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INTRODUCTION: CURRENT HYPOTHESES

Most research into female and male discourse patterns is in agreement that the sexes employ different strategies when conversing. Men are believed to be power-oriented, whereas women are considered cooperative (see Cameron 1985; Coates 1986; James & Drakich, to appear; Tannen 1990, and the numerous references cited therein). Thus, the majority of the studies support such claims as that men talk more than women in mixed conversations, disrupt others more often, and control topic shifts. Women, on the other hand, are claimed to have other objectives. Indeed, they were found to be supportive in conversation, smiling (Deutsch 1990 and references cited therein), giggling (Giora, in prep.), supplying more numerous minimal responses to their interlocutors, and manifesting more politeness. Thus, mainstream feminist theories diagnose cooperation as a specifically feminine style of discourse and dominance as a specifically masculine style. Such a gendered account attributes different behaviors to women and men, despite emerging conflicting evidence (see James & Clarke 1990; James & Drakich, to appear).

One important, though relatively neglected, argument against the gendered account of women and men's conversational differences has come from the attempt to view such differences as deriving from power/status distinctions (James & Drakich, to appear; O'Barr & Atkins 1980). In such a view, women do not employ feminine strategies, but rather strategies characteristic of powerless members of society. Similarly, men do not employ masculine conversational strategies, but rather, strategies characteristic of those in power.

Our approach is congruent with the second theory, namely that female and male discourse patterns derive from their respective statuses in society rather than from their psychological makeup (be it innate or socialized). However, we will suggest that although some cases of so-called gendered discourse strategies have to be accounted for by relative social power, the conversational styles of the sexes should primarily be considered against the background of ingroup-outgroup relations. Sociopsychological research into intra- versus inter-group relations has indicated that people are prejudiced in favor of their own group members, while discriminating against outgroup members (Stephan 1985; Tajfel 1978; Wyer & Gordon 1984, *inter alia*). In this view, power is a behavior that should be

exercised on an outgroup member, while cooperation is a behavior that should be practiced among ingroup members. Given ingroup and outgroup biases, we should expect group members to exert power on outgroup members and to cooperate with ingroup members in conversations.

Such a prediction, however, contradicts the inherently female- and male-pattern hypothesis mentioned above. Regarding men, while the gender hypothesis predicts that men should be powerful, group-relation theories predict that they should not be powerful towards ingroup members, i.e., men. Also, while the gender hypothesis claims that men should not be cooperative, group-relation theories expect them to cooperate with men. Regarding women, while the gender hypothesis predicts that women should not be powerful, group-relation theories predict that they should exercise power over outgroup members, i.e., men. Moreover, the gender hypothesis claims that women are always cooperative, but group-relation theories expect them not to cooperate with men more than with women.²

We intend to examine the gendered hypothesis against the group-relation theory. Within the group-relation theory we expect each sex to be self-biased. Note that unlike gendered theories, group-relation theories do not form predictions about speakers out of context, but rather about speakers with respect to addressees' sex. In order to decide between the competing theories, we have chosen to focus on impositive speech acts (see Green 1975). Impositives such as requests or commands are obvious examples of powerful speech. Begging, on the other hand, manifests speaker's powerlessness. Other impositives (e.g., advice, invitation) are related (also) to cooperation and support for the addressee. Note that power and cooperation are not mutually exclusive. Begging is not cooperative yet it manifests weakness, whereas a mutual command such as "let's go," when uttered by an officer to a subordinate, suggests power although it is cooperative. In this study, impositive speech acts are therefore classified and graded as to their relative powerfulness and whether or not they are cooperative.

GROUP-RELATION PREDICTIONS

Redefining femininity and masculinity in terms of group relations, we take feminine behavior, speech included, to manifest bias in favor of women and against men, and masculine behavior to manifest bias in favor of men and against women. The notion of self-bias thus predicts that women and men will not exercise different behaviors. Rather, they will exercise the same behaviors (power and cooperation, in our case), but under different circumstances, i.e., relative to the sex of the addressee.

To examine our hypothesis with regard to power, we have developed four power parameters, some of which are based on Brown and Levinson (1987):

Power parameters

- (1) Number of impositives. As is currently assumed, holding the floor reflects speaker's power.
- (2) Speaker's relative status vis-à-vis addressee. Where speaker is superior to addressee she is powerful. Where she is equal, she is not, and where she is subordinate, she is weak.

