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## **CATEGORIES OF GENDER IN INTERACTION**

The speech code theory investigates the manner in which groups of human beings communicate due to particular social, cultural, gender or other factors. Thus, every speech code contains the notion of what it means to be a male or female, it gives the patterns of speech behavior depending on the social roles of each individual.

The aim of the paper is to consider and analyze the characteristic features of gender relations in the implementation of intercultural communication and problems that arise in such interaction. The relevance of this issue lies in deepening and intensification of intercultural ties between the states, as well as intensifying the struggle for democracy principles and norms, which includes overcoming social problems and, in particular, problems of gender relations. Gender is an integral part of speech behavior, it determines the stereotypical forms of behavior, confirmed by language means (verbal and non-verbal) that allow a person to present himself or herself in the society.

The particular attention is paid to gossip as a social and speech phenomenon and unavoidable activity among women and men as well. Gender differences in gossiping are also still under examination.

Such means as hedging, boasting, talkativeness, intonation, interruption typical for gender interaction help us to specify gender roles in the society and characterize some nuances of communication and to dispel stereotypes. Also, the lexical peculiarities of female and male speech are analyzed.

From the gender point of view, the following outcomes have been noted. Women are interrupted more than men; they tend to provide feedbacks to the utterance of the other participants more than men; both women and men are talkative; women have the different choices and frequency of the lexical items comparing to men; the speech of women is full of redundancy; women tend to gossip more than men; women hedge their speech acts to avoid being direct and clear.

**Key words:** gender, speech, communication, behavior, interaction, stereotype, gossip.

**Introduction.** Gender is the range of physical, biological, mental and behavioral characteristics pertaining to and differentiating between masculinity and femininity. Depending on the context, the term may refer to biological sex (i.e. the state of being male, female or intersex), sex-based social structures (including gender roles and other social roles) or gender identity.

For some linguists gender is regarded as a notion, which is close to the speech and conversation. The reason of it is not due to a biological difference. We can say that such phenomenon results from their different social positions. Men and women do not

speaking exactly the same. D. Khaidar also supports this idea: "In line with modern linguistic research on gender, the overall goal is to study the correlation between the use of speech and the gender of the speaker. Gender is seen as a social construct created in communication and relatively autonomous from the biological sex" [Khaidar : 121].

Beyond that, "Gender differences are shown not only in verbal communication, but also in nonverbal. Gestures, facial expressions, postures, movements, looks are important for social interaction, especially when it comes to the demonstration of attitudes, assessments, emotions to others" [Kornieva : 111].

Sex differences might express the social hierarchy of a certain society. That is if women are inferior to men, they could not address them by their first names and vice versa. If men are more powerful, their spread and mobility would be greater and, consequently, their language could be affected during the whole period of their interaction with other groups. This statement is not applicable to women. That means if they are superior to men and perform greater interaction with others, their language would not be so vulgar as in the previous case. This happens due to the “inherent adaptability” of their language. Thus, male language could be easily affected in comparison with the language of women [Holmes 2013 : 166].

Such statements were widely-spread at the end of the 20th century. In the early 1970s, research on how women and men speak came to occupy the center of the study of discourses and genders. “In the Anglo-Saxon academic tradition, the emergence of interest in masculinity as an object of study, the genderization of androcentrism, and the prospect of incorporating the “male question” into the mechanism of gender studies which has already been launched date back to the second half of the 1970s” [Marchyshyna : 188]. In American linguistics the gender issue was popularized by Lakoff’s publication (“Language and Women’s Place”) in 1975, which is considered to be fundamental in the system of further gender linguistic research. Significant changes in the field of gender linguistic research took place in the early 90s of the last century after the publication of the work of D. Tannen “You just don’t understand : Women and men in conversation”.

Obviously, these achievements were later widely used in feminist linguistics, which aim was to expose the dominance of gender asymmetry in the language system that limits speech abilities of women [Lykova : 144–145].

