طويلة، لأنه موضوع جدلي. وهذا الموضوع يخص وظيفة وعمل الإعلام.

السؤال الذي يطرح نفسه ويدعو للمناقشة "هل الإعلام هو عبارة عن مؤسسات يتم التحكم بها من قبل تراتبية وأنظمة معينة تساهم في السيطرة على من يقول هذا الكلام وكيف يقال؟". وهنا يأتي دورنا في تحليل اللغة والخطاب ضمن سياقات معينة، من شأنه تزويدنا بطريقة لإيجاد إثبات لدعم أو دحض هذه المزاعم.

Thank You

...  
**LECTURE NO. 10**  
**THE LAST LECTURE**  
**25.02.2022**

**HELLO EVERYONE!**

**"Language and gender"**

*How do you translate (gender) in Arabic?* It can be translated as (النوع الاجتماعي), and it can be translated as (الجنس) as well.

This lecture is divided into different sections:

- Introduction
- How is English sexist?
- Do men and women talk differently?
- Possible explanations



Summary

### Discussion Questions

What is the difference between sex and gender?

What is meant by a sexist language?

It is when you are bias to a certain sex.

How sexist is English?

*Is English language sexist?* Yes. For example, the word (man) was used to refer to all humans.

Another example, when you are talking to a group of people, you use the masculine pronoun to greet them (*Hi guys*), even if the majority of them is females and there is one male.

Also it is the same in Arabic. They think it inclusive of both males and females.

Do men and women use language differently?

Maybe.

What are the possible reasons for gender-based differences in conversational styles?

### Sex vs. gender

'**Sex**' refers to biological category, which is usually fixed before birth.

'**Gender**' refers to social category, which is associated with certain behavior.

*What is the difference between Sex and Gender?* Sex is the biological category and gender is social type.

*What do we mean by social type? Can you give me examples? Can you think of any gender roles in our society or in other societies?*

Examples: When a baby is born, if it is a boy, they dressed him in blue, and they choose pink for the girls. These are conventional gender rules.

In our society, for example, people believe or still think that most scientists, astronauts, directors, or surgeons are males. When you think of secretary, English teacher, or nurse, you think of a female. For the role of policeman, we think of a man not a woman. So, these are conventional gender roles.

Conventional gender rules change from one generation to another, even in the same culture can change but it takes time.

Example:

Bicycle design neatly illustrates the difference between the two: bike saddles designed for women are usually wider than saddles designed for men, because women have a wider pelvic girdle (a sex difference). Bikes without a crossbar, so riders can wear skirts, are designed in response to a gender difference, since there is no biological reason why, in some cultures, women wear skirts and men don't.

We were educated and raised in our society in a way to believe that skirts are for females not for males, but in the past, if you look in history movies or



drama, men used to wear skirts and dresses.

### What is meant by 'sexism'?

**Sexist language** represents women and men unequally, as if members of one sex were somehow less completely human and less complex and had fewer rights than members of the other sex.

Sexist language also presents stereotypes of women and men, sometimes to the disadvantage of men, but more often to the disadvantage of women.

(Stereotypes) means الصورة النمطية.

Sexism means that someone is biased to one of the sexes, and treats somebody from the other sex in different way. It can be translated into Arabic as (التحيز الجنسي).

It is debatable whether language can actually be sexist against men (as opposed to just rude), or only against women.

*Are you aware about sexism against man in our society or other societies?*

No, just being rude by being oppressive using language to exclude you from certain activities, to limit your behavior.

Generally speaking, men still hold more 'high-status' occupations in this society than women do; men still own more property and earn more than women. There are still more male politicians, more male company directors, more male judges, professors, surgeons, head teachers and film directors.

Men also tend to have more physical power; domestic violence is perpetrated more often by men against women than the other way around. It is debatable whether using language to diminish men has the same effect as using language to diminish women, since the power relations underlying the language use are different.

(Domestic violence) means العنف الأسري

So, since men are physically has more power, and they still have high-status occupations, the violence practices against women is no just linguistic or verbal but a physically violence. Whereas even if sexism exists against men, it will not be equally the same as the sexism existed against women.

There might be some sexism against men, but it might be only linguistic as being rude or impolite.

### How is English sexist?

Sexist language can be discussed in two ways: firstly, as the extent to which the English language system is inherently sexist, and secondly, as the extent to which some ways of using language are sexist.

You have two ways to discussing how a language is sexist: either it is inherently sexist by its own nature, or the way we use it is sexist.

To consider the first approach, the extent to which the English language system is sexist, one of the things we look for is **symmetry** versus **asymmetry** in the



### Symmetry and asymmetry

A clear example of symmetry can be found in English terms for horses. Horse is a **generic** term which covers animals of both sexes:

(1)

generic *horse*

female *mare*

male *stallion*

young *foal* (either sex)

young female *filly*

young male *colt*

- (Generic) means a word or phrase that is used to describe some general or vague group or class, rather than some specific thing.

So, we have two groups, one for male horses and the other for female horses, but the main term is the horse. It is just like the word (Man), in the past it was used to include or mean both man and woman, and to mean (الإنسان), but today if you are writing an academic paper or submitting a paper for publishing, you cannot use this word to mean both man and woman, because it is politically incorrect, you are being sexist, and you are excluding women using (Man) as a **generic term**.

The terms for human beings follow a similar system, but are not so symmetrical in the way they are used:

(2)

generic Man

female woman

male man

young child

young female girl

young male boy

Example (2) indicates the ambiguity of the term *Man/man*. Speakers and writers often blur the distinction between the use of the word *Man* generically, to mean women, men, girls and boys, and the use of *man* to mean only men (and not women or children).

