30 Discourse and Gender

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0 Introduction

The study of discourse and gender is an interdisciplinary endeavor undertaken by scholars in linguistics, anthropology, communications, social psychology, education, literature, and other disciplines. At its heart is a focus on, first, the linguistic resources individuals draw on to present themselves as gendered beings in relation to other aspects of the self within the constraints of their communities, more or less conforming to or resisting these constraints; and, second, the discursive construction of gender and its many components through words and images. Given the complexity of gender as a social phenomenon, the study of gender and discourse requires attention to cultural influences that favor gendered ways of speaking and of negotiating both connection and power; the fluidity of gender as a performance and the societal constraints on gender performances; and the multiple interrelations among gender, discourse, and social meaning.

In what follows we first discuss the early work that inaugurated and established the field of gender and language research. We then describe research that focuses on the talk – or text – of women and men, including developments in theorizing the relationship between gender and discourse. The next section presents recent themes and trends, including research on the intersectionality of race, class, sexuality, and gender, as well as gender diversity in discourse; the consideration of sexuality and other facets of identity in the study of gender and discourse; discursive differences within, as well as between, groups; and how normative identities and practices are supported or opposed. We conclude with research on computer-mediated discourse, wherein new forms of previously described patterns have been identified.

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1 Laying the Foundation: Early Gender and Language Research

The year 1975 was key in launching the field of language and gender. That year saw the publication of three books that proved pivotal: Robin Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place* (the first part of which had appeared in *Language and Society* two years earlier [1973a]), Mary Ritchie Key's *Male/Female Language*, and Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley's edited volume *Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance*. These pioneering works emerged during the second wave feminist movement of the 1970s,[1] as scholars began to question both the identification of male norms as human norms, and the biological determination of women's and men's behavior. (The rejection of the latter is reflected in the term typically used to characterize and castigate it, "essentialism.") A conceptual split was posited between biological "sex" and sociocultural constructs of "gender," although "gender" is now used conventionally for both. Early language and gender research focused on documenting empirical differences between women's and men's speech, especially in cross-sex interaction; describing women's speech in particular; and, for many, identifying the role of language in creating and maintaining social inequality between women and men.

The goal of uncovering the role of language in maintaining gender inequality is evident in the field's foundational text, Robin Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place*, one of the first to call attention to gender differences in ways of speaking. Lakoff describes her book as "an attempt to provide diagnostic evidence from language use for one type of inequity that has been claimed to exist in our society: that between the roles of men and women" (1975: 4). She posits a cycle that begins with the unequal role of women and men in society, resulting in differential gender socialization by which girls learn to use a "nonforceful style," thus conforming to social norms of womanhood. The use of "women's language," in turn, denies women access to power, thus reinforcing social inequality. Lakoff identified linguistic forms by which "women's language" weakens or mitigates the force of an utterance: "weaker" expletives ("oh, dear" versus "damn"); "trivializing" adjectives ("divine" versus "great"); tag questions used when expressing speakers' opinions ("The way prices are rising is horrendous, isn't it?"); rising intonation in declaratives (as seen in the second part of the sequence, "What's for dinner?" "Roast beef?"); and mitigated requests ("Would you please close the door?" versus "Close the door") (1975: 10–18). Women, she noted, are in a double bind: they cannot be both a good woman and a good person. If they speak "women's language," they are seen as weak and ineffective, but if they don't, they are seen as unfeminine and therefore unlikeable.

Lakoff's work launched the exploration of gender and discourse. In keeping with the introspective method typical of her field, theoretical linguistics, Lakoff based her insights on her own observations and intuition. Subsequent studies applied her framework to a range of data and either confirmed her observations or found exceptions in particular contexts. Leaper and Robnett (2011) performed a meta-analysis of 29 studies that examined, among other linguistic features, "four forms of tentative language" as described by Lakoff: expressions of uncertainty, including disclaimers ("I'm not sure if this is right, but ...") and qualifiers (*somewhat*); hedges, including "prefatory remarks" ("I guess") and modifiers ("kind of"); tag questions; and the intensifiers *very*, *so*, and *really* (130). The results revealed a "small" but "statistically significant" difference, indicating that women were "somewhat more likely than men to use tentative speech." Some methodological and contextual moderators increased this effect: observation length (longer versus shorter), student status (undergraduates versus adults), group size (groups versus dyads), and physical setting (research lab versus other settings).

The enduring relevance of Lakoff's work is demonstrated and explored in Bucholtz (2004), which consists of Lakoff's full text along with commentaries by major researchers in the field. These commentaries emphasize that Lakoff's account of "women's language" does not represent the way each individual woman speaks, nor did it purport to. Rather, it represents the norms by which women are expected to speak (and many do), or what Bucholtz and Hall (1995: 6) call "the precise hegemonic notions of gender-appropriate language use," which represents "the idealized language of middle-class European American women." Since features of "women's language" are not intrinsically linked with gender, individuals and groups may draw on these features as resources for specific purposes. For example, Hall (1995) demonstrates that phone-sex workers use features of "women's language" to construct the gendered identity required for economic gain in their occupation.

