

Lecture 1

In this lecture, we will discuss the following:

1- Why do we study language?

2- Characteristics of Language.

A- Language is a system.

B- Language has the potential to **create new meanings**

C- Language can have multiple functions:

a. Language used **referentially**.

b. Language used **affectively**

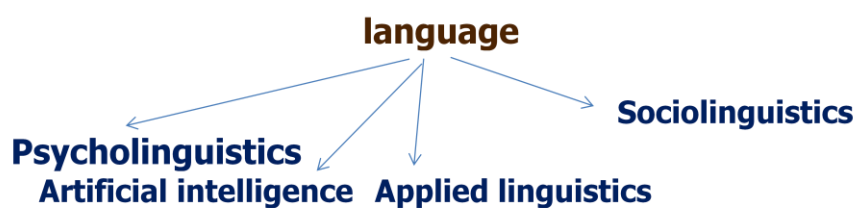
c. Language used **aesthetically**

d. Language used **phatically**.

D- Language is diverse

Why do we study language?

When we study language we discover more about different fields of knowledge:



Psycholinguistics

Definition:

Psycholinguistics: is the study of how a listener recognize words and utterances, or how damage to our brains results in certain kind of language disorders.



Applied Linguistics

A branch of linguistics where we study how to learn and to teach different languages.

Sociolinguistics

The study of the relation between language and society and the different varieties of language people use

Artificial intelligence:

The study of how to make computers more sophisticated

Who is interested in Language?

-Language related issues are discussed in newspapers, television, lectures, etc.

- e.g. complaining about jargon used in classroom
- e.g. coining new words.
- e.g. importance of political speeches, etc.

What is language?

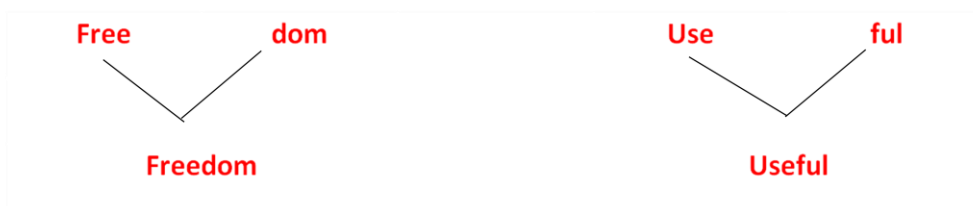
Characteristics of Language.

- 1- Language is a **system**.
- 2- Language has the potential to **create new meanings**
- 3- Language **can have multiple functions**.
- 4- Language is **diverse**

Language is a system.

- **Language** is a systematic way of combining **smaller** units into **larger** units for the purpose of communication:

Ex. unit + unit = lexical items. phoneme + phonemes = lexical items



Ex. syntax

book	Very	This	is	useful
This	book	is	very	Useful

Phonemes, Lexical items, Syntax

Phonemes: the sounds of our language. E.g. /k/, /t/, etc.

Lexical items: the words of our language. E.g. Help, homework, etc.

Syntax: grammatical rules which determine how words can be combined into phrases and sentences:

E.g. The nice book *book the nice
Jane is happy *Is happy Jane

- The use of a star * means that the sentence is ungrammatical.

Language has the potential to create new meanings

E.g.		
Arabic:	أتمتة	يؤتمت
English:	Important Boss	unimportant Bossy

We can easily understand what these new words mean:

- Unimportant = not important
- Bossy = to order people around.

This characteristics distinguishes human language from other languages:

E.g. Birds have very limited range of messages.

Language can have multiple functions:

Language can be used in different ways:

- A. Language used **referentially**.
- B. Language used **affectively**.
- C. Language used **aesthetically**.
- D. Language used **phatically**.

A. Language used **referentially**.

Referential use of language can be found in examples **giving information or instructions** the speaker wants the hearer to do. The purpose is to **transmit accurate or non-ambiguous information**.

Eg.

-Put those papers on the table.

-Open this door.