- (Blur the distinction) means (تضييع الحدود بين الكلمات).

This is no longer used when you write English. Unfortunately, it is still used in Arabic, some Arab countries and magazines paying attention to this language, they ask their writers when they want to publish online or in the actual magazine to use both masculine and feminine when they are talking about people in general. It is a lot more complicated in Arabic



كما قلنا، كانت تُستخدم كلمة (man) سابقاً للإشارة للبشر ككل أو الإنسان، وكنا نقول (mankind) بمعنى (البشرية). بينما تم اصطلاح (humankind) لأنه لم تعد كلمة (man) هي الـ (Generic) وإنما كلمة (human).

This is illustrated in example (3) below, where the first mention of *Man* appears to be in its generic sense, but the next sentence makes it clear that in fact *Man* here means men and not women.

(3)

For decades, pubs have been *Man's* best friend. He could take his wife, his girlfriend, but not his children. But now that's all about to change. (*News at 10*, ITV, 13 January 1995, on changes in the laws regarding children in licensed drinking bars)

The first mention of the word *Man* in this example is generic (*pubs have been Man's best friend*); it includes both man and woman. But since he used *he* in (*He could take his wife*), he is being more specific and referring to the men sex.

نجد هنا أن هذه الكلمة ممكن أن تسبب الخلط والخطأ في الفهم لأننا لا نستطيع التمييز مباشرة ودون توضيح هل تعني (الرجل) أم (الإنسان)؟

Another kind of asymmetry in the way the system shown in (2) is applied is the use of *girl* to describe adult women, where *man* would almost certainly be used if the reference were to an adult male. Consider this headline and the first sentence of an article from the *Daily Mail* (24 September 1997):

(4)

#### **Police girl wins sex bias case by a split verdict**

A policewoman who allegedly threatened to kill her chief constable and have the legs of a senior officer broken won a controversial sex discrimination case yesterday... The 34-year-old officer, who said her high-flying career was ruined by bullying male colleagues, now expects to receive up to £250,000 in compensation.

*Can you show me in this example where the asymmetry is? What are they talking about in this article? Why did they use in the headline "Police girl" but in the article they used "a policewoman"? Is there a difference? Why they defined the policewoman as a police girl? They used it to indicate that she is young and unexperienced maybe.*

*Are they talking about the same person? Yes, it is the same person.*

*Would you use "a police boy" to talk about "a policeman"? No.*

This is the sexism we are talking about. We will never see in a headline the term "a police boy" to refer to "a policeman". But for the woman, they used "a police girl", which is very dimensioning.

Since women's status tends to be far more dependent on their attractiveness than men's, the use of *girl*, rather than *woman*, to imply that you are not yet 'old' is usually assumed to be a compliment. Would a male police officer (aged thirty-four) be called a *police boy* in a headline?

هنا توجد دلالة على العمر.



The use of titles is also asymmetrical:

(5)

woman *Miss / Mrs. / Ms.*

Man *Mr.*

(*Mr.*) for both single and married man, (*Miss*) for a single woman, and (*Mrs.*) for a married woman.

In the past, there was two titles for woman: (*Miss / Mrs.*) But when feminism emerged they protested against the sexism inherent in the English language, and they suggested that we need to add neutral title as (*Ms.*) to indicate that she is being single or married is not your business. So, the title (*Ms.*) becomes like the title (*Mr.*).

An adult male can be assumed to use the title *Mr.* before his family name, unless he has another title such as *Dr.* or *Judge*. However, an adult woman (who does not use another title) may use one of three titles: *Miss*, *Mrs.* or *Ms.* Thus any woman who gives her preferred title on a form is revealing far more information about herself than a man does.

If she is applying for a job, they ask the man, are you *Mr. doctor, judge, etc.*? But for the woman, they ask her if she is *Miss, Mrs., Ms., doctor, judge, etc.*

*Miss* reveals she is unmarried (or chooses to present herself as such).

*Mrs.* indicates that she is married.

*Ms.*, a relatively new title, was introduced to end the inequality in the system but instead you could say that the inequality has increased. Instead of having only one title (which does not reveal marital status, in line with titles for men) there are now three possible titles in circulation, and all three appear alongside *Mr.* on many forms.

If you choose not to tell the world your marital status by selecting *Ms.*, some people will assume you are divorced; others will assume you are a feminist; i.e. the use of *Ms.*, if you had the choice of using *Miss* or *Mrs.*, can seem to carry information about your political opinions. Furthermore, since the introduction of *Ms.*, selecting *Miss* or *Mrs.* as your title can seem to indicate that you do not want to appear to be a feminist.

Therefore, not only do two of the titles women use reveal marital status, all three titles can appear to carry information about the user's political affiliations. This is not a situation men face!

The titles *Miss* and *Mrs.* are a reminder of a time when the power relations between women and men were much more markedly unequal than they are today for most women living in Europe or the United States.

Women were then regarded as the responsibility, or indeed the property, of either their father or their husband. Some forms of marriage service still require women to be 'given away' by their father (or other male relative) to their husband.

Women's political and economic rights changed considerably over the twentieth



century. However, our language still allows us to indicate the marital status of a woman in way that does not exist for men.

### Unmarked and marked terms

Another useful concept when analyzing sexism is that of **unmarked** and **marked** terms. This is still asymmetry, but of a specific kind.

