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Theorizing gender

Feminist awareness and language change

Rachel Giora

1. Introduction

Most recent research into gender and language challenges the dominant sex-difference oriented approaches which maintain that women are different from men, whether essentially or by socialization (e.g., Coates 1986, 1996). This sex-difference view either condemns women's different speech as socially dysfunctional and deficient (e.g., Lakoff 1975; Kendall and Tannen 1996), or embraces it as a 'different but equally valid' culture (e.g., Tannen 1990). The 'different and deficient' approach is criticized for implying that, to improve their social status, individual women should transform their style, and adjust themselves to men's linguistic norms (e.g., Crawford 1996). Findings of difference have been largely appropriated, and serve to oppress women: They either give rise to industries of self-correction, or are misused to consolidate and justify women's inferior social position (Cameron 1996).

The apolitical cross-culture model (e.g., Maltz and Borker 1982; Henley and Kramarae 1988, 1991; Tannen 1990) also implies affirmation of inequality: Viewing women and men as belonging to two equally valid but different cultures calls for no change, thereby maintaining the prevailing social structure (Troemel-Ploetz 1991). Thus, if 'communication failures' are a result of culture cross-blindness, no one is to blame. Indeed, analysis of talk about violence against women (acquaintance rape) reveals that such a view leads to victim blaming, deflection of accountability from violent men, and a focus on monitoring women's but not men's behavior. After all, if women and men "hold different systems of meanings about consent, 'miscommunication' is inevitable and no one is culpable for rape" (Crawford 1996: 175). Difference, concludes Cameron (1996), following Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992), is a conse-

quence of inequality, and tolerance to difference propagates it: "To suppose that [...] if only we valued women's styles as highly as men's there would be no problem, is reminiscent of right-wing pseudo-feminism which enjoins us to honor the housewife and mother for doing the most important job... feminism is not about giving housewives their due, it is about changing the conditions of domestic labor altogether" (Cameron 1996:44).

Both the 'different and deficient' and 'different but equally valid' approaches, then, are problematic politically: They result in maintaining inequality. However, they are also inadequate as descriptive theories. There is a growing body of evidence (e.g., Ariel and Giora 1992a, b, 1998; Crawford 1996; Freed 1992; Freed and Greenwood 1996) disconfirming the difference view. For example, the consensual belief that women are cooperative, employing addressee-oriented speech behavior, whereas men are dominant, employing speaker-oriented speech behavior (e.g., Maltz and Borker 1982; Cameron 1985; Coates 1986; Tannen 1990; James and Drakich 1993; James and Clarke 1993; West 1995), has not gained support (e.g., Ariel and Giora 1992a, b, 1998; James and Drakich 1993; James and Clarke 1993). Neither has the widely accepted association between women and standard speech and men and nonstandard speech (e.g., Eckert 1998; James 1996; Hibiya 1988; Rickford 1991; Salami 1991). Greenwood and Freed (1992:206) found that "neither sex nor age alone can account for the distinct variations" in using questions in conversation. Even highly 'feminine' behavior, such as polite speech is not uniquely feminine. In Javanese, for instance, women have been observed to behave more politely than men within family circles, but in public, it is men who behave more politely (Smith-Hefner 1988). Moreover, a speaker's social identities may fluctuate across a lifetime of communicative events. Trabelsi (1991), for instance, has shown that young Tunis women employ speech markers which suggest identification with men and modernity. Older Tunis women manifest speech markers which suggest that they identify with Tunis traditional values. Middle-aged Tunis women waver between the two styles, depending on their interlocutors. In addition, Jabeur (1987) and Trabelsi (1991) found that young Tunis women do not always align themselves with men. For instance, unlike Tunis men, they use French borrowings to project identification with freedom from Arab society. "To summarize, then, part of a Tunis woman's communicative competence lies in managing a number of social identities. Because different identities may be of primary salience in a particular communicative event, her communicative competence lies in choosing the linguistic variables that express these identities" (Meyerhoff 1996:206).

