

How do Language and Gender Interact? (A Critical Study on the Feminist Theory of Language)

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Abstract

In general, the effect of non-cognitive categories in knowledge and other categories like language is the important problem of epistemology. According to feminism, one of these categories is gender which feminists reproduced as a cultural and social meaning (not biological and physical one). This study through a library research based on description, analysis and with a critical approach analyzes the feminist interpretation of gender and its relation with language and the effects of their interaction on teaching and education and the guidelines they have given in the field of language teaching.

Keywords: Feminist Philosophy of Language, First Wave (Classical) Feminism, Gender, Gender and Language Study, Second Wave Feminism, Teaching Method, Third Wave (Contemporary) Feminism.

Introduction

In this research we are going to focus on feminist issues about language, linguistics and communication and have some critical consideration referring to those issues prepared by me and my friend Dr, Safari.

History and Theoretical Background to the Study of Language and Gender

In the early 1970s, feminist-inspired interest in sex and gender revived philosophical and linguistic questions about how language, culture and thought interact. During the 1980s and 1990s, feminist scholarship in the USA and Europe took an increasingly linguistic turn, not only in philosophy and linguistics but also in history, literary theory, psychology, politics and sociology. From many different viewpoints, scholars argue that language - and more generally, discourse shapes gender identities and relations and supports male and heterosexual privilege. Outside the academy as well, language figures prominently in gender discussions. Mass circulation publications report that the sexes speak 'different languages'; feature writers complain about feminist 'word police' (and often two sentences later about 'misuses' or 'abuses' of words like rape); anti-sexist and gay rights activists invent new terminology (sexism or homophobia) or renovate the old (using queer in positive self-

reference or she as a generic pronoun). Language-gender debates, however, include participants with different conceptions both of language and of gender. This section is about three recent kinds of work: the Anglo-American empirically oriented tradition, psychoanalytic theorizing from French philosophers and linguists, and work on discourse and gender construction from feminist philosophers and other theorists in literary and cultural studies. Linguist Robin Lakoff's widely read *Language and Woman's Place* (1975) framed much subsequent discussion by American linguists and social scientists and some philosophers. Lakoff argued that women face a double-bind. To sound feminine they must speak indirectly and euphemistically; that style, however, is derided as ineffective in public. She argued also that language used of women conventionally implied that they were less worthy and important than men. Although she did not join in the widespread critique of masculine generics (for example, man for humans generally or he with a general antecedent; see the introduction to Frank and Treichler (1989) for a discussion of this topic), she noted instructive examples of asymmetries in linguistic resources for speaking of men and of women: cleaning lady, for instance, versus the non-occurring garbage gentleman or the metaphorical extension of animal or food terms to refer to women, such as cow or tart. Others challenged Lakoff's ideas. Linguists such as Janet Holmes (1995) pointed to the multiple functions of linguistic forms. For example, rising intonation on a statement, a form Lakoff interpreted as signaling women's uncertainty or insecurity, can facilitate effective communicative interaction, inviting others to speak. Tag questions ('he's pathetic, isn't he?') have similar functions. Lakoff's critics also noted the cultural specificity of speech styles (for example, many African-American women reported Lakoff's characterizations inapplicable to their everyday speech). Furthermore, some (most notably, Penelope Brown (1980); Marjorie Harness Goodwin (1990)) argued that sex-differentiated rhetorical strategies are not arbitrary cultural conventions. They arise as strategic responses to general social constraints and the specific demands of particular communicative contexts. Women's linguistic agency began to be explored, not just their victimization. During the same period, some French thinkers began to articulate feminist perspectives on post-structuralist or postmodern views of language. The post-structuralist stance does not take language as a closed system for representing a pre-existing reality. To speak or write is never a neutral act of encoding, as dominant Anglo-American views of language seem to suggest, but always enacts a self; language is constitutive of subjectivity. To speak is to try to reconnect with the mother, or, more generally to connect to another; this attempt at (re)connection is inherently phallic. Moreover to speak and be understood requires one to submit to patriarchal social laws, to place oneself under the Law of the Father. None of this is a matter of being male or female: women can and do speak and write but linguistic communication remains phallic, not feminine, at a deep psychosexual level. Then is silence the only feminine linguistic move? The linguistic and social status quo, though powerful, are not stable. Psychoanalysis, Freud's 'talking cure', has always given language a prominent place, and French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan made it central in his interpretation of Freud. Linguistic communication, he proposed, is an attempt to erase the first and most traumatic psychic pain, the wrenching separation of birth. To speak is to try to reconnect with the mother, or, more generally, to connect to another; this attempt at (re)connection is inherently phallic. Moreover, to speak and be understood closed systems. Breaks in the discourse, slips of the tongue, puns, parody and repetition, all bespeak psychic difference and potential resistance, and offer a glimpse beyond the Law of the Father. Again it is not sex that is at issue: a man's speech or writing may inscribe a de-centring feminine voice, exposing the instability of the ruling order and threatening its hegemony. Although the