- (3) Rate of compliance by addressee. Where speaker manages to have her will complied with, she is taken to be powerful.
- (4) Speech act power. The speech act power is a function of linguistic aspects measured against contextual background:
 - a. Linguistic components:
 - i. Strength of illocutionary force, graded as below:
 - a. Threaten, command (+3).
 - b. Demand, request, warn, reprimand, suggest, advise, instruct, indirectly command, indirectly request, indirectly suggest, mutually command, order (as in a restaurant), soothe (0).
 - c. Mutually suggest, mutually advise, invite, offer, ask for permission, remind, beg (-3).
 - ii. Mitigators and intensifiers—the former indicating weakening, the latter indicating strengthening of speech act power. Thus, *please*, for example, signals relative weakness, while prodding (e.g., *come on*) implies speaker's sense of power.
 - iii. Repetition of speech act. Repetition reduces the power of the speech act. It implies lack of compliance and hence lack of power.
 - iv. Justification of speech act. Justification implies that the speech act on its own is too weak and will not be complied with.
 - b. Contextual background:
 - i. Speaker's relative status vis-à-vis addressee. The power of the speech act depends on whether it is uttered by a superior to an inferior or vice versa. In the latter case the same speech act would be perceived as more powerful.
 - ii. Interpersonal relations. Intimacy versus distance between interlocutors. Thus, a command issued to an intimate is less powerful than when the recipient is a stranger.
 - iii. Necessity in performing the action expressed by the speech act. Thus, the necessity of putting out a fire justifies a powerful address, while the necessity of closing the door when one leaves the room is much lower, and hence does not justify the use of a powerful speech act. An act of low necessity when imposed by a powerful speech act is relatively powerful.
 - iv. Degree of imposition required in order to comply with the speech act. A speech act which is highly imposing indicates a powerful speaker. Thus, the same command, e.g., to bring some water, puts the addressee into more trouble in the desert than in the kitchen. The more troublesome the imposition the more powerful the speaker.³

To measure cooperation we calculated the number of cooperative speech acts out of the total number of impositives performed. This constitutes the cooperation parameter. Recall that some of the impositive speech acts indicate cooperation regardless of their relative power. They are cooperative in that they are addressee-oriented and reflect the speaker's concern for the addressee's interests (e.g., advise, suggest, remind, mutual command).

Given speaker-addressee relations, there are seven possible relevant comparisons between the sexes:

- (5) Possible comparisons
 - a. Male speaker ≠ female speaker
 - b. Male speaker-male addressee ≠ female speaker-female addressee

of taking powerful and cooperative speech as inherent group characteristics (women, men, Jews, Arabs), we should take them as behaviors reflecting primarily intra- and inter-group relations, with the proviso that there are differences in the ability to practice self-biases by dominant and nondominant groups.

APPENDIX⁵

(1) Female bias (female scriptwriters)

a. Power

i.

TABLE 3. *Status*

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS < FS	25.14 21.43	1.17	Male
MS-MA > FS-FA	23.3 34.83	1.49	Male
MS-FA < FS-MA	18.55 12.35	1.5	Strong male
MS-MA < FS-MA	23.3 12.35	1.89	Strong male
MS-FA < FS-FA	18.55 34.83	1.88	Strong female
MS-MA > MS-FA	23.3 18.55	1.26	Female
FS-FA < FS-MA	34.83 12.35	2.82	Strong male

ii.

TABLE 4. *Power of speech act*⁶

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS < FS	2.96 2.1	1.41	Male
MS-MA > FS-FA	3.17 1.73	1.83	Strong female
MS-FA < FS-MA	2.82 2.48	1.14	Male
MS-MA < FS-MA	3.17 2.48	1.28	Male
MS-FA < FS-FA	2.82 1.73	1.63	Strong male
MS-MA > MS-FA	3.17 2.82	1.12	Female
FS-FA < FS-MA	1.73 2.48	1.43	Female

iii.

TABLE 5. *Amount of talk*

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS < FS	44.8 55.2	1.23	Female
MS-MA < FS-FA	42.9 50	1.16	Female
MS-FA > FS-MA	57 50	1.14	Female
MS-MA FS-MA	No prediction		
MS-FA FS-FA	No prediction		
MS-MA < MS-FA	42.9 57	1.33	Female
FS-FA > FS-MA	50 50	1	No

iv.

