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HOW AND WHY ARE WOMEN MORE POLITE: SOME EVIDENCE FROM A MAYAN COMMUNITY

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INTRODUCTION

Two separate lines of linguistic inquiry in recent years have yielded results which suggest that women are "more polite" than men. On the one hand we have the observations by sociolinguists like William Labov and Peter Trudgill,[1] which claim that women typically "hypercorrect," that (in terms of particular phonological variables sensitive to social status and level of formality) women speak more formally, using a higher proportion of standard ("prestige") forms than men do in comparable situations.* The explanation Trudgill proffers for this phenomenon is that, since women tend to gain their status through how they *appear* (rather than through what they *do*–job or income), they try to secure their social status (and social connotations of refinement and sophistication) through signals of status in their speech.[2] By contrast, the tendency of men to actually *lower* the status level of their speech is seen as evidence that men have

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*The examples originally observed for New York English involved phonological variables like whether or not one pronounces the *r* in words like *car*. The forms with the *r* pronounced differ from the *r*-less ("nonstandard") forms in social prestige–only the former is assumed by speakers to be "prestigious." The claim, then, boils down to this: women pronounce their words in accordance with the standard or "correct" forms more often than men do. This tendency for women to use more standard forms has by now been found repeatedly in research carried out in this paradigm, occurring in naturalistic settings as well as in the interview situations where it was originally observed [Trudgill, p.c.].

a "covert norm" of prestige that runs contrary to that assigning prestige to the standard forms.

To this claim that women generally speak in a more formal style than men, we may add an apparently related claim to be found in the work of Robin Lakoff. In *Language and Woman's Place*, Lakoff describes traits which she suggests are characteristic of "women's language" and which crosscut the grammar, occurring in the lexicon, in syntax, in phonology and prosodics; they build up to a "style" in which women express themselves hesitantly, tentatively, weakly, trivializingly, "politely." Asking why women speak in this style, Lakoff answers in terms of a psychological analysis of the nature of women's secondary status, that is, her sense of inferiority: women feel unsure of themselves (and hence are thus treated by others) because they have been taught to express themselves in "women's language," which abounds in markers of uncertainty.[3] This insecurity, it could be further argued, accounts as well for their propensity to use more standard forms in speaking.

Now intuitively it seems reasonable to predict that women in general will speak more formally and more politely, since women are culturally relegated to a secondary status relative to men and since a higher level of politeness is expected from inferiors to superiors. We might even predict that the internalization of inferior status would lead to a conventionalization of more polite forms in women's speech so that their speech would be more polite than men's even when addressed to equals or to inferiors. If we turn from English to Japanese, a language spoken in a culture where women's subordinate status is more overtly institutionalized, we do indeed find evidence that women are more polite in many situations.[4]

However, in opposition to such a sweeping generalization we find that in the Malagasy village studied by Elinor Keenan, women are considered to be *less* polite than men—that in fact women regularly and habitually violate the norms that both men and women say should govern speaking: norms favouring non-confrontation and indirectness in speech.[5] There is no suggestion that women are higher status than men in this Malagasy community; on the contrary, the way in which men obey the norms is seen by members of the society as support for and evidence of their superiority to women.

So the relationship between the status of women and the politeness or formality of their speech is by no means as simple and straightforward as has been assumed. The bulk of recent research on langauge and sex has focused on documenting differences between the speech of men and women in some respect for some sample, usually accompanied by the suggestion that differences in language usage are attributable to social differences in the position of women and men in the society. What is notably lacking, however, is a way of analyzing language usage so that the features differentiating the speech of men and women can be related in a precisely specifiable way to the social-structural pressures and constraints on their behavior.

Specifically, I have three basic complaints about the work on women's speech to date:

1) Linguistic features said to differentiate women's and men's speech have been treated as a collection of random linguistic facts. But the elements that make up any one of these putative "female" styles are not just an odd collection; they make an internally coherent picture, they "go together" naturally. I suggest that this is because when women speak, they are following certain strategies, intending to do certain kinds of things, such as create rapport with the addressee, or flatter the addressee that her/his opinion is worth soliciting, or assure the addressee that no imposition is intended.

2) The sociological concepts utilized in studies of women's speech have been equally random and arbitrary. Women are seen as following certain "rules" or "norms" of linguistic behavior laid down by society, such as "Be polite" or "Speak correctly," with no sense of the rational choices that lie behind such rules.

3) There is no explicit connection drawn between the linguistic facts (traits of women's speech) and the sociological facts (the secondary position of women in society) in analyses to date.

This study, then, is in part a reaction against the behavioristic poverty of much sociolinguistic analysis, the view of people as truncated *homunculi sociologici* who do what they do because of the social slot in which they find themselves. What is missing from accounts of women's speech is an account of the choices being made and the reasons for the choices.

If we bring humans as rational actors into the picture, we come up with a set of connections between language usage and social categories which makes sense of the data. *Social networks* (the kinds of people with whom one interacts regularly) give the individuals involved in them certain *social motivations* (the goals and desires that motivate their actions), which in turn suggest certain *communicative strategies* as means to achieve those goals, and these in turn suggest certain *linguistic choices* which will effectively implement those communicative strategies. The linguistic choices then are seen to be not random with respect to the communicative strategies, and the coherence which relates the features of a style (such as a "feminine style") is explained. With such a model we can relate strategic use of language styles to sex roles and social relationships in a particular society, thereby connecting the linguistic facts with the sociopolitical system within which they occur.

To illustrate the power of a strategic analysis in explicating the contention that women are "more polite," I will examine the class of social motivations related to the preservation of face, to the general desire that members of a speech community attribute to one another, the desire that one's face be respected. If we assume that all (normal adult) interactants have face wants, then a number of strategies for satisfying these wants may be derived. Taken in reverse, an examination of samples of speech can reveal what politeness strategies are being

followed by the speakers, and an account can then be given of what the speakers are trying to do. A formal model of politeness along these lines has been developed in detail by myself and Stephen Levinson. That model delineates the universal assumptions underlying polite usage in all languages, defining politeness as rational, strategic, face-oriented behavior and predicting the kinds of linguistic strategies which will be employed in particular circumstances. In this study the model is informally presented and applied to the analysis of the differences between women's and men's speech in Tenejapa, a community of Mayan Indians in Chiapas, Mexico. Finally, I suggest some implications of this approach for cross-linguistic studies of women's speech, and some hypotheses about in what senses and under what social conditions we do indeed find that women are more polite.*

A THEORY OF POLITENESS

What politeness essentially consists in is a special way of treating people, saying and doing things in such a way as to take into account the other person's feelings. On the whole that means that what one says politely will be less straightforward or more complicated than what one would say if one wasn't taking the other's feelings into account.

Two aspects of people's feelings seem to be involved. One arises when whatever one is now about to say may be unwelcome: the addressee may not want to hear that bit of news, or be reminded of that fact, or be asked to cooperate in that endeavor. A request, for example, or anything that requires a definite response directly imposes on the addressee. One way of being polite in such situations is to apologize for the imposition and to make it easy for the addressee to refuse to comply. So we try to give the most interactional leeway possible, and this, in one sense, is what it is to be polite.

Our long-term relations with people can also be important in taking their feelings into account. To maintain an ongoing relationship with others, one greets them on meeting in the street, inquires about their health and their family, expresses interest in their current goings-on and appreciation of the things they do and like and want.