But most importantly, women and men can be very much alike: Wetzel (1988) found that Japanese men speak very much like Western women. In fact, Freed (1992) accused Tannen (1990) of misrepresenting Maltz and Borker's (1982) and Goodwin's (1980) findings, presenting them as supporting a 'difference' theory, while the researchers themselves emphasized the similarity between the sexes. Also, as Uchida (1992) notes, Tannen (1984, 1986) herself showed that gender was not a significant factor in conversations between two ethnic groups.

The alternative to the difference hypothesis, then, stresses the similarity between the sexes. To show that women's and men's linguistic behavior is much more alike than different, Freed (1992) and Freed and Greenwood (1996) examined the effect of social context on people's behavior. They focused on symmetric talk between friends of both sexes. Looking into the conditions of use of two typically 'feminine' features of speech: 'You know' and questions, they found no difference in amount and use of these hedges between women and men. Rather, the use of these devices was found to be sensitive to situations, and to vary with respect to the demand of the task.

In a similar vein, Crawford (1996:17) proposes to view language as "a set of strategies for negotiating the social landscape — an action oriented medium". This constructionist view (following Potter and Wetherell 1987) conceptualizes gender as a system of social relations operating at the individual, social structural, and interactional levels. Instead of focusing on isolated features of speech, constructionist oriented research centers on interactional analysis. "It opens the way for analyzing how social groupings, hierarchies, and power relations structure interaction, constrain speakers' options, and affect the kinds of social feedback speakers receive" (Crawford 1996:171). For Crawford, women's and men's speech is best conceptualized as a collaborative social activity rather than being grounded in essential individual traits.

However, conceptualizing speech as a collaborative social activity where each party has a(n equally valid) role, or designing an experimental environment which places women and men in symmetrical social tasks are just as problematic as looking for differences. It masks the real problem. A homogeneous picture of similarity helps maintain the unequal social structure just as much as the 'different but equal' approach does. The claim that women and men are more alike than different (e.g., Fuchs-Epstein 1988) may disguise the problem of inequality, thereby implying that no change is necessary. Though women and men may exhibit similar linguistic behavior in a given situation, this does not preclude the possibility that they act under different social

constraints. For instance, women and men could behave alike, not because they are really alike, but because women, as a powerless social group, employ an assimilation strategy and copy the ways and values of men. Or consider, again, Freed and Greenwood's (1996) findings. So far they have been able to show that men can master 'feminine' or 'powerless' talk. However, it still remains to be seen whether women and men will fare similarly when the task requires use of what is considered 'masculine' or 'powerful' linguistic behavior (cf. Kendall and Tannen 1996). Findings of similarity, then, may be illusory, and may propagate inequality just as findings of difference. If feminism is about changing the world — findings of similarity will not provide the right drive.

Apart from being problematic politically, the similarity hypothesis is also problematic theoretically. Just as the difference hypothesis is deficient in handling findings of similarity, so is the similarity oriented approach; it cannot handle findings of difference.

The basic weakness inherent in both hypotheses is that they mainly study features rather than strategies (and resultant features). Features are a superficial and local phenomenon. They don't necessarily tell us much about the strategies which inspire them. Different surface behaviors may be induced by the same motivation, while similar styles may be a function of different linguistic strategies.

In recent studies (Ariel and Giora 1992a, b, 1998; Giora 1996, 1997) Mira Ariel and I proposed to consider the interface of social identity (e.g., gender) and language. We focused on the relation of a certain linguistic behavior and its motivation, i.e., the strategy that induces it. We assumed, following group relation theories (e.g., Giles 1984; Tajfel 1978) that (feminist) awareness should incite divergence strategy, while lack of it should result in convergence strategy. For women divergence implies adopting a Self point of view in language, whereupon an ingroup member identifies with her own group's objectives, values, and interests. Convergence implies adopting an Other point of view in language, whereupon an ingroup member identifies with an outgroup's objectives, values, and interests. Given group relations theories, then, nonfeminist female speakers would employ a convergence strategy, exhibiting a linguistic behavior similar to that of men's. In contrast, feminists' linguistic behavior would differ from both nonfeminist female and male speakers'. Upon such a view feature similarities and differences are just a by-product.

