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MALE AND FEMALE SPEECH DIFFERENCES IN K. MANSFIELD'S WORKS

Anna Knyazyan [1], ***Gevorg Barseghyan*** [1]

[1] Yerevan State University

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Abstract

The scientific article is devoted to the analysis of male and female speech differences in K. Mansfield's short stories. Different examples are analyzed through analytical and comparative methods, in order to explain the purport of male and female speech differences. Gender differences are a fundamental fact of human life and it is not surprising to find them reflected in language. There is perhaps no better way to understand human behavior as a whole than to analyze the differences between males and females. Everybody has a different style of communicating with other people. Generally speaking, men and women talk differently although there are varying degrees of masculine and feminine speech characteristics in each of us. But men and women speak in particular ways mostly because those ways are associated with their gender.

Keywords: *gender differences, gender roles, male, female, masculine and feminine speech, modal verbs, tag questions, intensifiers, hedges*

Introduction

Gender differences permeate every aspect of human personality and appearance, and dictate how men and women should act, think and behave. The term 'gender' is perceived as "social sex". Gender embodies a pattern of relations that evolves over time to define male and female, masculinity and femininity, concurrently structuring and regulating people's relation to society. Gender decides what is expected, permitted and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. Gender roles and expectations are socially constructed and learned. They are likely to change over time and they differ within and between cultures. Some stereotypes about gender differences are common to all cultures such as ideas about aggression and force which are considered as a distinguishing feature of males, and weakness, obedience, and sensuality as characteristic features of females (Knyazyan 2015).

Gender is so central to our understanding it seems natural, and beliefs about gender seem to be evident truths. The world is filled with ideas about gender – and these ideas are so usual that we assume that they are true.

It goes without saying that gender issues are opposed with the problem of gender stereotypes and clichés in society (Knyazyan 2015).

Gender linguistics is concerned with various aspects of the representation of gender in language. Gender differences represent the way men and women speak or write, and are spoken or written about.

The research aims to investigate both gender stereotypes and gender differences in K. Mansfield's short stories. **The topicality** of this study is related to the fact that especially in recent years, the term "gender" has been widely discussed. Over the past thirty years, and as a result of the women's movement, gender issues have become connected with the issue of language. Gender studies and language studies are both interdisciplinary academic fields. Gender, gender relations, gender culture are present in contemporary process of constructing society and social relations. Thus, gender relation deepens in all spheres of public life: political, psychological, economic, linguistic, etc.

The theoretical value of the paper is conditioned by the fact that various theoretical views are presented, both classical and modern ideas, aiming at the broader understanding of the given topic. **The methodology** utilized in our research is called "Conversation Analysis". This methodology was opted for because the aim of conversational analysis corresponds to the main aim of this research, namely to look for differences in male and female speech.

Results and discussion

It is quite easy to claim that men and women have different linguistic behavior. Assumed gender roles are contrastive, with men often thought as dominant speakers, while women are placed in a subordinate role during the conversation process. Nevertheless, an important issue is the different purposes the two sexes have in casual speech. *'Women speak and hear a language of connection and intimacy, while men's language is concerned with status and independence'* (Tannen 1990). Thus, a clash of conversation styles can occur resulting in misinterpretation of the use of linguistic functions.

It is now understood that men and women differ in terms of their communicative behavior (Coates, Cameron 1988). The traditional feminine gender role is a social orientation that emphasizes closeness and solidarity, whereas the traditional masculine gender role is a social orientation that emphasizes power and status. Thus, for example, traditionally women's language is kind and polite while men's is relatively simple, arrogant and firm. Social expectations will automatically become a powerful social stress and make people restrain their behaviors according to their gender mode (Dong 2014). Gender can be defined as the sex-role that a person takes on according to standards instilled in us by society. One can be a male or female biologically but still be perceived as the opposite sex due to the way one may think or present himself or herself.