Significant progress in gender research was carried out by the scientists P. Eckert, J. Corbett, B. Montdorf, D. Spender, E. Goffman, G. Rubin, O. Gorchenko, Y. Maslova, H. Mymchenko, A. Kyrylina, I. Kuznetsova, A. Skrypyuk, L. Stavyska, O. Taranenko and others.

**The objective of this research.** The aim of the article is to find out the differences in gender interaction between male and female, to specify particular means and features of communication and to reveal the sources of distinctions.

**Results and discussion.** Today a lot of attention is paid to studying gender aspects in language and speech. This fact is determined not only by the prosperity of feminist movement, but also by the desire of linguistics to study the social conditions within communication, including the human factor.

Researchers note that “gender issues in linguistics are investigated in several aspects: the way how man and woman are depicted in language and whether there are differences in their speech. In the first case we deal mainly with language as a system, while in the second – with speech, speech activity, which is the implementation of language in practice” [Fomenko : 454].

In Lakoff’s opinion, there are four approaches to the study of gender and language: the deficit, dominance, difference and social constructionist approaches. Most linguists prefer to use the last one, which has to do with the interactions between the genders and puts emphasis on doing gender rather than being gender. That means people act as females or males based on their subjective decision rather than on their biological sex. In other words, a female can act as a male if she likes and a male can act as a female [Lakoff].

By a close analysis of women’s language, Lakoff has found that there are certain features that characterize the speech of women and are not found in the speech of men. The suggested features could be gathered under “hedging devices” and “boasting devices”. As the name suggests, the “hedging devices” are used to show confusion and uncertainty. The “boasting devices” are used to strengthen the meaning. To exemplify this, it was a bad day can express certainty by saying it was really a bad day. It can also show uncertainty by saying: it was a kind of a bad day. Lakoff argued that both kinds show the lack of confidence of the females. They only use the “boasting devices” to convince their addressee with their utterance [Lakoff : 198–200].

Zimmerman and West [Zimmerman 1975] propose the idea that hedges like *um*, *hmm*, *uh huh*, *yeah* are often used to indicate an active hearership, in that hearers continuously show interest in the speaker’s utterances. These hedges consequently overlap with the ongoing talk or subsequently occur after utterances produced by the speaker.

Lakoff noticed that there are certain words uttered only by women. These words may be related to color such as “mauve” and “chartreuse”. She says that

women also use adjectives, which are out of meaning and power as “divine” and “cute”. This is contrasted to the adjectives used by men such as “great” and “terrific”. However, we should pay attention to the fact that this study is based on introspection but not on empirical methods [Lakoff : 176].

Deborah Tannen introduces the notion of “rapport talk” – talking about personal experience in order to establish connections – as opposed to men’s “report talk” – that is exchanging information about impersonal topics [Tannen]. Women tend to see conversation as an opportunity to discuss problems, share experience and offer reassurance and support. For men the discussion of personal problems is not a normal component of conversation. Most women enjoy talk and regard talking as an important means of keeping in touch, especially with friends and intimates. They use language to establish, nurture and develop personal relationship. Men tend to see language more as a tool for obtaining and conveying information. Women are more likely to discuss inter relational topics and to personalize conversations, a discursive style that males satirically define as gossiping. Males have been found to keep their distance from relational and human issues by reducing them to theories and abstractions.

Researchers came up with another explanation for the incongruity between the belief that women talk more and the fact, proven by research evidence, that men are the ones to actually talk more. Dale Spender [Spender : 42] suggests that women’s talkativeness has not been measured in comparison with men’s talkativeness, but in comparison with silence. Therefore, a woman who does any talking at all is automatically considered talkative. It is also interesting to note that whereas the deficient language of women was studied by many linguists, including men, only women have pursued research in the area of male/female talkativeness.

