
Exploring gender differences in language style: a style of male and female characters' speech in English novels

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Annotation *This article explores how gender affects language style by examining the speech of male and female characters in classic English novels. It focuses on significant language features including vocabulary, sentence structure, politeness strategy, hedging, and how to show emotions. These features are analyzed to understand how gender influences communication patterns in literature. Such analysis helps reveal underlying social expectations reflected in character dialogues across texts. As well as, the results show that female characters use more emotional and relational language, as well as more complicated sentence structures and ways that soften up their speech to keep their relationships strong. In contrast, male characters tend to use direct, succinct, and assertive modes of expression. These patterns are in line with what sociolinguistic researchers have said about how men and women talk to each other. Examples from chosen literary works demonstrate how dialogue mirrors broader societal norms. Moreover, the study emphasizes the significance of literature in depicting gendered communication and the necessity of linguistic analysis in understanding characters representation and cultural contexts.*

Keywords *Gender, language style, novels, sociolinguistics, speech patterns, emotional expression*

Til uslubidagi gender farqlarini o'rganish: ingliz romanlaridagi erkak va ayol qahramonlarning nutq uslubi

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Annotatsiya *Ushbu maqola klassik ingliz romanlaridagi erkak va ayol obrazlarining nutqini tahlil qilib, jinsning til uslubiga qanday ta'sir qilishini o'rganadi. Unda lug'at, gap tuzilishi, muloyimlik strategiyalari, ehtiyotkorlik ifodalari va hissiyotni ifodalash kabi muhim til xususiyatlariga e'tibor qaratiladi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, ayol obrazlar munosabatlarni mustahkam saqlash maqsadida ko'proq hissiy va munosabatga asoslangan til, shuningdek, murakkabroq gap tuzilishlari va nutqni yumshatuvchi usullardan foydalanadilar. Shu bilan birga, erkak qahramonlar to'g'ridan-to'g'ri, qisqa va qat'iy ifoda usullarini ko'proq afzal ko'radi. Bu naqshlar ijtimoiy lingvistik tadqiqotchilarining erkaklar va ayollar bir-biri bilan qanday gaplashishi haqidagi fikrlari bilan mos keladi. Tanlangan adabiy asarlardan olingan misollar dialoglarning kengroq ijtimoiy normalarni aks ettirishini ko'rsatadi. Tadqiqot genderli muloqotni tasvirlashda adabiyotning ahamiyati va qahramon tasviri hamda madaniy kontekstni tushunishda lingvistik tahlil zarurligini ta'kidlaydi. Bundan tashqari, bunday tahlillar adabiy matnlar orqali jamiyatdagi gender stereotiplari qanday shakllanishini va mustahkamlanishini yaxshiroq tushunishga*

yordam beradi. Bu esa zamonaviy tilshunoslik va adabiyotshunoslik tadqiqotlari uchun muhim ahamiyatga ega bo'lib, kelajakdagi izlanishlar uchun yangi yo'nalishlar ochadi.

Kalit so'zlar *Gender, til uslubi, romanlar, sotsiolingvistika, nutq naqshlari, hissiy ifodalar*

Изучение гендерных различий в стиле речи: стиль речи мужских и женских персонажей в английских романах

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Аннотация *В данной статье рассматриваются влияние гендерных факторов на стиль речи на примере высказываний мужских и женских персонажей в классических английских романах. Основное внимание уделяется значимым языковым особенностям, включая лексику, синтаксис, стратегии вежливости, выражения неопределенности и способы выражения эмоций. Результаты показывают, что женские персонажи используют более эмоциональный и ориентированный на отношения язык, а также более сложные синтаксические конструкции и приемы, смягчающие их речь, чтобы укрепить отношения. В отличие от них, мужские персонажи чаще используют прямые, лаконичные и напористые формы выражения. Эти закономерности соответствуют выводам социолингвистических исследователей о том, как мужчины и женщины общаются друг с другом. Примеры из выбранных литературных произведений демонстрируют, как диалоги отражают более широкие общественные нормы. Исследование подчеркивает важность литературы в изображении гендерной коммуникации и необходимость лингвистического анализа для понимания представления персонажей и культурного контекста. Кроме того, анализ подобных текстов позволяет глубже понять, каким образом литературные произведения формируют представления читателей о гендерных ролях и социальных ожиданиях в обществе. Это особенно важно в контексте современных гуманитарных исследований.*

Ключевые слова *Гендер, языковой стиль, романы, социолингвистика, речевые паттерны, эмоциональное выражение*

Language defines a society, particularly in literature where dialogue shows character traits and social roles. Studying men and women characters' speech in English novels shows that there are consistent language patterns that show what readers expect from each gender. Classic works such as Jane Austen's *Pride and*

Prejudice (1813), F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) reflect the embodiment of contemporary gender norms in dialogue, portraying women as relational and deferential and men as authoritative and direct. This exploration is significant as it connects literary

criticism and sociolinguistics, demonstrating how novels reinforce or subtly challenge gendered communication. We learn about how speech shapes identity, status, and power dynamics by looking at language instead of plot. Such studies also resonate today, informing discussions on language evolution amid changing gender roles. Ultimately, understanding these differences deepens appreciation of literature's sociolinguistic depth.