These two ways of showing consideration for people's feelings can be related to a single notion: that of FACE. Two aspects of people's feelings enter into face: desires to not be imposed upon (negative face), and desires to be

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*The analysis presented here is based on 15 months' fieldwork in Tenejapa, supported by National Science Foundation and National Institute of Mental Health grants. The data base for the linguistic analysis consists of tape-recorded natural conversations which were transcribed in the field with extensive annotations as to meanings and context provided by informants. The formal model relies or is presented in Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, "Universals of Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena," in *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in Social Interaction*, Cambridge Papers in Social Anthropology 8, ed. Esther Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 56-311.

liked, admired, ratified, related to positively (positive face).[6] Both can be subsumed in the one notion of face because it seems that both are involved in the folk notion of "face loss." If I walk past my neighbor on the street and pointedly fail to greet him, I offend his face; and if I barge into his house and demand to borrow his lawnmower with no hesitation or apology for intrusion (for example, "Give me your lawnmower; I want it") I equally offend his face.* So blatantly and without apologies *imposing on* and blatantly and without apologies *ignoring* the people with whom one has social relationships are two basic ways of offending their faces.

Three factors seem to be involved in deciding whether or not to take the trouble to be polite:

1) One tends to be more polite to people who are socially superior to oneself, or socially important: one's boss, the vicar, the doctor, the president.

2) One also tends to be more polite to people one doesn't know, people who are somehow socially distant: strangers, persons from very different walks of life.

In the first situation politeness tends to go one way upwards (the superior is not so polite to an inferior), while in the second situation politeness tends to be symmetrically exchanged by both parties.

3) A third factor is that kinds of acts in a society come ranked as more or less imposing, and hence more or less face threatening, and the more face threatening, the more polite one is likely to be.

These three factors appear to be the main determinants of the overall level of politeness a speaker will use.

Now given that politeness is about respecting the other's face, the way to incorporate politeness into the structure of one's utterance is to ensure that in the very act of threatening face, one disarms the threat by showing that one does indeed care about the other's face. *Positive politeness* aims to disarm threats to positive face. Essentially approach-based, it treats the addressee as a member of an in-group, a friend, a person whose desires and personality traits are known and liked, suggesting that no negative evaluation of the addressee's face is meant despite any potentially face-threatening acts the speaker may be performing. Especially clear cases of positive politeness include expressions of interest in the addressee ("What magnificent roses you have, Mrs. Jones, where did you get them?"); exaggerated expressions of approval ("That's the most fabulous dress,

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*This sentence illustrates the difficulties created in English when a sex-neutral noun such as *neighbor* is antecedent of a third-person singular pronoun. The generic *he* is retained here, despite feminist scruples, because the intended meaning requires its singularity: face inheres in individuals, not in groups. Alternatives such as *she, they*, or *he/she* are either semantically less accurate, blatantly ungrammatical, or stylistically horrific (especially given five pronominal occurrences in rapid succession). I await development in standard written English usage of a truly sex-neutral and singular pronoun for such third-person individual references.

[See other discussions of the generic masculine throughout this volume and especially in the chapter by Wendy Martyna, ed.]

Henrietta!"); use of in-group identity markers (slang, code-switching into the "we" code, in-group address forms and endearments, as in "Give me a hand with this, pal"); the seeking of agreement and avoidance of disagreement (using safe topics, such as the weather, and stressing similarity of point of view); joking; claiming reflexivity of goals (that I want what you want and you want what I want); claiming reciprocity (you help me and I'll help you); and the giving of gifts, in the form of goods, sympathy, understanding, and cooperation.

Strategies of *negative politeness*, on the other hand, are essentially avoidance-based, and consist in assurances that the speaker recognizes and respects the addressee's negative face and will not (or will only minimally) interfere with his or her freedom of action. The classic negative politeness strategies are characterized by self-effacement, formality, restraint, where potential threats to face are redressed with apologies for interfering or transgressing ("I'm terribly sorry to bother you, but I . . ."); with linguistic or non-linguistic deference ("Excuse me, sir . . ."); with hedges on the force of the speech act (using expressions like: *maybe, perhaps, possibly, if you please*) and questioning rather than asserting ("Could you do X for me?"); with impersonalizing mechanisms (for example, passives) that distance the act from both speaker and addressee; and with other softening mechanisms that give the addressee an "out" so that a compliant response is not coerced.

Evidence of such strategies in people's speech allows us to infer, given the appropriate supporting context, that they are attending to one another's face wants, they are "being polite." Presumably this is quantifiable: the more face-saving strategies in evidence, the more polite.

Such strategies in speech take time and effort. As such, they contrast with segments of speech where no face redress appears at all—where the speaker is expressing him/herself in the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way possible, following H. R. Grice's Maxims of Conversation[7] (for example, saying: "Give me five dollars now," meaning exactly that). Such *bald on record* expression involves a gain in clarity and efficiency, but runs whatever risk attends ignoring the addressee's face.*

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*The motives for speaking baldly on record, as argued in detail in Brown and Levinson, "Politeness Phenomena" can be various: a speaker can choose not to minimize the face threat in cases of great urgency, or where there is channel noise sufficient to provoke a need for clarity and efficiency, or where the speaker's desire to satisfy the addressee's face is small (either because the speaker wants to be rude, or doesn't care about maintaining face), or where the act is primarily in the addressee's interest so that simply by *doing* the act the speaker conveys concern for the addressee, so no face redress is required. There are also special cases where bald on record usage is particularly designed to redress face threats; the most notable examples being offers, where the baldness of the form of expression can be a way of assuring the addressee that the latter may impose on the speaker and accept the offer. So the use of bald on record strategies in speaking may convey a variety of different states of mind in the speaker, and cannot necessarily be taken as evidence of rudeness, indifference, status superiority, or intimacy.

Since two of the three factors influencing level of politeness have to do with the social relationship between the interlocutors, and since relationships (except among lovers, and so on) tend to be relatively stable, particular stable levels of politeness will reflect particular relationships. So strategies are tied to relationships, and politeness level is relative to the expected level for that relationship. Now given that there are three variables, if this expected level makes a notable shift at some point in an interaction, there is always a potential ambiguity as to whether the extra politeness is indicating:

1) a sudden increase in the speaker's respect for the addressee (or his/her perceived lack of power vis-à-vis the addressee; this is unlikely except in special cases such as violent confrontation or initiation into office); *or*

2) a sudden increase in social distance from the addressee (which may be used to symbolically convey anger or disapproval; witness the switch to a formal mode of address or an out-group code when familiars become angry with one another); *or*

3) a change to highly face-threatening material.

But on the assumption that relationships tend to be relatively stable, minor fluctuations in politeness level can be attributed to the third variable. Given then a range of politeness level over a wide range of kinds of acts, we can infer degrees of social closeness and degrees of relative power in relationships. Thus, politeness strategies are a complicated but highly sensitive index in speech of kinds of social relationships. It is for this reason that they provide a useful tool for analysing the differences between the speech styles of men and women.