2. Self vs. Other point of view

What does it mean to adopt a self point of view in language? To adopt a self point of view one should be oriented towards one's group's interests. Thus one should focus on ingroup rather than on outgroup members. Focusing on the Self rather than on the Other predicts, among other things, that, in women's writings, female characters would outnumber male characters.

Similarly, when one adopts a Self point of view, one's ingroup members should be foremost on one's mind. Linguistically this means that the Self should serve as a point of reference to the Other. Thus, when anchoring one character onto another ('X' is the anchor in 'X's friend', and 'friend' is anchored, e.g., Peter is Mary's friend), ingroup members should be assigned the role of anchors. Outgroup members should outnumber ingroup members in the role of anchored, dependent characters. For female speakers, then, to have more male than female characters as anchored, and more female than male characters in the role of anchors is to adopt a Self point of view.

For the Self, all the Others are alike (e.g., Linville and Jones 1980), while one's ingroup members are each distinct (e.g., Secord, Bevan and Katz 1956; Tajfel, Sheikh and Gardner 1964; Malpass and Kravitz 1969; Chance and Goldstein 1975; Brigham and Barkowitz 1978; Stephen 1985). To adopt a Self point of view in this respect means to individuate ingroup members. Individuating can be achieved by e.g., naming. To adopt a Self point of view, female speakers should name more female than male characters. They should do so by means of full or last names, since last names individuate characters much more effectively than first names, because (in Western culture) there are many more last than first names (see Weitman 1987).

Portraying ingroup members as independent is adopting a Self point of view, since (in Western culture, at least) dependency implies lack of control over one's life. To adopt a Self point of view, women writers, especially fiction writers (who need not be constrained by reality), should portray more women than men as functional. In contrast, family descriptions, which portray an individual as part of a larger whole rather than as a self-sufficient entity, should be assigned to outgroup members.

For the Self, the Other may be conceived of as a means to an end: an object. To adopt a Self point of view, women should objectify men rather than women; they should use more external descriptions (i.e., those based on look and bodily characteristics) for male than for female characters, and use more sex-based descriptions for males (e.g., 'male', as opposed to 'person') than for females.

When one adopts a Self point of view, one's ingroup members should not only play the role of protagonist (see above), but this protagonist should not be destroyed or die. Between the options of being either a victim or an aggressor, ingroup members should not be victims. Rather, they should victimize outgroup members.

Being in power is considered a positive state in Western culture. Hence, between the alternatives of either being in control or under control of others, especially under control of outgroup members, a Self perspective should prefer the former. To adopt a Self point of view, ingroup members should be portrayed as powerful, exerting power on outgroup members, e.g., by trying to affect the Other's behavior, as in commands, or threats, or more generally by using what Green (1975) has termed impositive speech acts (i.e., speech acts which impose the speaker's will on the addressee). Moreover, an actual compliance of the addressee with the speaker's wish testifies to the speaker's power. Hence, when outgroup members comply with the ingroup more than with outgroup members, this suggests setting out from a Self point of view. Thus, to adopt a Self point of view, women writers should portray more female than male characters as powerful, i.e., as attempting to impose their will on male characters, and more male than female characters complying with their will.

Cooperation involves acting in the best interest of another person. To adopt a Self point of view, one should cooperate with ingroup rather than with outgroup members (Tajfel 1978; Doise 1976; Dion 1979; Wyer and Gordon 1984). Speech may be cooperative when it is addressee-oriented, (e.g., speech-acts such as offer, advice). To adopt a Self point of view, one should be cooperative (e.g., advise or offer) when engaged with ingroup members. Or, one should obey ingroup rather than outgroup members' impositive speech acts. For women to adopt a Self point of view, they should portray female characters who cooperate with or obey female rather than male characters.

