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Language, Gender, and Sexuality

Key Concepts

Gender and sexuality as socially constructed
How language (use) can be sexist
Gender/sexuality ideologies in Discourses
Generalizations about male and female speech
Power issues in gendered language use
Gender and sexuality identities as socially constructed

A major topic in sociolinguistics is the connection, if any, between linguistic features – the structures, vocabularies, and ways of using particular languages – and the social roles and identities of the men and women who speak these languages. Do the men and women who speak a particular language use it in different ways? (We have already looked at some variationist studies on this topic in chapters 6 through 8.) If they do, do these differences arise from the structure of that language, which would therefore be one kind of confirmation of the Whorfian hypothesis (discussed in chapter 1), or, alternatively, do any differences that exist reflect the ways in which the sexes relate to each other in that society, whatever the reason? Might it be possible to describe a particular language as ‘sexist,’ or should we reserve such a

description for those who use that language? If the answer to either question is affirmative, what could and should be done?

Such issues generated a considerable amount of thought and discussion in the last decades of the twentieth century and few have been resolved. Further, what began as a focus on the sex of the speaker has shifted to looking at how speakers do gender, and the role of sexuality in language performances has also emerged as an important and interrelated topic. The literature on these issues is now vast; it has been one of the biggest 'growth' areas within sociolinguistics in recent years.

In this chapter we will trace the history of the scholarship on language, gender, and sexuality, encompassing three main topics within this body of research. First, we will look at research that deals with sex and sexism in language systems, and with issues connected to language planning. While it is obviously impossible to separate language systems from language uses, this first section focuses on the former. The latter will be addressed in the second section of this chapter, which looks at how Discourses of gender and sexuality are encoded in language use in both public and private contexts of use. Finally, the third section addresses the topic of most research in this area: how people use language in ways that are linked to their gender and sexuality. Here we will return to some of the ideas about language as a means of constructing identity discussed earlier in chapters 3 and 11.

Defining Terms: Gender, Sex Category, and Sexuality

Before discussing how language, gender, and sexuality are dealt with in sociolinguistics, we need to define the terms gender, sex category, and sexuality to discuss how these concepts are involved in the study of sociolinguistics. **Sex categories** are based on the biological distinction – not always completely clear – between 'male' and 'female.' There may also be additional culturally specific categories that define people who do not fall easily into these first two categories. Native American cultures have a tradition of what has been called 'two spirit' people (Jacobs et al. 1997), and in India there are *hijras* and *kotis*, which are different groups of people who exhibit physical and/or behavioral characteristics of both sex categories; in Indian society, they have a societal role and the linguistic means of constructing such a role in society (Hall 1997, 2005). The term **transgender** is often used in the United States to talk about people who are transitioning or have transitioned from one sex category to another, or have biological attributes of a sex category which does not match their gender (see below) or of both sexes; the term **cisgender** is used to talk about people whose sex category matches their gender. The term transgender may also be used for individuals with biological attributes of both sexes. Thus, while sex categories make references to biological characteristics, and are often perceived as binary and mutually exclusive, they are not entirely in synch with the reality of human diversity and some societies have more than two categories and may accept more fluid membership in sex categories.

On the other hand, **gender**, although based on sex categories, is culturally constructed. What is considered to be masculine or feminine differs from one society to another. It is also usually conceived of as being on a continuum of masculine and feminine, that is, you can be more or less masculine or feminine, while sex categories are generally thought of as being discrete groups so that individuals must firmly and permanently belong to either one or the other category. Within contemporary social theory, gender identities, like other aspects of identity, may change over time, and vary according to the setting, topic, or interlocutors. West and Zimmerman (1987) talk about 'doing gender,' that is, the idea that gender is not something we *have*, but something we *do*. Cameron (2006, 724) says: 'Sex is a word used in connection with the biological characteristics that mark humans and other animals as either male or female, whereas *gender* refers to the cultural traits and behaviors deemed appropriate for men or women by a particular society.' Elsewhere (1998b, 280–1), she points out that:

Men and women ... are members of cultures in which a large amount of discourse about gender is constantly circulating. They do not only learn, and then mechanically reproduce, ways of speaking 'appropriate' to their own sex; they learn a much broader set of gendered meanings that attach in rather complex ways to different ways of speaking, and they produce their own behavior in the light of these meanings. ...

In performances of gender, speakers draw on ideologies about what it means to be a man or a woman; for instance, women may give each other compliments on their appearance, while men exchange ritual insults, speech acts which draw on stereotypes of women seeking solidarity and men constructing hierarchy in conversation. However, performing masculinity or femininity 'appropriately' cannot mean giving exactly the same performance regardless of the circumstances. It may involve different strategies in mixed and single-sexed company, in private and public settings, and in the various social roles (parent, lover, colleague, friend) that someone might regularly occupy in the course of everyday life.

We cannot talk about gender without reference to **sexuality**, or vice versa. Sexuality has to do with an individual's identity in terms of his or her sexual activities. For example, certain types of masculinity rely heavily on heterosexuality while other identities explicitly involve gay masculinity. We also have stereotypes about identity categories such as 'butch' or 'femme' lesbians. Sexual identities are not just about being gay, lesbian, straight, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning, of course; they include performances of being available, promiscuous, asexual, or fetishizing certain things, acts, or types of sexual partners. Such aspects of sexual identity are intertwined with gender identity.

The next section will address how languages encode ideas about gender and sexuality, and the broader issue of how ideas about gender and sexuality are produced and reproduced through language. Finally, we will address how speakers' language use can be linked to gender, sex categories, and sexuality.

Exploration 12.1: Understandings of Sex and Gender

Before reading the definition of the above section, how would you have defined the terms 'sex' and 'gender'? (Why do you think the authors use the term 'sex category' here instead of simply 'sex'?)

How are these terms used in everyday conversations? On forms? In the media? What do these usages reflect about popular understandings of these concepts? How are the ways that these terms are used here different from how they are used in popular culture?

Sexist Language

Can language itself be **sexist**? Work in the 1980s on this topic addressed issues such as the so-called generic 'he' and the use of 'man' or 'mankind' to refer to all people. Penelope (1988) discusses how such usages exclude women and create the mentality that men are the default and the norm, and women are the exception. She gives examples which illustrate how this leads to even gender-neutral words being used to refer to men, for example, a line from Star Trek: 'Our people are the best gamblers in the galaxy. We compete for power, fame, women' (Penelope 1988, 135). Of course, academics were not exempt from such constructions, as she shows with examples from the renowned sociologist Goffman: 'It is here, in this personal capacity, than an individual can be warm, spontaneous and touched by humor. It is here, regardless of his social role, that an individual can show "what kind of guy he is" (Goffman, Encounters, p. 152)' (Penelope 1988, 136). She argues that such linguistic uses perpetuate the invisibility of women (an issue to be discussed further in Exploration 12.2).