For example, *lion*, an unmarked form, can refer to a male or female lion. However, the term used for a male lion is also *lion*, while a female lion is referred to by a marked term, *lioness* (it is 'marked' because it has the additional suffix *-ess*).

The word (*poet*) can refer to a male or female, but we also have the word (*poetess*); this marked term indicates the sexism of the English language. The female sex is marked to differentiate it from the norm the male sex.

It is quite common for 'unmarked' terms to refer to males, while to refer to a female, the terms are 'marked' by adding a suffix. This may make terms for females appear to differ from the 'standard'. For example:

(6)

*waiter waitress*

*host hostess*

*actor actress*

The marked terms on the right are used less nowadays, and the unmarked terms on the left are often used for women as well as men, which indicates that language and attitudes are changing.

For example, today we are no longer using the words (*chairman*, *chairwoman*), we say *chairperson*.

However, it is also true that some terms which can apparently refer to females or males, such as *surgeon*, *doctor*, *professor* and *nurse*, are in fact sometimes used as if they really only applied to one gender.

The same is applied in Arabic, when we say (ممرض) we only think of female, and we think of the word (*nurse*) the first thing comes to your mind is the female, also (*teacher*, *secretary*). But these terms are applied to both male and female.

People refer to a lady doctor, a woman professor or woman surgeon, implying that the norm is male, and to a male nurse, implying that the norm is female. It should be noted that nurses are of lower status than the other occupations mentioned. Therefore one way which these examples can be interpreted as sexist is that they imply that 'normal' (or, in the case of the medical profession, 'high status') people are men.

القاعدة المعروفة في هذه المهن أنها للذكور. والدلالة على أن الشخص أنثى، يجب أن تُلحق بكلمة

(lady/ woman)

### Semantic derogation

The process of words which refer to women acquiring demeaning or sexual connotations has been widely observed, and has been termed **semantic**



**derogation.** (*Semantic* is a linguistic term referring to meaning; *deroge* means 'to cause to seem inferior'.) Examples (7) to (10) illustrate this process.

- (Demeaning) means to treat someone as inferior to you, to mean them or look down on them.

(7)

gentleman or lord lady

*Lady* is used in contexts where it is highly improbable that *gentleman* or *lord* would be used. In the UK, *lady* is commonly used to form the expressions such as *dinner lady* (a woman who serves meals to schoolchildren) or *lollipop lady* (a woman who helps schoolchildren to cross roads).

Would you expect men filling these roles to be referred to as *dinner gentlemen*, or *dinner lords*? As *lollipop lords* or *lollipop gentlemen*? Probably not! *Lady* is used in contexts where *man* or a gender-free term is used if the job is done by a male.

In the previous example (7), they used the words or the titles (*gentleman* and *lord*) that refer to a man, but the word (*lady*) has a specific context in the UK, as *dinner lady* or *lollipop lady*, and both refer to demeaning occupations that men do not normally do.

To illustrate the point here is a newspaper extract describing a television program about how animals communicate:

How does a randy polar bear find a mate? Not very easily is the answer. After all, most of them mope about solitary, icy territories the size of Britain. And even when a lady polar bear does come mooching along, males have about as much chance of spotting her white coat against a sea of ice and snow as David Seaman has of tracking a 30-yard lob.

(*The Observer*, 30 June 2002, p. 5)

*Why the language here is demeaning? Can you find any sexism here?*

The usage of *lady polar bear*. They are considering the norm/ generic term as (polar bear), and (*lady polar bear*) is a marked to differentiate it from the norm.

*Are there any other examples of semantic derogation, or sex discrimination? How do you think they describe the lady polar bear?*

She is almost invisible because she lives in a very snowy environment, and she has a white coat, so it is very hard for males to spot her.

So, this is another discrimination against the female.

(8)

master mistress

*What is the difference between Master and Mistress?*

(*Master*) has one meaning, it is for the man, and it shows respect and fear. However, and (*Mistress*) is for the woman/ lady. But this is not how we use them, we use (*Mistress*) for the secret female lover, and it has negative collocations.

'He is my master' usually means 'he is my boss' or 'he has more power than me'.



'She is my mistress' is most likely to be interpreted as meaning 'she is my illicit lover'.

This demonstrates two phenomena: firstly that words for women tend to lose status (being someone's illicit lover usually is a much less powerful position than being their boss), and secondly, that words for women often end up referring to women in a sexual capacity. This has clearly happened to *mistress* and not to *master*. Even the term 'woman' is also sometimes used to refer to women as sexual activity, as in the phrase *wine, women and song*.

Even in Arabic, the word (woman) can be used in offensive and negative way against women. This is part of the sexism we practice towards each other.

(9)

*sir madam*

*Sir* and *madam* can both be used to refer to high-status people, but *madam*, unlike *sir*, is also used to refer to a brothel keeper.

- (Brothel) means a whorehouse.

كلا الكلمتين تُستخدمان للدلالة على أشخاص مرموقين، ولكن كلمة (madam) ممكن أن تشير أيضاً إلى (صاحبة بيت الدعارة).

(10)

*bachelor spinster or old maid*

(Bachelor) for a single man (عازب), (Spinster) for a single woman (عانس), and (Old maid) for an old single woman. This is the patriarchal ideology.

(Bachelor) is used for men only, and when they want to refer to a girl, they say (Bachelor girl). They need to differentiate because they think the generic term *Bachelor* indicates men not females. So, when they want to say a woman is single, they say *bachelor girl*.

All three terms refer to an unmarried person, but *spinster* and *old maid* appear to be rarely used nowadays, perhaps because their associations are so negative.