French postmodern turn does not necessarily promote the dismantling of male privilege, there is a strong feminist strain in such thinking. The feminine and masculine within each person - a kind of bisexuality - is the fulcrum on which Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous, for example, balance feminist politics. Although their specific projects differ, both make feminine outside voices more prominent, and they destroy the authority in varied ways established patriarchal assumptions and values. Both early American emphasis on sex-differentiated modes of speaking and sexist linguistic resources, and the French focus on the psychosexual significance of language, seemed to take sexual difference and male dominance as given, as prior to linguistic practices. Women and men, the feminine and the masculine - these were unequal poles existing outside language. During the mid-1980s and early 1990s, however, a number of English-speaking feminist philosophers and other cultural and social theorists explicitly questioned the 'naturalness' of heterosexuality and of polarized and hierarchized gender oppositions.

Value-laden Terminology: The Basis of the Feminist Theory of Language

Whether or not it is in theory possible for the discriminations made by some particular language (or part of a language) to reflect only morally and politically non-tendentious judgments of similarity and difference, it is clear that such neutrality does not characterize a large number of the distinctions made in the languages we actually use. A central tenet of moral and political thinking is that like cases ought to be treated alike; consequently the crux of many arguments lies in judgments of similarity and difference, carried out in language that can make some of those judgments nearly automatic and others virtually unthinkable. Examples abound, from military euphemisms that draw attention towards the achievement of strategic objectives and away from killing people, to abortion debates that pit those who favour choice against those who would force child-bearing or those who are pro-life against those who would kill babies. The notion of an 'essentially contested concept' (Gallie, 1956) raises similar questions. Such concepts are deeply value-laden, carrying strongly positive or negative connotations: 'democracy' or 'repression'. A discriminatory use of an essentially contested concept would be one that applied and withheld the term in ways that are argued to be either undermotivated or motivated in problematic ways. The point is not that we ought to eschew language that encodes controversial judgments of similarity and difference. Rather, we should be aware of what is encoded in our language and ready to argue for the judgments expressed therein and to challenge those of others with which we disagree. To call a particular use of language discriminatory goes beyond the claim that it implies a disputable judgment: rather, it commits one to arguing for why and how that judgment ought to be disputed. "The Language Is Not Neutral and the Language Is Not Ours", feminists say. Early feminist discussions of sexist language emphasized the ways that the content of what is said tends to make women shown lower in importance, to label us as exceptions when we succeed, or to erase us from the discourse entirely by using so-called generic terms that are not in fact generic. Such discussions are important for understanding the details of the practices that constitute our "socialization to powerlessness". Feminist philosophers and linguists have shown that women are oppressed by discursive practices in two primary ways. First, women are marked. Marking draws attention to the woman's femaleness and carries implications of inferiority. The woman is present, but only as lesser. Marking is achieved by pronouns, prefixes, and by sex-specific words and naming practices. Practices of marking women as diminutive, secondary, or amateur serve to diminish us, particularly when such marking fits into a systematic cultural pattern of women's trivialization. Secondly, women are erased as

subjects. Discursive practices set women up as outsiders, as objects in texts, but not straightforwardly as speaking subjects. The speaker or writer of a text claims an authority that women are generally presumed to lack. There is a paradoxical tension between the way traditional discursive practices both mark us and exclude us, making us present and absent, like the sign itself. A linguistic remark is sometimes said to be sexist because it reveals certain sexist attitudes and beliefs about the speaker, or because it perpetuates the oppression of women, or because it does both.