Another of the issues involved in answering this question has to do with words that encode sex categories, most commonly sex category-marked names of people in specific occupations, for example, fireman, stewardess, and waitress. While it is not inherently sexist to make reference to the sex category of a person, the problem with such words is that they could influence what professions we see as being appropriate for (only) men or (only) women. If the unmarked form is 'fireman,' it is possible to be a 'firewoman' but this is linguistically marked and suggests that the norm is for a person in this occupation to be a man. This problem has been addressed by the introduction of gender-neutral terms such as *firefighter* and *flight attendant*, common usages in North America. Today, there is a growing awareness, at least in some circles, that subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, distinctions are made in the vocabulary choice used to describe men and women. Consequently, we can understand why there is a frequent insistence that neutral words be used as much as possible, as in describing occupations, for example, *chair(person)*, *letter carrier*, *salesclerk*, and *police officer*. If language tends to reflect social structure and social structure is changing so that judgeships, surgical appointments, nursing positions,

and primary school teaching assignments are just as likely to be held by women as by men (or by men as by women), such linguistic changes might be expected to follow inevitably. Focus on such asymmetries in language does two things: it draws our attention to existing inequities and it encourages us to make the necessary changes by establishing new terms and categorizations (e.g., *Ms*), or suggesting modifications for old terms (e.g., changing *policeman* to *police officer*). However, there is still considerable doubt that changing *waitress* to either *server* or *waitperson* or describing Nicole Kidman as an actor rather than as an actress indicates a real shift in sexist attitudes. Reviewing the evidence, Romaine (1999, 312–13) concludes that ‘attitudes toward gender equality did not match language usage. Those who had adopted more gender-inclusive language did not necessarily have a more liberal view of gender inequities in language.’

Further, there is not necessarily consensus about what constitutes sexism in language. In a 2001 online discussion about the use of the term *server* (see the link in the online materials), the suggestion that *waiter* is a male term was dismissed by some contributors, who said that this is a neutral term. One writer clearly felt that changing such terms to avoid sexist connotations was silly and unnecessary, writing, ‘Similarly, I suppose, the word “President” should have been completely replaced when female corporate executives ascended to that level, right?’ The argument made by this poster and others is that what is sexist is not a term such as *waiter* or *actor*, which are gender-neutral terms, but the assumption that we must change the words when women do these jobs. Others pointed out that the issue is that we had gendered pairs of terms such as *waiter*–*waitress* and there is no such gendered pair for the word *president* in English. The argument here shows that far from there being a wide acceptance of avoiding gender-neutral terms, some people clearly dismiss the idea that language encodes sexism.

In other occupations, words that were often assumed to imply the sex of the person might be prefaced by a gender marker, such as ‘male nurse.’ We should note that men are increasingly found in the nursing profession, and nurse is less frequently interpreted as implying ‘female,’ just as the assumption that a doctor is male is no longer the default. However, as we will discuss further below, often the issue is not the labels used but how women or men in particular professions are discussed. For example, although we do not have different words in English for male and female politicians, the appearance of female politicians is often focused on in ways that it usually is not for male politicians (see links in the online materials on this topic).

It should also be noted that language can also encode and perpetuate **heterosexist** attitudes; we will return to this in the section below on language change. This will also be addressed in the section on Discourses of Gender and Sexuality, as much of the research on heteronormativity in language use fits within this approach.

Grammatical gender marking

We must note that grammatical gender marking is more extensive in some languages than it is in English, and presents different problems in attempts to make

language more gender neutral. As Mills (2008) notes, the word for 'minister' in French is masculine (*le ministre*), so it is difficult to refer to a female minister. Further, the norm in languages such as French and Spanish is to use the masculine plural for groups containing both men and women. While this is traditionally also true in German, some changes have occurred, including more use of the feminine plural ending *-innen* (instead of the masculine plural *-en*) for groups of men and women, and in some cases the introduction of words that do not mark gender for plurals. For example, the plural for 'students,' traditionally *Studenten*, using the masculine *-en* plural ending, was in some cases during the 1980s and 1990s replaced by *StudentInnen*, using the feminine plural suffix *-innen*, but has now been replaced by *Studierende* (literally, 'those who study,' from the verb *studieren* 'to study'). Thus while the form of the language itself may appear to be an impediment to change, in some cases it is possible to work around grammatical gender marking patterns.

One particular bit of sexism in languages that has aroused much comment is the gender systems that so many of them have, the *he-she-it* 'natural' gender system of English or the *le-la* or *der-die-das* 'grammatical' gender systems of French and German. The possible connections between grammatical gender systems (masculine, feminine, neuter) and sex categories (male, female, neither) are various. See Romaine (1999) for some observations and claims concerning these connections, for example, her claim (1999, 66) that 'ideological factors in the form of cultural beliefs about women ... enter into gender assignment in [grammatical] systems that are supposedly purely formal and arbitrary.' In English such connections sometimes create problems for us in finding the right pronoun: compare the neutral 'Everybody should hand in their papers in five minutes' to the apparently biased 'No person in his right mind would do that.' Although the singular 'they' in English has come under attack from some prescriptivists, it is now in wide usage, with such sentences as 'I saw someone enter the building, but I didn't know who they were' being common in youth speech in North America.

To return to the cross-linguistic perspective, gender distinctions such as *he-she* can often be avoided so it probably does not follow that languages with gender distinctions must be sexist, which would also be a clear argument in support of the Whorfian hypothesis. It is the people who use languages who are or who are not sexist; Chinese, Japanese, Persian, and Turkish do not make the kinds of gender distinctions English makes through its system of pronouns, but it would be difficult to find evidence to support a generalization that males who speak these languages are less sexist than males who speak English.

Language change

If there is a relationship between language and worldview, regardless of which direction we believe this influence flows, than we would expect that language would reflect (or have formed) changing gender roles. We can see this in some asymmetries of pairs of words. While *actor* and *actress* or *waiter* and *waitress* have few, if any,

differences in connotation aside from sex, pairs of terms such as *master–mistress*, *governor–governess*, and *bachelor–spinster* are different in more ways than simply indicating male and female. While a master is the man in charge, the word *mistress* is commonly used to refer to the female lover of a married man. Being a *governor* is an important political position; a *governess* is someone who takes care of children. While *bachelor* has connotations of fun and independence (as in the term *bachelor pad*), *spinster* is an undeniably negative term, calling up the image of an elderly woman living alone with lots of cats. (See Lakoff 1973 for a discussion of these and other such examples.) The interesting thing to note about these asymmetries, however, is that probably most readers of this text do not use the words *mistress*, *governess*, or *spinster* at all. If they know these words, they may not be familiar with the connotations cited here, as societal changes have made these terms less prominent and relevant, especially for young people today.

