A Socio-pragmatic Account of the Relationship between Language and Power in Male-Female Language: Evidence from "Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman"

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Abstract

Based on the premise that language consists of two major dimensions: linguistic and socio-cultural, the present study discusses the way men and women are socialized into differing gender roles and shows how the linguistic usage of men and women reflects these differences. And, with this in mind, Miller's Death of a Salesman is analyzed with a view to seeing whether Miller delineated his characters according to the stylistic variations in male-female interaction. The umbrella, under which the co-variation of language and gender is examined, is the relationship between language and power. The rationale, then, is that absence of serious attention to such a relationship is a major weakness of linguistic theory in the 21st century. It is hoped that the present study will be a modest contribution towards a clear understanding of the interrelationship between language, gender and power. The present study stresses the fact that gender differentiation in language does not exist in a vacuum, it interacts in a complex way with other kinds of social differentiation. Language and gender are inextricably linked. But the fact that gender is accomplished through talk is only now being addressed seriously by sociolinguists.

Keywords: Sociolinguistic analysis, Language and gender, Dramatic discourse

INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most important aspects of communication. Nowadays, we can find almost everybody around us using a particular language to communicate. Language is a wonder as it helps to spread our ideas, thoughts and let others know about our mood through time, space and culture. Linguistic studies which depend upon elicitations from only one or a few informants are now recognized as leaving unanswered many significant questions about the relation between language and the social context in which it is always embedded. Language is no longer viewed "as a closed system, but as one which is in perpetual flux" (Johnson, 2002: P.16). Moreover, the extraordinary growth of sociolinguistics in the last decade or so has shown convincingly that language is closely linked to its context and that isolating it artificially for study ignores its complex and intricate relation to society.

Language is not only linguistic as being regarded traditionally; rather it is both linguistic and sociolinguistic (in the sense of pragmatic and ethnographic approaches to language). That is, language consists of two major dimensions: linguistic and socio-cultural. Linguistic dimension of language represents the knowledge of grammar and lexicon. This dimension is the structural facet of language which integrates phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Sapir's description of language structure is that, "if language is structure and if the significant elements of language are bricks of that structure, then sounds of speech can only be compared to the unformed and unburnt clay of which the bricks are fashioned" (Sapir, 1921, P.24).

Socio-cultural dimension of language, represents the knowledge of language in its pragmatic and ethnographic aspect. Pragmatics, for Leech (1980) is "the study of the use of application of meaning in communicative situations" (P.33). Pragmatics is defined, by many scholars, as individual language use in social context, or as the rules governing the use of language in context. Seemingly, people use language according to certain implicit rules or factors which constrain what they say, or they unconsciously follow a large number of social and cultural rules which constrain their linguistic behavior. Crystal (1971) attempts to characterize pragmatics as

"that area of study which deals with the factors which govern individual choice of language" (P.243). Such characterization would imply that speaking a language depends on individual choice according to the various factors of a speech situation which dictate that choice. Pragmatics is, therefore, the study of situational, social or cultural factors which may affect (or 'colour') the literal meaning of an utterance in interactional activity.

Building on this perspective (that language is more than linguistic; it is linguistic and something else as well, language can be defined as a mental, social and cultural phenomenon. This definition appears to be encompassing two different approaches to language: 'formal' and 'functional'. According to the formal approach, language is viewed in terms of the forms of all the sentences that can be generated by the grammatical rules (Chomsky, 1957, 1965). The functional approach views language 'externally' (from outside inwards according to Halliday, 1978, P.4), as a social and cultural instrument; as a socially and culturally shared means of expressing ideas, performing action, and achieving goals (i.e,. getting things done); as a means of social and cultural identification. In order to be able to be performing all these functions effectively, we must have much more than linguistic knowledge (i.e. grammar and lexicon). Our conceptual knowledge about the world in which we live, our expectations, our system of values and beliefs are not really part of our linguistic knowledge. But they pay a very important role in the way we understand language in actual use.

According to Halliday (1978, P.2), language does not consist of sentences; it consists of interactional discourse. People exchange meaning in socially and culturally defined situations. When they speak to each other, they exchange meanings which reflect their feelings, attitudes, expectations and judgments. The context of speech, in which such social and cultural factors are exchanged, is itself, Halliday (1978, P.2) alleges, a semiotic construct (having signs and symbols deriving from the culture) which contains a form that enables interactants to understand one another as they communicate.

1. THE PRESENT STUDY: PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

1.1 The Purpose

This study discusses the way men and women are socialized into differing gender roles and show how the linguistic usage of men and women reflects these differences; then applies it to the play under investigation in order to point out male-female differences in the discourse of the characters of the play (Negm 2001; Gashgary, 1993; Koller 2004; Butler, 2005; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; De Fina et al., 2006).

1.2 Rationale

Absence of serious attention to the relationship between language and power was a major weakness of linguistic theory in the 21st century, including much of the work that has been done in sociolinguistics. In the 1960s, a distinction was often drawn between two branches of language study which link language and the rest of society in different ways: sociolinguistics, which places the focus upon language; and 'sociology of language' which starts from society and social theory. This distinction has dropped out of fashion, and sociology of language has not been really developed. The time has come for 'mainstream' linguistics to take note of recent critical work on language and power, perhaps in the form of resurrecting the sociology of language. But work on language and power may have a deeper significance for mainstream linguistics in the longer term; it may lead to new, more socially realistic theories of language which displace currently dominant asocial theories in the center of the discipline (See Al-Ali, 2006; Haworth, 2006; Heydon, 2005; Holmes, 2005, 2006; Wang, 2006). As far as terminology is concerned, "gender" rather than "sex" will be the key category under discussion. The word "gender" refers to the complex of social, cultural and psychological phenomena attached to sex, a usage common in the behavioral and social sciences (Ginet 1988, P.76). In other words, "sex" refers to a biological distinction, while "gender" is the term used to describe socially constructed categories based on sex (Coates 1997: 3).

Observations of the differences between the way males and females speak were long restricted to grammatical features, such as the differences between masculine and feminine morphology in many languages. In earlier usages, the word gender was generally restricted to these grammatical distinctions. They cause problems for speakers of languages like English, where grammatical gender is marked mainly in pronouns, when they learn a language like French, where non-sexed items like table (la table) can be grammatically feminine.

It was ethnographers who first drew attention to distinct female and male varieties of language, often with clear differences in vocabulary. The famous anthropologist Levi-Strauss noted how an Amazonian father laughed at his young daughter for using the male word for 'haunting'. Other ethnographers have provided cases of marked differences in the language of men and women. American servicemen in Japan who learned Japanese from the woman with whom they associated were thus a source of amusement to people who knew the language (Spolsky, 2004). In the second half of the twentieth century, social science researchers, among them linguists, directed

what might easily be considered an extensive amount of attention to the discussion of differences between the sexes, including sex differences in language. Starting in the 1960s, sociolinguistics, working as urban dialectologists, began providing detailed descriptions of characteristics that were said to distinguish women's and men's speech (Wolfram 1969; Trudgill 1972; Labov 1972).

