

GENDER AND SOCIAL CLASS

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Abstract. *Sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and society. It refers to the ways language is used considering social contexts. Communication is the purpose of language. This is supported by Functionalists as they view language as a tool for communication. The notion that communicators or interlocutors are highly influenced by their society and differences keep us realize that sociolinguistics is such a relevant concept.*

Keywords. *Gender, style, language, conversation, length of speech.*

Introduction

Gender, style, and social class play roles in communication. Our ways of using language are influenced by our status in society and that each gender has distinct behaviors towards language use. Below are my specific insights on this matter. First, the way we talk or the way we use the language describes our social identity. Our gender or sex contributes to our language and our way of communication. Since time there has been a difference in the ways males and females communicate. It is quite often that males speak shorter than females. People engage themselves in conversation well if topics conform to their interests which are influenced by their gender. Tone, length of speech, and words used are only some of the distinctive aspects.

This paper discusses three interrelated concepts of gender, race and class. The three concepts are said to be related because they are all socially constructed. The concepts are also institutionalized, meaning that they are entrenched in social systems and institutions such as organizations, schools and governments. The three are therefore characterized by discrimination, inequality, prejudice and skewed distribution of resources and power. In a nutshell, men hold senior positions of leadership than women, the whites colonize the non whites, and the rich exploit the

poor. The concepts are discussed below separately. Gender refers to the social construction of the differences between males and females. For example, the belief that all men are brave and strong while all women are coward and weak. Sex is defined as the biological differences between men and women. For example, body anatomy. While most or all males have beard, more muscular bodies and deep voices, most or all females do not have beard, have high pitched voices and are less muscular. Gender stereotypes are therefore the beliefs that people have towards males and females (Connell 72). There are both implicit and explicit attitudes towards males and females. When we say that the attitudes are implicit, we mean that they are internalized in our thinking processes. For example, a teacher may select male students to represent a school in a math contest and select female students to represent it in the art subjects or in languages. This may happen as a result of the belief that all males are good in mathematics while all females are good in easy subjects like the arts and languages. In professional context, a male doctor may be referred to as 'the doctor' while a female one may be referred to as 'the woman doctor' to imply that it is unusual for a female to be a doctor. When we say the attitudes are explicit, we mean that the stereotypes may not be necessarily internalized, but are based on generalizations about males and females. For example, a firm may refuse to recruit females to work as guards because of the belief that females are not only weak, but are also prone to other forms of violence such as rape. Both implicit and explicit attitudes towards gender stereotypes are sometimes correct but are not always true. For example, while it is correct that men are courageous and able to do tough subjects like mathematics, not all of them are able to perform well in mathematics. In some cases females may outshine males in mathematics. For a person to confirm a certain stereotype, he or she must do a research on the same. While doing the research however, he or she must bear in mind that attitudes and behaviors keep on changing (Mora and Ruiz 34). Gender stereotypes are related to ambivalent sexism, which is the coexistence of positive and negative attitudes towards a certain sex. Ambivalent sexism is understood by taking a closer look at some words and phrases which are used to describe females.

For example, a female Chief Executive Officer (CEO) may be described as very cute, adorable and attractive. Another example is the saying that men are incomplete without women. These are positive attitudes towards women. In leadership context, the female CEO may also be described as a 'very good public relations agent' while the male CEO may be described as a 'very good leader'. These ambivalent attitudes towards females are used by males to remain at the top of the hierarchy of power and leadership and place females at the bottom. While a phrase like 'that female CEO is very cute, calm and attractive' implies a positive attitude towards her, it can also imply that she can be too emotional to become a good leader. Ambivalent sexism is therefore used mostly to propagate the inequalities between males and females especially in the pursuit of power and authority. This leads to the enactment of policies which do not adequately reflect the views and wishes of females in the society. Race refers to the physical characteristics of people from different parts of the world. Such characteristics include skin color, dialect, eye color, type of hair and cultural practices. However, the skin color is the most common criteria for distinguishing people by race. We have various races such as the Whites, the Asians, the Jews and the Blacks.

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SOCIOLINGUISTICS AND SOCIOLOGY OF LANGUAGE

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Abstract. *This article explores the dynamic intersection of sociolinguistics and the sociology of language, two interdisciplinary fields that illuminate the complex relationship between language and society. Sociolinguistics investigates language variation and usage patterns within social contexts, emphasizing how language reflects and shapes identities, communities, and power dynamics. Concurrently, the sociology of language takes a broader sociological perspective, examining language as a social institution influenced by factors such as globalization, language policies, and ideological beliefs. The synthesis of sociolinguistics and the sociology of language contributes to a comprehensive understanding of language in its societal context.*

Key words. *Sociolinguistics, social factors, identity and ethnicity, gender, economic status, occupation, geographical location*

Introduction