However, gender asymmetries still exist in modern-day English usage. For instance, while it is common to refer to adult females as ‘girls,’ even in a professional context (for example, a bank employee might tell a customer that ‘the girl who handles the housing loans is out today’), such usages occur far less commonly with ‘boy’ – one rarely hears reference to ‘the boy who manages the produce section.’ However, the use of ‘girl’ (sometimes rendered ‘grrl’) is complicated by feminist reclaiming of the term by some young women, who have embraced the word as a term of empowerment. In another example, we see a clearer asymmetry in the difference between the meaning of ‘mothering’ a child, which implies nurturing, and ‘fathering’ a child, which simply implies contributing to the child’s conception. However, even here we see some changes, as the term ‘parenting’ is now used in some contexts in which ‘mothering’ was used earlier (for example, it is common to refer to ‘parenting magazines,’ although see below for some comments about the content).

All deliberate attempts to change or modify languages to free them of perceived (hetero)sexism or make them gender-neutral are a form of language planning, which we will discuss further in chapter 14. Sometimes the goal appears to be to force language to catch up to social change; and at other times it seems designed to bring about social change through mandating language change. Whatever it is, it requires us to accept a very Whorfian view of the interrelationship of language and culture. Here is Pauwels’ (1998, 228) statement of a similar position:

The aims of many feminist LP [language planning] efforts are to expose the inequalities in the linguistic portrayal of the sexes which reflect and contribute to the unequal positions of women and men in society and to take action to rectify this linguistic imbalance. Language action ... is social action, and to bring about linguistic change is to effect social change.

Some literature on this topic also talks about ‘reclaiming’ language for women (see especially Lakoff 1990, Penelope 1990, Sellers 1991, and Spender 1985). Spender writes (1985, 3): ‘Language helps form the limits of our reality. It is our means of

ordering and manipulating the world. It is through language that we become members of a human community, that the world becomes comprehensible and meaningful, that we bring into existence the world in which we live.' She further asserts (1985, 12) that 'the English language has been literally man-made and ... is still primarily under male control' and that males, as the dominant group, have produced language, thought, and reality. Penelope (1990) argues that women should be aware of 'the lies of the fathers' tongues' and of the 'Patriarchal Universe of Discourse.' Her view is that women should in a sense reinvent language for their own purposes. In this perspective, ways of speaking that are seen as part of women's repertoires, for example, non-competitive, non-interruptive speech, should be integrated into more contexts of language use. In the final section of this chapter, we will come back to ideas about women's speech and how male-female differences in speech have been studied and perceived.

We should also note that some small changes in heterosexist language practices can also be seen. One example is in reference to partners; some heterosexual married couples will refer to their spouses as 'partners' to avoid indexing the heterosexual privilege of legal marriage. At the same time, as marriage equality is achieved in some regions, the use of the terms 'husband' and 'wife' for same-sex partners is not uncommon, so these terms are no longer reserved for heterosexuals only. Further, in some circles there is objection to the term 'gay marriage,' as can be seen in the words of Liz Feldman (<http://www.funnyordie.com/articles/d18ead07bf/one-day-more>, accessed July 2, 2014): 'Personally, I am very excited about gay marriage, or, as I like to call it, marriage. Because I had lunch this afternoon, not gay lunch. I parked my car, I didn't gay park it.' However, such changes in both language and worldview are still incipient, and are reflective of policy struggles around marriage equality; language is used to claim or deny legitimacy for same-sex couples.

Exploration 12.2: Guys and Dolls

A common term used in many varieties of English to address a group of people is 'guys,' as in 'C'mon, you guys, let's go!' For many speakers, this term in the singular is almost exclusively masculine ('I met a guy in the park with a beautiful dog' would imply a male dog owner), but in the plural it can refer to all male referents, a group of both males and females, or an all-female group. Do you use this term? If so, how do you use it, that is, what are the possible referents? If you are female, do you ever object to being referred to with 'guys'? Do you think this usage is inherently sexist, as it uses a male term as the default, like 'mankind'?

Discourses of Gender and Sexuality

Before moving on to the topic of how men and women use language, we would like to address another aspect of how language is used in discussions about men and women, that is, how ideologies about gender, sex categories, sexuality, and so on, are produced and reproduced through language and language use. We use the term **Discourse**, taken from Gee (1999) and his description of Discourse with capital 'D,' as introduced in chapter 11 in our discussion of CDA. Discourse can be described as ways of representing facets of the world, that is, the processes, relations, and structures of the world, as well as feelings, thoughts, and beliefs about the social world (Fairclough 2003). Johnstone (2008) describes Discourse as conventional ways of talking which create and are created by conventional ways of thinking. These connected ways of thinking constitute **ideologies**. Consequently, Discourses have linguistic aspects (conventionalized sets of choices in language) and also ideological aspects (patterns of beliefs and action). Cameron (2008) makes the important point that we do not define ideologies as 'beliefs' or 'attitudes' but as 'representations'; that is, gender 'ideologies' are not distinct from 'truths' about gender. This distinction also focuses on the social aspect of ideologies: whereas 'beliefs' or 'attitudes' are mental constructs, and are individual as opposed to societal, ideologies are cultural manifestations.

Some common Discourses

Discourses about gender and sexuality influence and shape how we think about sex categories and the people who belong in them, as well as other categories having to do with sexuality. Among Discourses of gender and sexuality that we can identify, the discourse of **heteronormativity** is one of the most pervasive (Cameron and Kulick 2003, 2006, Coates 2013, Motschenbacher 2011, Kitzinger 2005). This Discourse requires an assumption of heterosexuality and the stigmatizing of gay and lesbian identities. Milani (2013) illustrates the hegemony of heteronormativity in his study of *meetmarket*, an online dating site for men looking for other men in South Africa. One point he makes is that the term 'straight-acting' is often employed both as a positive presentation of self and a description for what is desired, showing how what is seen as 'heterosexual' behavior is explicitly normative in matters having nothing to do with sex (dress, speech, etc.).