On the other hand, the question of gender in literary texts has been approached by linguists in two different ways. The first involves a comparison of the fiction created by male and female authors and is typified by the search for "the female sentence" or a specifically female style of writing. The second involves a study of the uses to which the linguistic gender system of different language has been put in literary works. In the former, gender is seen as a cultural property of the author. In the latter, a morphological property of the text. A third perspective of language and gender in literary texts is provided by translators and translation theorists. Translation theorists typically view a text as expressive of a particular time and place as well as being expressed in a particular language. The differences between source and target language may be accompanied by differences in culture and period, thus translators often work with both morphological gender and cultural gender.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

For Chomsky, the existence of variation in language simply confuses, diverting the linguist's attention from the wonderful abstract system that separates human language from other communication systems. For the sociolinguist, however, the most important variety is that a language – any language – is full of systematic variation, variation that can only be accounted for by appealing, outside language, to socially relevant forces and facts. As Carston (1988) points out that "before Chomsky, linguistics tended to be a taxonomic enterprise, involving collecting a body of data (utterances) from the external world and classifying it without reference to its source, the human mind" (P.206). Chomsky (1965) proposed a distinction analogous but not identical to Saussure's and Bloomfield's, namely competence vs. performance. In his distinction, Chomsky sees that the proper domain of linguistic inquiry is competence only.

The idea of extending linguistic analysis to include communicative functions was, first, proposed by Czech linguists. As Van Valin (2001) points out, "all contemporary functional approaches trace their roots back to the work of the Czech linguist Mathesius in the 1920s as part of the Prague School" (P.328). He and his successors developed the theory of functional sentence perspective. This theory was developed primarily with respect to the analysis of Slavic languages, but its ideas have been applied by other linguists to a range of phenomena in many languages. It was first brought to the attention of English-speaking linguists in Halliday (1967). By the end of the 1970s, a number of functional approaches were emerging in both U.S. and Western Europe. Sociolinguistics is the field that studies the relation between language and society, between the uses of language and the social structures in which the users of language live. It is a field of study that assumes that human society is made up of many related patterns and behaviors, some of which are linguistic. It takes as its primary task to map linguistic variation on to social conditions. This mapping helps understand not just synchronic variation (variation at a single point of time), but also diachronic variation (variation over time) or language change.

The existence of patterned variation in language makes it possible to identify ourselves and others as belonging to certain groups. The social prestige or stigma associated with these variations makes language a source of social and political power. Only by including both linguistic and social factors in our analysis can this complex but rule-governed behavior be accounted for. To do this is the chosen goal of the sociolinguist. Just as the formal linguist and the psycholinguist focus their attention on the language as a system with universal features, so the sociolinguist looks at the complex connections between the variations within a language and the matching variations in the social groups that use it. At what is often called the micro end of sociolinguistics, the sociolinguist's goal might be to show how specific differences in pronunciation or grammar lead members of a speech community to make judgments about the education or economic status of a speaker. At the other – the macro – end of the spectrum, sometimes labeled the sociology of language as distinct from sociolinguistics, the scholar's primary attention turns from the specific linguistic phenomena to the whole of a language or variety.

Some scholars use this difference of perspective to divide the field into two. They want to distinguish between sociolinguistics, which emphasizes the social influences on language, and the sociology of language, which emphasize the role of language in society. If there is a common theme that emerges from the studies of sociolinguists, it is that the complex interplay of language structure with social structure means that any user of language is constantly responding to and signaling social information. The existence of variation in language, therefore, is not accidental or meaningless. It adds a vital set of social dimensions, making it possible for language to reflect and record an individual's demographic, sociological, educational, and religious background. It helps constitute identity; it claims solidarity; it expresses attitudes towards power and prestige. This rich

complexity helps us understand both how and why language changes, for the social forces injected into variation provide the dynamism of change.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Language and Gender: 1973 to the Present

From 1973 to the end of the twentieth century, language and gender research was dominated by three major themes which theorized both the impressions and the presumed realities of female and male speech. The earliest modern theory about "women's language", most often associated with Lakoff (1973), is commonly referred to as the deficit theory. It described women's language as ineffective in comparison to men's and explained women's manner of speaking as being a reflection of women's insecurity and powerless place in society. By contrast, the dominance theory of language and gender, presented first by Thorne and Henley in 1975, focused on issues of patriarchy – that is, male power and dominance. Researchers characterized the social and political arrangement between the sexes as one in which women were viewed and treated as unequal to men because the norms of society had literally been established by men. The division of labor between women and men was seen to include a division of language practice, one belonging to the powerful and the other belonging to women. Language differences were identified as part of a structure of unequal access and influence. Finally the difference theory, represented by the writings of Maltz and Borker (1982) and Tannen (1990, 1994), hypothesized that women and men used specific and distinct verbal strategies and communicative styles which were developed in same-sex childhood peer groups. Researchers who adhered to this framework believed that by focusing on language difference instead of power difference (or male dominance), the antagonistic comparison between women and men could be avoided and the positive values of each language style could be celebrated. Feminist linguists who objected to the difference framework (Troemel-Ploetz 1991; Freed 1992; Uchida 1992) argued that the particular sets of verbal strategies associated with women and, men emerged not in a vacuum but were an integral part of the power arrangements between men and women in societies around the world. (Freed, 2006); Barry et al., 2006; Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Humm, 1998; Coates, 1997). Accordingly, in linguistic terms, the differences in women and men's speech are interpreted as reflecting and maintaining gender-specific subcultures.

3.2 The Concept of "Power"

The concept of power has been handled in various disciplines: philosophy, linguistics, and sociology. It has been developed and defined in different ways. This section is designed to shed light on these different definitions.

PHILOSOPHY

Andersen (1988) shows that philosophers have developed the concept of power from being physical to being social. First, they define power as knowledge of the past. Second, they become interested in physical knowledge claiming that knowledge of nature can result in social power. Then, the concept of the power of the will has been introduced. This concept holds that power is the ability to overcome oneself. Finally, power has become a key for understanding society. That is it has become "the production of intended effects" (Russel, 1975, P.25). This development is totally different from its development in linguistics.

SOCIOLOGY

Fairclough (1989) examines the dialectical process between discourse and social structure showing that language is determined by social structures because it is a part of society. For him, language is "a site of, and stake in, struggles for power" (Farrclough, 1989, P.15). There are power relations between men and women, old and young and between people in social institutions. For Faircloguh, language and power are related in two ways: as power acts in discourse and behind discourse. Power in discourse is related to holders of power in social interactions and it has three dimensions. Zupnik (1991) illustrates them as follows: (1) control over the relations between individuals, (2) power or control over the content, and (3) control over "subjects". This type of power, Fairclough claims, is concerned with discourse in which relations of power are exercised. To illustrate this point, he provides an example of an unequal interaction between a medical professor and a student. He shows that the professor exercises control over the student's contributions in the opening turn, the way in which the student is explicitly told when to start talking, the explicit instructions, the way in which the student's contributions are evaluated and finally in the questions directed to the student.