Your instruction is referential because it gives information about what you want placed (**the papers**) and where you want them placed (**on the table**).

B. Language used **affectively**:

When language is used affectively , the speaker/writer expresses his/her **feelings** or **attitudes**.

Eg. **Wow**, she is very beautiful.
Oh, he is coming!

The affective function of language expresses the speakers' or writers' feelings and attitudes.

C. Language used **aesthetically**

Aesthetic language is usually used in poetry not in science.
Aesthetic language can hold people's interest.

-Language performing aesthetic function is designed to **please the senses** through actual or imagined sounds and through metaphor.

Ex.

Speech is silver silence is gold.

D. Language used **phatically**

The *phatic function* is used to **keep communication lines open** and also keep social relationships well. It helps in maintaining **cohesion** within social groups.

-Refers to the **everyday usage of language**

-Refers to the **small talk between people** to share feelings or establish a mood of **sociability**; phatic language is for the sake of interaction that opens up a social channel.

Ex.

Greetings:

How are you today?

Discussions of the weather:

It is very warm today.

D. Language is **Diverse**

-There is more than one variety of English: English varies between countries.

Eg.

Indian English, American English, etc.

-Language use varies within a country.

Eg.

Classical Arabic and **Modern** Arabic

Formal Arabic and **informal** Arabic.

Lecture 2

In this Lecture, we will discuss the following:

1- Power and language.

-Definition of power

-How can language impose power?

2- Saussure's theory of language.

3- Sample exam questions for lectures (1+2)

Definition of power

Power is The ability of its holders to force compliance or obedience of other people to their will.



Eg. A police office can use **power** to stop criminals or thieves and make them comply with the law.

How can language impose power?

Statistics published by the State of the World Forum (September 2000):

- Number of pages on the World Wide Web: 320,000,000

This means that:

-The English language has the **power** to dominate the the Web. It has become so widespread.

- Percentage of all websites in English: 80

This means that:

If you do not speak a certain language you are excluded from some kind of power.

How can language impose power?

Which language we speak can be pathway to power

Knowing a language is power.

E.g. People who have knowledge (language or an skill) have the power to make you feel ignorant or confused because they have knowledge that you do not have.

E.g. An average person vs. an expert



Saussure' theory of language

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) was a [Swiss](#) linguist whose ideas laid a foundation for many significant developments in linguistics in the 20th century.



Theory: Language as a Representational System

Principles of Saussure' theory of language

As soon as you hear or read a word, you know what concepts it refers to.

Ex. Tree
watch



Saussure divided language into two parts.

1- Langue is 'our [innate] knowledge of the systematic correspondences between sound and meaning which make up our language (including the knowledge of what utterances are possible . . . and what utterances are not).

E.g. * see tomorrow I will
I will see you tomorrow.

2- Parole: is the actual use of language in both speech and writing



Principles of Saussure' theory of language

Signifier and signified


Signifier: the sound sequence which makes up a label

Signified: is the meaning or concept associated with the signified.

Sign: is the correspondence between signifier and the signified. It is the association that binds the signifier and the signified together.



The link between the signified and the signifier is arbitrary

				
English	French	Arabic	Spanish	German
Car	Voiture	سيارة	coche	Auto

Sign partially derive meaning from their relationship with other associated signs.

overcrowded



Crowded



We know the meaning of [overcrowded](#) through its relation with [crowded](#)

Signs do not exist in isolation, but in systems of associative relationship.

White Tulip

Red Tulip



We know the meaning of [white tulip](#) through its association with [red tulip](#).

Sample exam questions: lectures (1 and 2).

Lecture 1

..... is the study of how a listener recognize words and utterances.

- a. Psychosis
- b. Psychotherapy
- c. Psychology
- d. Psycholinguistics

Psycholinguistics is the study of.....

- a. How to describe the sounds of a language.
- b. How to learn languages.
- c. How to teach languages
- d. how a listener recognizes words and utterances.

