

**Literature Culture and Media**  
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**Lecture – 60**

- 1. Media and Language**
- 2. Glass Ceiling in Media**

Dear participants, welcome to this final module. In this week we have been discussing some latest developments in the field of cultural studies. We have looked at ‘gamification’ and ‘ludification’ of our culture. We have also looked at body culture studies and how body is important in our society. The composition of body affects the psyche of the people. It also affects the representation of a body through different media.

And at the same time as latest research show even in neutral situations the gender conditioning becomes important when we use language. It is in this context that we would be discussing whether there happen to be certain differences in the way an official communication like an e-mail is affected by the gender cognition of a person or not. There has been a very close interaction amongst language culture in society.

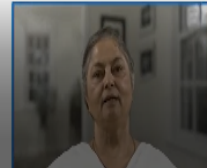
All 3 forces indirect continuously with each other and impact others. Also the different levels of power and recognition within our society and cultures.

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## Media and Language:

### Differences in the use of E-mail by men and women

- Interaction of language, culture and society. Different levels of power and recognition depending on gender, expressed through language:
  - Socialization of girls and boys affect how they communicate: encoding of social behavior is mapped onto language
  - This encoding of cultural norms of socialization is reflected in different social and communicative registers of men and women
- Tannen (1995:138), "Communication isn't as simple as saying what you mean. How you say what you mean is crucial, and differs from one person to the next, because using language is a learned behavior: how we talk and listen are deeply influenced by cultural expectations"




Depend on the gender and then once called mission of gender which simultaneously a cognition of the power structures within the society are expressed in the way we use language. As we have seen in our previous discussions socialization of boys and girls also affects how they communicate as the encoding of social behaviour is mapped in over use of language. This encoding of cultural norms of socializations is reflected.

In different social and communicative registers of men and women. It is pertinent to quote Tannen here who has written that "communication is not as simple as saying what do you mean. How you say what you mean is crucial, and differs from one person to the next because using language is a learned behaviour; how we talk and listen are deeply influenced by cultural expectations".

What Tannen has said is correct about the use of language in official and non-official situations including our oral and written communication and it is equally true in our nonverbal aspects of communication.

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- E-mail -- Digital Communication, faster means of sending e-mails, an official aspect of communication, expected to be gender neutral
  - E-mail as an appropriate forum to test the assumption of different registers of language according to gender
  - Less interruptions in terms of physical contact, aural/oral markers or other interruptions; both genders are relatively free
  - Forum where gender is irrelevant and can only be discerned if the participants voluntarily add their name/gender identity
    - Electronic mail discussion groups exist for every kind of topic imaginable. Have members from different groups; the composition is often heterogeneous; the members seldom meet in real life
- mod12lec60  
 communication happens through e-mail. E-mails postings are generally close to spoken language unless the communication happens in a pre-defined formal set-up
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E-mail is a form of digital communication normally is considered to be independent of certain other weights which we carry along with us. For example, the weights in terms of gender race ethnic identity. This is a very fast means of communication and therefore it is particularly adopted in different official situations. It is also free of several other baggage like in terms of physical contact oral as well as oral markers or other interruptions.

So it is considered that the gender itself would not be modulating it in any way. It is a forum where gender should be irrelevant and gender in any E-mail is normally discerned only if the participants while Intel really disclosed it through their name or gender identity. Electronic mail discussion groups exist for different types of topic here members may have different compositions and therefore compositions are heterogeneous. These members seldom meet each other in real life.

At the same time sometimes it may happen that the gender identity is reflected through name but the name itself can be chosen to indicate deliberately are different gender. E-mail postings are generally close to spoken language. That is the rhythms and rhymes of our spoken language are reflected in the E-mails which we write and at the same time in official procedures one adopts is certain predefined formal set up current in any given situation.

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- Internet
  - In 1996 around 40-49% online users were females as opposed to merely 10% in 1993
  - Safe to say that gender gap of users in computer mediated communication has decreased significantly over the years
- Gender in E-mail Communication
  - Herring (1994: introduction) suggests that "men and women have recognizably different styles in posting to the Internet" and that "women and men have different communicative ethics"
  - His position is dissimilar to the understanding that the internet facilitates interaction which is free from biases of age, gender, race and so on



We can also see that amongst the users of Internet the percentage of women is also growing continually. It is safe to say that the gender gap of users in computer mediated communications has decreased significantly over the years. But still it is a strange to note that the gendered interpretations of language are perceptible even in the E-mails sent by men and women. Herring has noted in his 1994 article.

That men and women have recognizably different styles in postings to the internet and goes on to suggest that women and men have different communicated ethics. His position is different to the common understanding that the internet facilitates interaction and communication which is free of biases regarding age, gender etc.