Power behind discourse, on the other hand, is said to involve the effects of power to show how orders of discourse are shaped and constituted. Power behind discourse is evident in the differentiation of dialects into "standard" and "nonstandard" and in the conventions associated with a particular discourse type. In this sense, it is outside the scope of the present study. Contrary to that view of power as a measure of dominance, control and influence is Volentine's (1986) view that power is a measure of the ability to communicate effectively. In

studying cross-sex communication, Valentine observes that there is no male control of macro institutions in society as Zimmerman and West (1975) claim but there are different contributions of both male and female speakers to the conversation for better communication. Those contributions are accomplished "through the use of different strategies or differential use of the same strategy" (Singh and Lele, 1990, P.544). However, this view of power ignores an important factor: hierarchical power. For Thompson (1991), it is Bourdieu who illustrates this point when he considers speech practices of individuals from different social backgrounds. He states that social hierarchies affect the production of speech. Tannen (1987) provides a third view in which power is a process for making decisions about what will happen. For her, it is misleading to think that there is only one source of power and that "somebody has it and someone else does not" (Tannen, 1987, P.5). Similarly, Ainsworth Vaughn (1998) states that power is constructed during interaction and thus all participants can be either its claimers or ratifiers. In this sense, there appears to be various types of power.

West and Zimmerman (1985) provide the concept of participant identities which refer to three types of power: master identities, situated identities, and discourse identities. Master identities refer to permanent factors such as age, sex, and social class. Situated identities are the power related to social settings. Finally, discourse identities are presented as the power created by the verbal activities of the participants. Brody (1992), on the other hand, divides power into other three different kinds: charismatic, social, and aesculapian. Charismatic power refers to the influence which is based on personal characteristics while social power is based on social prestige. As for aesculapian power, it draws its influence form professional knowledge. For instance, physicians, as professionals, have much greater aesculapian power than patients (See Jiang, 2006; Kamp & Partee, 2004).

LINGUISTICS

Thompson (1991) indicates that linguistics has defined power as a symbolic concept through the work of Pierre Bourdieu during the 1950s. For him, symbolic power is the aspect of most forms of power in social life. He also views linguistic utterances as relations of symbolic power in which the power relations between interactants are actualized. Further, he relates speech acts to social institutions claiming that "those institutions endow the speaker with the authority to carry out the act which his/her utterance claims to perform" (Thompson, 1991, P.8). This view of power has been developed by Halliday and Foucault. Halliday (1978) indicates that language symbolizes the social system through its function as a social semiotic. Likewise, Foucault (1980) relates the concept of power to the term discourse claiming that "power is relational and dynamic, showing itself in the minute interactions between and within people" (Foucault, 1980, P.98). He also holds that there is continuous resistance to it from individuals who are its vehicles. Following these Hallidayan traditions and the Foucauldian framework, sociolinguists attempt to clarify connection between language and power.

Sociolinguistic remains indebted to Brown and Gilman's pioneering correlations between linguistics patterns and social structures and stratifications. Brown and Gilamn's central distinction between power and solidarity taken for granted in the models developed by Brown and Levinson (1987) and Leech (1983). As perceived by Brown and Gilamn (1972, P.255), power obtains between two persons when one "is able to control the behavior of the other". This relationship is nonreciprocal and it can have a number of different bases: physical strength, wealth, age, or institutionalized role within the state, family, church, army, and so on. Solidarity, on the other hand, is a relationship that is based on similarity or even sameness of salient characteristics in two (or more) persons. Brown and Gilamn cite such relations as "attended the same school or have the same parents or practice the same profession" (P.258). Such relationships are reciprocal, i.e. they obtain equally for both individuals. The varying aspects of the solidarity dimension is its intensity, or degree of solidarity, ranging from close intimacy to distinct reserve (Mazid, 2008).

3.3 Male –Female Differences in Language Use

In the following section I will look first at turn-taking and conversational dominance, then at certain aspects of conversational style where male and female usage seems to differ, then at politeness and its linguistic correlates. The basic question that will be examined is "How far is women's language really powerless language"? In other words, I will review the research that shows how male speakers infringe the normal turn-taking rules of conversation in order to establish their dominance. They manage to do so, as research suggests, by interrupting other speakers, delaying or omitting minimal responses, and sometimes withdrawing from interaction altogether.

Jespersen (1922, P.247) asserts that it is men rather than women who introduce 'new and fresh expressions' and thus men who are "the chief renovators of language". In addition, he generalizes that 'the vocabulary of a woman as a rule is much less extensive than that of a man'. In his survey of 'adverbs' Jespersen says that women differ from men in their extensive use of certain adjectives, such as 'pretty' and nice'. Relatedly, Lakoff (1975), in his work, "language and women's place", which marks the beginning of the 20th century linguistic interest in gender

differences, singles out 'empty' adjectives like "divine", "charming", "cute", as typical of what she calls "women's language (P.53). According to Jespersen, women differ from men in their use of adverbs. He argues that this is 'a distinctive trait: the fondness of women for hyperbole will very often lead the fashion with regard to adverbs of intensity, and these are very often used with disregard of their proper meaning" (p. 250). In this connection, both Jespersen and Lakoff agree that the intensifier "so" has something of the eternally feminine about it. "This little adverb is a great favourite with ladies, in conjunction with as adjective, "it is so lovely; he is so charming; thank you so much". Jespersen's explanation for this gender – preferential usage is that 'women much more often than men break off without finishing their sentences, because they start talking without having thought out what they are going to say" (Jespersen 1922:250). Similarly, Lakoff (1975) asserts that "so" is more frequent in women's than men's language, though certainly men can use it" (P.54).

3.3.1 Prestige vs. Stigmatised Forms and Gender

Most early sociolinguistic work was concerned primarily with social class differences. However, it was soon apparent that other non-linguistic variables, such as ethnic group, age and gender, were involved in structured linguistic variation. In the case of gender, it was established that in many speech communities female speakers will use a higher proportion of prestige forms than male speakers. In other words, the prestige norms seem to exert a stronger influence on women than on men. Trudgill's (1974) study tells us the following: (1) in all styles, women tend to use fewer stigmatised forms than men; (2) in formal contexts, women seem to be more sensitive to the prestige pattern than men; (3) lower-middle-class women style-shift very sharply. In the least formal style, they use quite a high proportion of the stigmatized variant, but in the three more formal styles, they correct their speech to correspond to that of the class above them; and (4) the use of non-standard forms (that is, of the vernacular) seems to be associated not only with working class speakers, but also with male speakers (Widdowson, 2004; Kiesling & Paulston, 2005). In addition, Romaine (1978) shows us that women's pronunciation is closer to the prestige standard than men's. That is, female speech is closer to the standard, and male speakers consistently use a higher proportion of non-standard forms. In this regard, Coates (1997) argues that linguistic differences between women and men can be seen as functioning to maintain their separate identities (P.84). That is, social groups need to assert their distinctiveness, and language is one way of doing this. Then, it looks as though there are strong cultural pressures on men and women to distinguish themselves from each other. It is important for groups to maintain their identity, and language variation contributes to this in two ways: (1) linguistic differences strengthen in-group unity. That is, members of a group recognize each other as being linguistically similar to each other and different from people outside the group. (2) linguistic differences increase the distance between groups, which helps to maintain distinctive group identities (Martin & Rose, 2003; Coats & Wade, 2004). In addition, Deuchar (1989) proposed a different explanation of women's greater use of standard form. Deucher uses the notions of "face" and "power", drawing on Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness. Respecting face is defined as showing consideration for people's feelings. We show consideration by respecting two basic human needs: (1) the need not to be imposed on (negative face); and (2) the need to be liked and admired (positive face). Power is defined as "an asymmetric dimension of relative power; that is, in any interaction, the speaker can be described as relatively more or less powerful than the addressee. Accordingly, Deuchar makes the following four assumptions: (1) participants in an interaction wish to protect their own face; (2) attention to other's face is affected by relative power in relation to other; (3) attention to other's face may involve damage to one's own, and (4) women have less relative power than men. Deuchar argues that the use of prestigious standard speech can be a strategy for protecting the face of relatively powerless speakers without attacking that of their addressees. Given women's relative lack of power, use of more standard forms allows them to pay attention to other's face, at the same time as protecting their own face.