As Lakoff herself did, concurrent and subsequent research looked to language for reflections of unequal gender relations, illustrating the frequently reiterated observation that the personal is political. For example, Zimmerman and West's (1975) early findings that men interrupt women in conversation more than the reverse instigated numerous studies of interruption, which produced mixed results (e.g., Ahrens 1997; Beattie 1981; Esposito 1979; Greenwood 1996; West 1984; see James and Clarke 1993 for a survey of studies through the 1980s). Fishman (1983) examined naturally occurring conversations tape-recorded by three heterosexual couples in their homes, and found that the women performed more of the conversational "support work" required to sustain conversational interaction: they produced more listening cues (*mhm, uhuh*); asked more questions; used *you know* and attention-getting beginnings ("This is interesting") more frequently to encourage a response; and actively pursued topics raised by the men. In contrast, men were more likely to not respond to turns and topics initiated by the women, and to make more declarative statements. Fishman argues that women's supportive role in private conversations reflects and reproduces sex-based hierarchies of power within the public sphere.

2 Gender Differences as Discursive Strategies

The early focus on women's speech, sex discrimination through language, and asymmetrical power relations was maintained in two influential edited volumes: McConnell-Ginet, Borker, and Furman's *Women and Language in Literature and Society* (1980) and Thorne, Kramarae, and Henley's *Language, Gender and Society* (1983). However, several chapters in these volumes represent another major strand of research in discourse and gender, influenced by anthropological linguist John Gumperz and sociologist Erving Goffman.

Ethnographic work influenced by Goffman explores gender and discourse as a component of social interaction. Drawing on Goffman's (1967) concept of face (the individual's public "image of self," which consists of "approved social attributes" that must be continually maintained and protected [5]) and Lakoff's (1973b) theory of politeness, Brown (1980, 1990) examined politeness phenomena in a Mayan community. While finding that Tenejapan women used strategies that were qualitatively more polite than those used by men, Brown (1980) nonetheless questions the claim that women are more polite because they are "culturally relegated to a secondary status relative to men" (112). Rather, she suggests: "What is missing from accounts of women's speech is an account of the choices being made and the reasons for the choices" (113). For example, women tended to use irony and rhetorical questions in place of direct criticism ("Just why would you know how to sew?" implying "Of course you wouldn't"), which both deemphasized negative messages and emphasized ingroup solidarity (125). They used more speech particles not only to weaken, but also to strengthen, utterances. In addition (much as Lakoff originally observed), although both women and men used hedging particles in cases of genuine doubt, only women used them to hedge the expression of their own feelings ("I just really am sad then because of it, perhaps") (126). In contrast, Brown claimed, the men's communicative style was characterized by a lack of attention to face, and the presence of such features as sex-related joking and a "preaching/declaiming style" (129). She explains, moreover, that women's and men's linguistic choices are "communicative strategies"; that is, humans are "rational actors" who choose linguistic options to achieve certain socially motivated ends in particular circumstances (113). As McConnell-Ginet (1988: 85) observes, Brown's contribution was crucial because it overtly shifted the framework "from a system one acquires ... to a set of strategies one develops to manage social interactions."

Goffman's influence is also seen in the pioneering ethnographic work of Goodwin (1978, 1980, 1990), based on fieldwork among African American children in a Philadelphia neighborhood. Goodwin found that girls and boys in same-sex play groups created different social organizations through the directive–response sequences they used while coordinating task activities: the boys created hierarchical structures, whereas the girls created more apparently egalitarian structures. For example, the boys negotiated status by giving and resisting direct directives ("I want the pliers!") (Goodwin 1990: 103), whereas the girls constructed joint activities by phrasing directives as suggestions rather than commands ("Let's go around Subs and Suds") (1990: 110). Importantly, she also found that whereas girls at same-sex play typically phrased directives as suggestions starting with "Let's," they also used "bald directives," like those commonly used by boys, in particular contexts, such as when another child, often a boy, had violated the rules of play ("Don't paint that table" [119]) or when taking the role of mother addressing a child while playing house. Goodwin thereby emphasizes that gender-related variations in language use are context-sensitive and multifaceted.

Maltz and Borker (1982), in a volume edited by Gumperz, surveyed research on gendered patterns of language use, prominently including Goodwin's, and concluded that difficulties in cross-sex communication could be understood within the framework Gumperz (1982) developed for understanding cross-cultural communication. In this framework, negative outcomes (including not only apparent conflict but also misperceptions of speakers' abilities and intentions) stem from differences in women's and men's habits and assumptions about how to participate in conversation. For example, in considering the finding that women tend to use more minimal responses (*mhm, uhuh, yeah*) than men, Maltz and Borker suggest that women tend to use these responses to indicate "I'm listening," whereas men tend to use them to indicate "I agree." The reason, then, that women tend to use more of these utterances is that they are listening more often than men are agreeing. Maltz and Borker suggest that women and men acquire such different conversational habits during childhood and adolescence as they play in same-sex groups.

3 Analyzing and Theorizing Gender and Discourse

The publication of Deborah Tannen's *You Just Don't Understand* in 1990 can be seen as ushering in the next phase of discourse and gender research, based on the attention this book received both within and outside the field. During the 1990s and beyond, it served (as Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place* had before) as the point of departure for numerous studies, both as a touchstone for developing further research and as a *bête noir* against which to define arguments. As with Lakoff, it continues to inspire and be applied in current research. Written for a general rather than an academic audience, this book combined a range of scholarly work with everyday conversational examples to support and expand Maltz and Borker's (1982) claim that conversations between women and men could be understood, metaphorically, as cross-cultural communication. (Both before and after 1990, Tannen published scholarly essays on the topic, a number of which are collected in her 1996 book *Gender and Discourse*; however, it is *You Just Don't Understand* that is most often cited and responded to.)