*Bachelor*, however, usually has positive connotations. The *bachelor life* and a *bachelor pad* (an apartment for a single man) are generally regarded as glamorous; a bachelor is someone who has succeeded in not getting tied down.

*Spinster* and *old maid* on the other hand suggest to many people someone old, grey, ugly and unable to 'get a man'. *Bachelor girl* can be used to refer to an unmarried woman, to avoid the stigma of the other terms; however, this expression follows the pattern of unmarked and marked terms discussed above (*bachelor* is the 'norm', *bachelor girl* the marked form), as in the newspaper headline from the *Daily Mail*: 'Are these the most eligible bachelor girls in Britain?'

بدل من استخدام كلمتي (عانس/ فتاة كبيرة)، نستخدم كلمة (عازبة).

القاعدة هي (عازب) والشواذ هو (عازبة).

The examples cited above are all asymmetrical, and diminish women rather than men, by representing women as the property of men, as being of lower status, and



as being primarily sexual beings.

These usages not only represent women unequally, but they may also contribute to perceptions held by both men and women which contribute to women have less power over their own lives and other resources than men.

هذه الأمثلة ليس فيها تناظر، وتقلل من شأن النساء لأنها تصورهن على أنهن كملكية للرجل وأنهن في مكانة أدنى من الرجل وأنهن سلعة جنسية. هذه الاستخدامات لا تصور النساء بطريقة غير عادلة وليس فيها مساواة فقط، وإنما تعرض أيضاً الفكر وراء استخدام هذه الكلمات. واستخدامنا المتكرر لهذه الكلمات يساهم في استمرار القمع على النساء.

### Sexism in discourse

It was stated that sometimes sexism is located not in specific words but in the **discourse**, that is, by meanings created in a whole utterance or sentence, or a longer text. Below are some examples of apparently nongender-specific terms being used in a context which in fact shows they are being used to refer exclusively to men. The information which indicates that the use is specific is contained elsewhere in the discourse.

التحيز الجنسي ليس موجود فقط في الكلمات، وإنما في الخطاب ككل.

Sexism shows there is superiority of one sex over the other, even in English, such as the word *Spinster*, and even in Arabic, it has very negative and demeaning collocations that we should not use. This is part of the double standers (المعايير المزدوجة) or the Patriarchal system. It is also part of the language itself.

*Can language be changed? Can we change the Arabic or English?*

Not totally, but it is not possible to change these words, to remove them and clean the language, by using the media to raising the awareness on how important to respect one another no matter what sex is, you do not choose to be male or female.

*Why we look down on males, of why we look down on females?*

Some aspects of this are part of the English language itself, and others are social instructed. So, they cannot be changed, it takes a lot of time.

Sometimes this additional information is described as **disambiguating** the generic term (that is, it indicates more exactly to what the term refers). Generic (non-gender-specific) terms are shown in *italic*; gender specific terms are in Capital LETTERS.

- (Disambiguating): to remove the ambiguity from; make unambiguous.  
Generic terms, such as (man); it indicates man and woman.

(11)

People feel entitled to the car, the GIRL, etc. If *they're* let down, *they* blame themselves.

(Oliver James, quoted by Emma Cook in *The Independent*, 31 August 1997)

*Can you find me generic/ non-gender-specific terms in this example?*



People, they, and themselves.

Can you find me gender specific terms in this example? Girl.

(12)

Scanners that could determine our political beliefs, pinpoint our involvements in crime, or even uncover extramarital liaisons are being developed by neurologists... Such research raises the prospect that attitudes and feelings we try to conceal will one day be uncovered by researchers. Lying politicians, spin doctors and CHEATING SPORTSMEN (and HUSBANDS) will suddenly find life uncomfortable.

(Robin McKie in *The Observer*, 10 March 2002)

Can you find me generic/ non-gender-specific terms in this example?

Our, we, Lying politicians, and spin doctors.

Can you find me gender specific terms in this example?

Cheating sportsmen, and Husbands.

(13)

Several of Hollywood's most powerful players have arrangements with what in pre-palimony terms were 'common-law WIVES' – Kurt and Goldie, Tim and Susan, and Hugh and Elizabeth – one has to wonder: why do stars bother to get married at all?

(Alison Powell, *The Guardian*, 13 September 1997)

Can you find me generic/ non-gender-specific terms in this example?

Players and stars.

Can you find me gender specific terms in this example? Wives.

### Activity 1

Can you identify the gender-specific references and the generic, or genderneutral, references in these descriptions of dress codes in London restaurants?

#### Who dresses for dinner?

*The Causerie Restaurant, Claridge's Hotel*

The rule of jacket and tie at all times has become more relaxed. The public rooms require smartness without formality; the restaurant remains firmly jacket and tie. Those who come without a tie are invited to choose one from a selection held at the door – 'all very fine ties'. The restaurant used to ask any gentleman who removed his jacket during the meal to put it on again, but this practice appears to be dying out. The recalcitrant 'star' who came in less than formal clothes would be admitted, but respectfully asked to improve next time.

In this newspaper article, Can you identify any gender specific references?

They assume that all customers are men; they are expecting all of them are men. This is a gender specific.

How did we know? The clothes: jacket and tie, the word (gentleman).

The text is addressed to men, they are expecting and treating all the costumers as they are males, and they are excluding the females, even the form



of the dresses is very masculine.

We also have non-gender-specific term, which is (star).