Under what conditions and in what situations do women actually use more polite expressions than men do in comparable situations? And why? If women are more polite than men, our theory suggests that women are either, 1) generally speaking to superiors, 2) generally speaking to socially distant persons, or 3) involved in more face-threatening acts, or have a higher assessment than men have of what counts as impositions. We may then look to the minutiae of utterances in context to distinguish the facts of women's speech from the images and stereotypes that seem to be the basis of many claims that women are "more polite." Let us now apply this approach to data from Tenejapa, to see what insights about the differences between men's and women's speech emerge.

THE TENEJAPAN CASE

Men and Women in Tenejapa: an Impressionistic Overview

Tenejapa is a Tzeltal (Mayan) municipio situated in the central highlands of Chiapas, Mexico, some 20 miles by precipitous dirt road from the town of San Cristóbal de las Casas. Following the ancient Mayan pattern, the Indians live in scattered hamlets and subsist largely by milpa agriculture. As a single corporate entity, Tenejapa has its own native civil-religious hierarchy, and Tenejapans have their own characteristic dialect of Tzeltal, their own Indian

dress, and a strong sense of identity as Tenejapans, distinguishing them from the 16 other corporate communities of Tzeltal-speaking Indians and from the surrounding Tzotzil-speaking communities.

An outsider entering this community notices immediately the marked separation of the spheres of activity of women and men. Indeed, the sex-role division appears to be the most salient distinction between kinds of people in this relatively homogeneous egalitarian society.* Women's activities center in the home, focusing on cooking, food preparation, child-rearing, and weaving; men's work takes place primarily outside the home, in the fields, in the market, or in Tenejapa Center. Furthermore, antagonism between the sexes is institutionalized in a number of customs: men commonly beat their wives, marriage by capture is not uncommon (and is the terror of unmarried girls), and even courtship traditionally is initiated with a hostile act: the boy pelts the girl with orange peels, and she (in public) responds by pelting him with stones. On the symbolic level, women and men are seen as entirely different kinds of beings: men are "hot" like the sun, the sky, the day, while women are "cold" like the moon, the earth, the night.

The quality of interaction of women is likewise noticeably differentiated from that of men. Women appear to be highly deferent to men, but are extremely warm and supportive to other women. Thus, women are highly deferential and self-effacing in public; they walk behind the men on the trails, stepping aside to let men pass them if the men come up behind; they speak in a high pitch falsetto voice with kinesic humbling (hunched-over shoulders, avoidance of eye contact); in short, they give avoidance-type respect in the presence of men. By contrast when talking to women in the security of their homes, or even in public when in encounters with women not in the center of the public gaze, women are highly supportive and empathetic, stressing their closeness with many prosodic modifications and rapport-emphasizing expressions. In short, they emphasize commonality and appreciation of each other's personality.

Men, on the other hand, treat people in general in a much more matter-of-fact and businesslike manner. Their trail greetings are often short, even brusque, and their speech habitually lacks many of the elaborate mechanisms for stressing deference as well as for stressing solidarity that abound in women's speech.

From an impressionistic point of view, then, women's speech and demeanor appear to be elaborated for the extremes of both positive and negative politeness; men's speech and demeanor tend to be baldly on record to a much greater extent. The few notable exceptions to this general pattern have significant implications for the meaning of the general rule. The negative politeness pattern for women is modified somewhat by age—women become more assertive, less deferential, when they pass child-rearing age, when they become, as it

*Age is the other salient basis for differentiation, and hierarchy based on age is firmly institutionalized in ritual. But it does not have such a clear-cut effect on everyday interaction (except adult/child interaction) as sex does.

were, socially sexless.* The behavior of men is modified in two situations: when drunk, exaggerated positive politeness expression appears, with joking, back-slapping, and repeated assurances of solidarity. And in ritual contexts, when addressing the gods and saints, men's speech takes on many of the vocal and prosodic features that characterize women in daily interaction: exaggerated rhythmicity, falsetto, high trailing-off pitch contours.[8] But apart from these exceptions, we may take the initial impressionistic generalization as a working hypothesis: that relative to men's, women's speech is highly elaborated for both positive and negative politeness. Now how can we test such a hypothesis? How can we find an index of positive politeness and of negative politeness with which to measure the differences between men's and women's speech?

Being Polite in Tzeltal

Tzeltal has a built-in apparatus which is highly sensitive to nuances of social relations between speaker and hearer. There is a syntactically definable class of particles in Tzeltal which operate as adverbs on the highest performative verb, modifying the force of a speech act by expressing something about the speaker's attitude toward the act being performed (or toward the addressee). There are some 20 of these particles, and although the usage conditions for each one differ somewhat, what they basically do for any speech act is say, in effect, either "I maybe, perhaps, tentatively, in some respects, assert/request/promise/declare/, and so on" or "I emphatically, sincerely, really assert/request/promise/declare, and so on." So they may be classified crudely as strengtheners or weakeners of the force with which the speaker performs the speech act.

Some examples should clarify how the particles operate†:

Strengtheners—rhetorical assurances of sincerity or emphatic opinion:

(1) eh, haʔ *čʻe.*
Oh, so it is, *to be sure*! (emphatic agreement with the preceding utterance)

(2) weʔan me *ȼ in čʻi.*
Do eat, *then*! (polite emphatic offer of a meal)

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*In fact for the elderly of both sexes, politeness level seems to be adjusted on the basis of the perceived power of the addressee, but sex no longer is a major element in assessing that power. Some old women are powerful, some old men are, and others of both sexes will tend to be more polite to such elders. But despite some differences in wealth, possessions, successfulness, luck, and so on (although such differences are culturally downplayed for fear of envy), women during their reproductive years all seem to be categorized as nonpowerful in relation to men; the fact of their femaleness overrides any advantages due to personal circumstances and requires them to behave interactionally as deferential to men.

†Tzeltal examples are glossed underneath in English, with explanations of the glosses following in brackets. The tzeltal transcription is roughly phonemic, where č represents the sound spelled in English *ch*, š corresponds to English *sh*, ȼ represents English *ts*, ʔ indicates a glottal stop, and ʻ indicates glottalization of the preceding consonant.

(3) *melel* te ho?one, ma hk'an.
Truly, as for me, I don't want it. (stresses the speaker's sincerity)

(4) ya *naniš* stak ya šba? ɸ'us ?a.
You *really* can go shut it (the door). (that is, 'I sincerely say, you can shut it'; a woman's politely eager acceptance of a visitor's offer to shut the door, with the particle stressing her appreciation)

(5) bi lah *kati* yu?un ɸ'in, ?oč šan ta yakubeli ?
Why *in the world* then has he gone and got drunk again?! (speaker's emphasis solicits audience sympathy)

Weakeners–performative hedges:

(6) tal *me* kilat hwayuk.
I've come *if I may* to see you for a night or so. (hedged request)

(7) mač'a mene ɸ'i *bi* ?
Who is that one, *do you suppose*? (avoids presuming that the addressee knows the answer)

(8) *mak* bi yu?un me ma šp'ihube me sluse?
Why doesn't that Lucy wisen up, *I wonder*? (softens the implied criticism)

(9) ma *lah wan* ?ayuk ya?čon ?a?mutik.
You don't *perhaps* have any chickens to sell, *it is said.* (hedged request to sell chickens, plus devolving of responsibility for the request onto third party)

(10) ha? *naš* ya hk'an hohk'obet ?a?wala ?ič.
It's *just* that I want to ask you to sell a bit of chili. (minimizing the imposition involved in the request)

Although the meanings conveyed by these particles in context are extremely subtle and complex, in combination with intonation and prosodic patterns that themselves either emphasize or weaken, it is usually possible in particular cases to identify whether they are acting as speech act strengtheners or weakeners.