A Glance at the Concepts of Sexist Language and Linguistic Discrimination

Henley suggested that language not only ignored or defined women narrowly but might also demean them. An aspect of the English language that has been identified as lowering women's importance is that masculine forms of words tend to have more positive connotations than feminine ones. To illustrate with examples used originally by Lakoff, compare the connotations of 'bachelor' and 'spinster', 'master' and 'mistress' and 'lord' and 'lady'. Even words that have the same form (e.g. professional, secretary) may have more positive connotations when applied to a man than to a woman. When being referred to in terms of the opposite gender, 'tomboy' has positive connotations while 'sissy' is used as an insult. All above show that men and masculinity are valued more than women and femininity. In comparison to languages such as French and German, English has fewer linguistic forms that are used to indicate gender. One of the ways in which gender is marked in English is by the use of suffixes and adjuncts. Two suffixes which are commonly used to indicate that a female is being referred to are '-ess' (e.g. actress, waitress) and '-ette' (e.g. suffragette, nymphette). The use of an adjunct (e.g. woman doctor, male nurse) is a less obvious technique for indicating the conventional gender of the term. The marking of feminine terms has been criticised by some for implying that the world is male unless proven otherwise. Others have argued that the addition of feminine suffixes and adjuncts has a weakening, diminishing and trivialising effect. Stanley argued that feminine markers contribute to the construction of negative semantic space for women because, no matter what women do, language marks them as being different (e.g. a female surgeon, a woman lawyer), or less important, than men who do the same thing (e.g. waiter vs. waitress, steward vs. stewardess). However, in the case of adjuncts it could be argued that gender marking is not just sexist but provides information about normative gender roles in general. For example, masculine markers may also be used to indicate that a man is entering a stereotypically woman's domain (e.g. male nurse, male prostitute). Another grammatical technique in English that may indicate the gender of the person being referred to is the use of adjectives. For example, 'pretty', 'charming' and 'emotional' tend to be used to describe women or children and not men. In contrast, words like 'stern', 'strong' and 'tough' will mainly be used in descriptions of men; when these terms are used to describe women they detract from notions of their femininity. Using these terms in unconventional ways (e.g. referring to women as stern and men as charming) may help to undermine adjectives that function to mark (or index) gender. The slogans 'women can do anything' and 'girl power' and the subculture of 'riot grrls' (pronounced with a growl) seem to use this strategy and can be understood as feminist in so far as they are promoting a link between being female and being strong and powerful. Paradoxically the same slogans may also be thought of as reproducing the status quo because they reinforce a cultural system where strength and power are valued. The changing nature of gendered meanings over time has also been documented as a way in which women have been depreciated in language. Miller and Swift suggested that many words used to describe

females have travelled a road that linguists call 'degeneration of meaning'. Lakoff (1975) argued that the semantic derogation of female words could be seen occurring in America in the early 1970s because the once neutral term 'woman' had been developing negative connotations. Lakoff argued that the terms 'lady' and 'girl' were more commonly used than 'woman' because they seemed more polite. Another area of English that has been criticised for trivialising and deprecating women is metaphorical language. The data for this research were metaphors that students used to refer to women and to sexual experiences. It was found that many source domains are used in metaphors about women, including immaturity (e.g. babe), animals (e.g. bird, bitch), clothing (e.g. blue stocking, bit of skirt), food (e.g. tart, sweetie pie), vehicles (e.g. town bike) and furniture (e.g. mattress). Animals are used as a source of metaphors for men as well as women, but the animals used to refer to women tend to be either domesticated (e.g. cats, kittens, chickadees) or hunted for sport (e.g. foxes). Many of the metaphors we collected seemed offensive not only because they tended to sexualise women but they also constructed women in passive object positions in sentences that use metaphorical constructions (e.g. 'Looks like he's going to take the wood to the beaver').

Documentation of the ways in which English language is sexist and experimental research on the negative effect sexist language has on the perception and evaluation of women were two dominant aspects of psychological research in the gender and language field conducted during the 1970s and early 1980s. Although useful, this research has more recently been criticised for its assumptions about language and its overreliance on 'made-up' examples of sexist forms, albeit that they are used to ensure maximum experimental control. From the late 1980s studies began to appear that were less concerned about the impact of particular language forms and more concerned with how everyday talk was used in various and contradictory ways to produce and reproduce the dominant social order. Even psychological researchers who continue using mainstream methods have tended to use more valid examples of language in their research. A notable study that combined 'real-life' examples of sexist language with an experimental study was that of Henley, Miller and Beazley, who considered the verb voice (i.e. active or passive) of news media reports of violence against women. In an analysis of articles from over fifty American newspapers, they found that reports of sexual violence against women were most often written in a passive voice that tended to hide the male agency in the crime. Overall, social psychological research has demonstrated the nontriviality of feminist concerns about the impact of sexism in language. Although the assumptions underlying that work can be questioned, the work is important because it provides a legitimate source of evidence that features of language, such as masculine generics, do have negative psychological consequences, especially for women. Of course sexist language is not just a matter of the ways in which women are represented in language. Sexism in language can be considered more broadly as forms of language use that function to control women, and discourses that perpetuate social beliefs about women. Work that focuses on language as representation hides these aspects of sexism. However, they are highlighted in discursive approaches that emphasise language as social action. There has been a tendency in the media to trivialise feminist efforts to challenge and change words that ignore or demean women. Language rules are not neutral but deeply ideological, and responses to feminist calls for linguistic change are evidence of this. A related point is that there is no linguistic change strategy that is naturally and inherently feminist. It seems that, in the case of sexist language, an increased awareness of the problem is as important for feminists seeking social change as are the solutions employed to promote non-sexist language use. see Eckert and McConnell –Gient (1992:300-461)