Combining Gumperz's cross-cultural perspective (which later came to be known as Interactional Sociolinguistics), Lakoff's framework of gender-related communicative style and politeness, and her own prior work on conversational style, Tannen posited that gender-related patterns of discourse form a coherent web motivated by women's and men's approaches to social relationships. She concluded that linguistic strategies that have been found to characterize women's and men's speech could be understood as serving interactional goals: whereas all speakers continually negotiate relative connection (how close or distant are they, or do they want to be) as well as status (who's up, who's down), conversational rituals learned by girls and maintained by women tend to focus on the connection dimension, while rituals learned by boys and maintained by men tend to focus on the status dimension. Citing prior research, including Goodwin's, on girls' and boys' socialization, Tannen noted that girls and women are often sensitive to being left out or pushed away, whereas boys and men are often sensitive to being put down or pushed around. Conversational rituals associated with each gender, then, tend to serve those sensitivities.

Communicative strategies associated with women, accordingly, are often based on symmetry. For example, Tannen (1990) describes a conversational ritual common among women, "displaying similarities and matching experiences" (77), which may take the form of "troubles talk." Supporting this finding, Coates (1996, 2013a: 43) notes that "reciprocal self-disclosure" characterizes talk between women friends. This mirroring is realized linguistically through the repetition of syntactic patterns and key words and phrases, and also frequently involves matching troubles. Tannen notes that bonding through talk about troubles is a common activity for women throughout the world. The contrast is not that boys and men don't seek bonding but rather that they often accomplish it in different ways. For example, Tannen (1990, 1994, 1996b, 1998) shows that many conversational rituals common among men are based on ritual opposition or "agonism." Thus boys and men may show affection by teasing or playfully insulting each other, and may explore ideas by "playing devil's advocate," that is, by offering challenges, counter-challenges, and vigorous debate. Just as troubles talk appears among women cross-culturally, men in disparate parts of the world engage in a "war of words," in which they "vie with one another to devise clever insults, topping each other both in the intensity of the insult and the skill of the insulter" (Tannen 1998: 194). Tannen stresses that it is the use of *ritualized* opposition, or agonism, that is associated with boys and men; thus, little boys frequently play-fight as a favored game. Though little girls rarely fight for fun, girls and women certainly fight in the literal sense; they fight when they mean it (197).

During the 1990s, many scholars routinely classified research into two categories: a "power" or "dominance" approach which focused on social inequality as the source of gendered patterns of language use and a "cultural" or "difference" approach which focused on sex-separate socialization as the source of differences. This characterization of research, initially proposed by Henley and Kramarae (1991), was, to a great extent, disciplinary: the research they labeled as "dominance," including their own, stemmed from the fields of communication and sociology, whereas the research they labeled as "difference," predominantly that of Maltz and Borker (1982) and Tannen (1990), stemmed from anthropology (in the case of Maltz and Borker) or linguistics (in the case of Tannen). The distinction was used primarily to fault the "difference" approach for, purportedly, not incorporating into analysis, or even denying, the societal subjugation of women. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013: 50) argue for a balanced approach, because "[e]ach of these emphases points to important aspects of gender practice" so that "no single approach can tell the entire story, and a focus on one approach will miss important things, and thus distort the overall picture. A focus on difference … tends to dislodge dominance and structures of male privilege. A focus on dominance, on the other hand, tends to downplay the importance of difference in experience and beliefs."

Tannen and other linguists have argued that the difference-dominance distinction is fundamentally spurious, because the two dynamics are inextricably intertwined. They point out, moreover, that research relegated to the "difference" camp grows out of Interactional Sociolinguistics, a theoretical framework founded on the assumption that social relations such as dominance and subordination are in part constructed and reinforced in interaction. Indeed, a concern with social inequality and injustice motivates and drives Gumperz's (1982) foundational work. As early studies by Brown (1980) and Goodwin (1980) demonstrate, the meanings or functions of linguistic features depend on their immediate context of use. Interpretations about dominance and solidarity relations are context-specific as well.

In clarifying and complexifying the ways that gender patterns dovetail with the universal human goals of balancing the simultaneous yet often conflicting needs to negotiate both status (including dominance) and connection, Tannen (1996b) posits a grid in which a horizontal axis runs between the poles of connection and distance while a vertical axis runs between the poles of hierarchy and equality. She suggests that all utterances fall somewhere on the grid. Furthermore, she stresses, individual utterances are often ambiguous: they may create either connection or hierarchy. They also are often polysemous: they may create both at once. Tannen (1989, 1993) uses interruption as a paradigm case of ambiguity and polysemy. Beginning to speak when another holds the floor may seem to be (and has been taken by researchers to be) a self-evident display of conversational dominance, usurping another's speaking rights. However, there are many for whom talking-along is not an interruption but rather what Tannen calls "cooperative overlap": a way of showing enthusiastic listenership and eager participation. That is precisely what she found in her early analysis of conversational style (Tannen 2005). If one participant expects cooperative overlapping, but the other expects one person to speak at a time, the latter may perceive an intended cooperative overlap as interruption and stop speaking. In this case, the interruption, and the impression of dominance, resulted from the ambiguity of speaking-along rather than from an attempt to dominate. A situation of polysemy obtains when those for whom speaking-along is a sign of eager participation may in fact interrupt and try to wrest the floor from a current speaker, confident that their conversational partner will do the same and grab it back. In that case, speaking-along "means" both dominance and solidarity. In other words, Tannen's approach doesn't deny the effect and impact of dominance through interruption, but it demonstrates that the effect of dominance may not always result from an intention to dominate, because the same linguistic features can serve either or both status (or dominance) and connection. (This perspective on interruption is reprised in a chapter of *You Just Don't Understand*.)