Now the point to stress here is that *any* particles or words or expressions in any language that do this kind of thing, that is, that modify the performative force of speech acts, are prime candidates for formulating polite utterances. This is because speech acts are intrinsically potent things, because they presuppose various things about the addressee (for example, that he/she doesn't know the truth of what is being asserted, or that he/she is able to carry out the order, or that he/she is willing to perform the act requested, and so on). Therefore, to hedge these acts is in general to be negatively polite, and to emphasize them (in many cases) is to be positively polite.*

It seems clear that the Tzeltal particles provide rich resources for performing strategies of positive politeness (which requires emphasizing one's apprecia-

*Of course, the validity of such a generalization depends on the semantics of the sentence in question. If a speaker emphasizes a speech act of criticizing or insulting the addressee, it is hardly positively polite. Yet if the addressee is known to agree with the speaker in a negative evaluation of a third party (or event), it may be a positively polite stressing of solidarity to emphasize that evaluation.

tion of, approval of, similarity with, the addressee) and of negative politeness (which requires hedging of one's encroachment on the addressee's territory, or softening the force with which one does face-threatening speech acts, or giving the addressee an "out" in interpreting what speech act is being done). So it might be reasonable to expect that a simple count of particle usage would provide a rough index of the extent of face-redress being employed in speech. On the basis of our above hypothesis about the differences between men's and women's speech in Tenejapa, we might predict that:

1. Women use more strengthening particles when speaking to women (more than to men, and more than men speaking to men);

2. Women use more weakening particles when speaking to men (more than to women, and more than men use to men); and

3. Women speaking to women use more particles, overall, than men to men.

If we compare the speech of male and female dyads, matched so as to neutralize status differences, familiarity (social distance) differences, and differences in the culturally rated face-threateningness of the material being discussed (the three factors which our theory claims form the basis for determining politeness levels), insofar as natural conversation data allow such matching,* it turns out that some such crude correlations do appear, differentiating the speech of women and men. But they appear only when the particle counts are corrected for the subtleties of the semantics, which vary depending upon a number of factors. For example, the topic under discussion is a crucial variable, for both men and women use many more hedging particles when talking about something for which they do not have firsthand knowledge; similarly, they use many more emphatic particles when giving value judgments about what they think or feel. But when such factors are minimized by choosing passages with (roughly) comparable topic valency, gross counts of particle usage do show interesting sex differences.

The results for a few samples are summarized in Tables 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3.†

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*The difficulties of getting comparable data neutralizing face-threateningness (cultural rating of impositions) are considerable, since men and women have different concerns and hence tend to talk about different things and to perform different kinds of speech acts. It is even more difficult to find dyads equivalent in hierarchical status and in social distance for men and women, due to their different social structural loci. Getting comparable data is then a matter of matching as well as possible degrees of "more" and "less" on the scales of power, distance, and rating of imposition.

†The figures were computed on samples of approximately 1000 words each. The calculations were made of number of particles in relation to number of speech acts (roughly but not precisely equivalent to sentences) rather than simply to number of words because what is being assessed is the extent of speech-act modification, and speech acts can vary greatly in length. The counts were made of samples ranging from 74 speech acts (for one participant) to 236 speech acts (for one conversational chunk as a whole), and were adjusted to give the average number of 100 speech acts. I include these tables to indicate the nature of the differences found; a more thorough illustration would require breakdown into individual particles and extensive explanation. For further details, see Penelope Brown, "Language, Interaction, and Sex Roles in a Mayan Community: A Study of Politeness and the Position of Women" (Ph.D. Diss. University of California, Berkeley, 1979), chapter 4.

TABLE 8.1 Average Number of Particles for 100 Speech Acts: Same-sex Dyads

	Strengtheners	Weakeners	Total particles
Female dyads:			
3 girls (tape 17.1)	20.8	28.8	49.6
Tape 11 Mo	31.4	33.7	65.1
Da	19.8	43.4	63.2
Tape 7 L	25.6	26.9	52.5
S	23.1	26.9	50.0
Tape 7 M	33.2	48.1	81.2
S	22.2	31.2	53.3
Mean	25.2	34.1	59.3
Male dyads:			
Tape 15.2 t	12.2	16.2	28.0
M	20.0	17.5	39.5
2 'cousins' Tape 15.1	11.1	20.7	31.8
Mean	14.4	18.1	32.6

Source: Original data

To begin with the counts of particle usage in same-sex dyads, it can be seen from Table 8.1 that women do use more particles. That is, their speech is more elaborated than men's speech is for both positive-politeness emphasizing and negative-politeness hedging, as far as the use of particles is concerned, for on the order of half again to twice as many particles, both weakeners and strengtheners, appear in the female conversations. So our hypotheses about the speech of women to women as opposed to that of men to men appear to be supported by these passages, although of course we would need larger samples to ascertain statistical significance. The hypotheses for cross-sex dyads, however, are not confirmed in my counts. As Table 8.2 shows, there have appeared to be no clear-cut differences between men and women in terms of the number of particles they use when speaking to one another. That is, I have not found as predicted that women use more strengthening particles to women than to men,

TABLE 8.2 Average Number of Particles for 100 Speech Acts: Cross-sex Dyads

	Strengtheners	Weakeners	Total particles
Women speaking to men:			
14.1 Mo (to So)	36.2	24.3	60.5
17.2 s (to h')	34.3	20.6	54.9
12.1 A (to Pr)	36.7	28.4	65.1
Mean	35.7	24.4	60.2
Men speaking to women:			
14.1 h' (to Mo)	19.2	31.0	50.5
17.2 h' (to s)	17.1	36.8	54.0
12.1 Pr (to A)	35.6	31.5	67.1
Mean	24.1	33.1	57.2

Source: Original data

nor that women use more weakening particles to men than to women. Indeed, in both these cases the data actually reverse the order expected. Table 8.2 shows women using more strengtheners to men than to women, and women using more weakeners to women than to men, although I hesitate to draw any broad conclusions from this very small sample. This result is at least partly due to the fact that natural conversation yields little of comparable semantics in the speech of cross-sex dyads in my data, so the comparability of samples is highly questionable.

However, the gross differences between women and men in same-sex dyads are very large, and even when sex of addressee is ignored and particle usage of women is compared with that of men (see Table 8.3), female speakers came out as using considerably more particles than male speakers. We may conclude, then, that despite the semantic/pragmatic difficulties in counting particles, they

TABLE 8.3 Summary Table of Particle Usage

	Strengtheners	Weakeners	Total particles
women to women	25.2	34.1	59.3
women to men	35.7	24.4	60.2
men to men	14.4	18.1	32.6
men to women	24.1	33.1	57.2
Totals regardless of sex of addressee:			
female speakers (n = 10)	28.3	31.2	59.5
male speakers (n = 6)	19.2	25.6	44.9

Source: Original data

do appear to offer a possible quantitative index to politeness strategies, albeit a very crude one.*

More revealing differences between the speech of men and women appear when we examine qualitative differences in their particle usage. To get a real understanding of the sex differences in verbal strategies, we must look at the characteristic feminine and masculine usages to which the particles are put. For women, irony, rhetorical questions, and negative assertions used to convey the opposite (positive) assertion, are characteristic usages. For example:

(11) *mak* yuʔ *wan* ma haʔuk yaʔwil!
Lit: *Perhaps* because *maybe* it's not so, *as it were, you see.*
Implicating: Isn't that just how it is!