Our investigation contains the examination of *tag questions, intensifiers, interjections, hedges, adjectives, exclamatory sentences,* and other aspects in Katherine Mansfield's short stories..

In the short stories that we analyzed, both men and women employed tag questions. ***Tag questions or question tags*** are normally defined as interrogative segments attached to an independent declarative clause, requesting confirmation or disconfirmation. People make use of them to turn a statement into a question, to check the information they think is true, to be co-operative, when they want confirmation and so on. These are language structures meant to achieve certain communicative purposes, which tend to be different for males and females.

Two functions of tag questions are distinguished: ***modal and affective. Modal tags*** request information or confirmation of information of which the speaker is uncertain (Holmes 2007). Modal tags are more often employed by male speakers. For example: *The bell rang. It was lean, pale Eddie Warren (as usual) in a state of acute distress.* ***"It is the right house, isn't it?" he pleaded.*** *"Oh, I think so–I hope so," said Bertha brightly. (Bliss, p. 5).*

Affective tags are used not to signal uncertainty on the part of the speaker, but to indicate concern for the addressee (Holmes 2007). Affective tags are subdivided into two kinds: ***softeners*** like the first example below, which conventionally mitigates the force

of what otherwise be an impolite demand, and ***facilitative tags*** like the second example, which invites the listener to take a conversational turn to comment on the speaker's assertion. For example: *"No, I'm quite all right, come over here.* ***Sit down by me just a minute, will you, Robert?*** *Ah, that's very nice." (The Man without a Temperament, p. 8)* ***Female*** *(Softener).*

"Good evening!" said he. Miss Moss said, in her cheerful way: "Good evening!" "Fine evening," said the stout gentleman. "Yes, very fine. ***Quite a treat, isn't it****?" said she. (Pictures p. 7)* ***Female*** *(Facilitative).*

The first speaker softens her demand by using a tag, while Miss Moss suggests her listener getting into conversation and expressing his point of view. Here tag facilitates communication. Our analysis revealed that not only male speakers uttered significantly less tag questions than female speakers, but also the purposes of employing tags in a certain speech act were quite different. This idea can be supported by the following examples taken from different short stories by Katherine Mansfield. For example: *"I'll come with you into the hall," said Bertha. "I loved having you. But you must not miss the last train.* ***That's so awful, isn't it?"*** *(Bliss, p. 10).*

In the example above, female expresses her *opinion* in a conversation with a man, but she lacks confidence and wants her opinion to be supported by the man, which results in the usage of tag questions. The usage of tag questions by women can be explained by the fact that they are actually more insecure about their opinions and in conversations they feel less powerful than men. For example: *"And has the fruit come?" "Yes, M'm. Everything's come." "****Bring the fruit up to the dining-room, will you****? I'll arrange it before I go upstairs." (Bliss, p. 1).*

*"Twenty-eight guineas." Rosemary gave no sign. She laid the little box down; she buttoned her gloves again. Twenty-eight guineas. Even if one is rich. . . She looked vague. She stared at a plump tea-kettle like a plump hen above the shopman's head, and her voice was dreamy as she answered: "****Well, keep it for me – will you?*** *I'll. . ." (A Cup of Tea, p. 2).*

Tag questions uttered by women besides expressing uncertainly, insecurity and the wish to be accepted also function as expressions of politeness and women often soften the *orders* they give by employing these politeness devices instead of imperative forms. We deal with an indirect speech act here which is very common for female linguistic behavior. In two cases, there is a social difference between interlocutors – Bertha's conversation with the servant, Rosemary's with the shopman. However, women try to act in a polite and respectful manner and soften the directive with the help of tag questions. On the other hand, men mostly give orders directly using imperative mood. This is a sign of their dominance and control. For example: *He crooked a sausage finger at the waiter* ***"Bring me a large whisky"*** *and turned to Miss Moss. "What's yours?" (Pictures, p. 8).*