Elsewhere Tannen (2014) demonstrates that understanding women's and men's differing conversational rituals, growing out of their divergent conversational goals, can result in dominance in family interaction. Ochs and Taylor (1992) identify a ritual that typifies dinner-table conversation in many American families: individuals tell what happened to them during the day. The authors found that children's self-reported behavior was the most frequently judged by others. Fathers were the most frequent critics of others' behavior, and rarely had their own behavior criticized or judged. Mothers had their self-reported actions held up for judgment as often as they judged their children's. The result was a family power structure with fathers at the top, children at the bottom, and mothers in the middle. Tannen observes that mothers' self-reports of daily problems is a kind of troubles talk, typically intended to create solidarity, which men often misread as a request to offer advice. Seen this way, the resulting power imbalance might stem in part from the interaction of divergent gendered conversational rituals.

Tannen (1996b) further demonstrates the inextricability of difference and dominance in her analysis of workplace communication, where she demonstrates that language strategies used by those in positions of authority are not simply ways of exercising power but are ways of balancing the simultaneous but potentially conflicting needs for status and connection – ways she identifies, following Goffman (1977), as "sex-class" linked, that is, associated with the class of women and the class of men, where "class" derives from Bertrand Russell's notion of logical types. To illustrate, she compares two instances of small talk between status unequals. In one interaction, two men who are discussing a computer glitch negotiate status and connection through challenges; bonding against women; and alternating displays of helping, expertise, and independence (needing no help). The women's conversation occurred while the highest-status woman was telling a story to two lower ranking colleagues. When a female mail clerk entered, the speaker stopped her story and complimented the mail clerk on her blouse, and the others joined in. The complimenting ritual served as a resource for including the clerk and attending to her as a person, thus creating connection; however, it also reflected and reproduced relative status because it was the highest-status person who controlled the framing of the interaction, and the lowest-status person who became the focus of gaze. Thus, status was reflected and reinforced by the alignments the speakers created through talk – alignments that were associated with the speakers' respective sex classes: negotiating status and connection through challenges and mock insults was less available as a resource to the women, and doing so through the exchange of compliments on clothing and discussion of shopping and fashion was less available as a resource to the men.

A related theoretical perspective is provided by Ochs (1992), who argues that gender-related ways of speaking do not directly express gender but rather "index" gender by creating stances that are associated in a given culture with women or with men (in Goffman's [1977] terms, with the "class" of women and the "class" of men). In other words, the relationship between language and gender is indirect and indexically mediated: linguistic features directly communicate acts in certain contexts (e.g., the act of telling someone what to do) and simultaneously constitute stances (e.g., depending on how the directive is worded, uncertainty). The performance of these acts in ways that create stances associated with (i.e., indexing) sociocultural expectations and beliefs about gender thereby help constitute a speaker's gendered identity.

Individuals, moreover, will speak very differently given the stances occasioned by particular contexts. Thus Kendall (1999, forthcoming) observed, in an ethnographic analysis of a woman's self-recorded discourse at home and at work, that the woman issued directives differently in the two contexts. The directives she issued to subordinates in her role as manager at work tended to be indirect ("You might want to mention that to them, and see what they say about it"), but when she was talking to her 10-year-old daughter at home, her directives tended to be direct ("Shake this up"). Goodwin (2006) followed up her fieldwork among African American children in Philadelphia with a study of ethnically diverse girls' "games of stance, status and exclusion" (in the words of the book's subtitle), as video- and audio-taped in a southern California school playground. While in many ways reinforcing her earlier oft-cited findings that girls negotiate inclusion and exclusion (as distinguished from boys' negotiation of relative status), she also emphasizes their negotiation and exercise of status, as when they "challenge the boys' right to dominate the soccer field" or "assert their power over younger girls" (28).

These studies support the observation that links among talk, discursive practices, and social meanings are accomplished within "communities of practice," which Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992: 464) define as groupings of people who "come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor." They argue that linguistic practices and their social meanings emerge within these communities: "Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short, practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor." Expanding their earlier work, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2007) urge gender and discourse scholars to extend this focus by locating "communities of practice in relation to a world beyond – to other communities of practice, to social networks, to institutions (e.g., schools, churches, prisons), and to more global imagined communities (e.g., nations, women).

Consonant with these theoretical frameworks is a social constructivist paradigm that has prevailed in gender and language research. Scholars now generally agree that our conceptualization of gender, and the behaviors associated with it, result from sociohistorical processes, such that gendered identities are interactionally achieved. These processes have been called "displaying," "doing," or "performing" gender. Judith Butler's (1990, 1993, 2004) theory of performativity has been particularly influential. According to Butler (1993), individuals perform gender "through the repetition or citation of a prior, authoritative set of practices" (227). This perspective is reminiscent of Goffman's (1976) pioneering work showing that the gendered self is accomplished in print advertisements through the display of postures that both ritualize women's subordination and are conventionally associated with their gender, such as the "bashful knee bend," receiving help and instruction, and smiling more frequently and more expansively than men.