One study showing how heteronormativity begins in primary school is Renold (2000), which addresses how Discourses about girls needing to be attractive to boys, but not 'tarty,' is pervasive, and contrasts with boys' constructions of heterosexuality through fighting, football, homophobia, and misogyny (not aspects of behavior that are aimed at being attractive to girls). Dalley and Campbell (2006) discuss the continuation of this at the high school level, showing strong heteronormative Discourses. Further, this research shows an interesting twist to the perpetuation of privilege of heterosexuality in that the challenge of these hegemonic ideologies only

seemed feasible by a group of straight girls. These girls, who identified as 'nerds,' would playact 'lesbianism' in the presence of the normatively heterosexual popular kids, constructing identities for themselves which challenged the gendered expectations for girls in their school. They did not actually identify as lesbians, or have relationships with girls; they were recognized as heterosexual, yet did not conform to normative behavior. The displays of lesbian behavior were clearly performed as challenges to what they saw as homophobic attitudes of the popular crowd. The authors conclude (2006, 25):

As our article has shown, virtually any move by an individual student or teacher to introduce a queer perspective into classroom discussions was systematically negated, meeting with rejection (exclusion) or negative inclusion by teachers and students alike. Yet at the same time, lesbianism offered a discourse of resistance to five straight girls, the nerds. The nerds also put the straight/gay binary into question: in maintaining both straight *and* queer personas, they posited the possibility of a dynamic and complementary heterosexual/homosexual identity. While adopting this fluid yet counter-hegemonic sexual persona made it possible for these girls to challenge constraining gender roles by being assertive and outspoken about sociosexual matters, such social benefits did not seem to be available to a female friend who self-identified as a lesbian. Gay males also struggled with and against the silencing effects of the heteronormative discourses of the school. Without the protection of a heterosexual persona, however, they could not safely materialise their sexual identities at school. There, they developed strategies to remain hidden, relegating the expression/exploration of their sexual identities to safer zones outside of school.

Heteronormativity has been shown to privilege not only heterosexuals, but also certain gender roles within heterosexuality. Cameron and Kulick (2003) discuss how Discourses of heteronormativity produce what they call the heteronormative hierarchy, which favors monogamous and reproductive heterosexuality in which both partners adhere to normative gender roles. Thus, heteronormativity encompasses many Discourses about gender roles in heterosexual relationships (see Sunderland 2004). For instance, Sunderland (2006) looks at parenting magazines and shows that despite the gender-neutral depiction evoked by the term 'parenting,' the magazines construct a world in which mothers are the main caretakers of children. This Discourse was also apparent in the research on advertising by Lazar (2005) discussed in chapter 11. Another common gendered Discourse has to do with the value of women being linked to their physical appearance, noted in the study of primary school children above. Ohara and Saft (2003) look at data from a Japanese phone-in consultation program and show how this ideology is represented by a female caller who discusses how she dealt with her husband's infidelity by making herself more attractive. This study, which employed in part a membership categorization methodology, which is part of a CA approach, shows how this ideology includes categorizing different types of women. The authors summarize: 'By building on the caller's announcement of self-polishing and explicitly linking it to gender, S is placing the caller in a pre-established type of women, namely, those who react to men's affairs

by examining themselves for places that need improvement' (Ohara and Saft 2003, 166). In another study addressing the importance of appearance for teenage girls in Sweden, Ambjörnsson (2005) notes how girls' social relationships are created and maintained through talk about how fat they are; however, the social capital of this type of discourse is available only to girls who are, in fact, slender.

In some cases, the Discourses involve ideologies about other aspects of culture, or language ideologies more broadly. An example of this is given in Cameron (2008), in which she addresses some broader ideas about language, arguing that it is increasingly discussed as a set of skills. She looks at varied texts from the UK about women and men as communicators. She summarizes:

... what they say about language and gender is essentially similar: each one represents the verbal behavior of men as in some way problematic, and contrasts it unfavorably with the behavior of women in the same situation. In all four texts the "problem" is defined explicitly or implicitly as a lack of skill in using language for the purpose of creating and maintaining rapport with other people. Males in these texts do not spend sufficient time interacting with friends and relatives, do not share their feelings and problems openly, cannot chat to customers in a "natural" manner, and are unable to listen "sympathetically" in group discussions designed to promote learning. These deficiencies are represented as having serious consequences for men, including educational underachievement ... unemployment ..., personal unhappiness and even premature death. (Cameron 2008, 457)

Her subsequent analyses shows that while explicitly claiming superiority for women, this Discourse implicitly perpetuates traditional stereotypes about women as being more emotional, and so on. Further, it creates a situation in which men who are good communicators by this definition are given extra credit, while women's achievements as communicators are downgraded to being simply part of their 'nature' and thus not an achievement at all.

This chapter has up until now primarily addressed how language, or language use, can be used to represent men and women and how these representations are related to our social world. In the next section, we will move on to the research on how men and women speak, which in the end brings us back to these ideas of Discourses of gender and sexuality.

Deficit, Dominance, Difference, and Identities

Before beginning an historical account of the scholarship on gender and language, we first need to specify what we mean when we talk about differences between men's and women's speech. There are some claims to **gender exclusive language**, that is, situations in which men and women have different ways of speaking that could be deemed different languages, or at least distinct and named dialects of a language. According to Sapir (1929), the Yana language of California contained special forms for use in speech either by or to women. Another claim to sex-exclusive language

is found among the Dyrbal people of North Queensland, Australia, who have a special language which is gender-differentiated in a rather novel way (Dixon 1971). The normal everyday language, Guwal, is used by both genders; but, if you are a man and your mother-in-law is present, or if you are a woman and your father-in-law is present, you use Dyalluy, a 'mother-in-law' variety. This variety has the same phonology and almost the same grammar as Guwal but its vocabulary is entirely different. However, both genders have access to both varieties.

Another Australian aboriginal language, Yanyuwa, a critically endangered language, has gender-differentiated dialects. The dialects use the same word stems but there are different class-marking prefixes on nouns, verbs, and pronouns. According to Bradley (1998), men use one dialect among themselves and women use the other. Men also use men's dialect to speak to women and women use women's dialect to speak to men. Children are brought up in women's dialect with boys required to shift – not always done easily – to men's dialect as they are initiated into manhood. Bradley adds (1998, 16) that: 'If individuals wish to speak Yanyuwa then they are expected to speak the dialect which is associated with their sex – there is no other alternative.' A person can use the other sex's dialect only in very well-defined circumstances such as storytelling, joking, and certain singing rituals.

Another language which is often cited as having different ways of speaking for men and women is Japanese; however, some recent research on this may cause us to question exactly how exclusive the varieties associated with different sexes are. Japanese women show they are women when they speak, for example, by the use of a sentence-final particle *ne* or another particle *wa*. A male speaker refers to himself as *boku* or *ore* whereas a female uses *watasi* or *atasi*. Whereas a man says *boku kaeru* 'I will go back' in plain or informal speech, a woman says *watasi kaeru wa* (Takahara 1991). Children learn to make these distinctions very early in life. However, Reynolds (1998, 306) points out that 'the use of *boku* ... by junior high school girls has recently become quite common in Tokyo. Girls who were interviewed in a TV program explain that they cannot compete with boys in classes, in games or in fights with *watasi*. ... The use of *boku* and other expressions in the male speech domain by young female speakers has escalated to a larger area and to older groups of speakers.' More recent literature has discussed so-called Japanese women's language as an ideal rather than an existing genderlect (Inoue 2006, Nakamura 2004, 2005).