In addition to intoning questions in declarative statements, women would hedge their speech acts to avoid being direct and clear. They often do this by adding certain fillers such as: *you know, sort of, you see*. They might also do this by adding a tag question to their locutionary acts. Sometimes they tag their question to avoid a direct request. In that respect, they use certain modifiers that show uncertainty such as: *kind of, you know what I mean*. This is because they want to get an approval from

the other participant. However, tag questions may be used to express anger or threat. For example, if a woman says “*So you think you can get away with that, do you?*” she does not mean avoiding being direct, but rather expressing her anger or threat [Wolfson : 177].

“Women use the modifiers *so, such, and very* to emphasize their utterances much more often than men do and that they combine this usage with an intensity of intonation out of proportion with the topic of the phrase” [Wolfson : 177]. As it has been mentioned before, they tend to emphasize their utterances because they feel from their inside that the addressee is not believing them. Thus, they use such “boasting devices” which in reality show their uncertainty [Holmes 2013 : 310].

The speech of women is full of redundancy. They often repeat what they have just said. On the other side, men are more likely to omit “non-essential” utterances more often than women.

Women tend to pretend to be of a higher status than they are indeed. Labov and Trudgill discovered that women of the “lower-middle class” are more likely to use words nearer to the “prestige norm”, because women (in the period of these experiments) were isolated. Hence, they are nearer to hypercorrection [Trudgill : 179].

Most studies prove the fact that while interacting with females, males are more likely to interrupt them. Men may pursue competitive speech style, so they may be more likely to interrupt others. That is to say women are more likely to be interrupted competitively than men. This assertion is in accord with the finding in most studies, such as Zimmerman and West’s and Coates’. Women generally tend to pursue cooperative conversation strategy and their interruptions are more to show interest, high-involvement, support and solidarity rather than disruption and dominance as confirmed by James and Clarke and Coates.

Women tend to provide feedbacks (like *mmm*) to the utterance of the other participants more than men. Another study shows that females tend to develop and widen the arguments of the other speakers. It is deduced that females are more “cooperative conversationalists”. On the other hand, men tend not to support but to compete with the other participant’s arguments [Holmes 2013 : 324].

The concept “gossip”, which in any language has a pejorative connotation as the opposite

of serious male conversation [Coates 2005 : 167] is often used in purely female interaction. The gossip of females has certain linguistic features. It contains intensifiers that show certainty. It also contains question tags that require the interference of the other participants. When all the participants are women, they complete their sayings. In other words, it expresses the “cooperative and positive nature” of the females talk [Holmes 2013 : 327].

As for gossiping, a very typical feature of women’s speech, Suzanne Romaine suggests that the fact that men labelled women’s talk as gossip, and the topics they cover (details, emotions etc.) as trivial, shows that women’s talk about social relationships represents a threat to male social order. She affirms, that “women’s talk can be fatal and therefore must be contained” [Romaine : 152.].

The fact that women’s conversations are continuously trivialized by terms such as *girl talk*, *bitching*, *bickering*, while the same type of talk with men is termed *shop talk* and is regarded as important/serious talk, clearly shows our society’s values regarding women and men.

The meaning of the word gossip changed throughout the years. It appears that the term gossip didn’t always have a negative connotation. Gossip was originally a god sip. Back then, this term did not have the restricted meaning it has today, but it referred to the large network of relationships a family had. During the Elizabethan period gossip referred to individual relationships, typically masculine, men’s drinking, gathering of male friends in bars, raising the glass. The female variant of gossip pointed to the gathering of family and friends during childbirth. When a woman gave birth, her female family and friends came together to give her support, and that is what gossip was about in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; meeting with family and friends, socializing with each other. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the connotation changed, gossip was redefined as “idle talk” and “tattling”, an action that did no longer refer to the social act of gathering, but to an ordinary, rather negative form of communication [Backer].

Deborah James defines gossip as “essentially talk between women in our common role as women” [James : 242]. Gossip describes the kind of relaxed in-group talk that goes on between people in informal contexts. It conveys information about people, events, but in the same time it has

a cohesive social function, binding together people belonging to the same group. It is not talking against, but talking about something.