3.3.2 Conversational Style and Gender

3.3.2.1 Interruption Dominance (Control)

Zimmerman and West (1977) taped thirty-one conversations involving two participants in 'coffee shops, drug stores and other public places' on the campus of the University of California; ten conversations took place between two women, ten between two men, and eleven between one woman and one man. They examined irregularities in the transcribed conversations. They found profound differences between the conversations involving two speakers of the same sex and those involving one speaker of each sex. The two sorts of irregularity they identified are called overlap and interruption. Overlaps are instances of slight over-anticipation by the next speaker: instead of beginning to speak immediately following current speaker's turn, next speaker begins to speak at the very end of current speaker's turn, overlapping the last word (or part of it). Interruptions, on the other hand, are violations of the turn-taking rules of conversation. Next speaker begins to speak while current speak is still speaking, at a point in current speaker's turn which could not be defined as the last word. In

these eleven conversations there were nine overlaps and forty-eight interruptions. All of the overlaps were caused by the male speaker, and forty-six of the forty-eight interruptions were cases of the man interrupting the woman. Men rarely interrupt one another, it is when they are talking to women that they use interruptions. These results indicate that in mixed-sex conversations men infringe women's right to speak, specifically women's right to finish a turn. Conversely, the fact that women used no overlaps in conversation, with men (while they did use some in same-sex conversations) suggests that women are concerned not to violate the man's turn but to wait until he's finished.

It seems that after overlaps and especially after interruptions, speakers tend to fall silent. Since most interruptions (according to Zimmerman and West's data) are produced by men in mixed-sex conversations, the speaker who falls silent is usually a woman. Silence is often a sign of malfunction in conversation: under ideal conditions, participants in conversation alternate their turns smoothly, with little or no gap between turns. Zimmerman and West found that the average silence in single sex conversations lasted for 1.35 seconds, while the average silence in mixed-sex conversations lasted for 3.21 seconds. Silences in Zimmerman and West's data resulted not just from interruptions and overlaps, but also from delayed minimal responses. Minimal responses, such as 'mhm' or 'yeah' are a way of indicating the listener's positive attention to the speaker. The listener has an active, not a passive, role in conversation, and minimal responses (as well as paralinguistic features such as smiling, nodding, grimacing) signal active attention. Zimmerman and West found that in mixed-sex conversations male speakers often delayed their minimal responses. In other words, they said "mhm" or "yeah" at an appropriate point but only after a pause. It seems that a delayed minimal response may function to signal a lack of understanding or a lack of interest in what the current speaker is saying. Just as a well-placed minimal response demonstrates active attention on the part of the listener and support for the speaker's topic, so a delayed minimal response signals a lack of interest in and lack of support for the speaker's topic. Fishman (1980) taped the daily conversations of three young American couples (a total of fifty-two hours of speech). She found that the women used "you know" five times more than the men in the twelve-and-a-half hours of conversation which she transcribed (women 87: men 17). This use of "you know" by women in mixed-sex conversation is evidence of the work they have to do to try to keep conversation, going. Women use "you know" more than men because it is men rather than women who fail to respond minimally or with a full turn at appropriate points.

Control of topics is normally shared equally between participants in a conversation. In conversations between speakers of the same gender, this seems to be the pattern, but when one speaker is male and one female, male speakers tend to dominate. Conversational dominance is the focus of research by Leet-Pellegrini (1980) which looks at the interaction of the independent variables speaker's gender and expertise. Expertise refers to the speaker's level of knowledge of the topic under discussion. By examining linguistic features such as talkativeness, interruptions, overlaps and minimal responses, Leet Pellegrini was able to establish that in conjunction the variables of gender and expertise were a good predictor of dominance. In other words, speakers who were both male and well-informed tended to dominate conversation. They talked more and infringed the other speaker's turns more. On the other hand, speakers who were both female and uninformed talked less and used more minimal responses and other supportive linguistic behaviour. Male speakers who were well-informed dominated conversation because they used a style of interaction based on power (asserting an unequal right to talk and to control topics) while well-informed female speakers preferred an interactional style based on solidarity and support.

There is a widespread belief that women talk more than men, yet research findings consistently contradict this. Men have been shown to talk more than women when asked to describe three pictures, male subjects took on average 13.00 minutes per picture compared with 3.17 minutes for female subjects-more than four times as long (Swacker 1975). Research on conversational dominance establishes unambiguously that it is men who dominate the floor in mixed interaction. Spender (1980) explains the persistence of the myth of the talkative women by suggesting that we have different expectations of ma1e and female speakers: while men have the right to talk, women are expected to remain silent–talking at any length, then, will be perceived as talkativeness in women. The idea that silence is the desired state for women' is supported by the theory of "muted groups" proposed by Shirly and Ardener (Ardener 1978). Briefly, they argue that in any society there are dominant modes of expression, belonging to dominant groups within that society. If members of a muted group went to be heard, they are required to express themselves in the dominant mode. While muted groups are not necessarily silent, their mutedness means that they have difficulty making themselves heard by the dominant group. However, in many cultures, muted groups are indeed silenced by rules laid down by the dominant group (Coates 1997, P.36). De Francisco (1991) got seven married couples to tape themselves at home for a week or more. She subsequently interviewed each of the participants on their own and asked them to comment on extracts from their recorded

conversations. Her overall finding was that the women worked harder than the men to keep conversation going, but were less successful at achieving this. In contrast to Leet - Pellegrini's findings, DeFrancisco found that, although the women in her study talked more than the men and introduced more topics, this was not associated with dominance. In fact, the women were less successful than the men in getting their topics accepted. Overall, DeFrancisco concluded that the men's strategies allowed them control over domestic interaction. They defined the day-to-day reality of each couple's communication patterns, while the women had to adapt to the patterns imposed. This finding is supported by Sattel (1983), who argues that silence is used by men as part of male dominance (See Mutz & Mondak, 2006; McKellin et al., 2007). English literature is filled with characters who substantiate the stereotype of the talkative women. Rosalind, in "As you like it" says: "Do you not know I am a woman? When I think, I must speak. The other side of the coin to women's verbosity is the image of the silent woman which is often held up as an ideal. As the English proverb says, "silence is the best ornament of a woman". The model of the silent woman is still presented to girls in the second half of the 20th century. Research in English schools suggests that quiet behaviour is very much encouraged by teachers, particularly in girls.

4. APPLICATION (MILLER'S DEATH OF A SALESMAN)

4.1 Males Use of Interruptions

The main character Willy, interrupts his conversants a lot throughout the whole play. First, some examples of his conversations with Linda will be taken, trying to check which person interrupts the other more

(1)
Linda : Willy, he was gust saying –
Willy : I heard what he said! (P. 832)
Linda : I think everything.