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- Brigitt Earley refers to the findings of a study conducted by Yahoo Labs which analyzed more than 16 billion e-mails from 2 million participants over the course of several months ("How Men and Women Email Differently"\*). Language and style choices in writing a mail, its length, and the time one takes to respond to it
  - Theoretically, internet communication offers an equal opportunity to communicate
    - Pre-existence and adherence to different communicative registers continues to be a marker of difference
    - "if women use language that is considered weaker, more frivolous or somewhat less powerful than men, they will continue to be relegated to secondary status by men" (Rossetti)
    - "if men use a more aggressive, competitive, dominating style, they will continue to remain in power" (ibid)
- \*https://www.realsimple.com/work-life/technology/men-women-email



Brigitt Earley has referred to the findings which was conducted by Yahoo Labs and which analysed more than 16 billion e-mails sent by more than 2 million participants over the course of several months. It is found out in these analysis that language and the style choices in writing a mail the length of the mail and also the time one takes to respond to it are dominated by the gender of the senders.

Theoretically of course internet communication offers an equal opportunity to communicate to all the users but its still pre-existence and adherence to different communicative registers in terms of gender appropriateness continues to be a marker of difference. Rossetti says that if women use language that is considered weaker more frivolous or somehow less powerful than men they will continue to be relegated to a secondary status by men.

And similarly we can say that if men use are more aggressive competitive and dominating style they will automatically continue to remain in power.

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- Paolo Rossetti: different registers of communication (for different users) are both social and linguistic and are played out at all levels: at home, work, meetings, social occasions, and in personal, casual and formal contacts
  - Girls use language to negotiate closeness/intimacy; cooperation to build rapport; collaboration-oriented approach
  - Boys use language to negotiate status in a group; competition-oriented approach
- Herring (1994:3-4) proposes that “the male style is characterized by adversiality - put-downs, strong, often contentious assertions, lengthy and/or frequent postings, self-promotion, and sarcasm”
- In contrast, the female style is characterized by:
  - "supportiveness and attenuation", expressions of appreciation, mod12lec60ks, negotiation; "as well as apologizing, expressing doubt, asking questions, and contributing ideas in the form of suggestions."



Rossetti also remarks that there are different registers of communication which are both social and linguistic and they are played at all levels at home in work situations in meetings social occasions in casual, personnel as well as formal context. Rossetti has suggested that girls use language normally to negotiate a certain sense of closeness and intimacy. They seek cooperation to build repo collaboration oriented approach can be seen in their writings.

On the other hand, boys normally use language to negotiate their status in the group and therefore their communication has a competition oriented approach. Herring has also suggested that the main style is characterized by adversiality put downs a strong often contentious assertions, lengthy or frequent postings are there at the same time. We find that in the E-mails sent by men the idea of self-promotion as well as the use of sarcasm is more palpable.

In contrast, they style of female senders is characterized by supportiveness and attenuation. expressions of appreciation thanks, negotiations would be there as well as there may be some more exhibits in terms of language which show an expression of doubt asking questions to confirm their own opinions and contributing ideas in the form of suggestions.

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- Is it possible that as people become accustomed to the virtual culture of computer mediated communication; this female/male dichotomy in registers and style of communication can become irrelevant over time?
- Rossetti : Research on use of different styles by men and women
  - Analysis of e-mails on e-mail discussion groups
  - 100 messages selected arbitrarily; emails with gender neutral names were excluded (only way to determine gender; pitfall: no way to determine that name used represents the gender of the person)
  - Emails collected on a variety of topics: politics, religion, civil rights, ecology, martial arts, dog training, single parent problems, software engineering, gardening, bird watching etc.
  - Analysis identified expressions of aggressiveness and supportiveness



So this water down approach is often associated with the E-mail writings of women. But is it possible that as people become accustomed to the virtual culture of computer mediated communication the dichotomy in registers in terms of gender and these differences in the style of communication become irrelevant over passage of time. Because in the absence of any visual markers it would perhaps be easier to negotiate.

The different genders and their approaches to communication. Rossetti has analysed E-mails on E-mail discussion groups and hundred messages were selected arbitrarily E-mails with gender neutral names were excluded because in E-mail communication in the absence of any independent names are the only way to determine gender. At the same time there was a pit fall also associated with this type of his study.

Because there is no way to determine whether the name which has been used by a sender is actually representative of the gender of the person or not. These E-mails were collected on a variety of topics, politics, religion, civil rights, dog training, single parent problems, birdwatching, gardening etc and analyses identified expressions of aggressiveness and supportiveness.