(12) haʔ yuʔun ma ya *niš* šlah htakˈintik yuʔune, yakubeli.
Lit: It's because our money *just* doesn't get used up because of drunkenness.
Implicating: It *does* get used up!

*A word about the emic status of these particles is in order. Conscious awareness by Tzeltal speakers of the particles' functions as speech-act modifiers is limited to a very few which are recognized to operate as softeners of imperatives, for example, or are seen as being especially polite when tacked onto requests. But in most instances of usage the particles are very much in the background of awareness; while among the most frequently used words in Tzeltal, they do not lend themselves to introspection as to their meanings or uses. I was unable to elicit any definitions for the particles (and indeed, they tend to drop out in Tzeltal-speakers' speech to nonnative speakers of Tzeltal), although informants were able to compare sentences containing a particle with the same sentence minus the particle and make judgments about the relative politeness, implications, and so on, of the two versions. For further details see Brown, "Language, Interaction, 4 Sex Roles."

(13) yuʔ *bal* hoʔon ʔay ba ya hta takʻin?
Lit: Because as for me, *is there* anywhere I'll come up with money?
Implicating: Of course not!

(14) *bi yuʔun niš* ʔay *šaʔ*naʔ *sɛ̨'isel* ʔek ʔa ?
Lit: *Just why would* you know how to sew?
Implicating: Of course you wouldn't.

Ironies and ironic rhetorical questions are used to stress feelings and attitudes; by asserting the opposite of what one feels or thinks, one stresses the shared assumptions about such feelings between speaker and addressee, the shared views that make such ironies interpretable. In this way they are positive-politeness strategies, emphasizing in-group feelings and attitudes. In my data, women spend more time talking about feelings and attitudes toward events than do men, hence the ironies.*

Another positively polite feature of particle usage among women is the extensive use of the diminutive *ʔala* as a marker of small talk. This particle, usually glossed as 'a little', appears repeatedly in conversations between women where little or no new information is being conveyed, but the purpose of speaking is to stress their shared interests and feelings. This passage, for example, comes from a conversation between an elderly woman and her visiting married daughter:

(15) Da: ʔay binti ya k*ala* pas šane, šon yuʔun, nail to hoy ta koral k*ala* mut.
There is something else I'll *a-little* do, I said to myself, *first* I'll gather together my-*little* chickens in an enclosure.

Mo: la wan ʔaʔhoy ta koral ʔaʔw*ala* mut.
You perhaps put your-*little* chickens into an enclosure!

Da: la. haʔin ya sloʔlaben k*ala* kʻale.
I did. It's because they eat my-*little* cornfield up for me (if I don't confine them).

Mo: ya sloʔ ta me yaš *ʔala* čʻiise.
They eat (it) if it *a-little* grows up (big enough).

Da: *ʔala* lawaltikiš!
It's *a-little* grown already!

The subject to which the diminutivizing *ʔala* is applied moves from what Da' is going to do, to her chickens, to her cornfield, to the size to which the corn grows; the function of *ʔala* here is to stress the emotional bond between Mo and Da in engaging in this conversation, not to literally describe Da's actions, corn,

*Again, the propensity to ironic humor is recognized by Tenejapans to be a characteristic of women's speech—that is, they recognize that women are prone to this "lying" (that is, literally false) form of expressing themselves in casual speech—but the role of the particles in producing these ironic utterances is (as far as I could ascertain) completely opaque to them.

chickens, and so on.* This emphasizing usage of *ʔala* is a trait of women's speech; men consider it to be femine and "soppy," although men certainly use the particle for other reasons, for example, to minimize an imposition, as in a negatively polite request:

(16) ya hkʻan *kala* kʻinal, ya hpas *kala* na.
I want my-*little* bit of land, to make my-*little* house (there).
(as when a son asks his father for his share of land)

or to minimize the implications of what one is doing:

(17) yas *ʔala* yakubon hoʔtikike.
We are { sort of / a little bit / merely } getting drunk.

I even have one example on tape where a man proliferates the use of *ʔala* in one utterance in a way apparently similar to the women's usage:

(18) maʔyuk, ya naš hkʻan, wokol kʻopta, ʔay s*ɕ*ʻisben y*ala* hun k*ala* čʻin kerem, ʔay lah ha*ɕ*em y*ala* hun.
It's nothing, I just want to please ask if she would sew up for me the *little* book of my *little* small boy, his *little* book is ripped, he says.

But as the gloss indicates, the *ʔala*s here are functioning as negative politeness, to minimize what is actually an unusually humiliating request–since the man is asking his sister to do what his wife should have done, thereby revealing a serious domestic breach. So the *ʔala*s are making a plea for sympathy, perhaps, but their main function here is to minimize an awkward request, and they certainly are not oriented to stressing shared attitudes and values as the *ʔala*s in (15) are doing.

On the negative-politeness side, women also have some characteristic usages. Thus it appears that while both men and women use hedging particles in cases of genuine doubt, only women use them even in utterances where there is no doubt, where in fact only the speaker herself can know the truth of the proposition, for example, hedging on one's own feelings:

(19) ya niš hmel koʔtantik yuʔun *ɕ*ʻin *mak*.
I just really am sad then because of it, *perhaps*.

(20) čahp niš me koʔtan ta melel yuʔun *ɕ*ʻi *bi*.
My heart is just really terrible (that is, miserable) because of it then, *isn't it*.

Here the hedges in combination with emphatic expression of the speaker's feelings serve purely negative-politeness functions; the woman appears to think it an imposition to express her feelings strongly to the addressee–or rather, she

*ʔ*ala*, in fact, cannot be used to mean literally small in size; there is a different word (*č*ʻin*) for the description of size. The two can be used together to convey both affect and size, as in (18), k*ala č*ʻin kerem,* 'my-*little* small boy'.

appears to feel it is necessary to act as if she were thus hesitant. As a form of understatement these hedges can even make the assertion more exclamatory, by implying the necessity to suppress the full expression of one's outrage. For example:

(21) *puersa* kʼešlal ɬʼin *mak*!
She's *really* embarrassed then *maybe*! (Compare English: She's really a bit upset!)

As for the men, they too have characteristically sex-typed usages of the particles. One of the most noticeable occurs with the particle *melel*, which is a sincerity emphasizer usually glossed as 'truly' or 'really'. This particle abounds in male public speaking or any male speaking with the aim of political persuasion. For example:

(22) *melel* haʔ lek tey naš ya šʔainon hoʔtik, *melel* mukʼul parahe yilel ta baʔayon hoʔtik.
Really, it's good if we just stay there, *really*, ours is a big village.

(23) ma me štun ta me yaʔwakʼik tey ʔa te sna maestro tey ʔa, *melel* ma me štun.
It's no good if you put the teacher's house there, *really* it's no good.