..... refers grammatical rules which determine how words can be combined into phrases and sentences:

- a. Morpheme
- b. philosophy
- c. Syntax.
- d. Morphology

Theis used to **keep communication lines open** and also keep social relationships well

- a. aesthetic function
- b. phatic function
- c. Referential function
- d. Affective function

There is more than oneof English, eg. Indian English, American English

- a. variety
- b. verb
- c. Language
- d. Terminology

Aesthetic language is usually used innot in science

- a. Mathematics
- b. Physics
- c. Poetry
- d. Morphology

Choose the example that expresses the affective use of language:

- a. It is very hot to day.
- b. *Wow, she is very beautiful*
- c. *Go to the end of the road.*
- d. *Put those books on the table.*

Lecture 2

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) was alinguist

- a. Syrian
- b. Swiss
- c. British
- d. American

Saussure divided language into two parts: langue and

- a. paradox
- b. Pardon
- c. Parole
- d. grammar

.....is the actual use of language in both speech and writing

- a. linguistics
- b. B. language
- c. Competence
- d. Parole

The link between the signifier and the signified is

- a. Regular
- b. Systematic
- c. Arbitrary
- d. Logical

.....is The ability of its holders to force compliance or obedience of other people to their will.

- a. Parole
- b. Language
- c. Power
- d. signifier

Lecture 3

In this Lecture, we will discuss the following:

1- The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The hypothesis refers to two parts:

- A. Linguistic relativity
- B. Linguistic determinism

Chapter 3

1- Language and Politics

2- Ideology

3- Role of Language in establishing ideology

4- Political discourse.

Presupposition

Implicatur

Persuasive language.

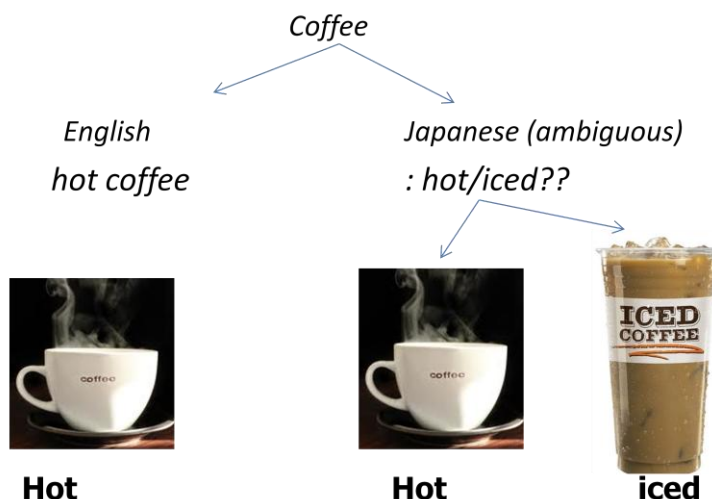
Rhetorical devices

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

- There is a **causative** link between **culture** and **language**.
- A community's **cultural** experience shapes their **language**.

Eg.



2-The hypothesis refers to two parts:

A. Linguistic relativity

B. Linguistic determinism

A. Linguistic relativity

Languages of different **cultures** involve distinct systems of representation which are not necessarily equivalent.

language	Eg. The student bought the book
English	tense distinction is included. Past form of buy (bought)
Turkish	Specifies whether the action was witnessed by somebody or not
Indonesian	tense distinction is optional
Russian	Gender distinction is included

Speakers of different languages refer to different aspects of the world. That is their language affect the way they think.

A. Linguistic relativity

Languages of different cultures involve distinct systems of representation which are not necessarily equivalent.

Eg. Arabic: زارت ناديا صديقتها

English: Nadia visited her friend.

Speakers of different languages refer to different aspects of the world. That is their language affect the way they think.

B. Linguistic determinism: language affects the thought processes of its speakers.

-the language you speak determines the way that you will interpret the world around you.

-Our language determines how we see the world (we can't see things another way)

language and its structures limit and determine human knowledge or thought

-individuals experience the world based on the grammatical structures they habitually use



Chapter 3 **Language and Politics**

What is meant by politics:

Politics is concerned with **power**: the power to **make decisions**, to **control resources**, to **control other people's behaviour** and values.