(2)
Charley : listen, if that watchman –
Willy : I give them hill, understand. But I got a couple of fearless characters there. (P. 825)

Obviously, Willy interrupts Linda in the first quotation. He also interrupts Charley in the second quotation. Thus, the above mentioned interactions indicate that men interrupt their conversants in both same and mixed sex conversations and induce them to fall silent after they have been interrupted. And many more examples of Willy's interruptions are clear throughout the play. Most male characters in Death of a Salesman, interrupt their addressees in conversations, especially women. Strangely enough, although Willy is very interruptive, he hates being interrupted. For instance, when Linda tries to facilitate the conversation among Willy and his sons by the end of Act One, Willy induces her into silence.

Linda : Maybe things are beginning to –
Willy : (Wildly enthusted, to Linda): Stop interrupting!... (P. 834)
Linda : He loved you!
Willy : (to Linda): Will you Stop!... (P. 834)
Linda : I'll make a big breakfast---
Willy : Will you let me finish… (P. 836)

Males' interruptions and delayed minimal responses are mainly to get the floor and to deny their addressees the right to control the topic of conversation. Thus, men try to control their addressees by interrupting them, and most of the time the person who falls silent is the woman. Most remarkably, Howard's frequent interruptions to Willy express his power and superiority over Willy who is an employee seeking a job in his firm.

4.2 Turn Taking and Overlaps

In many interactions, Willy overlaps Linda's talk asking her to stop talking which also indicates his dominance and control of the conversation. Once more, Willy dominates Linda by his use of the technique of long turns as long turns are usually held by dominating characters. Willy also backchannels many of Linda's questions as can be seen in the following exchange:

Linda : They were out of here by eight o'clock.
Willy : Good work!
Linda : It was thrilling to see them leaving together
Willy : Mmm …… (P. 837)

Accordingly, the aforementioned overlaps by Willy, his long turns and his back channels all express his power and superiority over Linda and his persistent attempts to control conversations between them and consequently control Linda. Relatedly, male characters in the play follow the technique of directives while no evidence of females' use of the same technique is found. Thus, Willy gives forceful directives in both same sex interaction (to Biff and Happy) and mixed sex interaction (to the woman). Thus, this linguistic form (directives) reflects the social organization of the group. Willy is the leader who uses very strong directives to demonstrate his power and control of the whole group. Linda, on the other hand, attempts to facilitate conversations between herself and others without trying neither to give directives nor to control conversations.

4.3 Politeness and Gender

The belief that women's language is more polite, more refined - in a world, more lady like - is very widespread and has been current for many centuries. In this regard, coates (1997, P.21) argues that 'vulgarity is a cultural construct, and the evidence suggests that it was the new courtly tradition of the Middle Ages which, by creating gentility, also created vulgarity. Presumably there have always been taboos on language, but it looks as if the courtly tradition of the Middle Ages, which put women on a pedestal, strengthened linguistic taboos in general, and also condemned the use of vulgar language by women, and its use by men in front of women (Agyekum, 2004). Politeness, then, can be defined as satisfying the face wants of others (while protecting our own), and linguistically this can be carried out in many different ways. Brown (1980) studied the language of women and men in a Mayan community in Mexico, to test the hypothesis that women are more polite than men. She argues that the level of politeness appropriate to a given interaction will depend on the social relationship of the participants. This means that linguistic markers of politeness are a good indication of social relationships. Brown argues that negative politeness – where the speaker apologises for intruding, uses impersonal structures (such as passives), and hedges assertions – is found where people are in an inferior position in society. This deduction is also made by O' Barr and Atkins, 1980; Daly et al., 2004; Harris, 2003).

There is little hard evidence on male / female differences in swearing. The folklinguistic belief that men swear more than women and use more taboo words is widespread. Jespersen (1922) claimed that women have an instinctive shrinking from coarse and gross expressions and a preference for refined and (in certain spheres) veiled and indirect expressions'. In his preface to the Dictionary of American Slang, Flexner claims that 'most American slang is created and used by males' (Flexner 1960: xii). Kramer (1974) analysed cartoons from the New Yorker. She found that cartoonists make their male characters swear much more freely than the female characters. She asked students to identify captions taken from the cartoons as male or female. For most of the captions there was a clear consensus (at least 66 per cent agreement) on the sex of the speaker and the students commented explicitly on the way in which swearing distinguished male speech from female speech (See Mazid, 2008; Mills, 2003; Watts, 2003; Lakoff & Ide, 2005).

APPLICATION

4.4 Males and the Vernacular

Willy Loman's vernacular includes many features of colloquialism such as the frequent use of swearing and colloquial words, contractions, syntactic looseness, the use of exclamations and abrupt topic shifts. Starting with swearing, Willy Loman uses swearing frequently in the play. For instance, he uses words like "gee" and "ignorant" and phrases like "for God's sake" "God damnit" "what the hell", "shut up" and "son of a bitch" frequently in the play. While talking to Charley, Willy says:

> **Put up your hands. Goddam you, put up your hands!**
>
> **……**
>
> **: Who the hell do you think you are, better than everybody else? You don't know everything, you big, ignorant, stupid ……. Put up your hands! (P. 849)**

Also Biff swears frequently throughout the play as he utters words like "gee', "Jesus" and "damn" and phrases like "what the hell", "god-dam", "shut up" and "ungrateflul bastards". Moreover, other characters such as Happy, Charley and Stanley swear. For example, Happy uses words like "damn", "gee" and "jerk" and phrases like "what the hell" and "son of a bitch". Charley, also, uses the phrase "what the hell". Finally, Howard, Bernard. and Stanley use "gee". Moreover, Willy, Howard and Biff use colloquial words like "kid" and "yeah" when talking to some other person. Willy also uses the word "wanna" frequently and the phrase "oh, boy", as the writer introduces him to us for the first time. He also uses the word "boy" frequently when addressing his sons.

Another form of colloquialism is contractions used by male characters in the play. For example, Willy, Biff and Happy drop the last letter "g" when talking:

Willy : No kiddin, Biff …….. (P. 810)

: You're doin all right, Hap (P. 811)

Also Biff, Happy and Charley drop the last letter "g" if it is preceded by the "in" like kiddin, tellin, getting etc…Another form of contraction which is also used by males in the concerned play is the word "cause" instead of the correct form "because". This from is used by Willy, Happy and Bernard. Moreover, Willy uses the contracted forms "gonna" "coulda" frequently in the play.

Regarding men's topic shifts in conversation, Coates (1997) suggests that shifts between topics in all male conversations are abrupt. Males' topic shifts in the concerned play are really abrupt. Willy makes semantic jumps from the very beginning of the play. In the opening pages of the play, while talking to Linda about his troubles**,** he makes a big shift**:**

Linda : Why don't you tell those things to Howard, dear?

Willy : (encouraged (I will, I definitely will is there any cheese?

Linda : I'll make you a sandwich

Willy : No, go to sleep. I'll take some milk. I'll be back right away. The boys in? (P.802)

Thus, he makes a big shift. While talking about a serious matter, he changes the discourse and talks about cheese. Then he changes his mind and wants milk. Finally, he asks if the children are in. Moreover, on another occasion, when he remembers the diamond watch that Ben gave him, and he asks Linda about it, as Linda answers him that he pawned it, he makes a big jump: **Gee, that was a beautiful thing. I'll take a walk** (p.827). Biff also shifts abruptly in his speech. For instance, while his father advises him to study with Bernard, he suddenly makes a shift: **Oh, Pop, you didn't see my sneakers!** (p.814). Moreover, Howard, while talking to Willy about the wire recorder, he makes a jump through their speech to talk about his (Howard's) little daughter who is "seven years old":

Howard : Listen to that kid whistle.