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- Samples of language expressing ideas and opinions were analyzed. The research finds a clear difference in the way men and women use language
  - Men wrote messages with aggressive expressions far more frequently than their female counterparts
  - Men were likely to use sarcastic expressions and resort to personal attacks and/or abusive language
  - Women made use of expressions of support and negotiation
  - Men seemed more interested in expressing their personal views as authoritative
  - Women seemed more interested in the discussion itself
- Clear gender difference in styles in e-mails posted to electronic discussion groups
  - The different registers of speech (encoded through different ways of modification) are replicated in a computer-mediated interaction
  - Men use technology as an opportunity to further their own influence



Samples of language expressing ideas and opinions were also analysed and the research found a very clear difference in the way men and women use language in their digital conversations and official E-mails. It was found that men wrote messages with aggressive expressions far more frequently than their female counterparts. Men were also likely to use sarcastic expressions and resort to personal attacks.

And also use an abusive language woman normally made use of expressions of support and negotiation. Men seem to be more interested in expressing their personal views with a certain authoritative tone whereas women seemed more interested in the discussion itself rather than positing their personal opinions. So clear gender differences is also perceptible in style in E-mails which have been posted to electronic discussion groups.

In regardless of physical contact, the different registers of communicative speech are replicated in a computer mediated interaction also. So it can be set on the basis of this study that men use technology as an opportunity to further their own influence as a way of expanding their authority and power.

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- “Language styles online are different, to a certain extent, because they reflect the different goals of the users” (Lucy Cockcroft)
- Approach of both the genders to new electronic technology is ‘congruent with the socialization and integration of males and females into society’
- Yahoo study: Men send slightly faster and shorter replies than women. On average, a woman’s response has a median length of 30 words and a median response time of 24 minutes; men’s messages have a median length of 28 words and a median response time of 28 minutes.
- In emails, women use exclamation marks significantly more often than men. Though initially academics assumed women were just more excitable, a 2006 study discovered that women do it to come across as friendly, as male colleagues often are not prepared for assertiveness in women.

So online language styles are different and in a way they also reflect the different goals of the users. The approach of both genders to new electronic technology is congruent with the socialization and integration of males and females into society. We can again refer to the Yahoo study. It had found that men sent slightly faster and shorter replies than women. On an average, a woman’s response has median length of thirty words and immediate response time of twenty four minutes.

Whereas men’s messages have median length of 28 words and median response time of 28 minutes. It is also said and substantiated by studies that in writing their mails women use exclamation marks significantly more often than men. Initially academics felt that maybe women were using more exclamation marks as they were excitable about the technology but in 2006 study discovered.

And suggested that woman do it to introduce deliberately a redundancy in their speech act. So, that they come across as a more friendly person. Often women were forced to adopt this particular strategy as their male colleagues were not prepared for assertiveness in women’s communication.

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- The differences in men's and women's styles create a persistent "credibility gap," where women are credited with less authority and power than men (Lucy Cockcroft)
- In 1983, the sociologist Arlie Hochschild first defined the term "emotional labor"
  - As opposed to the physical and mental work we do – and are paid for – in our jobs, emotional labor is extra. It is the process of managing our feelings, and the expression of these feelings, in order to do our job and satisfy its emotional requirements
- Regulation of emotions during professional interactions
  - Exclamation marks, and the other ways we express our emotions in emails, can be a form of emotional labor for men and women

It is interesting to refer to Lucy Cockcroft suggestions here. She has suggested that the difference in men's and women's style create a persistent 'credibility gap' where women are credited with less authority and power than men even though they may be occupied re same official situation. In 1983 have very interesting term was coined by the sociologist Arlie Hochschild who had used this term emotional labour.

And suggested that as opposed to the physical and mental work we do and we are paid for in our jobs emotional labour is an extra component. Emotional Labour is the process of managing our feelings and the expression of these feelings in order to do our job. And satisfy the emotional requirements of the job including the requirements of our colleagues. It also incorporates regulation of emotions during professional interactions.

Exclamation marks and the other ways, we express our emotions in E-mails can be a form of emotional labour for men as well as women.

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- Deborah Tannen : *You're The Only One I Can Tell: Inside The Language Of Women's Friendships. Talking from 9 to 5: Women and Men at Work, You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*
- Women tend to use a range of different features in online communication, capital letters, exclamation marks, repetition of letters
- Tannen coined the term "enthusiasm constraint" – meaning that without a certain degree of enthusiasm present, we immediately assume a person is unenthusiastic or unhappy
  - If you texted your friend "Fancy dinner?" and they replied "Sure.", you might be offended



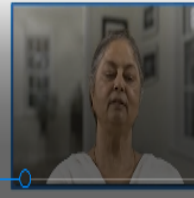
Deborah Tannen has written several books in the context of official communication and related differences between men and women. Here popular and well research books are *You are the Only One I can Tell: Inside the Language of Women's Friendship*, *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*, but most pertinent book from the point of view of studying E-mails written by women is *Talking from 9 to 5: Women and Men at work*.