Women employ tags when they are making a statement. They mitigate their assurance because of hesitation and lack of confidence. So tags are also a good variant when women make statements with hesitation. And a very interesting fact is that hesitation on women's part is not only a feature of female-male communication, but also female-female. This is obvious in the example taken from "*The Daughters of the Late Colonel*", which is a part of the conversation between abovementioned two sisters. The example from Mr. and Mrs. Dove is an utterance by a young woman, who knows that the man is in love with her, but she knows that they cannot be together. It is obvious that the woman is in hesitation. She uses the adverb 'surely' and adds a tag at the end. She is sure, but still she wants her statement to be accepted by the man. Thus, we can suppose that she is not confident about her thoughts and ideas. So we came to realize that although women use tag questions more often, it's worth noting that modal tags, the tags that genuinely express uncertainty, are much more likely to be used by men, while the affective tags are somewhat more likely to be used by women. The usage of softening and facilitative tags is more frequent in female speech, although we came across the fact that males as well make use of facilitative tags. In short stories men were mostly less interested in controlling the conversational actions of others, on the other hand women initiated most of the conversations and tried to keep it going. Women put more emphasis than men on the polite or

affective functions of tags, using them as facilitative positive politeness devices. Men, on the other hand used more tags for the expression of uncertainty. Now we shall move on to consider ***the usage of exclamatory sentences*** by men and women. In the course of this investigation it was revealed that both men and women use exclamations. It can be said that women's usage of exclamations is more emotive. Men use exclamations for transferring their thought of the moment. However, both sexes used exclamations to express positive things, surprise and admiration. Women also employed exclamations to express fear. Another feature that can be found in gendered speech is the usage of specific ***interjections***. It is important to mention that women use far more interjections in their speech than men. In all the stories that have been analyzed, female characters employed a great range of interjections. Men also used interjections but rather rarely. Moreover, women are inclined to use ***"oh",*** while men mostly use ***"ah"*** in their speech. For example:*"**Oh,** dear," thought Miss Moss, "I am cold. I wonder why it is that I always wake up so cold in the mornings now." (Pictures, p. 1)* ***Female.***

*"**Ah,** be off with you!" said the boy in an angry whisper. (Miss Brill, p. 3)* ***Male.***

The analysis of male and female speech revealed another important point that makes their speech different. ***Hedges*** are words that convey the sense that the speaker is uncertain about what he or she is saying. They weaken the strength of an assertion, express lack of confidence and reflect women's insecurity. After examining many conversational examples in different short stories we came to the conclusion that hedges appear more often in women's speech. We cannot state that men do not use hedges, but they use it much less than women do. Being uncertain about what they are saying is what the usage of hedges expresses. And women seemed to be more uncertain about what they said in the course of speech acts we examined.

The hedges ***"you know", "perhaps", "I think", "well" and "I believe***" used by women express levels of uncertainty. They are also traditionally considered to be characteristics of weakness typically associated with tentativeness and indecisiveness of speaking.

Next linguistic features that have high occurrence in female speech are the **intensifiers.** Intensifiers are associated with females because they express an emotional approach to storytelling, as opposed to the direct approach, which is associated with males.

There is a type of intensifiers called ***unnecessary intensifiers*** that is typical to women's speech.

We can state that women and men employ intensifiers differently. Of course, women tend to use **unnecessary** ones more frequently. However, in the course of this analysis we came across the opposite examples as well: men using unnecessary intensifiers and women using 'necessary' one

Another interesting speech feature that caught our attention is the usage of **minimal and short responses.** It is believed that during interaction women demonstrate interest more vigorously, while men tend to be passive. Minimal and short responses are typical to men's speech and generally indicate lack of involvement. It is not a secret that men's conversation is generally less responsive than women's. The question of who talks more has always been a hot topic for discussion. There is a stereotype that women "never stop talking" and as a result of the investigation we carried out it was revealed that there is a frequency of short responses form the men's side though women sometimes included these strategies in their linguistic behavior as well. However, the purposes of usage and attitude are different. For example:*"You would like to go to Switzerland, wouldn't you, Gerald?"**"Very much."**"You're – awfully good at skating and all that kind of thing – aren't you?**"Fairly."** (Mr. and Mrs. Williams, p. 2)* ***Male.***