Given women's powerless social status, women may find it difficult to substantiate their own perspective. We, therefore, expected nonfeminist women speakers and writers to adopt an Other point of view. Adopting a convergence strategy on the part of women should result in a speech product similar to men's. Feminist speakers and writers, however, are expected to set out from a Self point of view, employing a divergence strategy. The result of such strategy is a speech product different from men's. Since men make up the dominant group, they should have no difficulty setting out from a Self point of view, even unknowingly.

While current theories predict either difference between women and men's speech behavior (the difference hypothesis) or similarity between women and men's speech behavior (the similarity hypothesis), a group relation based theory has different predictions altogether. It groups nonfeminist female and male speakers on the basis of their similar speech products, and feminist female and male speakers on the basis of their similar strategy — setting from a Self point of view. Feminist and nonfeminist female speakers have nothing in common: neither speech nor strategy.

3. Findings

3.1 Style

One feature of style we looked into is introductory patterns. We examined how Israeli female and male authors introduce female and male protagonists. Our data come from short stories by Israeli women and men writers, both modern (1965–1982) and early, pre-state (1928–1940).¹ Our data on introductory patterns in feminist writing, come from a contemporary Israeli feminist magazine, *Noga* (23, 1992), edited and written by feminist writers, catering to a primarily female readership. As a nonfeminist counterpart to *Noga*, we chose the most popular women's magazine, *Laisha* (2369, 1992:5–56; 109–112). For each text, we checked the number of characters and female characters and whether they received a description stemming for a Self or an Other point of view. To set out from a Self point of view, female authors should have given their female characters a name, preferably a full or a last name, a functional as well as an anchoring description. Their male characters should have been given a family description as well as external, sex-based, and anchored descriptions. For an illustration of our analysis, consider the following translated examples:

- (1) a. His [anchoring] sister [family+anchored] Bilha [first name], who works with him, an architect [functional] too, a woman [sex-based] divorced three times [family] (Hareven 1982: 14).
- b. An ugly and noisy [external] woman [sex-based] (Oz 1965: 45).
- c. A woman [sex-based] to receive customers [functional]. An assistant [functional] (Cahana-Carmon 1966: 115).

Our findings show that only male and feminist female authors tend to set out from a Self point of view (female authors do it in 50% of the cases, male

authors do it in 100% of the cases). Feminist authors introduce female characters applying similar descriptions used by men to introduce male characters: Both name these characters (either using last or full names) and assign them functional and anchoring descriptions. Similarly, both introduce outgroup members by external, sex-based, family and anchored descriptions, either failing to name them or giving them first names only. Though male and female feminist authors set out from the *same* (Self) point of view, their styles, as a result, are completely *different*.

Less-feminist writers adopt an Other point of view, resulting in a style *similar* to men writers'. Both male writers and nonfeminist female writers describe women as outgroup members (giving them either first names or failing to name them, assigning them external, sex-based, family and anchored descriptions), and men as ingroup members.² While for male writers this style is inspired by a Self point of view, for female writers having the *same* style is a result of adopting a *different* strategy — setting out from an Other point of view (see also Ariel 1988; Ariel and Giora 1992a, 1998).

3.2 Narrative structure

Another way of testing the above hypotheses (Section 2) is to investigate narrative structure and narrative change. Recall that the assumption is that (feminist) awareness — i.e., setting out from a Self point of view (for women) — should induce products different from men's and women's who lack such awareness. In Giora (1997), I looked into women's narratives dealing with abuse of female protagonists. According to the awareness hypothesis, feminist writers should portray female protagonists who defend themselves, retaliate or ruin their abusers instead of complying with the role of victim. Less-feminist women writers should copy men's narratives in which the abused female protagonist accepts her victimhood and destroys herself instead of acting in self defense and harm her abuser (as do the suicidal heroines of Flaubert's (1955) *Madame Bovary*, or Tolstoi's (1951) *Anna Karenine*). The narratives studied were short stories, novels, and scripts written by women before and after the feminist revolution of the 1970s. It was assumed that women writers following the feminist revolution should be more affected by feminist awareness than women writing in the period preceding the feminist revolution.