In the Dyrbal example cited above we may find an important clue as to why there are sometimes different varieties for men and women. One variety may be forbidden to one gender, that is, be taboo, but that gender is apparently nearly always the female gender. This phenomenon has been noted among the Trobriand Islanders, various aboriginal peoples of Australia, Mayans, Zulus, and Mongols, to cite but a few examples. The taboos often have to do with certain kinship relationships or with hunting or with some religious practice, and result in the avoidance of certain words or even sounds in words. They derive from the social organization of the particular group involved and reflect basic concerns of the group. Such concerns quite often lead to women being treated in ways that appear inimical to egalitarian-oriented outsiders.

In addition to ways of speaking which are seen as specific to men or women, there has been some research addressing ways of speaking which are associated with sexual minorities, primarily gay men and lesbians. In a review of the research on gay and lesbian speech, Kulick (2000) notes that up until the 1980s, work focused mostly on lexical items used in particular gay and/or lesbian communities. Subsequent to that, there was a body of research which focused on distinguishing features of gay or lesbian language, with a particular focus on phonology. Some of this research focused on whether research participants could accurately identify gay or lesbian speakers (see Gaudio 1994, Moonwomon-Baird 1997 for examples of two early studies). In a review of this research, Munson and Babel (2007) maintain that while there are certain speech features that are often associated with gay and lesbian speakers, they are not simply imitations of speakers of the opposite sex, but individual features which carry social meanings. Much subsequent research has focused on the communicative practices in **LGBTQ** communities of practice in a social constructionist paradigm, and will be discussed further in our section on identities.

Recognizing the relationship between language and other social practices and structures, we will focus here on what is sometimes called **gender preferential language**. In other words, certain ways of speaking may be preferred by one gender, or are stereotypically associated with being feminine or masculine. We have already mentioned many instances of language behavior varying according to gender (see chapter 7 in particular). Many of these are quantitative studies in which sex is used as one of the variables that are taken into account. As Milroy and Gordon (2003, 100) say, 'Strictly speaking ... it makes sense ... to talk of sampling speakers according to sex, but to think of gender as the relevant social category when interpreting the social meaning of sex-related variation.' We may remember that Fischer's work (discussed in chapter 7) showed how very young boys and girls differ in certain choices they make, as did Cheshire's work in Reading in an older group. Labov's studies in New York and Philadelphia also revealed noticeable gender differences in adult speech. These led him to make some interesting claims about what such differences indicated, for example, about women's role in language change. The Milroys' study (1978) exploring network relationships (see chapter 7) showed certain characteristics of men's and women's speech: how they were alike in some ways but different in others. Gal's (1978) study in the Oberwart of Austria (see chapter 8) showed how it is not only what women say but who they are willing to say it to that is important.

Still other gender-linked differences are said to exist. Women are also said not to employ the profanities and obscenities men use, or, if they do, use them in different circumstances or may be judged differently for using them. (However, the evidence is not conclusive on these issues, and anyone who has ever watched the successful American television series or the later movie *Sex and the City* can see how acceptable certain kinds of language have become even in media still highly controlled in their portrayal of 'normal' behavior.) Women are also sometimes required to be silent in situations in which men may speak. Among the Araucanian Indians of Chile, men are encouraged to talk on all occasions, but the ideal wife is silent in the

presence of her husband, and at gatherings where men are present she should talk only in a whisper, if she talks at all.

Some writers are not impressed with such claims. For example, Cameron (1998a, 945–6) says that these findings ‘belong to the tradition of empirical sex difference studies that do no more than set out to find statistically significant differences between women’s and men’s behavior. This research formula has proved as durable as it is dubious (not to say dull).’ In this view, merely to observe, count, and graph linguistic phenomena is not enough. An investigator needs some kind of theory about such behavior and some ideas to test before beginning an investigation.

Women’s language

Research which seeks to apply social theory and answer questions about the relationship between language and gender/sexuality was launched by a provocative and insightful work by Lakoff in 1973, *Language and Woman’s Place*. As this title implies, this work focused on how women’s language revealed their place in society – a place that was generally seen as inferior to that occupied by men. This account of what came to be called Women’s Language (WL) has in retrospect been called the **deficit model**, as many of the features Lakoff discusses position women as deficient to men: less confident in what they say (e.g., use of tag questions, hedging devices, rising intonation), and less able to participate in serious activities in the social sphere (e.g., empty adjectives, lexicons specific to domestic domains). Empirical studies have shown that some of the features Lakoff suggests are typical of WL are not necessarily present in the speech of women; for instance, empirical work on tag questions has refuted the idea that they are used more by women (Dubois and Crouch 1975, Cameron et al. 1989, and Brower et al. 1979). Holmes (1984) actually found that men were more likely to use tag questions that indicated uncertainty. Furthermore, after analyzing a large corpus of academic data from the University of Michigan, researchers found that ‘in the domain of academic speech, there is no specific gender-related effect on speakers’ hedging frequencies’ (Poos and Simpson 2002, 20).

Still further work by O’Barr and Atkins (1980) showed that in courtroom speech, it was not women who used the features identified by Lakoff as being part of WL, but people who had less institutional power. In a sense this last finding only strengthens the importance of Lakoff’s work by confirming that the ways of speaking which are associated with women are associated with a lack of power. This theme of power being encoded and created through language use is one that has wide applications.

Dominance

What has been called the **dominance approach** also addresses power relations between the sexes. Some of this research claims that there is evidence that in

cross-gender conversation women ask more questions than men, use more **back-channeling** signals (i.e., verbal and non-verbal feedback to show they are listening) to encourage others to continue speaking, use more instances of *you* and *we*, and do not protest as much as men when they are interrupted. On the other hand, men interrupt more, challenge, dispute, and ignore more, try to control what topics are discussed, and are inclined to make categorical statements. Such behaviors are not characteristic of women in conversations that involve both men and women. In other words, in their interactional patterns in conversation, men and women seem often to exhibit the power relationship that exists in society, with men dominant and women subservient. Work such as that of Fishman (1978) and DeFrancisco 1998 on couples' talk, Zimmerman and West (1975) on gender and interruptions, and West (1984, 1998) on physicians' directives shows how men tend to dominate conversations through interruption and topic control, and to backchannel less than women.

However, more comprehensive research on interruptions shows that this pattern cannot be generalized. James and Clarke (1993) looked at fifty-four studies that addressed the claim that men are much more likely than women 'to use interruption as a means of dominating and controlling interactions' (1993, 268). They report that the majority of studies have found no significant differences between genders in this respect, and that both men and women interrupt other men and women. However, according to James and Clarke (1993, 268), 'A small amount of evidence exists that females may use interruptions of the cooperative and rapport-building type to a greater extent than do males, at least in some circumstances.'