Is there a Concomitance between Changing Language and Changing Gender?

'Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me', chant children trying to defuse the sting of labels like 'sissy', 'faggot' or 'bitch'. They seek to convince themselves and their tormentors of the view, widely endorsed in one form or another, that language has no force, is causally inert. As formal objects on their own, of course, words (more generally, languages) do not hurt people or do anything else to them. But words in use do indeed affect people in many ways: they convince, persuade, enlighten, frighten, humiliate, amuse, disgust, titillate.

Take a simple example. Labelling people affects how those people and their labellers then enter into a host of social practices. Until recently most communities using American-English conventionally assigned adult women social titles on the basis of marital status ('Mrs' or 'Miss'), whereas men's social titles were not so differentiated ('Mr' being the only option other than occupational and professional titles). The introduction of 'Ms' offered women a title option supposedly neutral as to marital status. This option was adopted by a diverse group including advertisers who did not want to offend by making mistaken assumptions about marital status, young unmarried women wishing not to advertise themselves as single, and self-described feminist women claiming a status equivalent to that of male peers (whether husbands or not). There have been other changes in linguistic practice connected to marriage, sexuality and family: for example, more women retain a pre-marriage surname or hyphenate surnames, some couples create a new shared surname, and some use the mother's surname for a child; even women who have adopted a husband's surname frequently favour 'Ms/Mrs Jane Doe' over the formerly dominant 'Mrs John Doe' form; employers and others now inquire about a 'spouse' (or even a 'partner', finessing both marital status and sexual preference) rather than a 'wife'; marriage ceremonies much less often ask a woman to 'obey' a husband, and those officiating frequently pronounce the couple 'husband and wife' rather than 'man and wife'; same-sex couples go through marriage-like rituals and adopt common surnames; 'parent' has acquired a use as a verb (which is semantically far closer to the verb 'to mother' than to the verb 'to father'). Such changes in sociolinguistic practice have accompanied nonlinguistic changes in the institutions of marriage and family and practices associated with them. Middle-class women are less likely than they used to be to assume their economic welfare and social position will derive from husbands' income and status. Not only do young women see divorce as a real possibility, they also see themselves as capable of significant earnings and professional achievement, whether or not they opt to marry or to have children. Some men see caring for children - parenting - as a central role for part of their lives. Heterosexual marriage of the traditional hierarchical and strongly sex-differentiated kind, though still in many ways the default option for middle-class Americans, is increasingly seen as not the only choice open, not even for women who want to bear children. Adding 'Ms' as a title option for women and changing laws about surnames of married women and their children could not have increased women's participation in high-level careers if all else had remained the same, just as having available the sex-neutral verb 'to parent' does not suffice to get men more actively engaged in the activity it denotes. But changes in linguistic practice have been (and continue to be) part and parcel of changes in gender practices - the linguistic and nonlinguistic developments reinforce one another. Linguistic practices change all the time. For example, new words or terms are introduced. 'Surrogate mother' designates a kind of relation of woman and child not earlier envisaged (and carries with it certain assumptions about the social weightiness of that relation); 'sexual harassment' groups together, on the basis of similar effects, kinds of