Findings indeed support the hypothesis. They show that following the 1970s, works by female authors portray more retaliating female characters than earlier works. Earlier works abound in self-destructive heroines (e.g., *The story*

of an hour and *The awakening* by Kate Chopin (1899/1976), Virginia Woolf's *The voyage out* (1915), *A Room of One's Own* (1929), *Lappin and Lapinova* (1939/1944: 60–68), *The legacy* (1940/1944: 107–114), *Kritut* (Divorce) by the Hebrew author Dvora Baron (1943), *To room nineteen* by Doris Lessing (1958), or *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath (1966)).

In contrast, later works allow for more violent female characters. Consider, for instance, *How did I get away with killing one of the biggest lawyers in the state? It was easy* by the African-American author Alice Walker (1971), *The collector of treasures* by the South African author Bessie Head (1977), *Baby Blue* by Edna O'Brien (1978), the French film *Jeanne Dielman* by Chantal Akerman (1979), *Cry, the Peacock* by the Indian writer Anita Desai (1980), the Dutch film *A question of silence* by Marleen Gorris (1982), the teleplay *The burning bed* by Rose Leiman Goldemberg (1984, following the book by Faith McNulty), *the last diet* by Ellen Gilchrist (1986), *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe* by Fannie Flagg (1987), *Blue Steel* (Katherine Bigelow 1990), and *Thelma and Louise* (Ridley Scott 1991, screenplay by Callie Khouri), *Un crime maternel* by Fay Weldon (1991), *The revenge*, by the Singaporean author Catherine Lim (1993), *The golden snake* by the Palestinian author Hanan Michaili Ashrawee (1990), *Women at point zero*, by the Egyptian author Nawal El Saadawi (1975), *The fall of the Imaam* by the same author, (El Saadawi 1988), *Malice*, by Danielle Steel (1996).³

In fact, by the early 1970s, the theme of 'getting even' has become a main stream topic in American movies about women. Abuse, particularly rape, became "not only a deed deserving of brutal retribution, but a deed that women themselves (not cops, boyfriends, or fathers) undertook to redress" (Clover 1992: 16). It seems that as feminism gets a stronger hold, women tend to set out from a Self point of view more often, which affects narrative change from the male 'norm'.

Consider, however, another angle taken by Adrienne Rich (1973:25), where murder does not suffice, since it does not change the world:

The phenomenology of Anger

Fantasies of murder: not enough:

to kill is to cut off from pain

but the killer goes on hurting

Not enough. When I dream of meeting

the enemy, this is my dream:

white acetylene
 ripples from my body
 effortlessly released
 perfectly trained
 on the true enemy
 raking his body down to the thread
 of existence
 burning away his lie
 leaving him in a new
 world; a changed
 man.

3.3 Power and cooperation

To examine the way women and men manipulate power and cooperation in conversation, male and female characters' speech in scripts written by Israeli female and male script-writers during the late 1980s was analyzed (see Ariel and Giora 1992b, 1998). The focus was on impositive speech acts (Green 1975), because impositive speech acts encode power and cooperation (e.g., threaten, command, demand, request, warn, reprimand, suggest, advise, instruct, indirectly command, indirectly request, indirectly suggest, mutually command, order, soothe, mutually suggest, mutually advise, invite, offer, ask for permission, remind, beg). A command indicates a relatively powerful speaker. Begging indicates that the speaker is relatively powerless. Giving advice or offering something to the addressee show some concern for the addressee, and are thus indicators of the speaker's cooperation with him. Note that power and cooperation are not mutually exclusive. Begging implies a powerless speaker, but not a cooperative one, while suggesting, which implies a more powerful speaker, is a cooperative speech act. All the impositive speech acts in seven Israeli movie scripts written during the late 1980s were examined for manifestations of Self point of view in speakers' attempts to impose their will on others. The parameters of power and cooperation included:

- a. Power relations between the speaker and the addressee.
 The speaker may be superior, equal or inferior in status to the addressee.
- b. Amount of talk.
 Who holds the floor and issues more impositive speech acts?
- c. Power of speech act.
 The speech act power is a function of linguistic components measured

against the context, with the understanding that the very same act can be perceived as less or more powerful, depending on the context. The linguistic components include (i) strength of illocutionary force (e.g., command versus suggest), (ii) the presence of mitigators (e.g., please) or intensifiers (e.g., come on), which either weaken or strengthen the speech act power, (iii) repetition and/or (iv) justification of the speech act, which imply lack of compliance and hence speaker's powerlessness.

Partly following suggestions made by Brown and Levinson (1987), the contextual aspects included (i) the speaker's relative status vis-à-vis the addressee (the power of the speech act depends on whether it is uttered by a superior to an inferior or vice versa), (ii) the relative intimacy/distance between them (a command issued to an intimate is less powerful than when the recipient is a stranger), (iii) the extent to which it is necessary to perform the act (extinguishing a fire, as opposed to closing the door), and (iv) the degree of imposition required in order to comply with the impositive speech act (e.g., bringing some water in the desert as opposed to bringing it from the kitchen).

- d. Rate of compliance by the addressee.
 Who obeys whom by actually performing the act requested?
- e. Rate of cooperation with addressee.
 Who issues to whom more cooperative speech acts?

The translated examples in (2) below illustrate how impositive speech acts were analyzed:

- (2) a. Rosy to Eli: Enough already [command], ass hole [intensifier]
 (Gabison and Aroch 1989:27).
- b. Frieda to Simcha: You know what? Go lie down [suggestion]. We'll continue some other time [justification] (Zvi-Riklis 1984:73).
- c. Tmira to Elit: Tell her again that I'm sorry... [request] Elit, tell her I'm sorry [request + repetition] (Yaron-Grunich 1987:26).

Given that the female script writers of the late 1980s must be (at least partially) influenced by feminist ideas, it was predicted that this awareness should affect the way their female and male characters speak. More specifically, given the Self perspective hypothesis, female characters in female writers' scripts should exert power over male characters and cooperate with female characters.

We collected our data from Schorr and Lubin (1990) who assorted scripts written during the 1980s.⁴ Results support the hypothesis only partly. They

show that, contrary to the Self perspective hypothesis, female characters in female writers' scripts do not exert power over male characters. Rather, when they can, they exert power over equally powerful or weaker characters, such as ingroup members (i.e., women) and children. In this respect, their characters adhere to the male oriented perspective. That is, both female and male script writers produced female characters who obey male characters, and male and female characters who exert power over female characters. However, while for female writers this means setting out from an Other point of view, for male writers this means adopting a Self point of view. Here, again, adopting different strategies results in similar products.

However, when it comes to cooperation, female writers do adopt a Self point of view: Their female characters cooperate with ingroup rather than with outgroup members. In this respect, they adopt a strategy similar to that of male script writers' whose male characters too cooperate with male rather than with female characters (adhering to a Self point of view).

While male writers always set out from a Self point of view, women, being a powerless group, may find it difficult. The feminist awareness of the Israeli female script writers of the late 1980s allowed them to set out from a Self point of view only partly, thus producing only partial change from the stereotypic male 'norm'. They created female characters who diverge from the stereotype upon which women are cooperative across the board, not least with men (a stereotype made manifest in the male writers' scripts).

