

Gender and Careful Linguistic Behaviour

By

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ABSTRACT

The research aims at investigating the gender differences with specific reference to careful language use. It is designed to examine the linguistic behavior of females in comparison with males keeping in view five linguistic variables. These are: hyper correct grammar, hedges, words spoken in Italics, special linking words in Urdu language and modal verbs. Data for this research was taken from television, eight programs based on talk shows and panel discussions were recorded to generate data with the help of content analysis. The quantitative analysis aimed at enlisting the frequencies of under examined linguistic variables. Chi square test was used to find out differences in frequencies after getting the mean of specific linguistic items of each linguistic variable. The qualitative analysis discussed the context and function of linguistic variables. It also examined the linguistic variation with respect to gender dialogues and their feelings. There was found significant difference in the use of hypercorrect grammar. Females seem to use hypercorrect grammar more frequently than males. As a result, there is found phonological variation of glottal sound /h/ in specific linguistic items. It has been eliminated when it is used after three consonant sounds. /r/, /b/ and /n/. Both genders are using both forms of these grammatical particles with glottal sound and without glottal sound. This variation is found with significant difference on both inter speaker and intra speaker level. Besides this, there is also meaningful difference of other four linguistic variables. Although, it cannot be said as significant difference due to small corpus. The difference will be significant with this application on large corpus. Besides the gender differences in language use, the research will provide more awareness of the use of Urdu language in Pakistani community and its change and variation in terms of its speaker's usage. It will also prove an effort contributory to the planning and development of Urdu language.

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Chapter 1

This chapter briefly summarizes the importance of gender differences with specific reference to language use and highlights the importance of their study. A brief overview of sociolinguistic features which can be used as parameters for finding out these differences is presented. This is followed by the main objectives and questions addressed in this study, research design and finally the scope and benefits of the research.

1.1 Gender Difference in Language Use

Communication is a vital reflection of general behavior of human beings and language is a key instrument for general and specific studies of behavioral, cultural or psychological traits. Language contributes towards the construction and articulation of gender categories.

In present age, there is an ongoing debate on essential gender differences which are supported by the difference approach. Famous linguists of gender linguistics, Deborah Tannen in 1990, Janeffer Coates in 1986 and other proponents of difference approach have argued that the gender difference in language usage clearly appears and the reasons behind this phenomenon are some essential differences in gender separation. Psychologists also support this opinion by the theory of essentialism. According to this theory, all women share the same psychological

characteristics which are very different from the psychological characteristics that all men share. It is generally seen that females are more caring, empathetic and compassionate in almost every culture.

The purpose of this research is to study variations of some sociolinguistic features by examining them within the language of both genders in order to determine whether there are differences according to speech style in terms of degree of 'carefulness'. Gender differences have been studied from a number of perspectives such as different usage of linguistic variable, such as phonological and grammatical differences, conversational style including interruption, politeness etc. The present involves enlisting some significant linguistic variables, chosen from samples of conversation and their detailed analysis. It will examine how some linguistic features represent these differences can be used to identify distinct groups.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The research is closely related to some of the fundamental issues of gender differences in language use. Gender differences can be understood by the analysis of language in the context of general behavior. Therefore, the proposed research will be helpful in highlighting the role of females as equally valuable and useful individuals in the society. This analysis will assist our understanding of their role in society which they contribute from their use of language.

Gender differences, in the contest of sociolinguistics, have been studied in great detail over the past few decades. There are mainly two significant approaches which provide direction in this research area. The dominance approach suggests that males have a dominating role from the beginning and females have a subordinating role and their language use represents the same identification indeed. The difference approach is based on the argument that men and women belong to different subcultures and there is an essential difference in their social and

psychological hierarchy. However, the gender difference through language use is very important to study the sociolinguistic and cultural aspects of every community as it personifies the general tendency of male and female behavior.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In sociolinguistic research, the topic of gender difference in accordance with language use has thrown light on a number of social, cultural and psychological aspects of both groups in every community. In Pakistan, this sociolinguistic aspect of language use also needs to be studied critically for the equal rights and security of women identity. This will investigate the variation of some sociolinguistic features by examining them within the language of both genders in order to determine whether there are differences according to speech style in terms of degree of 'carefulness'

1.4 Rationale of the Study

Following are the primary reasons that make a strong case for undertaking this research:

Firstly, although the issue of gender difference in language use is not new to the world, however, it is an important discussion in present times. This is because the emergence of group identity of females as a significant separate culture in all societies has added their importance to the community. This distinction can be observed in Pakistan as well. This difference cannot be overlooked and needs to be studied in detail as it has not yet been explored much from this perspective.