4 The Intersectionality of Identities: Race, Class, and Sexuality

Butler's (and Goffman's) performative paradigm is relevant to research on the intersectionality of identities, a perspective that stresses the interrelationship among race, class, sexuality, and gender. The concept of intersectionality stems from Crenshaw's (1989, 1991) work on anti-discrimination law. Crenshaw (1991) argues that "intersectional identities such as women of color" (1242) are necessary for understanding male violence against women because "the experiences of women of color are frequently the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism" (1243). In gender and language research, Morgan (2007) urges scholars to "address intersectionality, where race, class, sexuality and gender interrelate for some women and do not act as independent forms of oppression" (119). She argues that accounts of women's language based solely on the speech of middle-class white women establish a normative basis against which black and working-class women's speech is judged anomalous, with resultant negative stereotypes. Morgan cites early work by Mitchell-Kernan (1971), who demonstrated that African American women often participate in conversational signifying (ritual insults), loud-talking, marking, and other linguistic practices previously attributed to men (Abrahams 1962; Kochman 1969). However, black women confront ideologies not only of race but also of gender. The black women's "[s]ignifying and loud talking styles simply didn't stand a chance as an example of the good woman" (125). In other words, they find themselves in a position similar to Lakoff's double bind: a black woman cannot be both a "good black person" and a "good woman."

Mendoza-Denton (2008) examines the daily lives of young Latinas in the Norteña and Sureña (North/South) youth gangs in California. She describes how their "innovative use of speech, bodily practices, and symbolic exchanges" simultaneously signal their "gang affiliations and ideologies" and "their connections to larger social processes of nationalism, racial/ethnic consciousness, and gender identity" (294). One of their communicative practices is "clowning": ritualized routines involving playful insults, outrageous statements, and one-upmanship (69), all verbal strategies associated in the literature with boys and men. Mendoza-Denton describes "an instance of cross-gender and cross-subcultural misrecognition" involving clowning: she and some gang girls attended a film festival on a college campus. As they were heading out, they picked up a male college student who needed a ride. The girls entertained him with a clowning session, and were dismayed that he bolted from the car as soon as they stopped. When Mendoza-Denton told the girls, "You guys scared him," they were genuinely surprised. She surmises that the hapless young man perceived the incident as "potty-mouths threatening an unsuspecting stranger who had never had female sexual joking jabbed in his direction" (72). Mendoza-Denton concludes that "clowning, bragging, and braggadocio," being dependent on shared frames, are "precisely the kinds of speech routines that might lead to instances of misrecognition and stereotyping" – and may even be a source of some high-school teachers' complaints about "gang-related threats" (73).

Race and ethnicity are co-constructed in discourse with other aspects of social identities such as class, gender, and/or sexuality (e.g., Bucholtz 1999; Gaudio 2001; Goodwin and Alim 2010; Jacobs-Huey 2006; Mendoza-Denton 2008). In some communities, ideologies of race and gender link blackness with masculinity (Bucholtz 1999) and whiteness with femininity (Chun 2011). In her ethnography of a multi-ethnic high school, Chun finds that the students label people and practices in racial terms that are often linked with gender and class. For example, they characterize some female students by using the local image of a "prep girl," an embodiment of "middle-class white hyper-femininity" (413), which the students discursively construct through "white girl stylization" consisting of high falsetto and final vowel lengthening ("oh my go::sh") [408]); high falsetto and rising intonation ("Miss Smith? Okay? Okay we were reading Romeo and Juliet?" [407]); and "dramatically stylized performances" of the phrase, "oh my *god* every*body*." Prep girls are also represented as engaging in "narcissistic discourse about their bodies (hair, nails, breasts)" and "'talking shit' about others" (413).

Other strands of research linking gender and race consider conversational patterns in specific contexts. For example, Rahman (2011) describes how four African American female comedians discursively construct performance identities that will alleviate harassment from male audience members in mixed-gender African American audiences. The female comedians employ solidarity-based features and practices associated with language among close female friends, including stances of confidence sharing and "friend-as-advisor" (323); gendered terms used to directly address female audience members; and African American forms of indirectness as described by Green (2002), Jacobs-Huey (2006), and Morgan (1998, 2002). For example, Adele Givens opens her act by ignoring the men and complimenting the women, referring to them as "queens" and addressing them as "ladies": "I am so glad y'all decided to join the Queens of Comedy tonight! So glad to see so many queens in the house with me tonight! Now, ladies, …" (Rahman 2011: 323). In this way, the comedians establish their identities as both African American and female, appeal to the female audience members, and discourage potential negative reactions from men by casting them "in the role of onlookers at an event for women" (333).

Also based, in part, on poststructuralist approaches, many analyses of gender and discourse have focused on the interrelation between gender and sexuality. Included here are studies demonstrating the interactional achievement of multiple femininities and masculinities, as well as the construction of both same-sex and heterosexual sexualities, particularly in relation to normative and non-normative groups and practices.

Beginning in the 1940s, the earliest work on language and sexual orientation focused on words and pronouns used by gay, lesbian, and transgendered groups (Cameron and Kulick 2003; Kulick 2000; Leap 1995, this volume). In *Word's Out: Gay Men's English*, Leap (1996) considered how gay men employ linguistic practices in conversational interaction, narratives, and text. In 1997, Queer Theory was introduced into the study of gender and discourse with Livia and Hall's *Queerly Phrased: Language, Gender, and Sexuality*. "Queer Theory" represents various approaches that are driven by a critical focus on heteronormativity, that is, "the discursive construction of certain forms of heterosexuality as natural, normal or preferable" (Motschenbacher and Stegu 2013: 520). In conjunction with Queer Theory, the study of gender and sexuality was explicitly launched in 2003 with Cameron and Kulick's *Language and Sexuality*, and reached another landmark with the 2012 inaugural issue of the *Journal of Language and Sexuality*. The study of sexuality for this journal and other scholarship is not limited to, though it includes, sexual orientation or same-sex practices. Rather, sexuality includes "everything that arguably makes sexuality sexuality: namely fantasy, repression, pleasure, fear and the unconscious" (Cameron and Kulick 2003: 10).