4. In conclusion

Our findings, thus, pose a problem for both the similarity and difference hypotheses. The difference hypothesis predicts that differences should cluster around the gender dichotomy, thereby failing to account for the similarity-based findings. The similarity-hypothesis fails in that it obscures difference in the strategies employed. Our findings (and others') are best accounted for in terms of adopting different strategies, i.e., different points of view in language. The more *aware* the female writers, the more extensively they *diverge* from the 'norm', setting out from a Self point of view. This interpretation of the findings using Self versus Other points of view as a classifying criterion, categorizes feminists, nonfeminist women, and men quite differently. Both men and feminists behave alike in that they adopt a Self point of view. In contrast, nonfeminist women adopt an Other point of view.

Our analysis does not preclude the possibility that women's and men's language may both differ and be similar in terms of 'features'. Rather, the proposal is to avoid considering 'features' on their own, without studying the social constraints that either allow or disallow them. Our analysis neither precludes the possibility of evaluating findings in different ways. For example, for women to set out from an Other point of view may result in products similar to men's, i.e., using a male-biased portrayal of women, which, in themselves depict women as different from men. Features then don't tell us much. What we have tried to show is that the question of interest is what motivated a certain feature:

In the realms of *social identities* relatively low rank may be universally linked to stances and acts of accommodation. Interlocutors may universally display lower rank through displays of attention and willingness to take the point of view of a higher-ranking party or otherwise meet that party's wants or needs. By implication, these same stances and acts of accommodation universally mark the other party's higher rank. Higher rank as well may be universally linked to rights to direct others through such acts as ordering and summoning (Ochs 1996: 426).

But since "members of societies are agents of culture rather than merely bearers of a culture that has been handed down to them and encoded in grammatical form" (ibid, p. 416), language users may change the world by projecting their own point of view.

We have only to look at the language of working women in management positions to see how their language practices constitute alternative conceptions of leadership in the workplace (e.g. decision making as consensual versus authoritarian); or take a look at minority and female lawyers whose insistence on the use of personal narrative in legal argumentation challenges status quo expectations. Language socialization is potent in that it is our human medium for cultural continuity and change" (ibid, p. 431).

Though to adopt one's own point of view (at least to a certain extent) is a rational strategy, the one we should all aspire to substantiate, because, among other things, it will make the world a better place for those whose point of view is suppressed, this strategy may not be equally available to all language users. In this respect, powerless groups such as women and other minorities differ from the male dominant group. They are more constrained. They, may, however, compensate themselves for their lack of autonomy by developing a social awareness. Still, even this may be too difficult to follow. Social pressures might be too punitive, and women and other powerless groups compromise at times and assimilate.

Notes

1. The early women writers are Baron (1943), Bichovsky (1976) and Puchachevsky (1930: 59–168). The modern women writers are: Cahana-Carmon (1966) the first eleven stories, Almog (1969, 1971:7–19) and Hareven (1982). The early men writers are: Shoffman (1942:11–170), Smilansky (1934, 1955:117–137) and Steinberg (1957:219–263). The modern men writers are: Oz (1965), the first seven stories, Yehoshua (1972), the first five stories and Ben-Ner (1980). The year of publication of the early writers usually documents the collected writings of the author rather than the original date of publication. The basis for selection was the historical fame of the authors. They all appear in anthologies that reflect the spirit of their time.
2. This description does some injustice to early female writers writing during the 1930s. Their plots and themes were affected by feminist awareness. However, their awareness was insufficient to induce style change.
3. Note that the feminist awareness of the early female authors was insufficient to allow for a narrative change. Recall that this is the case with the early Israeli female authors who did not challenge men's style (see note 1).
4. The women script writers are: Menahemi (1987), Troppe (1986), Yaron-Grunich (1987) and Zvi-Riklis (1984). The men script writers are: Gabison and Aroch (1989), Heller (1986) and Waxman, Haspary and Levins (1987).

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