There is no keeping out of politics. Politics can involve most aspects of life.

Everyday's decisions and politics.

Eg.

In a supermarket:

-Buying some brand of **coffee** rather than another:

When you choose specific brand you make a small contribution to the continued existence of a particular company.

Eg.

-Recycled paper goods or non-recycled paper goods

-Organically grown vegetable or genetically modified vegetables.

-Imported food or food produced in your country.

Politics and Ideology

How to achieve political beliefs.

1- Physical coercion

Associated with dictatorial regimes

2- Legal laws

Associated with democratic regimes

Eg. Laws for car parking, places where you can drink alcohol, etc.

3- Persuasion and consent.

Persuade people to act voluntarily in the way you want

-what you want is what your people want.

To achieve this we need ideology

Ideology

Ideology:

Any set of beliefs which, to people who hold them, appear to be logical and natural.

Questioning the ideology:

- difficult
- challenging
- appears not to make sense
- a price to be paid.

Political Discourse

1- Presupposition

2- Implicature

These are two main tools that can lead the hearer to **make assumptions** about the existence of information that is not made explicit in what is actually said.

Eg.

-Why did you kill your wife?

This sentence presupposes that the listener has really killed his wife.

Presupposition

Presupposition is the background assumption embedded within a sentence or a phrase.

Eg.

We want to set people free. (British conservative politician).

This example presupposes that people are not currently free.

How to use presupposition in a sentence?

1- **Adjectives**, especially comparative adjectives.

Eg. Good better

We need a **better** teacher. (presupposes that the current teacher is not good)

-Fair fairer

The government will introduce a **fairer** funding for schools.

(presupposes that the current funding is not fair).

2- **Possessives**

Eg. We will not talk about Sally's problems any more.

(Presupposes that we have talked before and that Sally has problems.)

3- **Questions instead of statements**

Eg. **Is it not now time to study hard?**

Presupposes that the listener did not study hard.

Eg. **Do not you think that we should make use of our time?**

Presupposes that we have wasted our time?

Implicature.

Implicature leads the listener to infer something that was not explicitly asserted by the speaker.

Characteristics.

- Implicature operates over more than one sentence.
- Implicature depends on shared knowledge between the speaker and the hearer.
- Implicature depends on the surrounding context of the discourse.

Eg.

A: Will Sally be at the meeting this afternoon?

B. Her car broke down.

Implicature: Sally won't be at the meeting.

Lecture 4

In this Lecture, we will discuss the following:

◆ Persuasive language.

The power of Rhetoric

- A. Rhetorical Devices used by Politicians:
- B. Metaphor
- C. Simile
- D. Personification
- E. Euphemism
- F. The Rule of Three
- G. Parallelism
- H. Pronouns

◆ Language and the media

◆ Potential power of the media

◆ Media Language and Power.

- A. Sources of news
- B. Commonsense Discourse
- C. The Power of Change

Persuasive language- the power of rhetoric.

Rhetoric: is the art of using language so as to persuade or to influence others"

Oxford English Dictionary.

Rhetoric : is group of rules that speakers/writers adhere to so that they express themselves with eloquence (using language to best effect).

Rhetorical Devices used by Politicians:

a. **Metaphor:** is a way of comparing two different concepts:

e.g. Sally is an angel.

their house is a palace.

b. **Simile:** asserts that something is similar something else.

e.g. Sally is like an angel.

their house is similar to a palace.

Simile and Metaphor

While a metaphor asserts that something is something else, a simile asserts that something is similar to something else.

Simile

The room was like an oven

Her hair is golden silk.

The sun was like a diamond in the sky

He was like a lion in the battle

Her smile was as bright as the sun.

The night was as black as tar

Metaphor

This room is an Oven

Her hair was golden silk

The sun was a diamond in the sky

He was a lion in battle

Examples showing the use of metaphor/simile in politics

That vast wealth producing engine of the West began to splutter

Margaret Thatcher. 1983

Thatcher talks about the Western economy which she says is an engine.