Willy : That is lifelike, isn't it?

Howard : Seven years old. Get that tone (p.841)

4.5 Males' competitiveness and Females' Co-operation

Tannen (1994) and Coates (1997) maintain that while men in mixed sex interactions act competitively, women act cooperatively. It is clear that Linda, throughout the play, gives cooperative interactions. She gives more indications of interest in and attention to what other people are saying. For instance, she makes supportive remarks, acknowledges what has been said by others, and makes comments which develop and elaborate on what others have said. In other words, she is facilitating the flow of conversation. However, male characters in the play do not act the same. Biff's conversation with his father near the end of the play is also competitive and inconvenient between a father and his son. Obviously, men's conversations are competitive and aggressive. Men, thus, violate Grice's cooperative principle while women follow it. For instance, Willy violates the maxim of *quality* as he provides contradictory utterances throughout the play. Evaluating his son, Willy violates the maxim of quality by contradicting himself and saying things which he believes to be false, and he himself asserts them

Willy : Biff is a lazy bum!

Linda : ……..

Willy : And such a hard worker. There's One thing about Biff - he's not lazy. (p.803)

Willy also flouts the maxim of relation by providing unexpected transitions between divergent subjects. This can be noticed in Willy's long turns which come unexpectedly and stop abruptly. For example, Willy's utterances are irrelevant to the immediately preceding questions provided by Linda

Willy : I was right !

Linda : Did you have some cheese ?

It's very late, darling. Come to bed, heh?

Willy : Gotta break your neck to see a Star in this yard. (p. 826)

Thus, Willy completely ignores Linda's utterances. Another example of males' violation of the relevance principle is given by Charley as follows:

Willy : Well, you don't know how to eat.

Charley : I eat with my mouth.

Willy : No, you are ignorant. You gotta know about vitamins and things like that.

Charley : Come on, let's shoot (p. 820)

The special use of terms of endearment by the two participants is very significant in determining the social relation between them and in determining the male/female distinctive use of language to convey different feelings and attitudes. Linda's frequent use of terms of endearment and of politeness principles indicate that she seeks to make connections and reinforce intimacy. Hence, Linda's use of endearment terms and politeness principles is more frequent than Willy's which is characterized by peculiar endearment terms. Such terms reflect his dominance and determination to use language in a way that protects his status. Willy's violation of Leech's principles of politeness, namely, the sympathy, approbation, tact and modesty Maxims' also implicate his superiority, seeking power and dominance. One more feature of Linda's seeking intimacy is her use of informal address terms, the most frequently used term is the first name, and which Lakoff considers as a way of seeking friendliness, camaraderie and egalitarianism. Finally, Linda's frequent use of the politeness marker "please" corresponds to Lakoff's definition of linguistic politeness. It is also indicative of deference and camaraderie

Willy's use of first name when addressing Howard indicates familiarity and equality. But, Howard's use of first name and of certain address terms as the term "kid", (also in Howard's office when Willy visits him to ask for a job), implicate that Howard emphasizes his superiority and power over Willy who is an employee asking for a favour from Howard, the employer. Accordingly, Howard violates Leech's maxims which are the approbation, tact and sympathy maxims. Biff's use of first name when addressing his father near the end of the play, indicates that Biff is in a higher status to his father. This reversal of social roles from an inferior to a superior after Biff's discovery of Willy's affair with the woman implicates that Willy no longer holds a superior social role over his son, and that is why the latter violates the sympathy and approbation maxim**s**.

Linda talks like a typical female abiding by the politeness principle more than Willy. For example, this principle is clear from the very beginning of the play. As we notice from the first few pages, she is very sympathetic with Willy and is trying to let him feel her love for him. For example, in the opening lines of the play, we find Linda a very nice and sympathetic wife.

Linda : "Don't you feel well?"

: "well, you'll just have to take a rest, Willy, you can't c ontinue this way."

: "take an aspirin. Should I get you an aspirin? It'll soothe you."

: "Willey, dear. Talk to them again." (p. 800:801)

Thus, Linda is sympathetic with Willy. Moreover, she is very nice to him most of the time calling him "dear" repeating it:

Linda : "Don't you feel well?"

: "and the mind is what count, dear (p. 801)

: "Why don't you tell those things to Howard, dear?" (p. 802)

: "Willy, darling, you're the handsomest man in the world".

Willy : "oh, no, Linda"

Linda : "To me you are. (slight pause) The handsomest."

A page forward, Linda expresses her love and respect for Willy and asks her sons to sympathize with him:

Linda : "He's the dearest man in the world

: to me, and I won't have anyone making him feel unwanted and low and blue.(p. 828)

Thus, Linda follows Leech's Politeness Maxims which are the sympathy, approbation, tact and agreement Maxim. Throughout the play, men do not follow Leech's principles of politeness. Starting with Willy Loman, the main character of the play, he doesn't follow the politeness maxims as his verbal aggressiveness is a vivid feature in his character from the very beginning of the play

Linda : "You didn't smash the car did you?"

Willy : (with casual irritation). I said nothing happened. Didn't you hear me?

Obviously; Willy so far violates the tact and approbation Maxims. One page more, we find Willy again violating the afore-mentioned maxims.

Willy : "What're you lookin'so anemic about, Bernard?"

Willy : "Don't be a pest, Bernard! (to his boys)

What an anemic!"

: "Bernard is not well liked, is he?" (p. 814)

Moreover, during Linda's and Willy's conversation about Buff's and Oliver's meeting that will take place soon, Willy violates the maxim of approbation saying:

: "Remember him? What's the matter with you, you crazy "You don't know the average caliber anymore" (p. 836)

Similarly; when Willy is talking to his sons in the middle of the Second Act of the play, and definitely when talking to Biff about the stolen pen and about his flunking math, Willy violates both the tact and approbation maxims saying:

Willy, "No, you're no good, you're no good for anything." (p. 864)

So far, Willy is violating the maxims of tact and approbation, but next, he is also violating the modesty maxim:

Bernard : Did you tell him not to go to summer school?

Willy : Me? I begged him to go. I ordered him to go. (p.851)

Thus, Willy is violating Leech's politeness principles which are the sympathy, approbation, tact and modesty maxims. But it is not only Willy who isn't following Leech's principles, also Willy's sons Biff and Happy, Charley and Howard are violating such principles.

4.6 Questions

Fishman (1980) analysed her transcripts of couples in conversation for questions as well as for '*you know*'. She looked at yes/no questions such as 'Did you see Sarah last night?' as well as at tag questions. The women in her sample used three times as many tag and yes/no questions as the men (87: 29). During the twelve-and-a-half hours of conversation transcribed, a total of 370 questions was asked, of which women asked 263 (two-and-a-half times as many as the men). A survey of the linguistic behaviour of people buying a ticket at Central Station in Amsterdam also established that women ask more questions than men, especially when addressing a *male* ticket-seller (Brouwer et al. 1979). Perhaps women feel less inhibited about asking for information, since this does not conflict with the gender-role prescribed by society (O'halloran, 2007; Orpin, 2005; Sinclair, 2004).