The overarching theme in this research is that men's societal dominance is reproduced in conversations between men and women. Although there are problems with this approach, including that it is somewhat overly simplistic, the idea that larger societal norms influence what happens within a conversation is an enduring concept in the study of language, gender, and sexuality. Context is important in how we use language. Men and women's speech is not the same in private and public spheres, and different roles within an interaction also lead to different ways of speaking. Someone who frequently interrupts in one context may backchannel a lot in another, and this fact must form part of any larger picture we may want to draw of gendered aspects of language use.

Talbot (1998, 133–4) also advocates caution when applying the idea of dominance to gender differences in language: 'A major determinant [of the dominance framework] is that male dominance is often treated as though it is pan-contextual. But ... all men are not in a position to dominate all women.' Dominance clearly fails as a universal explanation of gendered language differences.

Difference

Almost concurrently with the focus on dominance in the study of language and gender arose another approach which became known as the **difference, or two**

cultures, approach. Its basic idea was popularized by the psychologist Jonathan Grey in his bestselling book *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus: The Classic Guide to Understanding the Opposite Sex* (1992) and by the linguist Deborah Tannen in her book *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* (1990). These works were based on the assumption that men and women speak differently. Their claim is that men learn to talk like men and women learn to talk like women because society subjects them to different life experiences. However, the process of gender differentiation is not the focus of this approach, it is an underlying assumption (and one that has been questioned). The main claim is that men and women have different conversational goals and thus although they may say the same things, they actually mean different things. Maltz and Borker (1982) propose that, in North America at least, men and women come from different sociolinguistic sub-cultures. They have learned to do different things with language, particularly in conversation, and when the two genders try to communicate with each other, the result may be miscommunication. The *mhmm* a woman uses quite frequently means only 'I'm listening,' whereas the *mhmm* a man uses tends to mean 'I'm agreeing.' Consequently, men often believe that 'women are always agreeing with them and then conclude that it's impossible to tell what a woman really thinks,' whereas 'women ... get upset with men who never seem to be listening' (1982, 202). They conclude that women and men observe different rules in conversing and that in cross-gender talk the rules often conflict. The genders have different views of what questioning is all about, women treating questions as part of conversational maintenance and men treating them primarily as requests for information; different views of what is or is not 'aggressive' linguistic behavior, with women regarding any sign of aggression as personally directed, negative, and disruptive, and men as just one way of organizing a conversation; different views of topic flow and topic shift; and different attitudes toward problem-sharing and advice-giving, with women tending to discuss, share, and seek reassurance, and men tending to look for solutions, give advice, and even lecture to their audiences.

There is an emphasis on misunderstandings in this approach, caused by differences in conversational goals. For instance, Tannen (1992), who likens speech between men and women to cross-cultural communication, claimed that men seek to establish hierarchy and status through talk, whereas women look to create solidarity and connection.

One consequence of such differences is that men have often devalued women's speech and, as Tannen rightly observes, her difference approach in no way denies the existence of male dominance (1993, 9). Tannen's solution is an interesting one, although one not without its critics. She believes that men and women should try to understand why they speak as they do and try to adapt to each other's styles. However, the self-help nature of her 1990 book *You Just Don't Understand* seems to thrust much of such work onto the shoulders (or tongues?) of women rather than men. Tannen's book was widely acclaimed, so its message obviously resonated with many people, women in particular. As Talbot (1998) observes of the book, with its appearance of objectivity and neutrality and its stress on differences and equality,

Tannen's approach provides a 'comfortable explanation' (1998, 139) for some troublesome issues. Cameron adds (2007, 98) that 'the research evidence does not support the claims made by Tannen and others about the nature, the causes, and the prevalence of male-female miscommunication.' Although such claims may grab our attention, they do not stand up to rigorous scrutiny.

As we can see from the fact that works espousing such a characterization of male-female differences have made the bestseller lists, the claims they make might seem to be valid; however, many sociolinguists remain extremely skeptical. We suggest that their popularity is at least in part because they avoid difficult issues of power relations between the sexes that are brought to the forefront in other approaches (see Cameron 1998c, Talbot 1998). Different ways of speaking are presented as equal but different in this approach, but as we know from discussions of different dialects and attitudes toward them as in chapters 2 and 3, this is a fake neutrality. People evaluate and judge others based on how they speak, and this statement is as true for gendered ways of speaking as it is for social or regional varieties.

Further criticism of the difference approach has been that the analogy to cross-cultural communication and the focus on misunderstanding is misplaced, as it relies on the assumption that most human interactions and socialization are within same-sex groups, something obviously untrue for many people. A related problem which has been pointed out is that this approach reifies the differences between men and women, and men's and women's ways of speaking; but in reality the similarities between male and female speech patterns (to the extent that we can say there are such things) outweigh the differences.

More recently, the concept of 'community of practice' has been used to examine gender issues in language (see chapter 3). According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1998), gender issues are essentially complex and not easy to separate from other issues. They deplore the fact that too often,

Gender is abstracted whole from other aspects of social identity, the linguistic system is abstracted from linguistic practice, language is abstracted from social action, interactions and events are abstracted from community and personal history, difference and dominance are each abstracted from wider social practice, and both linguistic and social behavior are abstracted from the communities in which they occur. (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1998, 485)

In order to understand what is happening when people acquire and use language, we must try to understand the various communities of practice in which people function. Various kinds of differences arise in such circumstances, including gender differences: 'gender is ... produced and reproduced in differential forms of participation in particular communities of practice. ... The relations among communities of practice when they come together in overarching communities of practice also produce gender arrangements' (1998, 491). Individuals participate in various communities of practice and these communities interact in various ways with other

communities. Since these processes of participation and interaction are constantly changing, there is also constant reshaping of both individual identity and any kind of group identity, including gender identity. You must learn to be a jock or a burnout, a particular kind of man or a particular kind of woman, and any other kind of socially categorized or gendered person.

Gender and sexuality identities

Work on the social construction of identities has become central to ways of thinking about language, gender, and sexuality in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology. As in West and Zimmerman's *Doing Gender* (1987), we focus on gender not as the source of linguistic behavior but as the product of our language performances (see chapters 3 and 4). Identity may be constructed through a variety of linguistic means. For instance, the use of certain lexical forms or language varieties may contribute to the identification of a speaker, just as particular communicative practices, such as silence, greeting formulas, or gaze do. Identity is neither an attribute nor a possession, it is a process of semiosis (Mendoza-Denton 2002). Heller (2007) points out that the concept of identity, along with community and language, are 'heuristic devices which capture some elements of how we organize ourselves, but which have to be understood as social constructs' (Heller 2007, 13).