situations previously either ignored or seen as very different in kind ('sexual teasing', for instance, and 'seduction'). Of course, new expressions draw on associations with existing ones: 'sexism', for example, developed meaning in part through the implied analogy with the word 'racism'. Sometimes an existing form is altered in its uses, as when 'partner' comes to designate the person with whom one lives in a sexually intimate relationship, whether that relationship is sanctioned by the state or religious authorities, whether the person so designated is a woman or a man, and whether of the same sex as, or opposite sex to, oneself. But the implication of equality remains from other uses of the term 'partner'. Customary usage may change while reference stays fixed. Some have begun to say 'my child' or 'my kid' in contexts where most people still say 'my daughter' or 'my son', to say 'kids' rather than 'girls and boys', and in other ways to resist identifying everyone always in sex-specific terms. The linguistic system and its interpretation are not thereby changed, but patterns of language-use are and with them what is implicated when people speak, what we take them to mean above and beyond what their words literally say. There are no explicit norms that say adults must identify a person to children by using 'that woman' or 'that man' or similar sex-specific forms, yet this is standard practice: 'Say thank you to the nice lady' rather than 'Say thank you to the nice person who gave you that sweet'. Changes in such practices might ultimately help effect major shifts in gender polarization and emphasis on sexual difference, an emphasis important for enforcing heterosexuality. Could some group impose what might seem desirable linguistic and related social changes? Should they? History shows that some regulation is possible: for more than a century, schools and editors, for example, have proscribed singular 'they' and prescribed a supposedly sex-indefinite 'he'. Simply removing institutional sanctions (poor grades, having an article rejected) from the use of singular 'they' would almost certainly greatly reduce use of supposedly generic 'he'. But of course some people might continue its use, and even those who have dropped it might nonetheless speak in other ways indicating a view of humans as normatively male: 'During the night the villagers left in canoes, leaving us behind with the women and children.' Linguistic conventions, both those that narrow the range of linguistic systems on which community members can draw and expect to be understood and those that promote certain patterns of usage (for instance, when to say 'thank you'), only constrain and never completely determine what community members will say. People can in various ways challenge and resist such conventions or exploit indeterminacy in them as to form and meaning. And other people can make countermoves as in the charges of a silly 'political correctness' hurled at those who have drawn attention to social biases implicit in existing linguistic conventions and have proposed alternatives. No social standpoint monopolizes all moves; subordinated interests can find expression. This does not mean that social advantage confers no linguistic advantage (it does) or that linguistically aided social change is not possible (it is). But total control of language use (and therefore of the patterns of thought and action it might facilitate) is only an Orwellian nightmare, not a real possibility. And, as many feminist thinkers have reminded us, quick linguistic fixes for sexism and heterosexism are just pipedreams (see the guidelines in Frank and Treichler, 1989).

Critical Considerations

1. One of the most important criticisms to the feminist theory of language is criticism to the basis of it. The claim that language is not neutral, and it is value- laden, According to some arguments, is incorrect:

1-1. This theory is based on their views on epistemology and philosophy of science. For example see (Tanesini, 1999; Harding, 1986,1991; Lynn, 1990). The feminist epistemology expresses that there are not any pure and neutral knowledge, belief and theory. It means all the knowledge, beliefs and theories are value-laden and relative to many presuppositions. In other words, all the knowledge is dependent on and is affected by non-cognitive factors. One of those factors is sex/gender.

This claim in addition to leads to an absolute skepticism and relativism (that both results are logically and intuitionally false), is self-defeating and paradoxical.

If all the proposition because of being value-laden is empty of truth and epistemic value, so this proposition that "all the proposition is value-laden" is value-laden too. Thus, this proposition lacks the truth and the epistemic value. If feminists say that their theory is a meta-theory or a meta narrative or a second order knowledge, and it is not value-laden but it is a pure knowledge (a true justified belief), In response to it, we will say that according to your views, the yardstick and the criterion of "being value-laden and relative" in all the knowledge, belief, proposition and theory are "the being-a-human of the perceiver", so because the producer and the perceiver of all the second order knowledge and meta theory is a human, Necessarily all of them will be subject to the same judgement.

1-2. The value-laden terminology/language theory entails the absolute linguistic – semantic skepticism and relativism. If the theory is true, therefore, sentences and words cannot fully signify or denote the external world and cannot correctly refer to the state of affairs and the referents. So there is no fixed intersubjective thing and humans cannot understand each other, but they can. It should be noted that values are not only generic and specific values but can be the values of a group or even the personal values that by the powerful individuals and the rulers through the institutions of language production and promotion and so on are transferred to others and are internalized.