#### *The Ritz*

Tries very hard to ensure no denims or trainers. Smart casual is the norm for breakfast, while at lunch, tea and dinner, jacket and tie are mandatory. A spokeswoman draws attention to 20 silk Turnbull and Asser ties, and a selection of jackets, for guests who do not provide their own. Ladies' only requirement is to be smart. 'It's hard with the ladies but we try not to make an issue of it.'

*Can you find any gender specific terms?*

Spokeswoman, ladies, even the type of clothes (jacket and tie) for males.

*Can you find any non-gender-specific terms?* Guests.

#### *The River Café, Hammersmith*

Owned by the wife of architect Sir Richard Rogers, and one of the most fashionable restaurants in London, it has no code at all, but a spokesman did indicate that bare chests would not be allowed, 'although people haven't actually started stripping off', he adds.

(James Bristow, *The Independent*, 20 September 1996)

*Can you find any gender specific terms?* Wife, Sir, and spokesman.

*Can you find any gender-neutral terms?* People.

#### **Other explicit examples of sexism**

One aspect of sexism in language which we have not discussed yet is probably the most obvious kind: direct insults or other remarks which make inequality explicit, aimed at women rather than men.

- (Explicit) means stated clearly and in detail, leaving no room for confusion or doubt. Example:

On *PM*, BBC Radio 4's early evening news program, a journalist from *The Independent* newspaper (28 February 2002) explained why media award ceremonies, such as the Oscars, are given so much media coverage: 'We get to see beautiful actresses and interesting actors', making explicit the dynamic which places greater emphasis on women's looks and on men's personalities.

It is not very straight words but it is also not hidden, the insult is not hidden. (beautiful actresses) based on physical beauty, while the focus for men is on their personalities, skills, and achievements rather than the physical appearance.

In 2002, a well-known chocolate bar appeared with a new label, which appears to work by establishing the credentials of the chocolate bar as masculine, or macho (as it has always been marketed). In dark blue foil, the wrapping has a circular icon of a woman with a superimposed diagonal red line (similar to a 'No Smoking' sign) and the additional text '**IT'S NOT FOR GIRLS!**' and '**NOT AVAILABLE IN PINK**'. It seems to use the term *girl* and the icon as insults, a marketing strategy which might



appear rather risky if it discourages women from purchasing the product.

So, they have made a chocolate bar, in the design they have a woman, and the slogan says "IT'S NOT FOR GIRLS", and "NOT AVAILABLE IN PINK".

They are using the woman to make people buy the product, they are treating woman as an object here, and in the same time they are insulting the female sex and banned them from buying this chocolate.

### Activity 2

Insults and obscene words are often to do with sexual behavior and parts of the body. To investigate whether there is a sexist bias in insults and obscene terms, make a list of as many as you can think of (you can do this on your own or in class). Now group the terms you have collected into separate lists according to what they describe. Compare the lengths of your lists and the kinds of terms they contain; for example, are they funny? Blasphemous? Very obscene or only mildly? How many are to do with sexual behavior or parts of the body? Decide whether your lists provide you with evidence of sexism in English.

- (Blasphemous) means showing lack of respect to God or to a religion.

We will not do this exercise. But immediately, once you read it, a whole list of insults comes to your mind, even in Arabic.

Last time, I told you that when you see men fighting in the street, the first insult a man uses it against the other one is woman (يامرا). This is a tiny example of many insult words that we use randomly and maybe without thinking during a fight or argument, or when we are angry, especially the male sex.

I think the way we use these insults in our culture in Arabic is meant to restrict the behavior of women present in the society, street, etc.

It is common, as a result of this activity, to find that there are far more terms to describe promiscuous women than men, that insults for women are often harsher and less funny, and that the words that many people find most obscene describe women's sexual organs, not men's.

This can be illustrated by an extract from a television guide, joking about a television chef who on a previous program had sworn on air. Among a range of swear words, the writer (or editor) decided just one of them should not appear in full, but should have some of its letters replaced by asterisks:

**See? He's human! I can picture the spin-off recipe book – Jamie's Fuckin' Kitchen. 'Here's a recipe I call Shit-Hot Spag Bol – 1lb minced cow bollocks, 2 onions, garlic, a tin of fucking tomatoes and a pissload of spaghetti. And if you don't like it, you're a c\*\*\*.'**

(Charlie Brooker, The Guardian, 2 November 2002)

- (Promiscuous) (شهوائي) means having a lot of different sexual partners or sexual relationships, or (of sexual habits) involving a lot of different partners.



The editor decided that all of the sworn words are ok, and just one of them should not appear in full because it describes the female sexual organ.

It is funny how he measured these insults are ok to appear on air, whereas that sworn word it is not. How did he decide what is ok and what is not?

\*\*\*\*\*

### Sexism against men?

Maybe there is no sexism against men, there might be some sexism against certain sexual orientation in our culture because our society is not accept the sexual orientation and treats it as sexual perversion. That includes man and woman.

In introducing this section, I raised the question of whether language could be sexist against men. The following example seems to illustrate the other side of the coin:

Last week I asked for alternative suggestions for the phrase toy boy. Hundreds have poured in from men and women. Here's my pick of the best: HRT (Husband Replacement Therapy), Youthfool, Wrinkle picker, Joy Boy, GIBBET (Good In Bed But Extremely Temporary), Mantress, Sugar laddie, POW (Prefers Older Women), Mutton Fodder and Booster Rooster. Glad Lad, Juvenile Lead, Studlet, Born-Later-Babe, Bimboy, Bounty Hunter, Nappy Chappy, Ego Booster, Mini Mate, Play Mite, Lap Chap and Tom Kitten. Muscle Tussle, Handsome Sansom, Younger Monger, Romp Tot, Cub Class, Game Boy and Sapling. Homelette, Boncubine, Little Soldier, Beddyboy, Passion Puppy, Honkybonk, Kideology Kid and Himbo.