Sociolinguistic research has significantly influenced our comprehension of gender and language. In literary texts, language is not only a tool for communication but also a means of shaping character identity. The way characters speak often reflects broader social expectations, including those related to gender. Authors tend to use subtle linguistic differences to present personalities, relationships, and power dynamics within the narrative. These linguistic patterns are rarely accidental, as writers unconsciously draw on real-life communication norms when constructing dialogue. In her groundbreaking book *Language and Woman's Place* (1975), Robin Lakoff said that women use "empty" adjectives for example, "cute" and "lovely", hedges such as "I think" and "sort of", and tag questions (for example, "isn't it?" to be polite and show that they are unsure of themselves. Men, on the other hand, speak firmly to assert their power. This framework impacted subsequent studies by emphasizing dominance in male discourse. In *You Just Don't Understand* (1990), Deborah Tannen built on this idea by separating "rapport talk" that women use to build connections through questions, backchanneling, and empathy from "report talk" that men use to put an emphasis on independence through lecture and interruptions. In *Women, Men and Politeness* (1995), Janet Holmes measured politeness through showing that women say "sorry" a lot more often, give compliments, and use positive politeness strategies to keep things peaceful, whereas men

prioritize negative politeness by respecting space.

Jennifer Coates' *Women Talk* (1996) characterized female conversations as cooperative, defined by turn overlaps, brief affirmations such as "yeah," and topic-sharing, in stark contrast to the competitive and topic-controlling styles of men. Penelope Eckert's *Linguistic Variation as Social Practice* (2000) shifted the emphasis to agency, arguing that individuals identify their gender through stylistic choices within communities rather than through innate traits. Deborah Cameron and others who wrote *The Myth of Mars and Venus* (2007) warn against biological determinism. They state that differences are caused by socialization and power imbalances, not by hardwired differences. These theories offer a strong framework for analyzing literary dialogue, revealing stylized observations of societal patterns. They point out that language that is gendered is not set in stone; it changes based on the situation, culture, and the person using it.

In novels, men and women use totally different vocabulary in conversations. Female characters frequently employ evaluative and emotionally expressive vocabulary, while male characters tend to benefit referential and status-oriented language. Elizabeth Bennet's dialogue in *Pride and Prejudice* is full of relational words, like "My dearest sister... your friendship has been most warmly solicitous" (Austen, 1813; Ch. 24). Such expressions make you feel love and think about yourself and also emphasize emotional closeness and reinforce interpersonal relationships between characters. Mr. Darcy, on the other hand, uses exact, status-laden language: "In vain have I struggled." "It will not do" (Ch. 34), putting logic ahead of emotion. This fits with Lakoff's emotional vocabulary for women. Another significant aspect is the relationship between language and power. The choice of words, tone, and structure may indicate a character's social position or level of confidence. In this way, linguistic analysis allow a deeper

understanding of how authors built meaning beyond the surface level of the text, and helps reader recognize hidden hierarchies and tension between interactions. The Great Gatsby makes this even more obvious; Daisy's speech is full of emotion: "I'm p-p-paralysed with happiness..." What are we going to plan? (Fitzgerald, 1925; Ch. 5) with exaggerations and silliness. Tom Buchanan responds with strong, concrete expressions: "Her voice is full of money... Civilization's going to pieces" (Ch. 7), focusing on external realities like class and decay. Such patterns underscore Tannen's report vs. rapport divide. In *Jane Eyre*, Jane employs introspective words: "I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself" (Brontë, 1847; Ch. 27). Rochester's is declarative: "You — my life, my — only life, you sweet little roamer!" yet factual in proposals. Female speeches emphasize relational and emotional aspects, while male speech emphasizes action and authority, highlighting how authors use dialogue to reinforce traditional gender roles.