Gender theorists have increasingly incorporated sexuality into discussions of gender and discourse, recognizing that gender and sexuality are intertwined in complex ways. Individuals' gender identities encompass not only biological sex (e.g., female, male) but also sexual identity (e.g., transgendered, gay, straight, bisexual); masculinity and femininity in self-presentation; and desire in terms of attraction, and who and what one desires. There are numerous interrelations among these components of identity, which produce a plethora of individual gendered identities, particularly when incorporating other social facets, such as class, age, ethnicity, and nation. The components of gender and sexual identities, and their interrelations, vary culturally and historically, and are based on particular perspectives and beliefs, such as whether same-sex desire is possible; for example, if a biologically female individual desires other females, is this same-sex desire or is the desiring subject actually a male in a female body?

Although individuals enact agency in their discursive creations of identities, these performances are constrained. As Butler put it, gender is accomplished within a "rigid regulatory frame" that limits and constrains this construction (1993: 33). This regulation "operates as a condition of cultural intelligibility for any person" (Butler 2004: 52) by defining categories (such as male and female) and delimiting what is deemed "normal" through a "process of normalization" (55). Social categories entail both gender and sexuality, and are socially constructed and culturally relative, changing over time. Within cultures, shifts in labeling reflect and (re)produce sociocultural changes in ideologies or beliefs; for example, "homosexual" appeared as a pathology in the medical domain, but was replaced by "gay" as an ingroup term in the early twentieth century (Cameron and Kulick 2003). Individuals construct their gendered selves in relation to the categories that are culturally available to them. The *hijras* of India (Hall and O'Donovan 1996), *travesti* of Brazil (Kulick 1998), and *kathoey* of Thailand (Totman 2004) do not accept the primarily Western categories and labels for cross-sex versus same-sex relations. In fact, they do not consider their sexual partners to be "homosexual" in a Western sense.

Gender and sexual identities are achieved locally in interaction. Hall (2011) examines a meeting of a Hindi- and English-speaking support group in New Delhi, India, intended for "women who are attracted to women" (385). In these interactions, two identities emerge: "lesbians" and "boys." The lesbians orient themselves to a model in which same-sex desire is viable; the boys are male-identified women who orient to the "other-sex model of eroticism" in which men desire women and women desire men. Although all participants in the meetings are middle class, these orientations are associated with the West and with rural India, respectively. The Indian "boys" do not consider themselves to be women or a third gender. Instead, they plan to eventually convert their female bodies to male bodies through sexual reassignment surgery, thus preserving the ideology that only men (not women) desire women. In the group meetings Hall considers, the lesbians attempt to convince the boys to accept same-sex desire and, thus, avoid the necessity of transforming their bodies through sexual reassignment surgery. The "boys" discursively construct their masculine-based subjectivity by using grammatically masculine self-reference (395) and by assuming an adversarial stance that is "indexical of masculinity more generally" (397). They create this oppositional stance by using impolite language associated with the lower-class and "authentic Indianness"; displaying "stereotypically masculine emotions, such as anger" (391); engaging in "verbal oneupmanship" (397); and by using Hindi, which, in this context, is "ideologically associated with male speakers." Thus Hall demonstrates that participants linguistically perform gender in relation to other social categories and that these performances depend upon class-based sexualities.

5 Identity and Discourses of Gender

Studies of the interrelationship of gender and sexuality reveal that heterosexualities as well as same-sex sexualities are discursively constructed (as individuals construct masculinity as well as femininity). Much of the work on masculinity considers how individuals construct normative and non-normative masculinities. Coates (2013b) demonstrates that speakers discursively produce "a range of heterosexualities" in everyday talk (538). Furthermore, using Cameron and Kulick's (2006: 165) concept of the "heteronormative hierarchy," Coates (2013b) demonstrates that the conversational participants she discusses do not construct all forms of heterosexuality as equal: "Heterosexual relationships which are not monogamous, which do not produce children (and therefore do not establish the normative nuclear family) and which do not conform to conventional gender roles are less favoured" (542).

Individuals not only produce heterosexualities in interaction but also create gendered identities by positioning themselves within specific discourses of heterosexuality. In a study of the naturally occurring, self-recorded interactions of two separate heterosexual couples, Kendall (2007) demonstrates that the two women in these couples negotiate the forms and meanings of their parental and work-related identities through the positions they discursively take up themselves and make available to their husbands within traditional and feminist discourses of work and family. Both couples were committed to sharing child-rearing and work responsibilities equally. One couple ensured this by arranging their work schedules so that each enjoyed one full day every week as primary caregiver. Yet, in their discourse, the women position their husbands as breadwinners in the work sphere and themselves as primary caregivers in the domestic sphere. For example, when talking with a friend, one of the women refers to her employment as optional, contingent on the cost of daycare, revealing her assumption that the husband's salary, which is not optional, supports the family. The mother in the other couple (the one wherein each works four days in order to have a fifth day as primary caretaker) claims the position of main parent by frequently questioning her husband's parenting. In one instance, for example, she tells their two-year-old daughter to take out of her mouth a cough drop that the father had given her. The mother expresses disapproval by saying, "Yuck!" When the child asks, "Whas' that?," her mother tells her, "It's a cough drop. You don't want that anyway." The father then defends his action by saying that the child wanted the cough drop. The mother heaves a disapproving sigh but says no more. The father again defends himself by saying, "It CAN'T hurt her," to which the mother responds, "Well, it can choke her." In these and many other examples, Kendall shows that whereas their ideologies support parental equality, the women's discourse supports traditional gendered roles.