(Daily Mail, 28 May 1997)

*What do you think of this list? Have you heard these words before? Do you know what they describe or refer to? Are they talking about one type of Man or different types?*

About one type of Man, which is the toy boy, and the toy boy is a young man who has a romantic relationship with an older woman. All these terms in the passage refer to that boy, so a man who prefers an older woman.

*What do you think of these words? Do they sound like insults? Are they demeaning the male sex? Do you find any sexism against man?*

*Would you consider this sexism equal to the sexism that woman receive?*

No.

They are funny, that is the difference. They might seem sexist but they are not as rude as the words when we describe a female.

In other words, there is deference between the sexism directed at women and sexism directed at men. They do not necessarily always have the same effect.

\*\*\*\*\*



## Do women and men talk differently?

Yes, they do. We said before that women use a lot of words, on the contrary to men.

Perhaps some of the examples discussed above seem to you more likely to be used by women or by men. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence around that there are differences in the way men and women talk.

A common stereotype is that women talk more than men; perhaps you have heard people say things like: 'women never stop talking'. Women's talk is often described in terms seldom used about men's talk: *gossip, chatter, nag, rabbit, yak* and *natter* are all terms used to refer predominantly to women's conversations. They all imply that women's talk is plentiful but rather pointless.

There has been a considerable amount of research in this area; the majority of the research on which the remainder of this chapter has been based has been conducted in English-speaking countries such as the United States, Britain and New Zealand, in a variety of ethnic and social groups.

The research findings have been that there are quite dramatic differences in the ways men and women talk, which are sometimes the opposite of what you might expect. For example, the evidence strongly suggests that men on the whole talk far more than women, in contradiction of the stereotype. This is an important finding, because it shows **ideology** at work.

The differences between women's and men's use of language are remarkably many and varied. For example, there is evidence at the level of **phonology** that women and men vary in their pronunciation. If you are interested you should read Trudgill (1972), Milroy (1987) and Coates (1993: 61–86).

There is also evidence of **syntactic** differences, i.e., the kinds of grammatical constructions we use (see Coates 1993: 76–7). In this section we will concentrate on the area of discursal differences, that is, variation in the kinds of things we talk about, and how we conduct conversations.

### *So, do men and women use language differently? How?*

Yes. Maybe men have the dare to say things that women do not. This leads us back to the idea of gender roles and how we are raised to think in a certain way that women used to be shy, light, and do not swear, and men to be brave and out of the box. And any woman, who is different from this etiquette or these convention social norms, will be avoided or stigmatized.

Also the differences in the use of vocabulary.

This is an example on *Symmetry* and *Asymmetry*.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **How much talk?**

As stated above, stereotypes of women's and men's talking styles usually portray women talking far more than men.



As also stated above, men (and boys) in fact appear from the research to talk more in mixed-sex groups than women (and girls) do. Studies on this which you might want to check for more information include Fishman (1980), Spender (1980) and Swann (1989).

Spender (1990: 41-2) gives an overview of the research. The proportions most frequently quoted are that in a mixed-sex conversation, the average amount of time for which a man talks is approximately twice as long as the average amount for which a woman talks.

There is evidence that women who talk for more than one-third of the available time in mixed conversations involving three or more people will be regarded by others as talking too much.

In the mix conversations, women who talk only one-third of the conversation, is classified by the people in this conversation as a woman who talks too much.

This unevenness in how much women and men are expected to talk is also found in school classrooms, where boys talk more in front of the whole class than girls do, and absorb more of the teacher's time. As a consequence of this research, changes to teaching styles in the UK have been made to distribute the amount of classroom talk, and the teacher's time, more fairly.

- (Unevenness) means lack of equality.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Turn construction and interruption**

One of the very famous findings from research into language and gender differences is the extent to which men interrupt women. It appears that men interrupt women more than they interrupt other men, far more than women interrupt men, and more than women interrupt other women.

The finding that men interrupt women so frequently is often argued to indicate that men act as if they have more right than women to speak in mixed-sex conversations, and that women act as if they had less right to speak than men. The research in this area also discovered that women, particularly in single-sex conversations, are more likely to overlap one another's talk than men are.

It is quite interesting the fact that women are expected to stay silent, it still applicable to the Arab society today. The talk is given for the male in the conversation in our country, most likely this talk is given to the males, and they lead the conversation and women listen. Sometimes females contribute but they contribute in very shyly way because they are not expected to. This is from a Patriarchal point of view according to the conventional rules in this country, you find the male is leading the conversation and expecting the female to stay silent, nodding, smiling, and having a very conservative body language, seated very decently, politely, and very attentively listening to the others, not



contributing in the conversation actively.

### Turn construction and interruption

This overlapping talk differs from interruptions because two or more speakers can continue talking at the same time on the same topic without any apparent sense of their right to speak being violated.

Here, they made a differentiation between interrupting someone while talking and overlapping. They said that females tend to overlap other females in single sex conversation, and that is ok because they are not interrupting each other. They can continue talk, even they overlap each other, they continue talk and discuss the same topic, or different topics. This is a female feature.

These data are often used to argue that women value co-operation and collaboration very highly in their conversations, while men perhaps feel uncomfortable with the degree of intimacy that overlapping talk involves.