The airport is already acknowledged as the economic motor of the region'

Graham Stringer, 1997

Personification is a rhetoric device that entails giving human characteristics to inanimate objects or abstract ideas

Eg.

a. Once again the heart of America is heavy. (Us President Lyndon Johnson).

The use of personification in (a) can give the speech a poetic effect.

b. Germany is the bully in the playground. (British TV news 1990s)

The use of personification in (b) has an ideological effect: indicating Germany's strong and influential position in the European Union or its dominance in Europe

Further examples:

c. Germany is the conductor of the orchestra.

d. Germany is the captain of the ship.

Euphemism is a rhetorical device which uses mild or inoffensive language to make something seem more positive than it actually appears

E.g. Sex or Death

Make love sexual intercourse

Die pass away

E.g. Military matters

Clean strikes deadly strikes

Positive effect through the connotation of *clean* which means *healthy*

Decommissioning disarming

Put weapons beyond use surrender

Ethnic cleansing forcible removal of civilians

The term is used to hide the fact of forcing civilians to move out of their homes because they belong to specific ethnic group.

E.g. diplomatic meetings

Free and frank exchange of views flaming row

The rule of Three: a rhetorical device where a statement is divided into three parts or points.

E.g.

That government **of the people, by the people and for the people** shall not
perish from this earth

. (Abraham Lincoln)

The cry of the French Revolution (**liberty, equality, brotherhood**).

Tony Blair claimed that three main commitments of the labour party were **education, education , education.**

Parallelism.

Parallelism: A rhetorical device which expresses several ideas in a series of similar structures.

Politicians use parallel structures when they want to draw attention to a particular part of their message:

E.g.

"we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets. **Winston Churchill** 1940

This can serve to emphasize that

- a. the ideas are equal in importance
- b. and add a sense of symmetry and rhythm,
- c. make the speech more memorable.

Pronouns is a device which can be used by either to emphasize or to obscure responsibility and agency.

E.g.

'We have no choice but to consider retreating combat units as a threat [. . .] Nearly six weeks ago, I said that our efforts are on course'

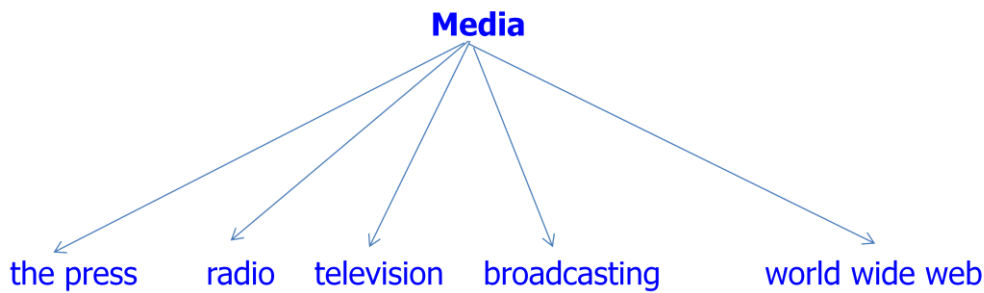
US President George Bush

Why do you think George Bush change from *we* to *I*?

Answer:

He uses *we* when the focus of his speech is relatively controversial, as it is unclear whom *we* refers to. He uses *I* when he is on safer ground and where he claims responsibility for positive achievements.

Language and the media



Importance:

We get our knowledge of the world through media

Potential power of the media

Media can represent a powerful source in society:

- The media can select what counts as news.
- The media can who gets on the television, radio or newspaper.
- Media plays important role in the ways through which information is told or presented
- The media has become an integral part of most people's lives

Media, Language and Power.

Linguistic representation is a level of language use which is concerned with the relation between how a story is told and how this can lead to different view or versions of the same story or event.