In a heated attempt at persuasion, *melel* and other sincerity emphasizers can occur in virtually every sentence for several minutes of discourse. Another markedly male feature of such public speaking is the liberal interpolation of Spanish words into the stream of speech. Men tend to publicly flaunt their knowledge of Spanish; women, in contrast, tend to hide their knowledge and pretend to understand Spanish less well than in fact is the case. In male public speaking one also hears three Spanish-derived words used like the Tzeltal emphatic particles: to stress the strength of the speaker's commitment to what he is saying. These are *meru, puru,* and *bun*:

(24) *meru melel* ya kil!
That's really true, (as) I see it!

(25) *melel* lom bol te promotor, *puru* baɬʼilkʼop ya yakʼ ta nopel, *puru* lom bolik.
The teacher is really stupid, he teaches nothing but Tzeltal, he's really (that is, purely, completely) stupid.

(26) lom spas kʼop, *bun* lom šcukawan, te maestro.
He fights very much, *boy does he ever* jail people a lot, that teacher.

This kind of particle-like use of Spanish-derived expressions appears to be restricted to male speech.

Speech and Style in Tzeltal

I hope to have demonstrated that the speech of men and women in Tzeltal differs in systematic ways. First of all, it differs in terms of how many particles members of each sex tend to use, thus establishing frequency of speech-act

modifiers as a promising index of the complex verbal strategies that speakers are employing.* We may conclude that such quantitative comparisons are useful as a rough guide to what is going on at the strategic level, although they will not replace the painstaking comparison of individual strategies employed in speech. Theoretically it should be possible to quantify underlying intentions such as strategies and count them up, but a methodology that would allow us to do that in any rigorous way is still in its infancy.[9] While one could count up Tzeltal ironies, it would be much more difficult to isolate all the instances of positive-politeness strategies in a passage, quantify their relative strength of face redress, add them up, and compare the speech of women and men on this basis.[10] If we were to attempt such an enterprise for Tzeltal, we would need an inventory of the kinds of politeness strategies (in addition to the use of particles to modify performative force) available in the Tzeltal repertoire. An inventory of the conventionalized linguistic resources for positive politeness, available potentially to both women and men, would include the following: the emphatic particles (as illustrated above, and including a number of others); exaggerated empathetic intonation and prosodic patterns; negative questions ("Won't you eat now?") as offers which presuppose an affirmative reply; repeats and other ways of stressing interest and agreement; irony and rhetorical questions as ways of stressing shared point of view; use of directly quoted conversation; diminutives and in-group address forms; expressions like 'you know' (*ya?wa?y*) and 'you see' (*ya?wil*) which claim shared knowledge; joking (which also presupposes shared knowledge and values); and the Tzeltal inclusive-*we* used to mean 'I' or 'you', pretending that the speech act is for the common weal.

Linguistic realization of negative politeness strategies in Tzeltal include performative hedges; indirect speech acts; pessimistic formulation of requests and offers ('You wouldn't have any chickens to sell'); minimization of impositions ('a little', 'for a moment', 'just', 'merely', 'only'); deference (including ritually falsetto high pitch and other forms of symbolic self-minimization); and depersonalizing and deresponsibilizing mechanisms which imply that the speaker is not taking responsibility for the force of this particular speech act.

Although both sexes have access to these resources, the usage of men and women differs systematically both in terms of which strategies they choose to use and how much effort they put into face redress, whether positive or negative. The results of comparing male and female use of these strategies (nonquantitatively, so far) supports the two claims I have made on the basis of simple particle

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*Eleanor H. Jordan, "Language-Female and Feminine," in *Proceedings of a U.S.-Japan Sociolinguistics Meetings*, ed. Bates Hoffer (San Antonio, Texas: Trinity University, 1974) pp. 57-71, provides some evidence for this conclusion from another language: she claims that in Japanese, the most statistically significant sources of evidence for deciding whether a sample of speech was produced by a male or a female speaker come from the area of politeness, formality levels, and sentence particles.

counts: (a) that women use the extremes of positive and of negative politeness, while men speak much more matter-of-factly, and (b) that women have characteristically feminine strategies of positive politeness and negative politeness so that what might be called "feminine styles" can be isolated. Similarly, there are usages characteristic of men, especially sexy joking (*ʔišta kʰop*) and the preaching/declaiming style discussed above, which define kinds of typical "masculine style."

In labeling these systematic patterns of language usage "styles," however, a clarification is in order. "Style" is frequently used to label surface-structural features of language with no reference to why particular stylistic features go together or what is the reason for using them, rather than others, in a given instance. I am claiming rather that there is a coherence among the features of positive politeness, and among those of negative politeness, at the strategic level. The features of positive politeness all contribute to the aim of a positively polite conversational style: to stress in-group knowledge, shared attitudes and values, appreciation of the addressee, and so on; and the features of negative politeness contribute to the aim of distancing, non-imposing, that defines negative politeness. It is the employment of strategies that generates surface-structural features that can be called "style." If linguistic form differs in two styles it is because language is being used for different ends. This argument has significant implications for sociolinguistic theory, for the claim is that only by probing below the surface and identifying the strategies that actors are pursuing when they speak can we see how the linguistic minutiae of utterances are related to the plans of human actors. And only thus can we claim that there is a deep, intrinsic relationship between language usage and social facts.

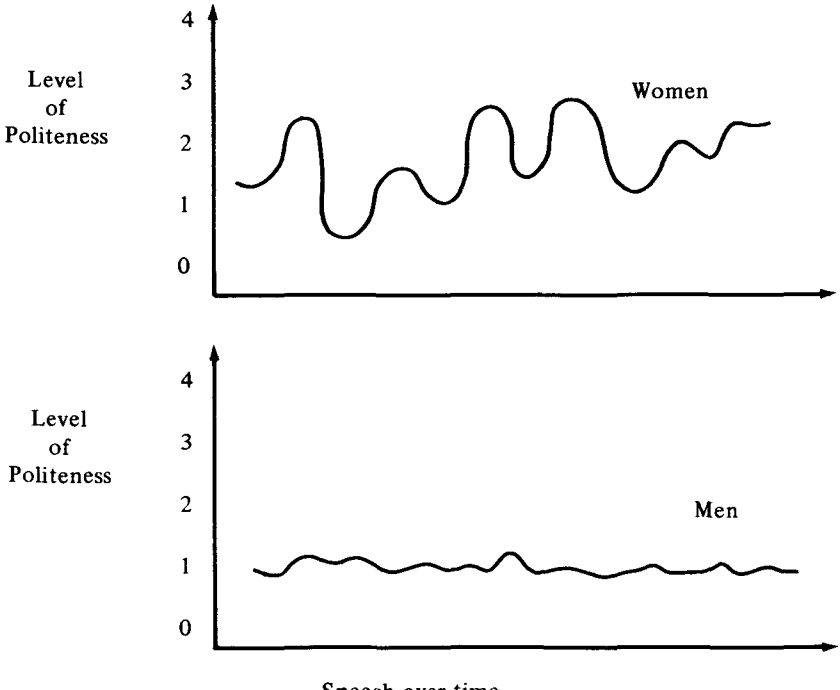
Ethos and social context

We may conclude that women are, overall, more polite than men in Tenejapan society. That is, the general quality of interaction between women, their interactional ethos, is more polite than that for the men, as measured by the particles and other strategies in usage. It remains to integrate these linguistic facts with the social context that gives rise to them, in order to explain the basis for the patterns that are observable.