2. Feminist issues in the field of nature of language and literary criticism often are originated by western new linguistic and literary criticism issues in recent decades. Linguist Edward Sapir, first argued that human's language in some ways, has taken him prisoner. According to him, our view of reality is as an abbreviated version of the world that our language has edited. It is clear that what radical feminism says about the decisive and extreme impact of language on androcentrism and patriarchy culture has no clear reason and evidence in scientific linguistics, but at the same time, the discovered fact that language has a gender-based nature and that nature can restrict speakers and listeners, is an important achievement of feminist linguistic issues. In general it seems that the feminist theory of language faced a big misunderstanding in linguistics and considered the position and function of language over what scientific research shows. Feminists just refer the sexist difference to language than culture, while we can say that the difference is born by social culture and the culture shapes and determines the structure and functions of language (467، 1387، بیتس-پلاگ). At least we can say that the structure of language is originated by beliefs and values, and then it appropriates to its nature affects the beliefs and values. One way of examining this issue, is a cross-cultural comparison. Field research in this direction can help to perform effectively. If language sets and shapes the form of human worldview, so that two groups that speak a language or languages with very close relatives, it will be necessary to have same and similar beliefs, values and cultural practices, but research shows the opposite point. What I call it the principality of language in the formation of social – cultural mechanisms (the role that feminists claim it), has no strong evidence (2009). According to some empirical researches in linguistics and anthropology in Africa, Latin America and elsewhere taken place, is (clear and proven that it is possible for

some societies and communities that speak languages with very close relatives to have very different political and economic structure and types of social relations, while it is possible for some others that speak very different languages to be socially, culturally, economically and politically quite similar. For example, see (2009). So feminism's presuppositions in the field of linguistics is not scientifically proven and verified.

3. Feminists differentiate between sex (physiological and biological aspects) and gender (social and cultural aspects) and believe that what caused the discrimination in language, refers to the cultural and social aspects (gender) and men's domination over the institution of language.

This attitude that mostly is influenced by radical feminism, ignores the fact that there are many objective, factual and ontological differences between men and women (for example, in biological, physiological, psychological dimensions) and these differences naturally and necessarily, affect language and manifest in it. French feminist tradition with both trends (the psychoanalysis tendency and the deconstruction tendency) indulge in language so that they refer any linguistic differences to women's sexual inferiority complex and men's supremacism. Apparently, they think that humans in the past and present, have not had any problems except the confliction between the sexes(!). However, the role and the share of ontological, objective and factual differences between male and female in the formation and appearance of linguistic differences or sexist differences in the field of language, is much more than that feminists believe. A little evidence for this claim is that although western women at least since a century ago have released from men's domination, but yet they have not affected western languages and also they have not been able to show and offer clearly features of a feminine language.

In response to that feminists believe language, throughout history, has been totally and absolutely patriarchal; should be said that if women really have had their own quite different language, so why the effects of the feminine language have not been displayed and appeared in the communities? And so why women around the world in different social and geographic conditions, all have been submitted to the male language? Some people refer it to the physiological characteristics of women which force them to mother and to depend on men. Others refer it to the sovereignty and domination of men over the institutions of production and promotion language in schools, churches, publications and However these factors partly are the effect, but in reality, none of these cannot be a clear reason for this massive and widespread claim that there is a category called "feminine language" which although that is true and real but could never appear in any of human societies. We know that people the most sensitive and the most influential time of language learning spends in mothers' lap. We can ask why women did not benefit from this golden opportunity to teach children their own language? Unfortunately, the feminist theory in the analysis of examples and cases, is out of the academic and scientific way and indulge in it. At least some of the cases that as a signs of the patriarchy of language are proposed, may have been caused by other cultural and linguistic factors. Although addressing this debate could be interesting but is outside the scope of this paper.

Despite the harsh attitudes of feminist criticism to the common language, they have been unable to properly express linguistic ideals of feminism, and the features of a feminine language. For example, Helene Cixous's descriptions of feminine language can be compared with the realities of common language.

However, linguistic and literary feminism, must answer this question whether the gender differentiation in language is acceptable or believes a common language of human without

any gender differentiation and sexist distinction? It seems that the English - American tradition tends more to a common language and the French tradition tends more to a feminine language, and in both cases there are also plenty of unanswered questions. If the common language is suggested, how essentially will sex differences reflect? In sex-neutral cases, how to act that it does not create a sexist discrimination in language? However, there is the main difficulty about the tendency to a feminine language: What are the essentially differences between this language and a masculine language? Does a feminine language reproduce the sex/gender discrimination to benefit women? Does it treat equally male and female sex/gender? How and from what way can the production and promotion of such language be possible? Can this language communicate men and boys? How? If feminism for men and women suggests two different languages, will not this duality intensify in practice the distance and social conflict between the two sexes? Will the result of these separations and conflicts benefit women or vice versa, oppression against them will double?

It seems that the feminists are better to form a deeper analysis of women's issues instead of exaggerating some minor facts so that they can be more successful in serving the oppressed women around the world.

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