Journalist (1)

- narrates the event as they appeared
- gives informative facts,
- states official sources from police and hospitals, etc.
- Reports facts objectively

Journalist (2)

- openly refers to the ethnic community the involved individuals belong to.
- Gives expected incidents.
- Uses unofficial sources. E.g. Friends and personal experience
- Reports facts subjectively

Sources of news

The factuality level of a source is very important.

Examples of unreliable sources:

- A friend of Mr. Carling is reported as saying
- He told me later that

These are examples of third- or fourth-hand source of information because the reported information is difficult to retrieve or verify

Commonsense Discourse

Discourse is used in linguistics with a range of meanings. It can refer to

- Any piece of connected language which contains more than one sentence.
- It refers to conversations.

Commonsense Discourse

The prevailing way that a culture talks about or **represents something is called the dominant discourse**

Ex.

- I want to go to the forest and try to understand what the plants are saying
- I want to go to the forest to be inspired by nature.

The Power of Change

Media can lead to different changes in the society:

1- The use of non-sexist language

Eg. The use of grammatical forms which are **neutral** such as the **third person pronoun** being a non-specific-gender pronoun

Eg: Gender-specific nouns: *fireman*, *chairman*
Gender-neutral nouns: *firefighter*, *chairperson*

Example of sexist language

The athlete should get the appropriate amount of rest before **his** match.

Correction:

The athlete should get the appropriate amount of rest before **his/her** match.

Most job titles that were gender-specific in the past have an equivalent gender-neutral synonym today

Examples:

mailman

mail carrier, postal worker

waitress/waiter

server

saleswoman/salesman

Sales representative, sales clerk

policewoman/policeman

police officer

congressman

congressional representative

chairman

chair, chairperson,

Lecture 5

In this Lecture, we will discuss the following:

Media Voices: accent and Register

variation in register

Public participation in the Media

Language, society and virtual power.

social identity

Netiquette Netiquette

Cyberspace: a socially powerful community?\

Language and gender

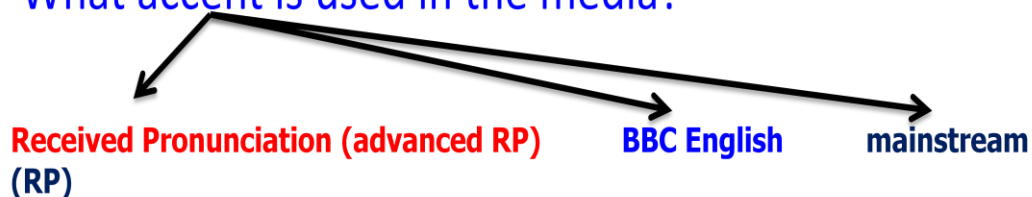
How is English sexist?

Characteristics of Sexist language

Symmetry and asymmetry

Media Voices.

What accent is used in the media?



Received Pronunciation (advanced RP):

refers to the accent used by the educated and the wealthy. It gave no indication of what part of the country the speaker came from

BBC English:

A pronunciation of British English based on the speech of the upper class of southeastern England

Mainstream (RP):

An accent which sounds less formal than advanced RP and is the one that most people in Britain generally hear when they listen to newsreaders on national television.

Variation in Register.

What is Register?

Register is the way that language can systematically vary according to the situation in which it is used.

Variation in Register can be in

- ◆ Sentence structure,
- ◆ Pronunciation
- ◆ Vocabulary

Three factors that determine variation in register.

Field: refers to the subject matter of the discourse

Tenor: *refers to the role being played by the speaker*

Mode: refers to the medium of communication, e.g. speech or writing.

E.G

the weather forecast contains technical vocabulary relating to temperature, high and low pressure, cyclones, etc.,

Field= weather forecast

Tenor = weather reported

Mode = technical vocabulary (temperature, high and low pressure)

a small sun to represent sunshine

arrows for the direction of the wind, etc.