*You know you are very absurd, sometimes, "said she.**"I am"** he answered. (The Man without a Temperament, p. 5–6).*

*"Robert you are not eating again. Is anything the matter?"**"No. Off food, that's all."** (The Man without a Temperament, p. 9)* ***Male.***

In the abovementioned speech acts we found short and minimal responses of male characters. It is important to mention that all three utterances are taken from conversations of husbands and wives. The first example proves the idea that women talk a lot

and are engaged in the conversation more than man. In contrast to wives enthusiasm Gerald answers in a very brief manner. However, we cannot state that he is uninterested as we know that a minimal response can also be a sign of agreement. Here, it is worth paying attention to the tag questions, which serve as a kind of persuasion tool. The second and third are taken from the same short story called "The Men without a Temperament". Here the man treats her wife politely, but coldly. The short story is full of short answers provided by him. He is not fond of interaction and tries to escape from it. However, the opposite process is also possible.

For example:*" Do you remember that boatman's song that you used to play?"**"**Yes."* *It began to play in her mind as she spoke."- Do you ever play it now?"**"No, I've no piano."**He was amazed at that. "But what has become of your beautiful piano?"She made a little grimace. "**Sold. Ages ago."** (The Dickle Pickle, p. 3)* ***Female.***

The man is engaged while the woman tries to end the conversation by giving a minimal response. The thing is that this is a scratch of a conversation they have when suddenly meet after six years of break-up. She regrets that and is very sad and heartbroken all the time so she escapes giving answers. This is not a signal of being bored or less interested, just a result of her inner feelings.

Overall, we can say that women were more inclined to initiate conversations and keep them going unless they were in a bad mood.

Conclusion

So far, we have studied gender stereotypes, male and female speech differences in K. Mansfield's short stories. As far as the results of the study are concerned, we have arrived at the following conclusions:

In K. Mansfield' works women use tag questions more frequently than men do. The usage of tag questions by women can be explained by the fact that they are actually more insecure about their opinions and in conversations they feel less powerful than men. A basic female speech strategy worth mentioning is the supporting and maintaining conversation by asking questions and hereby encouraging the speaker to proceed talking. Males and females make use of tag questions for different communicative purposes: men employ modal tags, which request information, while women are inclined to use affective tags. Women put more emphasis than men on the polite or affective functions of tags, using them as facilitative positive politeness devices.

Both males and females use exclamatory sentences. However, women's usage of exclamations is more emotive. Men usually use exclamations for transferring their thought of the moment.

Women use far more interjections in their speech than men. In the stories that have been analyzed, female characters employed a great range of interjections. Men's use of interjections was rare. It is interesting that women were inclined to use *"oh",* while man mostly used *"ah"* in their speech.

Hedges appear more often in women's speech. These linguistic devices weaken the strength of an assertion, express lack of confidence and reflect women's insecurity. Females make use of them as they appear to be uncertain speakers.

The intensifiers and empty adjectives have high occurrence in female speech in the studied short stories. These lexical means are associated with the female gender because they express an emotional approach to storytelling, as opposed to male gender, whose speech is objective and neutral. Men's conversation is generally less responsive than women's. Thus, minimal and short responses are typical to male speech, which generally indicate lack of involvement.

We came to the conclusion that male and female speech styles in K. Mansfield's works are rather different. Also it became obvious that the author paid a huge attention to gender issues and reflected the social circumstances and conditions of her times, where men and women were constantly under the pressure of stereotypical public opinion and attitude.

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annaknyazyan@ysu.am; barseghyan.gevorg@ysu.am

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Contact: annaknyazyan@ysu.am; barseghyan.gevorg@ysu.am