This result contradicts our initial impressionistic hypothesis, that women are positively polite to women and negatively polite to men. Rather, the data suggest that women are overall more sensitive to possibly face-threatening material in their speech, and hence use negative politeness to women as well as men, and are more sensitive to positive face wants and hence use positive politeness to men as well as women. We may reformulate our hypothesis in these terms, therefore, which may perhaps be made clearer by recourse to schematic representation in the form of a graph. Imagining that we may quantify the level of politeness by indexing number and quality of politeness strategies used,[11]

the vertical axis in Figure 8.1 indicates that women overall employ a higher level of politeness than men. The horizontal axis shows that there is greater variation in politeness usage between women from moment to moment; men are, in comparison, relatively stable over time in the amount of face redress encoded in their speech. Recalling that according to our theory there are three reasons for increasing face redress in speech, Figure 8.1 indicates that women are speaking as if the social power of addressee and social distance between interlocutors are higher overall than they are for men, and therefore their overall politeness level is higher. In comparison, men are speaking in a relatively familiar manner, treating each other as though power and social distance were both very low. The social weighting of seriousness of impositions, based on the potential face-threateningness of acts, varies to account for the variations in politeness level in each sex's speech over time, severely for women, mildly for men. Thus I am suggesting that women are more sensitive from moment to moment to the

FIGURE 8.1: Politeness in Women's and Men's Styles: Schematic Representation



potential face-threateningness of what they are saying and modify their speech accordingly.

Ethnographic support for this interpretation comes from three salient facts of Tenejapan life. The first is that women are vulnerable to men in this society where wives, sisters, and daughters are likely to be beaten if there are threats to their reputation, and women are vulnerable to women as possible sources for slights on their reputations. Secondly, in speech to women, a higher level of politeness may be due to the fact that residence is generally patrilocal, so that women marry into their husband's family's household. For this reason there is likely to be a somewhat greater social distance between the women than between the men of a household. Thirdly, women treat some kinds of speech acts more cautiously than men; the vulnerability of women means that more acts, as well as certain particular acts (such as talking to an unrelated male at all), *are defined as face-threatening. This also motivates the particular strategies* that women choose, most obviously the ubiquitous expression denying knowledge or responsibility: *maškil* ('I don't know'), which is used conventionally as a self-protective device.

As for men, it may simply be the case that they have a higher evaluation of wants that conflict with face wants–for example, those supporting a goal of communicative efficiency which conflicts with the elaboration of face-redressive strategies.* One other possible factor is a process akin to Gregory Bateson's "schismogenesis"[12]: it is possible that men are stressing their brusqueness as a sign of tough masculinity, and women their polite graciousness as a display of feminine (contrasting to masculine) values. This parallels Trudgill's suggestion *that middle-class men in England use linguistic forms typical of working-class* usage as a way of stressing their masculinity, whereas women tend to hypercorrect, using forms typical of persons of a higher social class.[13]

The negative politeness between women is a surprising result in the light of our initial predictions, and implies that there is not a dichotomizing of the social world into men vs. women, with the former receiving negative politeness and the latter positive politeness, but that overall women are paying more attention to face redress than men are. This would parallel the suggestion of Peter Trudgill, for British English and Roger Shuy for American English, that women show greater sensitivity to the socially diagnostic features of their language, so that they use a higher percentage of valued (standard) forms.[14] Women, in this

*This conclusion disagrees with the position taken in my earlier paper, where the politeness theory was developed (Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, "Universals in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena," in *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in Social Interaction*, Cambridge Papers in Social Anthropology 8, ed. Esther Goody [Cambridge: University Press, 1978], pp. 56-311.) There we took the position that extrinsic weighting of events was not an element in the evaluation of politeness strategies.

view, maintain a degree of "normativeness" over men in English. Tenejapan women, then, appear to be like English women in this respect.*

We still need some explanation of cross-sex relations in Tenejapa. Although certain social forces make women vulnerable, there are several reasons why women are not totally powerless in the society. Women make a considerable economic contribution to the household; they help with work in the fields and are solely responsible for food preparation, raising of small domestic animals, child rearing, and weaving. In Tenejapa it is frequently said by young women that they "don't want to marry." They fear separation from their natal families, husbands' physical power over wives, and the embarrassment or shame of illness and physical deterioration due to childbirth. In fact there seems to be no opprobrium attached to unmarried women (*tektom ʔanɬetik*); there were six such adult women in the hamlet in which I worked, living with parents or siblings. Men, on the other hand, all want to be married, for they cannot get along without a woman to cook for them. This may be one reason for the relative courtesy with which men treat women in this society.

A second important fact is that Tenejapan culture interactionally downplays differences in status and power. Fear of envy and witchcraft provides a powerful motive for minimizing differentials in wealth and status. Political positions (cargos) are rotated annually or triannually; men are coerced into taking them on and the ritual accoutrements of a cargo are very expensive, so that anyone with accumulated wealth is more than likely to be forced into spending it on a cargo position. There is an ideology of complementarity in sex roles: the overseeing gods are called *meʔtiktatik*, ('mother-father'), and cargos all involve a complementary female role requiring ritual food preparation and prayers. So women are seen as indispensable to the order of things, not simply in their reproductive function but in maintaining and guarding the society in a role parallel to that of men. The egalitarian ethos and downplaying of wealth and power differentials mean that women (indeed, all adult members of the household) generally take a major role in decision making at the domestic level.

While these facts mitigate the status differences between the two sexes, that there remains a power/status difference between men and women is indisputable. Physically—men beat women, women do not beat husbands or fathers or brothers. Interactionally—husbands routinely give wives direct bald on record imperatives: 'Cook that meal,' for example. However, I never heard a woman give her husband a direct order of that sort. In public, women give men (especially unrelated males) marked interactional deference; the reverse is not the case. Politically—men hold the positions that are prestigious and publicly visible,

*While comparisons of phonological standardness and use of politeness strategies are not necessarily one to one, they seem to be both aiming at the common goal—social approval.

and it is men who make the decisions affecting the community as a whole. Women's role in decision making, while very important domestically, is from a society's-eye view more or less invisible.

CONCLUSIONS

What then can we learn about women from looking at language? In the past linguists came up with descriptions of code differences between the speech of men and women in some exotic languages,[15] but there was no claim of the relevance of these descriptions to languages where such code differences were lacking, and no attempt to relate the existence of code differences between the sexes to social-structural facts about the societies wherein such languages were operative. In recent years sexism in language has been enthusiastically examined and well documented,[16] especially with reference to semantics and to the asymmetry of lexical items for men and women. There is also considerable evidence that women are particularly sensitive to nuances of social categories and to levels of formality.[17] But the area that has been most disappointing has been the attempt to show how the ways in which women choose to express themselves reveal truths about their social relationships and their social status in the society. I have argued here that a prerequisite to such an inquiry is an adequate theory of the relationship between language usage and social relationships, and I have offered the present sketch of a strategic analysis of language usage to suggest a means to pursuing relatively subtle indications of the position of women in society. The approach has several advantages which should be stressed.

The analysis of communicative strategies provides an intervening variable allowing us to relate language and society in a direct and motivated way, rather than simply to correlate them. The ethos of women, in this view, is tied to culture and social structure via strategies for behavior. By linking behavior to social structure we are thereby enabled to ask the question *why* do women talk the way they do in this society and what social-structural pressures and constraints are molding their behavior?