Sentence structure further highlights gender: females make longer, subordinate-clause-heavy sentences for indirectness, and males shorten declaratives for directness. Charlotte Lucas advises indirectly in *Pride and Prejudice*: "If a woman doubts as to whether she should accept a man... she will make him a very ungrateful husband" (Ch. 22), layering conditionals. Mr. Bennet snaps: "For what do we live, but to make sport for our neighbors?" (Ch. 57), terse and ironic. Daisy's convoluted musings in *The Great Gatsby*: "I love to see you smile... It makes me feel like a fool" (Ch. 1) contrasts with Nick's crisp narration, mirroring male economy. *Jane Eyre* reflects elaborately: "Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain... I am soulless and heartless?" (Ch. 23), while Rochester commands, "Answer me, Jane!" Holmes links this to women's harmony-seeking elaboration. Politeness strategies and hedging devices serve to soften female assertions, while male characters generally argue directly. In

Pride and Prejudice, Elizabeth Bennet says, "You ought certainly to forgive them as a Christian, but never to admit them in your sight" (Austen, 1813; Ch. 57). She also uses question tags like, "He is not a sensible man, is he?" (Austen, 1813; Ch. 57). Daisy says, "Well, I tried... sort of" (Fitzgerald, 1925; Ch. 1), and Tom says, "I've got to beat this man!" (Fitzgerald, 1925; Ch. 7). *Jane Eyre* asks politely, "Sir, you are not well?" "Jane, be still!" (Brontë, 1847; Ch. 23) says Rochester. These patterns show the way social norms treat men and women differently: women use mitigated forms to keep harmony, and men assert control and authority.

Another aspect that distinguishes male and female speech is how they express their feelings. In dialogue, female characters usually work together and express their feelings, while male characters often compete or take charge. The Bennet sisters talk things over and agree that "We will not quarrel for the greater share of blame" (Austen, 1813; Ch. 46). Mr. Collins, on the other hand, talks to them all at once. Daisy's vulnerability deliberated in "Sophisticated God, make me a beautiful little fool" (Fitzgerald, 1925; Ch. 1) makes people feel sorry for her. Tom's speech shows anger and power. In *Jane Eyre*, Jane tells the story in a special personal way: "Reader, I married him" (Brontë, 1847; Ch. 38). Rochester, on the other hand, speaks in a possessive and commanding way: "Answer me, Jane!" (Brontë, 1847; Ch. 23). Female dialogue often reinforces interpersonal bonds, whereas male dialogue highlights authority and goal-oriented communication.

The language employed in conversations between male and female characters is the primary focus of this study, which is based on a qualitative analysis of literary texts. Novels by Jane Austen, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Charlotte Brontë are among the chosen works because of their confusing character relationships and accurate depictions of the social mores of their eras. Vocabulary, sentence construction, manners, and emotional expression are the main topics of the analysis. The study looks at

particular passages from these books in order to find recurrent linguistic patterns and relate them to accepted sociolinguistic theories. This approach made it possible to understand how gender is established through language in literature on a deeper level. Although Lakoff, Tannen, and Holmes' theories provide a solid foundation for understanding gendered language, they have also received plenty of criticism. Some scholars argue that by presenting the differences between male and female speech as constant and universal, these methods frequently oversimplify them. In actuality, socioeconomic status, context, education, and individual personality all have an impact on language use in addition to gender. For instance, not all male characters speak in a domineering manner, and not all female characters employ indirect or kind language. This implies that rather than being absolute, gendered communication patterns should be seen as variable. Consequently, even though old ideas are still useful, they should be used cautiously, supported with contextual analysis. The idea of gendered language is becoming less rigid and more complicated in current society. Traditional distinctions between male and female speech are slowly disappearing due to the growth of social media and international interaction. Regardless of gender, a lot of people today employ a variety of communication styles, and gender-neutral language is becoming more widely recognized. For example, aggressiveness is no longer restricted to male speakers, while politeness and emotional expression are no longer seen as solely feminine qualities. This change can also be seen in modern literature, where characters frequently have more varied and unique speech patterns. Because of this, sociolinguistic analysis must also alter to account for these shifts and take into account

effects that go beyond conventional gender roles.

In conclusion, sociolinguistic analysis of literary dialogue in novels by Jane Austen, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Charlotte Brontë, this research demonstrates that patterns of gender-embedded language are fundamentally inscribed into narrative structures themselves. Through exploring the vocabulary, syntax and politeness strategies used in dialogue, this study shows that authors historically employed it to reflect and uphold the social orders of their time. The analysis revealed that in the social world women use "rapport talk," meaning using relational vocabulary, hedging and more complex sentences that allow to maintain social harmony. Conversely, men consistently used "report talk," which allowed them to be brief, status-laden language, and authoritative declaratives. Furthermore, the relationship between choice of language and power dynamics is made clearer by applying ideas by Lakoff, Tannen, and Holmes to these texts. Literature serves as a storehouse for modern gender norms, as evidenced by the dominance displayed in the speech of characters like Mr. Rochester and Tom Buchanan, in contrast to the subdued and sentimental language of Jane Eyre and Daisy Buchanan. But as contemporary linguistic perspectives indicate, these patterns are socially generated performances instead of biological necessity. In the end, the sociolinguistic study of the novel does more than define character; it offers a crucial lens for comprehending the historical trajectory of gendered communication and the ongoing deconstruction of identity through language. Traditional theories, while offering a strong framework for identifying gendered divergence, must be balanced against the evolving fluidity of identity seen in contemporary discourse.

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