We can’t but agree with the statement: “If two people engage in the same behavior, talking too much, the woman is likely to be called a gossip, while the man will not. Ironically, a man who talks too much is often called “an old woman”, a phrase that manages to blame womankind for man’s verbosity” [Rysman : 178]. Holmes notes down that it is agreed that women tend to be more «facilitative, affiliative and cooperative» in interaction while men tend to be rather competitive and control-oriented [Holmes 1988 : 455].

Eckhaus and Ben-Hador [Eckhaus] made a research on gender differences in gossiping habits, subjects, and attitudes by using a mixed methodology. This study proved that women were more engaged in gossiping about social issues and physical appearance and they were more likely to be positive in gossiping in contrary to man. As women friendship run deeper than men friendship, gossip in female group can provide more negative effects than males’ gossip particularly gossiping about physical appearance [Watson : 497–498]

**Conclusions.** In general, women’s language is described as a kind of language that avoids direct and forceful statements and relies on forms that convey hesitation and uncertainty. Men’s speech was identified as logical and concise, concerting important topics, whereas women’s speech was seen as emotional, flexible, chatty and uncertain.

Constructing one’s gender identity, according to K. West and D. Zimmermann is a permanent process that permeates all actions of individuals –social and speech behavior in particular [Zimmermann 1987 : 120]. Although researchers note that there are situations and contexts where gender does not play a key role in distinguishing between men and women, so gender should be given no more importance than other categories such as age, education etc.

There are no reasons to talk about the significant differences between male and female speech, or about the existence of separate languages, marked by gender differences, because the process of speech is determined by the situation and the topic of discussion rather than gender. The gender factor has no permanent manifestation in speech, that is can become visible with varying intensity or be neutralized depending on the situation.

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## **КАТЕГОРІЇ ГЕНДЕРУ У ВЗАЄМОДІЇ**

Теорія мовного коду досліджує спосіб спілкування груп людей, враховуючи певні соціальні, культурні, гендерні або інші фактори. Таким чином, кожен мовленнєвий код містить уявлення про те, що означає бути чоловіком чи жінкою, він надає моделі мовленнєвої поведінки залежно від соціальних ролей кожного індивіда.

Метою роботи є розгляд та аналіз характерних особливостей гендерних відносин у реалізації міжкультурної комунікації та проблем, що виникають у такій взаємодії. Актуальність цього питання полягає в поглибленні та інтенсифікації міжкультурних зв'язків між державами, а також загостренні боротьби за принципи і норми демократії, що включає подолання соціальних проблем і, зокрема, проблем гендерних відносин. Гендер є невід'ємною частиною мовленнєвої поведінки, він визначає стереотипні форми поведінки, підтверджені мовними засобами (вербальними та невербальними), що дозволяють людині позиціонувати себе в суспільстві.

Особлива увага приділяється пліткам як соціально-мовленнєвому явищу і неминучій активності серед жінок і чоловіків. Гендерні відмінності в плітках також все ще активно досліджуються.

Такі засоби, як хеджування, хвастощі, балакучість, інтонація, переривання, характерні для гендерної взаємодії, допомагають конкретизувати гендерні ролі в суспільстві, охарактеризувати деякі нюанси спілкування та розвіяти певні стереотипи. Також проаналізовано лексичні особливості жіночого та чоловічого мовлення.

Щодо гендерної характеристики взаємодії, ми прийшли до наступних висновків. Жінок переривають частіше, ніж чоловіків; вони мають тенденцію надавати зворотню реакцію на висловлювання інших учасників більше, ніж чоловіки; і жінки, і чоловіки однаково балакучі; жінки використовують різний вибір і частоту лексичних одиниць, порівняно з чоловіками; мовлення жінок сповнене надмірних елементів; жінки схильні до пліток більше, ніж чоловіки; жінки хеджують свої мовленнєві акти, щоб не бути різкими та уникнути двозначності.

**Ключові слова:** гендер, мовлення, спілкування, поведінка, взаємодія, стереотип, плітки.