

DECONSTRUCTING THE DISCOURSE OF WOMEN'S ANGLICIZED PRONUNCIATION IN INDIA

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Abstract: This paper shall focus on how women in India pronounce English words, keeping in view the proper English Pronunciation. English has been widely regarded as *lingua franca*, the medium of common understanding, (even Universal language). This phenomenon has certainly its roots in the colonial history. Language has been the major cultural force that almost every dominant civilization has tried to force among the dominated ones. The linguistic hegemony and demeaning of local languages has been the hallmark of colonialism. As English has become the medium of instruction at higher education level throughout India. Most of people in Indian metropolis prefer to speak in English, or use English words frequently. Various studies have suggested that this trend is common among women, who tend to use more English words, and they pronounce words much better than that of men. They tend to learn both these traits, Language and Pronunciation much quicker than their male counterparts. This paper shall unravel the possible reason of this development. Is this in their subconscious mind that they pronounce words in original accent or Is it natural or easy for them to pronounce English the way it is pronounced.

Introduction: Conceptualizing language in Gender Discourse: The greatest advantage of being a Human being (*Homo sapiens*) has been the ability to articulate through a medium called language. Language has always been central force in shaping the power structure at different levels of human interaction. Each Dominant civilization has tried to force its language on dominated ones. In the modern times, when Nation States came into being, Language has been central to their formation. As England had successfully colonized the large parts of Asia and Africa, Its language by default became the language of Time and Its Traditions became the common sense of the age. In India, from 1813 the English East India Company set aside some money for education of the Indians in English. After the charter Act of 1833 English became the official language. In 1844 Lord Hardinge announced that English-educated Indians would be given preference for government appointments. Since then, there has been rise in English speaking, as second language among Indian people. Bernard Cohen, a famous Anthropologist, reveals this fact in his magnum opus *Colonialism and its forms of Knowledge* by arguing that “how use of language becomes an important tool of control and command for a colonizer”

There are various myths in popular circulation that suggest that English was the language of Elites. The recent trend in India has been different in the sense, that middle class people, particularly in metropolis have been attracted to speaking English frequently and fluently. Some have connected it to a different assumption, that women tend to speak or use more English words, and also have the tendency to pronounce them better than that of men. In Popular discourse, it is being established that women Prefer to speak English frequently and pronounce in a particular fashion consciously, keeping in view the

luxury (social prestige) attached to it. This view is further strengthened by Social Networking sites, and means of popular culture, particularly comedy shows on TV, which blatantly crack jokes at it, not remaining sensitive to the effects it might create for long term. This trend is more or less accepted as fact among a large junk of population. This trend is problematic in the sense; it takes gendered view of a particular phenomenon and establishes it in mainstream media, thus manufacturing consent around it.

Hence there is a great need to deconstruct and debunk this myth in academia, and provide a transition for its deconstruction in popular discourse. The language that is used for gender differences is loaded with political, professional and personal terminologies. Biological and Social differences also shape the distinction between genders and thus cannot be separated from the discourse. Scholar like Judith Butler writes in her book *Gender Trouble* that sex or gender is self-constructed through language. Thus according to her language becomes a medium; of what is regarded as feminine and masculine. There are points of both, similarity and difference in reference to communicative behavior of men and women. In some cases men's normal speech is similar to that of women's talking behavior and in some cases they differ variedly. In fact, Social and cultural environments do play an important role in giving meanings to these terms and expressions. This is best forwarded by, Simone de Beauvoir in her book, *The Second Sex*, where she argues that ‘women is not born as women, she is made woman’. Stretching this argument, it can be said that language carries meaning and forms categories like Man and Woman. There are marked differences between men and women, when it comes to communication style, pronunciation and vocabulary. Ann Weatherall, a

Psychologist says that the nineteenth-century contained an awareness of a relationship between language and women's social status due to women's movement and the publications of that time. (Weatherall, 2002, pp. 2)

In the field of language learning, there has been a long-standing idea that females are also more adept at languages than males, excelling in their native tongue and also foreign language study. But is there any truth behind this theory, or is it just academic folklore? According to the language journal *Porta Linguarum*, studies from Europe, East Asia, and Latin America have all concluded that female foreign language learners tend to use more varied study methods than their male counterparts. Female learners engage more skills (speaking, reading, etc) and elements of language (vocabulary, pronunciation, etc), than males, who tend to stick with only a handful of study methods.

An extensive new survey, released by the teaching company Education First, comes to another surprising conclusion: In most of the countries that were surveyed, women were better than men at learning English as a non-native language. In total, 70 countries were part of the analysis. The findings confirm other surveys, such as the results from international Test of English as a Foreign Language or TOEFL, in which women also outperformed men. "In several cases, the differences between women and men were astonishingly big," said Kate Bell, one of the report's authors. A close look at the report reveals that females outperforming males on the test could be a consequence of prolonged gender inequality.

Jennifer Coates research successfully found that the girls acquire linguistic skills at a faster rate than boys. She also said that, they acquire configurations, which differentiate them from boys. The differences, initially thought to result from innate biological differences, are actually developments of distinctions in the linguistic environment of girls and boys. In the socialization process, language plays an important role for a child. The process of learning to be male or female in our society means, in other words, to learn sex-appropriate language.

Taking different things into consideration, interpreting the gender differences is clearly an ambitious venture. Further investigation in the future could give some more indications of detailed explanation of the ways in which social roles and relationships between men and women contribute to differences in language use. As we learned during the analysis atop, the study of language caters an unambiguously "social" perspective on the study of gender differences. Understanding the main differences in communication style between human beings is obviously dependent on the maintenance of gender stereotypes. Communication differences

concerning gender reflect a complex combination of social goals, situational demands, and socialization.

Furthermore, the study found that girls have significantly greater activation in linguistic areas of the brain. The pattern of activation differences and the relationship of activation with performance accuracy and reading skill suggest that these differences underlie childhood sex differences in language performance. Girls make language judgments based on linguistic content by accessing a common language network regardless of the sensory input, whereas boys rely on a modality-specific network. Although such differences reflect early differences in processing language, evidence does not currently suggest that differences in brain-behavior correlations persist into adulthood. Instead, such differences may disappear as the development of sensory processing in boys catches up to girls, so that by adulthood language processing in both sexes relies on the efficiency of the brain's linguistic network. This possibility warrants further study. Nonetheless, by characterizing the nature of sex differences in processing language during a period in which reading acquisition occurs, our findings represent an important step toward identifying the developmental basis for sex differences in language performance. (Burman (2008) pp. 1359, 1360)

Differences in girls' and boys' language are directly related to girl's oppression, when looking at the differences in the gender roles and identities of women and men and the hierarchical nature of gender relations and the dominance of men. "Language is one of the means by which individuals locate themselves in social space." Completing, speech can be seen as an act of identity, because while speaking the individuals defines him- or herself as male or female.

Conclusion

Women are literary and men are mathematical", "Women have better communication skills than men", "Women are more gifted than men in language learning"... these often sighted statements may not surprise one, since they're things we often hear. And there are multiple preconceptions out there, perhaps stereotypes that involve the differences between men and women, intellectual differences being the most common.

Despite recent progress toward sexual equality, it's still a man's world in many ways. But numerous studies show that when it comes to language, girls start off with better skills than boys. Now, scientists studying a gene linked to the evolution of vocalizations and language have for the first time found clear sex differences in its activity in both rodents and humans, with the gene making more of its protein in girls. But some researchers caution against drawing too many conclusions about the

gene's role in human and animal communication from this study.

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