Work by Bucholtz and Hall (2003, 2004, 2005) outlines an approach to the linguistic construction of social identity that has provided a popular framework for this approach. The term identity is used here to describe what is primarily a social, and not a psychological, phenomenon; we do not speak the way we do because of our identities, but construct our identities using linguistic practices which have social meanings (Bucholtz and Hall 2005). The underlying idea is that identities do not exist outside of the performance of them; thus this work moves away from the common perception that gender and sexuality categories are pre-existing and fixed, and views gender and sexuality identities as fluid and constantly shifting. Individuals are not fixed subjects in a society but position themselves, and are positioned by others, in multiple and sometimes contradictory ways. We speak of identity in terms of intersubjectivity, recognizing the dialogical aspect of the negotiation of identities. Individuals are not solely responsible for their own identity and position vis-à-vis others in an interaction; it is something that is jointly constructed.

Furthermore, a speaker's identification involves social categories of many different types – not just social categories for gender and sexuality such as 'male' or 'gay' but also situational roles such as 'patient' or 'customer' and interactional stances of similarity and difference. What, therefore, are the consequences for gender identity in particular? Gender identity is not separate from other types of identity in two ways. First, it is what has been called **intersectional**; an individual does not construct an identity just as a woman, but as a woman plus other intersecting categories – Latina, middle class, bilingual, straight, mother, urban, and so on. Thus the

identity a speaker constructs through language (and other social behaviors) is never just about gender, but about gender and many other types of identity.

Second, if identity is something that must be performed, gender identity might not always be in the forefront of a performance. Everything a man does is not primarily a performance of masculinity; certain ways of speaking may be primarily about constructing an identity as an African American, a professional, or an avid Chicago White Sox baseball fan. While such things may be intertwined with gender identity, gender is not foregrounded in the construction of identity at all times.

There is a large body of literature on the linguistic construction of gender identity, but several themes recur. One is the multiplicity of gender identities. Studies which look specifically at how different linguistic devices are used to construct different masculinities include Bucholtz (1999a), Cameron (1998b), Kiesling (2001) and Sheldon (2008). They use different types of data but share the concept that there are different types of masculinity associated with different ways of speaking to construct particular identities and, as Sheldon and Bucholtz argue, to reify masculine stereotypes. Both Cameron's and Kiesling's articles look at language within male groups and how it is used to construct hegemonic masculinity; Cameron shows how a key component in the conversation she analyzes is used to establish heterosexuality: discussing other men and calling them 'gay.' Kiesling looks at how one member of a fraternity uses different ways of speaking to construct different types of masculinity. Among his frat brothers, he uses confrontational language to put himself at the top of the hierarchy, but with a young woman at a bar he presents himself as an authority figure. Both styles require him to position himself as an expert, albeit in different ways.

Bucholtz' study, which analyzes the narrative of a White teenager who uses CRAAVE (Cross-Race African American Vernacular English), focuses on how a racialized physical masculinity is constructed through language use. This speaker's use of CRAAVE simultaneously constructs him as having an affinity to his African American friends, but also reinforces stereotypes about Black masculinity and its supposed connection to physical strength and toughness.

Sheldon's study looks at an ad for Microsoft which features a 'menacing white biker guy' (Sheldon 2008, 151) who is extolling the virtues of Microsoft's classical music software. He switches between a nonstandard variety of English and a stylized techno-geek register, the former evoking a masculinity based on ideas of physical strength and toughness, the latter based on ideas of technical knowledge as part of masculinity. Sheldon suggests that such use of these contrasting styles and gender ideologies allows the readers of this ad to 'have their cake and eat it too' – that is, they can be knowledgeable about something like classical music, but also be tough and physically strong.

Research on the construction of femininities also focuses on the use of stereotypical ideas about femininity and how speakers position themselves in alignment with, or in opposition to, these dominant ideologies. We mentioned earlier the study which addresses how Swedish girls feel compelled to continually discuss how fat

they are as part of their construction of femininity, but that this is a strategy open only to girls who are not actually considered overweight (Ambjörnsson 2005). This study shows how the discourse about weight reproduces stereotypes about body size and femininity. In contrast, Bucholtz (1999b) looks at nerd girls and shows how they use hypercorrect language and displays of knowledge (the latter often associated with masculinity) as part of their construction of nerd girl identity, an identity which challenges hegemonic femininity.

While there is a body of literature which addresses how dominant constructions of masculinity and femininity lead to the silencing of girls in the classrooms (Sadker and Sadker 1994, Swann 2003), there are also studies which show other perspectives on gendered language use in the classroom. Davies (2003) looks at groups of girls and boys in the classroom, and shows that the construction of feminine identities involves cooperation and engagement in academic work. The boys' talk included features of confrontation and the construction of heterosexuality, which, when used in classroom discussion, were a deterrent to academic achievement. Baxter (2002) also shows how girls are not locked into particular ways of speaking, but can resist dominant classroom practices which privilege ways of speaking typically associated with boys. Similar themes are also found in research on gender in the workplace (Holmes 2006), particularly in how gendered language is part of the construction of leadership roles.

The intertwining of gender and sexuality is also apparent in many studies which examine how heteronormativity is reproduced and challenged in conversation. Liddicoat (2011) looks at heteronormative framing in the language classroom, and how several students' valiant attempts to come out (i.e., indicate that they have same-sex partners) are treated as issues of grammatical incorrectness. This theme of normative heterosexuality, discussed above, is also a theme in work by Land and Kitzlinger (2005). They examine data from telephone calls from five lesbian households and show how sexuality is indexed among intimates in similar ways for heterosexual and lesbian women, but in institutional calls, indexing a lesbian identity involves a disruption of the heterosexist assumption. Thus an act of 'coming out' must be continually performed.

Queen (2005) explores how lesbian identity is constructed through joking and on how these interactions revolve around knowledge of both the sexuality of the speakers and stereotypes about lesbians. Far from being accepted as definitive, however, these stereotypes are contested; they can be funny, but they are also a springboard for a negotiation of group and individual identities. In one example, short hair, wearing Birkenstocks, and vegetarianism are presented as identifying characteristics of lesbians, although these are ultimately all challenged in terms of their applicability to themselves and other women they know. Through this conversation their own identities emerge, not simply by positioning themselves with reference to stereotypes but through the interaction itself, thus illustrating how identities are discursively produced. Another article which also examines lesbian identity and authenticity is Jones (2011), in which the category of 'lesbian' is constructed around certain characteristics associated with being 'butch'; being too 'femme' is not seen

as authentically lesbian. Again, however, this article shows how these categories and the identities of the speakers are not fixed but emergent from the discourse.