Just as Kendall's and others' studies of women's discourse have yielded an increasingly nuanced understanding of women's lives and feminine identities, Kiesling's (e.g., 2005, 2011) body of work on the discourse of members of an American men's college fraternity demonstrates how masculinities, too, are multifaceted, and are constructed in discourse. Kiesling tape-recorded individual interviews with, and group interaction among, fraternity members in contexts ranging from formal fraternity meetings to casual drinking at a bar. Citing earlier findings about the centrality of power to men's talk, Kiesling (1997) examines the discourse of a formal fraternity election meeting to develop a more nuanced analysis of power in interaction. When arguing for their preferred candidates, each fraternity member has access to different discursive resources (e.g., joking) dependent, in part, on their history within the fraternity (e.g., referring to past events). Through these discursive strategies and other linguistic features of talk (e.g., mitigating opinions rather than stating them as fact in imperative statements), they draw upon different processes of power: physical, economic, knowledge, structural, nurturant, and demeanor.

In later work, Kiesling and others scholars examine how masculinity itself is constructed, drawing from the work of sociologist R. W. Connell (2005) who argues that there are multiple, competing masculinities, some preferred over others, including hegemonic and subordinated masculinities. In an analysis of the magazine *Men's Health*, Boni (2002) explains how hegemonic masculinities are constructed through text and images as heteronormative: real men desire women and are thus not feminine and not gay. Kiesling (2004) shows that the fraternity members in his study use the word "dude" to create a stance of "cool solidarity," which functions to balance two potentially contradictory "discourses of modern American masculinity" (282): a discourse of masculine solidarity, referring to the "close social bonds between men" that are encouraged between fraternity members; and the discourse of heterosexism, the need to not be "perceived as gay by other men" (283). The stance of "cool solidarity" combines both the intimacy and distance of the solidarity dimension, indexing "young Anglo masculinity"; thus, "dude" indirectly indexes masculinity through this stance (286).

Notions of face and politeness continue to figure prominently in research on gender and discourse. Here, too, the range of discursive strategies analyzed has broadened to include not only mitigated language and indirectness but also what has come to be referred to as "impoliteness." (Note that this term is now used to refer to discursive practices that would be called "impolite" in common parlance, whereas Lakoff's [1973a, 1973b, 1975] and Brown and Levinson's [1987] use of the term "politeness" is not really about conventional notions of etiquette but rather refers to ways of serving social goals in interaction.) Scholarship on linguistic politeness and face has been particularly revealing in studies of gender and discourse in the workplace (e.g., Angouri 2011; Baxter 2010, 2014; Mullany 2006; Saito 2013; Schnurr and Mak 2011). Janet Holmes and her colleagues draw upon politeness to provide a complex portrayal of workplace discourse in New Zealand (Holmes 2005, 2006, this volume; Holmes and Marra 2011; Holmes and Stubbe 2003; Marra, Schnurr, and Holmes 2006). In the Japanese workplace, Takano (2005) finds that female leaders shift their speech styles between more honorific styles and direct styles (i.e., the plain form) in confrontational situations, whereas their male counterparts consistently employ direct styles. As part of a larger project on British business leaders, Baxter (2010) finds that women leaders use "a double-voiced discourse" in male-dominated corporations to simultaneously promote their own agendas and "pay attention to other colleagues' points of view" in order to regulate how these others perceive them (112). They assume a warm manner; use humor, and allow themselves to be the objects of humor; and otherwise attend to the face needs of subordinates by using "mitigated commands, forms of politeness, and indirect engagement" (112). In contrast with male-dominated corporations, "Gender-Multiple corporations" promote double-voiced discourse in training future leaders as a means for "self-reflexivity," enabling leaders to "shift constantly between action and reflection to produce a multi-faceted leadership style" (115).

6 Language and Gender Online

We conclude this survey of research on gender and discourse by turning to the burgeoning field of language use online. Many of the themes addressed in research focusing on women's and men's spoken discourse have been identified in computer-mediated discourse. Other patterns of gender and discourse are emerging in this context as well.

Scholars in the field of language and gender were among the first to examine Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC). Susan Herring was a pioneer in this area and, together with her students and colleagues, has continued to be the major researcher in it (see Herring and Androutsopoulos, this volume). In an overview of CMC research published between 1989 and 2013, Herring and Stoerger (2014) demonstrate that widespread predictions that gender would be invisible online, and therefore gender-related disparities and inequalities would disappear, were not borne out. Summarizing the findings of early research on discussion lists and newsgroups which considered the quantity of talk and the stances that males and females take up in relation to their interlocutors, they note that women tended to post shorter messages and were more likely to "qualify and justify their assertions, apologize, express appreciation, support others, and in general, adopt an 'aligned' stance toward their interlocutors" (570). In contrast, men tended to post relatively longer messages, were more likely to "begin and close discussions in mixed-sex groups, assert opinions strongly as 'facts', challenge others, use crude language (including insults and profanity), and in general adopt an adversarial stance toward their interlocutors" (570). These patterns help explain Thomson and Murachver's (2001) finding that subjects could identify the gender of an email's author based on a combination of features.

