THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER ON LANGUAGE USE

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Abstract. *This article discusses gender and its impact on language use, variation, and perception in English-speaking cultures and that of Uzbek cultures, while emphasizing the relevant cultural principles. It covers how gender influences conversational styles, language development, and attitudes in society. Additionally, it addresses stereotypes related to gendered language and the implications of linguistic profiling in both societies. A deeper understanding of these dynamics enhances our appreciation of how gender informs language and cultural identities.*

Key Words: *Sociolinguistics, gender and language, conversational style, linguistic variation, language perception, social identity, gender stereotypes, linguistic innovation, communication equity, linguistic profiling.*

Based on sociolinguistics, the branch of study on how and why language changes in relation to social context, gender has an indelible impact on how and what we say. This article examines the impact of gender on language use, language variation, and language perception, and summarizes major theories and findings in the field. It is not only a tool to communicate, but also a resource to build social identities (even gender identity). Below there are some characteristics that differentiate male and female language.

Politeness Strategies

In English-speaking cultures, women frequently employ indirect requests as a politeness strategy. For instance, a woman might say, "Could you possibly help me with this?" This phrasing softens the request and conveys respect for the listener's autonomy. Men may use more direct commands, such as "Help me with this," which can be perceived as assertive.

In Uzbekistan, politeness is deeply rooted in cultural norms and etiquette that dictate respect, particularly towards elders and authority figures. Uzbek speakers often use honorifics and formal language when addressing others, regardless of gender. For example, an Uzbek speaker might say, "Dear, could you please help me?" This illustrates a cultural emphasis on formality and respect in communication.

Conversational Style

Deborah Tannen's research highlights divergent conversational styles between genders. In English-speaking contexts, women often use rapport-building techniques, such as asking questions to invite others into the conversation. For example, a woman might say, "What do you think about this idea?" This approach fosters inclusivity and connection.

However, Uzbeks' conversational style may lean towards more formal structures, where men typically dominate discussions. Traditional norms often position men as the primary speakers, leading to assertive statements without much room for input from others. For instance, a man might say "This project is very important," often without inviting discussion or feedback.

Language Change and Innovation

Gender significantly influences language variation and change. In English-speaking environments, studies have shown that women often lead in adopting new slang and linguistic innovations. For example, younger women might use terms like "lit" or "fam" to express excitement or refer to close friends, reflecting a trend toward informal and dynamic language.

In Uzbekistan, young women increasingly use social media to introduce new slang and modernize traditional language practices. For instance, the term "kuyov" (groom) may evolve in informal contexts to refer to a boyfriend showcasing a playful adaptation of language that resonates with younger generations.

Gendered Stereotypes

Both cultures hold the gendered language stereotypes which might result in biased evaluations. In English-speaking environments, if a woman gets a little emotional when speaking, it can discredit her professionalism. An example would be if a woman presents her

idea passionately in meetings, she is categorized as a bit too emotional and her authority goes down.

For example, it works to treat women in Uzbekistan as less rational or persuasive in the discursive space. For instance, she might have spoke in a buiness meeting and been dismissed with comments like, "Don't listen to this woman; she's too emotional." Comments like that perpetuate old gender roles and silence women from engaging in professional conversations.

Linguistic Profiling refers to the practice of making judgments based on speech, highlighting the role of gender in social contexts. In English-speaking environments, research shows that women's language is often subjected to closer scrutiny, sometimes labeled as "emotional" or "trivial." For instance, an enthusiastic contribution from a woman might be perceived as excessive or unprofessional.

In Uzbekistan, women's opinions in public forums are frequently discounted, reflecting traditional gender dynamics. A common phrase might be, "Bu ayolning fikri qiziqarli emas," meaning "This woman's opinion isn't interesting," which undermines their contributions and perpetuates gender bias.

Educational and Professional Contexts

The influence of gender on language extends into educational and professional settings. In England, women are increasingly participating in higher education and professional fields, leading to changes in linguistic norms. However, they often face challenges in male-dominated environments where their contributions may be undervalued. Studies show that women in STEM fields, for example, report feeling marginalized due to their gender.

In Uzbekistan, while educational attainment for women has improved, traditional roles still significantly affect their professional opportunities. Women may be encouraged to pursue careers in teaching or healthcare, which are seen as more suitable. This societal expectation can restrict their linguistic expression in professional contexts, as they navigate the need to conform to gender norms.

Gender's impact on sociolinguistics includes the use, variation, perception and norms of language. This dynamic is not one dimensional and understanding it will enable further equitable

change and disrupt the mouldings of stereotypes that often affect communication. Just like languages, these realities change, and our understanding of how gender shapes language and context, and how language contextualizes gender, has to change as well.

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