Exploration 12.3: Labels

Do you have words (slang or standard) for referring to people who are considered to have a particular kind of gender or sexuality identity? For instance, the terms 'butch' and 'femme' are often used to describe lesbians who are considered more masculine or feminine, respectively. Are there other words you use or hear which refer to different ways of being masculine, feminine, gay, straight, and so on? Do these words indicate positive or negative values for the people in the categories they describe?

However, not everyone agrees that the focus on identity is the best way to look at gender and sexuality. In their book-length treatment of sexuality, Cameron and Kulick (2003) adopt a postmodern approach heavily dependent on the ideas of Derrida, Foucault, and Lacan, and argue that a concept they call **desire** should play a central role in trying to understand human behavior since 'desire encompasses more than just the preference for partners of the same or the other sex: it also deals with the non-intentional, non-conscious, and non-rational dimensions of human sexual life. The unconscious and irrational aspects of sexuality may not be manifested on the surface of people's behavior in the same way that their behavior displays the sexual identities they have consciously chosen ("gay," "lesbian," "straight," etc.)' (2003, 140). They argue that the issues of identity and power are less important, an argument that Bucholtz and Hall (2004) reject, claiming that desire is much too vague a concept to be useful and that issues of identity and power are not only relevant but essential in any research on such language varieties.

Research on language, gender, and sexuality has been done in a variety of ways. Although the current focus is on qualitative studies of the linguistic construction of identity, there is also other work on gender and sexuality as variables in variation (as we saw in chapters 6 through 8) and on sexist language and the reproduction of gender/sexuality stereotypes in social Discourses. This range of ways in which we can approach the general topic of language, gender, and sexuality has given rise to controversies and disagreements over the past decades and these continue into the present day. Such discussions should be viewed as a strength in the field, because even without consensus, they guarantee that important issues for language and society continue to be addressed.

Chapter Summary

The research in sociolinguistics on language, gender, and sexuality has been presented here in three main sections. First, we talk about how sexism and heterosexism can be encoded in language structure and vocabulary. Second, we look at how language is used to create Discourses of gender and sexuality. The third and most extensive section looks at research on how men and women use language, tracing research trends up to the current focus on language as a means of expressed gender and sexuality identities.

Exercises

1. Look at the following headlines for online articles about stay-at-home parents. Are dads and moms talked about in different ways? What are the differences and similarities? What are some of the underlying assumptions about gender roles that become apparent? What Discourses about gender roles can we see in these headlines, and what inequalities do they represent?

WALL STREET MOTHER, STAY-HOME FATHERS: As Husbands Do Domestic Duty, These Women Are Free to Achieve. (*New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/08/us/wall-street-mothers-stay-home-fathers.html>, accessed July 2, 2014)

BREAKING DAD: THE STAY-AT-HOME LIFE: Think tech jobs are booming? Visit a playground on a weekday afternoon and observe the newest wave of the American workforce: the stay-at-home dad. (*Gentlemen's Quarterly*, <http://www.gq.com/life/mens-lives/201311/stay-at-home-dad-fatherhood>, accessed July 2, 2014)

THE OVERHYPERED RISE OF STAY-AT-HOME DADS: If anything, men have stopped taking on more responsibility at home in recent years. (*The Atlantic*, <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2013/09/the-overhyped-rise-of-stay-at-home-dads/279279/>, accessed July 2, 2014)

A STAY-AT-HOME DAD NOT WORTH 50K, INTERNET SAYS: (*Good Morning America*, <http://gma.yahoo.com/stay-home-dad-not-worth-50k-internet-says-021629639-abc-news-parenting.html>, accessed July 2, 2014)

WHAT IS A STAY-AT-HOME MOM'S SALARY WORTH? How tasks like driving, cooking and laundry would add up to a \$113,568 income. (*Daily Mail*, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2544913/What-stay-home-moms-salary-worth-How-tasks-like-driving-cooking-laundry-add-113-568-income.html>, accessed July 2, 2014)

1% WIVES ARE HELPING KILL FEMINISM AND MAKE THE WAR ON WOMEN POSSIBLE: Being a mother isn't a real job – and the men who run the world know it. (*The Atlantic*, <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2012/06/1-wives-are-helping-kill-feminism-and-make-the-war-on-women-possible/258431/>, accessed July 2, 2014)

GERMAN FAMILY POLICY: PAY TO STAY AT HOME: The government plans a controversial benefit for stay-at-home mothers. (*The Economist*, <http://www.economist.com/node/21554245>, accessed July 2, 2014)

BEING MR. MOM: Stay-at-Home Dads on Tough, Full-Time Job. (*ABC News Nightline*, <http://news.yahoo.com/blogs/nightline-fix-abc-news/being-mr-mom-stay-home-dads-tough-full-154633088.html>, accessed July 2, 2014)

STAY-AT-HOME DADS, BREADWINNER MOMS AND MAKING IT ALL WORK: The next time you see a father out shopping with his kids, you might need to check your assumptions. (*NPR*, <http://www.npr.org/2013/05/15/180300236/stay-at-home-dads-breadwinner-moms-and-making-it-all-work>, July 2, 2014)

2. Write an essay addressing the following question: *What does it mean to say gender and sexuality are 'performed' or 'socially constructed'?* Include references and examples, but explain this in your own words.

Further Reading

Baker, Paul (2008). *Sexed Texts: Language, Gender and Sexuality*. London: Equinox.

This book offers a review of the literature on language and gender and a main focus on linguistic performance and its role in the construction of gender and sexuality for identities and ideologies. Specific examples from culturally specific representations are included in the discussions of media and interactions.

Cameron, Deborah (2009). Sex/Gender, Language and the New Biologism. *Applied Linguistics* 31(2): 173–92.

This article examines and refutes arguments that differences between male and female speech are based on biological differences.

Harrington, Kate, Lia Litosseliti, Helen Sauntson, and Jane Sunderland (eds.) (2008). *Gender and Language Research Methodologies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

This edited volume presents introductions to a variety of approaches to studying gender and language, including interactional sociolinguistics, CA, corpus linguistics, CDA, discursive psychology, feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis and queer theory.

Mills, Sara (2008). *Language and Sexism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Following a review of the literature on sexist language, this volume presents a discussion of overt and indirect sexism based on the analysis of texts and conversational data. The author argues that while overtly sexist comments have become easier to identify, and thus are at least in some cases avoided, indirect sexism is extremely common and more difficult to counter, as it relies on contextual and interactional factors to be understood.

Motschenbacher, Heiko (2011). Taking Queer Linguistics Further: Sociolinguistics and Critical Heteronormativity Research. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 212: 149–79.

This article addresses criticism against Queer Linguistics as a post-structuralist approach and makes suggestions for methodologies to empirically study language and sexuality.