The prediction – indeed, the hope – that CMC would be gender-neutral grew out of the assumption that it would be anonymous. The trend, however, has been in the opposite direction. Zhao, Grasmuck, and Martin (2008: 1818) note a move from anonymity to "nonymity" (i.e., the opposite of "anonymous") with the increase in popularity of social network sites on which users post photos and personal information. Moreover, recent research has continued to document that online discourse tends to replicate gender-related patterns that had previously been observed in spoken interaction, as well as the important insight that gender-related patterns vary by context. It is essential, therefore, to pay attention to the type and purpose of online discourse in order to get an accurate understanding of the relationship between gender and online discourse.

For example, the early question of who talks more, women or men, was answered differently depending on whether one examined what Tannen (1990) dubbed private or public speaking: women were found to talk more at home but less at meetings. Just so, Herring and Stoerger report that researchers looking at online discourse have observed that gender differences in participation vary by online context: women outnumber and are more active than men on social networking sites such as Facebook, the microblogging site Twitter, the consumer review site Yelp, and the online pinboard Pinterest, while men participate more frequently on music-sharing sites, the professional social networking site LinkedIn, and the social news website, Reddit. Similarly, Lam *et al.* (2011) found that women constitute only a tiny fraction of contributors to Wikipedia. Furthermore, just as studies of spoken conversation found that men's contributions at meetings are more often taken up by the group, Kelly (2012) found that men's tweets are retweeted more often than women's, especially by men, even though women post more on Twitter, and Herring *et al.* (2004) found that men's blogs are linked to and reported on in the mass media more often than women's blogs. This is not to say that men's online discourse always receives more attention; women may receive more attention, but, unfortunately, of a less desirable kind: Harding (2007) observes that women receive proportionately more online harassment, while Marwick (2013) notes that they are subjected to more threatening language when they speak up on social media sites.

Attention to all aspects of context is necessary not only to understand levels and types of participation but for analyses of online discourse itself. Thelwall, Wilkinson, and Uppal (2010), for example, found that females are more likely to give and receive comments with positive emotions on MySpace, but they found no gender differences in giving or receiving comments with negative emotions. Fullwood, Morris, and Evans (2011), examining the discourse of 40 male and 40 female MySpace users in the UK, found that women and men used gender-identified language features in their forum comments, where social interactions take place, but not in the "about me" sections, which they characterize as a "social CV" (121). The features they found to be used more often by women in forum comments were emoticons and multiple-punctuation (e.g., *wow!!!*), while men were more likely to use swear words and references to taboo subjects, such as sexual acts, as well as slang, defined as "any form of colloquial language considered distinct from standard language" (e.g., *innit*, *coz*).

A study of gendered patterns in the discourse of online avatars interestingly parallels key studies of spoken interaction in the observation that females use styles of speech associated with males in particular contexts. Much like the previously cited findings by Goodwin of girls at play, and by Kendall of a mother at work and at home, Palomares and Lee (2010) found that women's discourse on graphical websites varied by context and the accordingly appropriate stances: women were more apologetic and tentative when using a female avatar but not when using a male avatar. The online context thus provides support for the insight that women and men tend to speak in gender-associated ways not because of their biological sex but to express stances associated with culturally recognizable roles.

Extending her research on the language of everyday conversation to the exchange of digital messages through texting and such synchronous platforms as IM (Instant Messaging) and gChat, Tannen (2012) describes digital analogues to gendered patterns of conversational style. Her examples illustrate women's use of emphatic punctuation, capitalization, and repetition of words, letters, or punctuation marks, which are parallel to their use of amplitude, intonation, and elongation of sounds to create emphasis and emotional valence in speaking, with parallel examples of miscommunication in cross-gender interaction. For example, a young woman who proposes, over IM, to visit her brother at college, finds his response ("Okay cool." "Dinner sounds good.") unenthusiastic, and grumbles "Good thing you sound excited …" though she ultimately believes his insistence "Sorry, sorry, I am. I am." Tannen contrasts this misunderstanding with a more successful exchange between two women: a college student proposed dinner to a friend and former dorm-mate by texting, "Hey so I haven't seen you the ENTIRE week and I reeeally miss you!" Her friend's response began, "I miss you too!!!!!!!!" The original texter explained that she didn't miss her friend all that much; she simply knew that because capitalization, exclamation marks, and repetition of letters and punctuation were expected, omitting them would give the impression of lack of enthusiasm, as happened with the brother in the prior example.

Studies of gender and discourse online are sure to proliferate as new platforms for digital interaction emerge, and as use of these devices and platforms become ever more pervasive in everyday interaction. Given the findings of research on computer-mediated discourse thus far, it seems safe to predict that the patterns observed will instantiate reiterations and adaptations of patterns documented for spoken interaction, even as new theoretical frameworks and perspectives are sure to emerge.

7 Conclusion

Research on language and gender has increasingly become research on gender and discourse. A movement toward the study of language within specific situated activities reflects the importance of culturally defined meanings both of linguistic strategies and of gender. It acknowledges the agency of individuals in creating gendered identities, including the options of resisting and transgressing sociocultural norms for linguistic behavior. But it also acknowledges the sociocultural constraints within which individuals make their linguistic choices, and the impact of those constraints, whether they are adhered to or departed from. In a sense, the field of gender and discourse has thus come full circle, returning to its roots in a Goffman-influenced constructivist framework as seen in the groundbreaking work of Brown, Goodwin, Lakoff, and Goffman himself.

NOTES

1 Feminist writers currently recognize three waves of feminism: a first wave defined by the suffragist movement; a second wave for women's empowerment from the 1960s through the 1980s; and a third wave focused on diversity and linked with postmodernism beginning in the 1990s.

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