TABLE 6. *Compliance (of addressees to speakers)*

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS < FS	54.5 45.8	1.19	Male
MS-MA FS-FA	No prediction		
MS-FA < FS-MA	56.8 39.3	1.45	Male
MS-MA < FS-MA	51.3 39.3	1.31	Male
MS-FA < FS-FA	56.8 51.7	1.09	No
MS-MA > MS-FA	51.3 56.8	1.11	Male
FS-FA < FS-MA	51.7 39.3	1.32	Male

b. Cooperation

TABLE 7. *Cooperation*

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS FS	No prediction		
MS-MA < FS-FA	23.3 29.2	1.25	Female
MS-FA > FS-MA	36.1 25.5	1.42	Female
MS-MA FS-MA	No prediction		
MS-FA > FS-FA	36.1 29.2	1.24	Female
MS-MA < MS-FA	23.3 36.1	1.55	Strong female
FS-FA > FS-MA	29.2 25.5	1.15	Female

(2) Male bias (male scriptwriters)

a. Power

i.

TABLE 8. *Status*

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS > FS	49.7 0	Incalculable	Strong male
MS-MA < FS-FA	23.3 0	Incalculable	Strong female
MS-FA > FS-MA	39.7 0	Incalculable	Strong male
MS-MA > FS-MA	23.3 0	Incalculable	Strong male
MS-FA > FS-FA	39.7 0	Incalculable	Strong male
MS-MA < MS-FA	23.3 39.7	1.7	Strong male
FS-FA > FS-MA	0 0	Incalculable	No

ii.

TABLE 9. *Power of speech act*

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS > FS	3.36 3.27	1.03	No
MS-MA < FS-FA	3.46 0	Incalculable	Strong female
MS-FA > FS-MA	3.1 3.3	1.06	No
MS-MA > FS-MA	3.46 3.3	1.05	No
MS-FA > FS-FA	3.1 0	Incalculable	Strong male
MS-MA < MS-FA	3.46 3.1	1.12	Female
FS-FA > FS-MA	0 3.3	Incalculable	Strong female

iii.

TABLE 10. *Amount of talk*

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS > FS	85.3 14.7	5.8	Strong male
MS-MA > FS-FA	74 0	Incalculable	Strong male
MS-FA < FS-MA	25.95 97.7	3.76	Strong male
MS-MA FS-MA	No prediction		
MS-FA FS-FA	No prediction		
MS-MA < MS-FA	74 25.95	2.85	Strong male
FS-FA > FS-MA	0 97.7	Incalculable	Strong male

iv.

TABLE 11. *Compliance (of addressees to speakers)*

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS > FS	70.4 59.5	1.18	Male
MS-MA FS-FA	No prediction		
MS-FA > FS-MA	75.0 61.0	1.23	Male
MS-MA > FS-MA	57.9 61	1.05	No
MS-FA > FS-FA	75 0	Incalculable	Strong male
MS-MA < MS-FA	57.9 75	1.3	Male
FS-FA > FS-MA	0 61	Incalculable	Strong female

b. Cooperation

TABLE 12. *Cooperation*

Comparisons	Findings (%)	Gap	Bias
MS FS	No prediction		
MS-MA > FS-FA	29.4 0	Incalculable	Strong male
MS-FA < FS-MA	21.3 30.2	1.42	Male
MS-MA FS-MA	No prediction		
MS-FA < FS-FA	21.3 0	Incalculable	Strong female
MS-MA > MS-FA	29.4 21.3	1.38	Male
FS-FA < FS-MA	0 30.2	Incalculable	Strong male

NOTES

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2. The claims here and above should be taken as relative rather than absolute. Namely, when the gendered hypothesis expects women to be powerless, what is meant is that they are less powerful than men, etc. Similarly, when the group-relation theory predicts that women cooperate with women, for example, what is meant is that they cooperate with women more than with men.

3. The way we calculated each specific utterance for its power of speech is exemplified in (a) below (Impos = degree of imposition):

a. Rosy (to Eli): "Enough already, asshole."

Context:	Necessity	Status	Distance	Impos	Total
	0	0	-1	0	-1

Linguistic Aspects:	Intensifier/Mitigator	Explanation	Repetition	Illocutionary Force	Total
	+1	0	+1	3	+5
Gap:	6				

4. For the precise percentages and gaps between the sexes on which this table is based, see the appendix. Since the whole corpus of impositive speech acts was taken into account, a difference of 1.1 and above was considered significant and counted as a bias. A difference of 1.5 and above was considered a strong self-bias.

5. FS and MS in the Appendix stand for female speaker and male speaker respectively. Likewise, FA and MA stand for female addressee and male addressee. Under the heading Comparisons we list our predictions as to which behavior should be practiced more often. These predictions follow directly from group-relation theories.

6. The linguistic aspects weighed against the context yield mean results, calculated by Unbalanced Analysis of Variance and Covariance with Repeated Measures.

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