هذا يحلل الكاتب كيفية قدرة النساء على سماع ومتابعة والمشاركة في عدة أحاديث في نفس الوقت، وهذا دليل على أن النساء يقيمن التعاون والمساندة مع بعضهم البعض في محادثاتهم. بينما يتضايق الرجال من المقاطعة والانتقال بين المواضيع لأن ذلك يدل على وجود الحميرية في الحديث، والرجال يتجنبون هذا الأمر.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Back channel support (الدعم أثناء الحديث)

Research suggests women are often more active than men in supportive roles in conversation. It appears that women give more back channel support than men do.

النساء يدعمن بعضهم البعض خلال الحديث أكثر من الرجال.

Back channel support is the verbal and non-verbal feedback listeners give to speakers. Listeners can give feedback by saying things like *mmm, uhuh, yeah*, by *nodding*, smiling, frowning and by other body language including gestures and body posture.

Not only do the studies suggest that women give more back channel support than men, some studies suggest that women's sense of when it is appropriate to give back channel support is more 'finely tuned' than men's, so that speakers really feel they are being listened to.

- (Finely tuned) means precise and appropriate.

النساء أيضاً يعلمن متى يقدمون الدعم خلال الكلام أكثر من الرجال.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Mitigated and aggravated forms

Women have been shown in some studies to use more **hedges** and **epistemic modal** forms than men.

- (Mitigated) means make less severe.
- (Aggravated) means serious and severe.

Hedges are linguistic forms which 'dilute' an assertion; for example: *sort of, like, I*



*think and kind of.*

- (Dilute) means decrease and reduce.

Epistemic modal forms indicate explicitly the speaker's attitude towards their utterance. For example, *should, would, could, may* and *might* (which are all **modal auxiliary verbs**) can be used to indicate that you don't want to sound completely certain about something. Other words with a similar function are *perhaps, really* and *maybe*.

The studies suggest that women exploit hedges and epistemic modal forms more than men, although why this happens is disputed. Some scholars claim it is because women are less confident than men and feel nervous about asserting anything too strongly.

That is why they assumed that women tend to use sort of *like, maybe, kind of, I think*, etc.

Other studies claim that women prefer to avoid conflict and so use forms which, by being less direct, allow disagreement to take place without explicit confrontation.

So, there are two different types of studies here: one thinks that because women are less confident in a conversation, they tend to use these terms, they tend to use auxiliary forms, as well as, hedges or words that avoid assertion.

The others argue that women avoid conflict and give space for other to express their opinions. That is why they use these terms.

Here is an example of a fifteen-year-old girl using hedges to mitigate the force of her statement, in which she is questioning the interpretation made by another girl of a character in a play they are studying in school:

**Laura: - But (.) but (.) do you not think that's just a big a. (.) it could be just a big act (l) he might not**

*What do you notice about this language?* Notice the interruptions, the repetition of *but* at the beginning.

She wants to show disagreement with her classmate but she does not want to sound very direct or impolite, that is why she hesitates.

*(Do you not think)* is an example on hedges.

She is not saying straight words; she is not very assertive because she is giving space for disagreement.

(The dots in brackets indicate a pause shorter than 0.5 of a second; the figure 1 in brackets indicates a pause of one second.) Laura is suggesting that her classmate's interpretation is wrong and that the character is just putting on 'a big act'. To make her objection, however, she uses very mitigating language, emphasized here with italics.

The *mitigating language* here is soft, less severe, less serious, and not strong.

\*\*\*\*\*



### Topic development

Another way women's and men's conversations appear to vary is in the topics they choose to discuss. Women, it is said, select more personal topics: their family, their emotions and their friendships.

Men, on the other hand, are said to prefer more impersonal topics, often based on factual or technical knowledge, such as football, cars or home improvements. These require fewer intimate revelations, and also emphasize the exchange of information as the reason for the conversation.

Women's conversations, it is claimed, focus more on the development and maintenance of the relationship between speakers, fostered by the exchange of intimate details and supportive listening (as discussed above).

\*\*\*\*\*

### Possible explanations

So why might these differences exist? The situation is different from those which give rise to people speaking different languages or different dialects, which are usually associated with geographical or social distance. Women and men, on the other hand, grow up in the same families, go to school together, work together and socialize together.

الفروقات التي لها علاقة بالـ (dialects) لها علاقة بالجغرافية أيضاً.

There two theories to explain why men and women talk differently:

#### 1. Dominance

أحد النظريات التي تمثل الفروقات بين الجنسين هي (Dominance).

One explanation offered for these variations is 'dominance' theory, which takes the difference in power between women and men as the main cause of discursal variation. As stated above, it is statistically the case that men tend to have more power than women, physically, financially and in workplace hierarchies.

This is one reason why men and women converse differently. It is to do with power relationships.

إن الاختلاف في القوى بين الرجال والنساء هو أحد أهم أسباب هذه النظرية أو هذه الفروقات. إحصائياً للرجال قوة أكثر من النساء، وأيضاً فيزيولوجياً ومالياً وفي هرمية مكان العمل.

The ways we talk may be a reflection of the material differences between the sexes, and may also reinforce those differences, making them seem 'normal', part of the 'natural order of things'.

إن الاختلاف في طريقة الكلام هي انعكاس للفروقات المادية بين الأجناس، وهذه الفروقات من شأنها تعزيز هذه الاختلافات وتجعل منها قواعد ضمن المجتمع.