Research findings so far suggest that women use interrogative forms more than men and that this may reflect women's relative weakness in interactive situations: they exploit questions and tag questions in order to keep conversation going. However as Cameron et al.'s (1989) research on tag questions demonstrates, some kinds of questions are associated with *powerful* speakers. Research into doctor patient interaction, or teacher-pupil interaction confirms this finding: questions are overwhelmingly used by powerful participants. Thus, while it seems that in some situations women use more questions than men, in others the relevant variable is occupational status not gender. If we are to make sense of the way questions are used in speech, we have to distinguish between the different functions of questions, and we have to keep symmetrical and asymmetrical discourse separate. It is certainly true that questions are powerful linguistic forms: they give the speaker the power to elicit a response from the other participant(s). This characteristic of questions is exploited by powerful participants in asymmetrical situations; it is also exploited by women speakers who use questions and tag questions to keep conversation going (Prego-VazQuez, 2007; Stokoe & Edwards, 2007).

4.7 Tag Questions

Lakoff (1975) nominated the tag question as one of the linguistic forms associated with tentativeness, but provided no empirical evidence to show that women use more tag questions than men. According to Lakoff, tag questions decrease the strength of assertions. Compare the two sentences below:

(1a) The crisis in the Middle East is terrible.

(1b) The crisis in the Middle East is terrible, isn't it?

Lakoff claims that women use sentences like (1 b), which contains the tag question *isn't it,* more often than men, who are supposed to favour (1 a). Siegler and Siegler (1976) presented students with sixteen sentences, four of

which were assertions with tag questions like (1 b) above. The students were told that the sentences came from conversations between college students, and were asked to guess whether a woman or a man produced the sentence originally. The results of this test supported Lakoff's hypothesis: sentences with tag questions were most often attributed to women, while strong assertions, like (1 a), were most often attributed to men (the difference in attributions was statistically significant). This, however, only confirms what speakers' *attitudes* are; it doesn't prove that women actually use more tag questions. When the relationship between the participants in the interaction is taken into account, it emerges that facilitators are more likely to use tags than non-facilitators. Holmes (1994) use the term *facilitator* to refer to those responsible for ensuring that interaction proceeds smoothly, such as interviewers on radio and television, discussion group leaders, teachers, hosts. Moreover, women are more likely than men to use tags when acting as facilitators.

APPLICATION

4.8 The Use of Questions and Tag Question

Fishman (1978) sees that women have a question asking tendency. Coates (1997) also notes that women exploit questions and tag questions in order to keep the conversation going. From the very beginning and the opening lines of the play, we find Linda asking questions more than Willy. Thus, Linda is giving thrice the number of questions Willy gives (7to2). Moreover, when Linda is talking to Biff and Happy about Willy and is trying to gain their sympathy towards Willy, she asks more questions than Biff and Happy who give no questions at all. As for tag questions, we see that men use tag questions more often than women and don't conform to Coates' (1997) indication that women exploit tag questions more men. For example, Willy uses tags frequently while Linda uses them rarely. For instance, in the opening pages of the play, Willy uses tags while Linda doesn't. Moving on in the play, Willy gives more tags while conversing to the different characters of the play. For example, talking to Biff and Linda near the end of Act One, Biff tells his father about Linda:

Biff : Don't yell at her, Pop, will ya?

Willy : (angrily). I was talking, wasn't I?

Obviously, both male characters, namely, Willy and Biff give tags while Linda doesn't. Moreover, when Willy asks Biff if he saw Oliver, Willy gives tags two times

Willy : You didn't see him, did you?

Biff : I did see him!

Willy : What'd you insult him or something? You insulted him, didn't you?

Biff : Listen, will you let me out of it. (p.862)

In fact, most of the male characters of the play exploit tags not only Willy. For example Biff, Happy, Ben, Howard and Bernard use tags more frequently than the female ones. Such frequent use of tags by males is indicative of their uncertainty about the truth of their assertions (Lakoff 1975) and tentativeness (Coates 1997). Males' tags are modal ones (Holmes 1984), expressing their uncertainty and signaling the speakers' degree of certainty about the propositions expressed. Such tags are speaker oriented as they ask the addresse to confirm the speaker's proposition.

Happy : Are you familiar with football?

Girl : No, I'm afraid I'm not. (p. 587)

Finally, Linda gives some more questions to her dead husband and of course receives none at the very end of the play.

Linda : Forgive me, dear. I can't cry. I don't know what it is, but I can't cry. I don't understand it. Why did you ever do that? Help me Willy, I can't cry. It seems to me that you're just on another trip. I keep expecting you. Willy, dear, I can't cry. Why did you do it? (Requiem)

As Fishman sees, this question – asking tendency is a way of facilitating the flow of conversation and a positive reaction which indicates tension release and agreeing. This is true of Linda's questions which are given for the purpose of seeking information and confirmation when addressing Willy and her sons, questions are for the purpose of gaining their sympathy towards their father, but she never gains it. Willy's dominance is clear in his conversations with Linda. For instance, Linda initiates the exchange, gives an elicitation which requires a response (a question which requires an answer), but when Willy gets the floor, he dominates the interaction by giving a question after each response he gives.

4.9 Minimal Responses

Research on the use of minimal responses is unanimous in showing that women use them more and at appropriate moments, that is, at points in conversation which indicate the listener's support for the current speaker (Coates 1997). Fishman (1980) describes women's skilful use of minimal responses in mixed interaction as 'interactional shitwork'. She concludes that there is a division of labour in conversation which supports men and women in positions of power and powerlessness. When men do use minimal responses, these are often delayed, a tactic which undermines the current speaker and reinforces male dominance.

APPLICATION

4.10 The Use of Minimal Responses

Concerning the issue of minimal responses, it is obvious that only Willy gives a minimal response through the whole play. It is a delayed one coming before a pause and it takes place in the very beginning of Act Two:

Linda : It was so thrilling to see them leaving together. I can't get over the shaving lotion in this house!

Willy : Mmm ---- (p. 837)

This delayed minimal response by Willy, while Linda talks very enthusiastically about how their sons looked when they were leaving, indicates complete lack of interest and lack of understanding.

4.11 Hedges

Women's speech is often described as 'tentative', and this assertion is linked to the claim that women use more hedges. Hedges are linguistic forms. such as *I think, I'm sure, you know, sort of* and *perhaps* which express the speaker's certainty or uncertainty about the proposition under discussion. Lakoff explicitly linked women's use of hedges with unassertiveness. She claimed that women's speech contains more hedges (a claim based on no empirical evidence), and argued that this is because woman' are socialised to believe that asserting themselves strongly isn't nice or ladylike, or even feminine' (Lakoff 1975: 54). Surprisingly few researchers have carried out empirical work designed to investigate Lakoff's claims. Few studies have shown that in some situations women do use more hedges, but suggest that we need to be sensitive to the different functions of hedges, and to query the assumption that more frequent use is a weakness. A possible reason for men's apparently lower usage of hedges is their choice of topics: unlike women, men on the whole avoid self-disclosure and prefer to talk about impersonal subjects. In other words, a comparison between all-male and all female conversation will often be a comparison between discussion of impersonal issues (current affairs, travel, sport) and discussion of highly personal issues involving mutual self-disclosure.