Public participation in the media

What are the reasons for allowing the public to participate in the media. (TV shows)

- 1- This provides the opportunity for democratic debate in the media.
- 2- This can depoliticize some important issues by presenting them for public debate.
- 3- This opens up access to an important public domain for people whose voices and opinions are not usually heard on television.
- 4- This provides a powerful space for the voices of ordinary people to be privileged over the voices of institutional representatives whose opinions and views usually predominate in the media.

Language, society and virtual power

Computer mediated communication (CMC)

This includes different forms of interactions ranging from email to newsgroup

Social identity

In the early days of CMC it was thought that this new medium would result in more democratic communication, because a person's social identity (their gender, ethnicity, age) can be hidden in the virtual world. However, this is not the case as stereotypical interpretations of gendered behaviour still prevail:

So you can disguise your identity on the net, the people you interact with will still make assumptions about who you are based on what you say and how you say it.

Netiquette (short for network etiquette)

Netiquette refers to the rules that attempt to control social interaction in the virtual world (cyberspace).

E.g. There are rules and codes of behavior which have developed in order to control the way members of a community behave as in chat rooms.

Many newsgroups have a FAQ (frequently asked questions) file which sets out what these rules are,

Inappropriate behavior can get you sanctioned, and possibly excluded from, a group.

E.g.

Flaming (aggressive verbal behavior)

spamming (sending unwanted long messages)

Cyberspace: a socially powerful community?

Diverse groups of people who participate in protests and campaigns via the internet, can be socially and politically powerful.

Example

In case a database such as (Marketplace Households) (listing details of people and the items they bought) are released.

- This can result in intense debate about privacy
- The debate is not only in newspapers but across internet newsgroups and bulletin boards.

Language and gender

We will discuss:

- asymmetrical** representations of women and men
- Why language can be considered sexist ?
- Whether women and men use language in different ways

Sex and Gender

Sex refers to biological category, which is usually fixed before birth.

Gender refers to social category, which is associated with certain Behaviour.

Sexist language represents women and men unequally, as if members of one sex were somehow *less completely human*, or *had fewer rights* than members of the other sex.

Examples of sexist language



Characteristics of Sexist language

Sexist language presents stereotypes of women and men sometimes to the disadvantage of men, but more often to the disadvantage of women.

E.g.

The most common stereotype about women's speech is that *women talk a lot*

Men are strong and do all the work.
husband works, wife stays home

-Men still hold more 'high-status' occupations in this society

E.g.

Most presidents around the world are men.

-Men still own more property and earn more than women



How is English sexist?

Sexist language can be discussed in two points:

1- English language system is inherently sexist

2- Some ways of using language are sexist

Point (1)

to what extent English is inherently a sexist language:

Answer:

We look for **symmetry versus asymmetry in the vocabulary or lexis.**

Symmetry and asymmetry

Symmetry

generic	<i>Man</i>
female	<i>woman</i>
male	<i>man</i>
young	<i>child</i>
young female	<i>girl</i>
young male	<i>boy</i>

asymmetry

woman	<i>Miss / Mrs / Ms</i>
man	<i>Mr</i>

adult male = Mr

adult female = Miss, Mrs or Ms

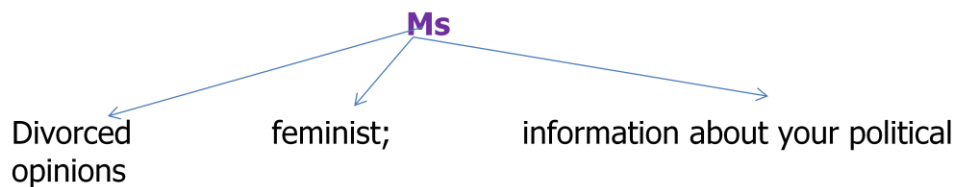
Any woman who gives her preferred title on a form is revealing far more information about herself than a man does.

E.g.

Miss reveals that *she* is unmarried

Mrs indicates that she is married

Ms. does not reveal marital status, in line with title for men



Men do not face this situation as the term Mr does not indicate all the information we find in women

For next lecture, we will discuss the following topic

Some ways of using language are sexist