Another important feature of analysis in terms of communicative strategies is that it allows us to work from the point of view of the speakers themselves. Through looking at the strategies women are pursuing in their speech, we can get a woman's-eye view of her networks of relationships, who she esteems, who she looks down on, and who she feels intimate with. This is a distinct step forward from the prevailing methodology in sociolinguistics, which provides correlations between linguistic and social facts which may have no reality for the speakers themselves.

Furthermore, the link between behavior and social structure also provide a basis for predictions about when and where and under what conditions women's speech will take on certain characteristics—of positive as opposed to

negative politeness, or of high overall politeness in both domains as opposed to low levels overall, for example. It allows us to predict universals in linguistic usage based on universals in the position of women cross-culturally; to the extent that women occupy similar social-structural loci with similar social-structural constraints on behavior, women will behave similarly at the strategic level. Thus we would not expect linguistic similarities between West African women or high-caste Indian women and Tenejapan women, the former having apparently much more structural power. But we can predict similarities between language usage of Tenejapan women and other peasant women in egalitarian small-scale societies with similar social-structural features. I would suggest two hypotheses which could fruitfully be tested in further cross-cultural research:

1. Deference (and, in general, negative politeness) prevails if and where people are in a position of vulnerability or inferiority in a society. Hence women in an inferior, less powerful position than men will be likely to use more negative politeness. However if women are so far inferior as to have no face at all (like children, or beggars, or slaves, who in many societies are treated as having no face), the particular strategies of negative politeness they use will be different than in societies where women are accorded some social esteem.*
2. Positive politeness prevails if and when social networks involve multiplex relationships, that is, members have many-sided relationships with each person they interact with regularly, so that each relationship involves the whole person, or a large part of his/her person.[18] In many societies like Tenejapa, where men dominate the public sphere of life and women stick largely to the domestic sphere,[19] it seems likely that female relationships will be relatively multi-stranded, male ones relatively single-stranded. And where these conditions prevail, positive politeness should be strongly elaborated in women's speech.

NOTES

1. William Labov, *Sociolinguistic Patterns* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1974) chapters 8 and 9; Peter Trudgill, *Sociolinguistics* (London: Penquin, 1974)

*Some evidence for this prediction comes from Indian data: beggars and low-caste members (Harijans) use highly honorific titles to superiors, but otherwise their requests are often made baldly. Thus you hear things like: 'Give us a little cent, oh Lord-God'. (Brown and Levinson, "Politeness Phenomena;" Stephen Levinson, "Social Deixis in a Tamil Village" [Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1977]). This may also be the explanation of Keenan's Malagasy data, where women are said to be *less* polite than men. Her data are from a stratified society of people who were formerly slaves, and now have a monopoly on "high" forms of speech used in politics. The forthrightness of women is socially useful for reprimanding people, for efficiency in bargaining, and so on. And there is some suggestion that women when speaking to women are highly positively polite (Keenan, personal communication).

chapter 5; Peter Trudgill, "Sex, Covert Prestige, and Linguistic Change in the Urban British English of Norwich," in *Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance*, ed. Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1975).

2. *Trudgill, "Sex, Covert Prestige and Linguistics Change," pp. 91-92.*

3. Critiques of this work have been both theoretical and empirical; see for example Betty Dubois and Isabel Crouch, "The Question of Tags in Women's Speech: They Don't Really Use More of Them, Do They?" *Language in Society* 4 (1975):289-94; Penelope Brown, "Women and Politeness: A New Perspective on Language and Society," *Reviews in Anthropology* 3 (1976):240-49; and Philip M. Smith, "Sex Markers in Speech," in *Social Markers in Speech*, ed. Ulaus R. Scherer and Howard Giles (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 271-85.

4. Samuel Martin, "Speech Levels in Japan and Korea," in *Language in Culture and Society*, ed. Dell Hymes (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), pp. 407-15; Roy Andrew Miller, *The Japanese Language* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967); Tazuko Yamanaka Uyeno, "A Study of Japanese Modality: A Performative Analysis of Sentence Particles" (Ph.D. diss. University of Michigan, 1971); Eleanor H. Jorden, "Language–Female and Feminine," in *Proceedings of a U.S.-Japan Sociolinguistics Meeting*, ed. Bates Hoffer (San Antonio: Trinity University, 1974), pp. 57-71.

5. Elinor O. Keenan, "Norm-Makers, Norm-Breakers: Uses of Speech by Men and Women in a Malagasy Community," in *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*, ed. Richard Bauman and Joel Sherzer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 125-43.

6. The notions and labels for positive and negative face derive from Durkheim's positive and negative rites (Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* [London: George, Allen & Unwin, 1915]), partially via Goffman (Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual* (Chicago: Aldine, 1967); also *Relations in Public* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

7. H. P. Grice, "Logic in Conversation," in *Syntax and Semantics, Volume 3*, ed. Peter Cole and Jerry Morgan (New York: Academic Press, 1975), pp. 41-58.

8. *Cf. Brian Stross, "Tzeltal Conceptions of Power," in The Anthropology of Power,* ed. Raymond D. Fogelson and Richard N. Adams (New York: Academic Press, 1977), pp. 271-85.

9. Brown and Levinson, "Politeness Phenomena," 1978.

10. I know of one study that has attempted to do this for English (Susan B. Shimanoff, "Investigating Politeness," in *Discourse Across Time and Space*, Southern California Occasional Papers in Linguistics No. 5, ed. Elinor Keenan and Tina L. Bennett [Los Angeles: University of Southern California Department of Linguistics, 1977], pp. 213-41.), but the methodological problems were substantial and she found no clear differences between the speech of the two sexes.

11. Brown and Levinson, "Politeness Phenomena," 1978.

12. Gregory Bateson, *Naven* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1958.)

13. Trudgill, "Sex, Covert Prestige and Liguistic Change," 1975.

14. Ibid.; Roger Shuy, *Sociolinguistic Research at the Center for Applied Linguistics: The Correlation of Language and Sex*, Georgetown Monographs in Language and Linguistics (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1974).

15. Mary Haas, "Men's and Women's Speech in Koasati," in *Language in Culture and Society*, ed. Dell Hymes (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), pp. 228-33; Edward Sapir, "Male and Female Forms of Speech in Yana," 1929, reprinted in *Selected Writings of Edward Sapir*, ed. David G. Mandelbaum (Berkeley: University of California Press).

16. Compare, for example, Casey Miller and Kate Swift, *Words and Women* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1977); Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley, eds. *Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance* (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1975); Mary Ritchie Key, *Male/Female Language* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1975); Robin Lakoff, *Language and Woman's Place* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), and a great deal of as yet unpublished material.

17. Labov, *Sociolinguistic Patterns*; Trudgill, "Sex, Covert Prestige and Linguistic Change;" Shuy, "Correlation of Language and Sex." See also evidence for South Indian Tamil in Levinson, "Social Deixis."

18. Cf. Elizabeth Bott, *Family and Social Network* (New York: Free Press, 1957).

19. Michelle Rosaldo, "Women, Culture and Society: A Theoretical Overview," in *Women in Culture and Society* ed. Michelle Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), pp. 17-42.