APPLICATION

According to Fishman, women use hedges more than men. From the opening lines of the play, Willy is fond of using hedges. Willy makes hedges while talking to Howard, who replies him with hedges. Moreover, Willy makes hedges while talking to his sons Biff and Happy. For example, when he talks to his sons in the restaurant in the second half of Act two, he makes hedges. In fact, men give more hedges than women; and this consequently contradicts with Fishman's words.

Jespersen and Lakoff claim that "so" has something feminine about it. In Miller's play, female characters violate Jespersen's and Lakoff's claim and it is the male characters who follow it as Willy, Happy and Biff. For example, Willy in the opening pages of the play says:

Willy : …. But it's so beautiful up there Linda, the trees are so thick, and the sun is warm. …….. (p. 801)

Also, Happy and Buff use the intensifies "so"

Happy : But not so noticeable It got so embarrassing**. I sent him to Florida** (p.806)

Happy : Dad is never so happy as when he's looking forward to something!

Obviously, Willy's use of "so" indicates his dissatisfaction with his humdrum life. His description of nature is very poor. This linguistic poverty represents his commonness. However, it is counteracted by his ability to be more poetic in expressing his dreams and aspirations. This is also true of Biffs and Happy's use of the intensifier "so". Biff is dissatisfied with both his father especially after his discovery of Willy's affair with the woman and

with the idea of being himself a salesman. Happy is also dissatisfied with his father and admires his uncle Ben much more than Willy. Accordingly, their use of "so" indicates their naivety, dissatisfaction and commonness.

FINAL REFLECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

What emerges from any review of work on speech differences between women and men is a complicated sense of variation affected by a range of factors. Two points in particular, one sociological and one linguistic, should be noted. First, speech differences between men and women are not clear cut. The sex differences which stem from anatomy and physiology are filtered through the social construction of gender identity and gender relations which work differently in different societies, epochs and cultures. For this reason, we should not expect some set of universal differences in the language of men and women. Instead, we need to consider carefully the ways in which gender as a dimension of difference between people interacts with other dimensions such as those of age, class, ethnic group, and so on. Second, from a linguistic perspective, we need to be very clear about what exactly is being identified as a difference between men and women. Generalized claims about assertiveness or politeness are difficult to substantiate unless they are translated into more specific statements involving identifiable linguistic behavior. Despite these complications there seems to be growing evidence to suggest that, in the words of Coates, “women and men do pursue different interactive styles: in mixed-sex conversations this means that men tend to interrupt women; they use this strategy to control topics of conversation and their interruptions tend to induce silence in women. Women make greater use of minimal response to indicate support for the speaker. It also seems that women ask more questions, while men talk more, swear more and use imperative forms to get things done. Women use more linguistic forms associated with politeness. (Coates and Cameron, 1988, p.117). Studies of language and gender have returned repeatedly to the question of how the language used by men and women reinforce their respective positions in society. Women are maintained in a subordinate position, it has been argued, because they are socialized to adopt powerless patterns of speech; and conversely men maintain their dominance by the use of verbal strategies associated with power. The propensity of men to interrupt women more than women interrupt men may be seen in these terms. As West and Zimmerman maintain: “the fact that female find themselves subject to interruption more frequently than males in cross-sex conversations is not merely an indicator of a power differential. it is …a way of ‘doing’ power in face to face interaction, and to the expect that power is implicated in doing what it means to be a man vis-à-vis a woman, it is a way of ‘doing’ gender as well”. However, an equally important theme that has emerged more recently is the focus on differences between men’s and women’s speech as the outcome of what are in effect two different subcultures with contrasting orientations towards relationships. In effect, women and men, it is claimed, grow up within different social worlds, as a result of which women are inclined to see relationships in terms of intimacy, connection and disclosure whereas men are inclined to see them in terms of hierarchy, status and independence. These sub cultural differences are enacted in contrasting communicative styles. If the contrasting subcultures of men and women give rise to contrasting communicative styles, then these very differences provide ample grounds for misunderstanding between men and women. As Tannen (1992) argues, they end up talking at cross purposes. Women, she believes, tend to speak and hear a language of status and independence. Thus, men find that seeking advice (especially from men) is potentially demeaning; women may be less inhibited in doing so. Women talk about troubles to share them; men talk about troubles to solve them (Montgomery, 2005).

The present study stresses the importance of examining the relationship between gender, language and educational disadvantage. And in doing so, we need to focus on "communicative competence, not only on grammar or pronunciation" (Coates 1997, p.196). Young children acquire gender-appropriate language, and this includes differentiated communicative competence. In the school setting, this differing understanding of when to speak, when to remain silent, how to mark speech for politeness, when it is permissible to interrupt, etc. helps to contribute to different outcomes for girls and boys. Their differentiated communicative competence enables boys to dominate in the classroom. The classroom in other words, mirrors the outside world: male dominance is acted out in the classroom, and this limits girls’ opportunities to learn. Boys' talk in the classroom differs from girls’ both in style and in quantity. Boys tend to brag; after a school test they will say it was ‘easy’, ‘simple’, while the girls tend to express anxiety about their performance (their comments are of course unrelated to their results). Boys’ confidence is also apparent in the way they respond to questions: they participate actively, call out answers, make lots of guesses, while girls listen more passively (Stanworth 1981). Pupils themselves are aware of this discrepancy: ‘they all make a lot of noise, all those boys That’s why I think they’re more intelligent than us’ (female pupil reported in Stanworth 1981). Girls’ silence in class is despised by boys, but tends to be supported by the girls who are hostile towards girls who adopt a more assertive role. Girls are explicitly taught that loudness is ‘unfeminine’ (Payne 1980) and it seems that girls’ sense of their own identity as female makes them feel that the speech acts of arguing, challenging and shouting are inappropriate behaviour for them.

Quietness is an ideal held up to schoolchildren throughout their school life. Many schools equate *quiet* behaviour with *nice* behaviour. The English infant school defines the quiet child as well-behaved and noisy child as badly behaved (King 1978, p.61). Whether quietness is a desirable quality is a debatable point: recent innovations in educational practice have stressed the importance of *active* learning – for children to learn, they need to be actively involved in the learning process. Being actively involved means *talking,* among other things: asking questions making suggestions, offering comments. The quiet child, if quiet means passive and unassertive, is a child who is unable to participate fully in learning. One consequence of boys' more noisy, undisciplined behaviour in the classroom is that they get more attention. Recent research on teacher–pupil interaction patterns has arrived at the same resu1t: boys get more of the teacher's attention than girls (Spender 1982). Spender estimates that teachers normally give two – thirds of their attention to boys. This is confirmed by Swann's (1989) research on classroom interaction. Teachers' awareness of the different communicative competence of girls and boys also affects the choice of topics to be discussed in school. Lessons are organized to reflect boys' interests, because teachers have learned that boys will object – loudly – to topics they see as effeminate, while girls will accept 'boys' topics. Teachers have varying success in their efforts to include girls.

In conclusion, we must remember that gender differentiation in language does not exist in a vacuum: it interacts in a complex way with other kinds of social differentiation. Both language and gender are developed through our participation in everyday social practice. In other words, language and gender are inextricably linked. But the fact that gender is accomplished through talk is only now being addressed seriously by sociolinguists (See Van Dijk, 1998, 2001, 2006, 2008 a, b).

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