She has suggested that women tend to use a range of different features in online communication. We have already referred to exclamation marks but then they also use more capital letters. They also repeat certain letters so Tannen has coined the term 'enthusiasm constraint'. It means that without a certain degree of enthusiasm present we immediately assume a person is enthusiastic or not.

She has given this example in which if one takes our friend and ask 'fancy dinner' and the friend simply says 'sure'. Then the sender maybe offended because the enthusiasm constraint was there.

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- Yet Tannen says emotional constraint affects women more than men. “These expectations for written communication are parallel to what has been observed in girls’ and women’s spoken communication”
- “Our intonation is more marked – goes up and down in more extreme ways; our facial expressions are more marked – our smiles are broader, we smile more; and we express more enthusiasm – ‘I’m SO glad; I’m SO sorry.’”
- Tannen says the reasons we do this are cultural
- In a study she found that Greek men and women expected a certain level of enthusiasm from conversations, or they interpreted the speaker to be insincere. In the same study, Americans mod12lec60 Greeks to be histrionic when using their expected level of enthusiasm.



Tannen says emotional constraints affects women more than men. “These expectations for written communication are parallel but what has been observed in girls and women’s spoken Communication”. “Our intonation is more marked goes up and down in more extreme ways. Our facial expressions are more marked our smiles and broader. We smile more and we express more enthusiasm. Oh I am so glad, I am so sorry”. And Tannen says that the reasons behind it are cultural. She has given the example of the differences between the Greek and American culture whereas in Greek culture it is considered to be a norm to express our emotions and enthusiasms vocally and verbosely in communication it is looked down upon by the Americans and because of these differences a cultural misunderstanding may be there.

Tannen idea is there that because the cultural conditioning of men and women is different. Therefore, these differences occur in the way we approach our written digital communication.

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## Implications

- Same mode of communication can be perceived differently by the users
- Gender and other socio-cultural factors are important dimensions in analyzing how users relate to, perceive and use a certain medium
- Need for including gender in IT diffusion models -- since gender is an important factor in communication, sensitive work environments should be created
- Organizational training on use of communications media
- Perceived social presence of e-mail depends on gender
- Women view it as having a higher social presence; higher value for women, amenable to feminine discourse patterns
- User-friendliness of the medium makes it particularly sensitive



The implications are also easy to make out here. Some modes of communication can be perceived differently by the users and gender and other social cultural factors are important dimensions in analysing how users relate to or perceive a certain medium. It can also be suggested that there is a need in different office situations to use IT diffusion models. Since gender is an important factor in communication sensitive work environment has to be created.

Organization training on how to use communications in official digital media can also be planned. It becomes obvious on the basis of different studies that the perceived social presence of E-mail depends on the gender. Women view it as having a higher social presence. It has a higher value for woman and they want to be amenable in their discourse. So user friendliness of the medium makes it particularly sensitive also.

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## Glass Ceiling

- Do these cultural patterns, which are also reflected in linguistic choices, hamper the career growth of women? Concept of Glass Ceiling
- First used by Marilyn Loden, an American writer and management consultant, during a 1978 speech, the metaphor denotes invisible and covert discriminatory patterns of promotion, whereas the written policies are non-discriminatory
- In 1991, a 21 member Glass Ceiling Commission was created by the U.S. Congress to study these barriers and to suggest ways to dismantle them
- Presence of women in Boards/ Decision making Bodies
- Gender pay gap
  - Related phenomena of glass escalator – about how more men are joining work areas previously dominated by women – nursing, teaching – and are given steep rise within hierarchies



Also this discussion brings us to another component and this is the idea of ‘glass ceiling’. Do these cultural patterns which are reflected in our linguistic choices hamper the career growth of women and it is when women started to ask this questions and were confused about the answers that the concept of glass ceiling was started. It was first used by Marilyn Loden an American writer and management consultant during in 1978 speech the metaphor denotes invisible and covert discriminatory practices of promotion. Whereas the written policies remained to be non-discriminatory. In 1991, a twenty one member glass ceiling commission was created by the US Congress to study these barriers and to suggest ways to effectively dismantle them. Glass ceiling is often perceived on the basis of the absence of women in boards and in similar decision making bodies where their representation remains to be only a token one.

It also leads us to review the questions like gender pay gap and also sensitizes us to another related phenomena which has been named as ‘glass escalator’. Glass escalator unlike glass ceiling is related about those men who are joining work areas which were previously dominated by women for example nursing or teaching. And they are given a steep price within these hierarchies which were traditionally governed by women.

So this concept of glass ceiling alerts us to the constraints which we have in our contemporary society owing to gender differences. So in this week we have looked at different issues which are

emerging in the area of cultural studies, issues which are still evolving, issues which are alerting us to further possible changes also. Thank you.