The strength of this explanation is particularly clear in some situations, such as business meetings, where women often report that they have difficulty in gaining the floor (i.e. the right to speak), that they are more often interrupted and that their points are not taken as seriously as men's are.



- (Gaining the floor) means (استلام الحديث).

Again, it is a question of power, who has power in the business industry.

## 2. Difference

Two of the problems with dominance theory are, firstly, that it may appear to cast all women as 'powerless victims', and, secondly, that it casts men as undermining, excluding and demeaning women.

These are two problems to do with the dominance theory.

'Difference theory' is a response to these difficulties. It suggests that women and men develop different styles of talking because they are segregated at important stages of their lives.

نظرية الاختلاف هي ردّ على نظرية السيطرة، وهي تزعم أن وجود اختلافات في الكلام بين الرجال والنساء سببه أنهم كانوا منفصلين عن بعضهم البعض في فترة معينة خلال نشأتهم.

According to 'difference' theory, playing in single-sex groups as children, and having same-sex friendships in adult life, leads men and women to have separate 'subcultures' each of which has its own 'subcultural norms', that is, rules for behavior and, in particular, for talking. Within their own subcultural groups, women's and men's conversational norms work perfectly well for what they want to accomplish.

Women, the theory explains, desire from their relationships collaboration, intimacy, equality, understanding, support and approval. Men, on the other hand, allegedly place a greater premium on status and independence, and are less concerned about overt disagreement and inequality in their relationships. The rub comes when women and men try to communicate with one another: their different styles can lead to misunderstandings.

What they are saying here, according to the difference theory, the way we are raised is very important for how we speak. So, if we are segregated at a very young age, if the female is segregated from the male, we end up developing very different conversational norms and rules, and these rules work perfectly well in segregated sex circles. So, when you are with females as a female, everything is fine, and when you are a male with men, everything is ok. But when these two groups mix, we will have confrontations, misunderstanding, and disagreements. This happens a lot.

Some people link these characteristics to biological factors: that men's different hormonal balance means they are more aggressive than women. Others link it to socialization: that girls are rewarded very early for behaving politely and putting the needs of others before their own, but are told off more than little boys for rough behavior. Little boys, on the other hand, are praised for being 'active' and 'spirited'. These gendered socialization patterns are not neutral, as you will probably have noticed: they still prepare women for being less socially powerful than men.

- (Told off) means (توبيخ) to speak angrily to someone because they have



done something wrong.

Again, there are not only the biological factors but also the way we raise our children at home and school.

This is gender socialization place a very important role in creating a power imbalance between the two sexes, and a conflict, as well.

### Analysis of gender

The weakness of both the models described above is that there is a tendency to regard 'women' as being all more or less the same: talking in the same ways and having the same expectations from relationships. In fact differences of age, nationality, religion, class, sexual orientation, regional and cultural background mean that two women may have different ideas of what it means to be 'a woman', and different expectations of their friendships and sexual relationships. Equally, men are not homogeneous group with shared values, but have diverse ways of thinking about their identity.

The idea here is that we cannot generalize, even if when you look at a group of females, you will find so many sexual, national, religion, age, and cultural differences.

Another way of looking at the differences between the ways in which women and men use language is to see the differences in the way we use language as part of what creates our perception of gender. Newborn babies cannot easily be identified as 'girls' or 'boys' if they are dressed identically.

لا يمكن تمييز الأطفال الصغار أو الرضع إذا كانوا يرتدون نفس الثياب فيما إذا كانوا ذكورا أم إناث.

However, in many cultures, babies are frequently dressed in ways to make their gender clear, for example by the colors of their clothes. The use of color to indicate gender is particularly marked when it comes to dressing boys. Many people would feel quite disturbed by the thought of dressing a baby boy in pink.

This gender separation makes us very conscious and oriented towards identifying or separating men and women, boys and girls in two boxes.

We use clothes, and other physical attributes we control such as our jewellery, hairstyles and use of makeup, to indicate our gender. Similarly, perhaps women and men adopt certain styles of talking as part of the process of demonstrating to the world what their gender is.

These are social constructed differences to differentiate the male from the female.

Finally, it is worth considering how many of the differences we observe are linked less to what people actually do when they talk and more to our perception of gender, and how we interpret the differences we notice.

لا يتعلق الموضوع بما نقوم به، وإنما كيفية نظرنا إلى الجنس وكيفية تفسير الاختلافات التي نراها.

\*



## Summary

In this chapter we looked first at sexism in English, created through asymmetry, marked and unmarked terms, and semantic derogation.

We also looked at how it's possible to be sexist in discourse using terms which in another context might not be sexist at all.

You were asked to consider whether it is possible to be sexist about men in the same way as it is about women.

You were also asked to consider whether the evidence of sexism in language is also evidence of sexism in society.

In the second part of the chapter, we looked at differences in the way women and men talk, and how evidence of these differences sometimes contradicts our 'common sense' ideas.

Two possible explanatory theories were put forward: dominance and difference theory. We ended with a word of warning: that it is very hard to be objective in our analysis of gender, since our perceptions in this area can easily be distorted by our expectations.

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For the Exam:

- I will try to make it /50/ questions, /2/ marks for each one.
- Nothing will be out of the lectures.

## Thank You

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## Wish you all the best

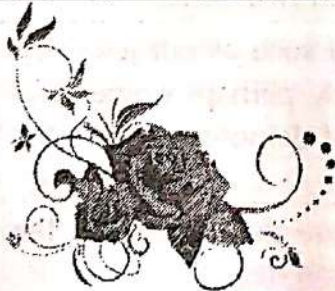


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