

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE AND GENDER IN LINGUISTIC APPLICATIONS

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Abstract

A critical analysis of language and gender in linguistic applications in the study of language and gender includes two different things. i) How language reveals, embodies and sustains attitudes to gender. ii) How language users speak or write in (different and distinctive) ways that reflect their sex. Infact in studying language you must study speech - but in studying language and gender you can apply what you have learned about speech but with gender as a variable - do men and women show any broad differences in the way they do things? Education or social conditioning can influence gender attitudes in speaking and writing (for example, to make speech more or less politically correct), but There are objective differences between the language of men and that of women (considered in the mass), and no education or social conditioning can wholly erase these differences. Studying language and gender is easy and hard at the same time. It is easy because many students find it interesting, and want to find support for their own developing or established views. It is very easy to gather evidence to inform the study of language and gender. Studying language and gender is hard, because students can easily adopt entrenched positions or allow passion to cloud a clear judgement.

One example is sexuality - how far the speech and writing of gay men and women approximates to that of the same or the opposite sex, or how far it has its own distinctness.

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