Secondly, despite the enormous information about the ways in which both groups have different style of language use, it is difficult to find out valid constraints on gender difference with reference to careful linguistic use. It is mostly a complex mixture of social and psychological aspects. There are a number of variables like education, age, economic condition

and social status which may affect. This study aims at finding out this difference with a special context i.e. the link between gender and careful language use in Pakistani community.

1.5 Objectives

1. The study aims to study variation of some sociolinguistic features by examining them within the language of both genders in order to determine whether there are differences according to speech style in terms of degree of 'carefulness'.
2. The study aims at finding out the frequencies of those words which are casually used by both genders to see difference in using specific sociolinguistic feature i.e. hypercorrect grammar, hedges, use of modal verbs, special linking words in Urdu language and the words spoken in Italics (Intensifiers).

1.6 Specific Questions

The research is designed to find out the relationship between the linguistic behavior and general behavior of females in the context of essential gender differences. The following questions will be addressed in the present study.

➤ *Is there any significant difference between men and women regarding the use of following features of their conversation :*

1. *Use of hypercorrect grammar*
2. *Use of hedges*
3. *Use of linking words (In Urdu Language)*
4. *Use of the words spoken in italics*

5. *Use of modal verbs*

- *To what extent these differences exist between both the genders in relation with above linguistic or sociolinguistic features?*

1.7 Contents and Structure

Chapter 1 introduces the introduces gender difference in language use, background of study, research questions and objective of research, statement of the problem, importance of the study and research design.

Chapter 2 explores the related literature and previous studies. It states number of those sociolinguistic researches which specifically deal with the linguistic features that have been studied.

Chapter 3 gives detailed description of research methodology which starts with research design and ends with data collection process.

Chapter 4 presents the analysis of findings and interpretation.

Chapter 5 is the final chapter that presents the conclusion of research.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

There are certain limitation regarding conducting this research. In terms of selection of programs, the same format of programmes will be followed with reference to speakers and time. It will be done due to this reason that data is supposed to examine quantitatively before qualitative analysis. Secondly, owing to the limited scope of MPhil study, it is not possible to include all language domains. Since gender differences in language use in terms of careful

linguistic use is a phenomenon which can be observed in both domains formal and informal as speakers are not consciously aware of this phenomenon. but it will be tried enough to choose the programs with those features in which speakers are having the variety of social and cultural background i.e. educational, religious, political and professional. Initially it is supposed to take the informal domain based on home and family, but it will open new dimensions of comparison and similarity of formal and informal domain. But owing to limited time and scope of M. Phil studies only formal domain is taken for study. Therefore, it is limited to consider this particular aspect of gender difference in only formal domain.

There is also limitation for data transcription. It is expected to consume so much energy and time. Data is based on eight clips consisting of 40 minutes each which is equal to almost four hours. So, it is hectic enough to transcribe this data, under the circumstances, there is no standard key available for Urdu language data transcription. So firstly transliteration of data will be done and then the linguistic variables will be made bold which have been taken for observation taken for observation.

There are certain constraints for the process of analysis also. For examples, the blurred boundaries of the definition of linguistic variables have been taken for analysis. So it will create troubles in categorizing the linguistic items under the category of each linguistic variable. The linguistic variables then will be categorized on the basis of previous framework done by Lakoff in 1975. Hedges, words spoken in Italics and hypercorrect grammar particles delimited to some items only according to Urdu language. However, to categorize the modal verbs was not found difficult by definition.

Another problem in terms of categorization and interpretation of data is that there could be large items of one category of each linguistic variables is found so this research is limited to

each category to maximum five words or phrase. It is decided to get clear and precise results through quantitative analysis. Otherwise, there are chances of overlapping and mixing of linguistic entries of each linguistic variable. Thus the categorization process is devised in such a way that there would not be any chances of repetition or overlapping of entries of each category. So, after getting the quantity of each entry, it becomes easy to take the mean of every speaker with reference to use the entry and overall frequency of each category. SPSS will make the categorization easier to handle and measure the variation of each linguistic variable according to gender.