

THE IMPACT OF GENDER ON POLITENESS AND COMMUNICATION IN IVORIAN DEBATES

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Abstract: The current paper aims at investigating the impact of gender on politeness and communication in Ivorian debates. In addition, this investigation attempts to clarify the domains affected by the impacts of gender on politeness and communication, and the reasons arising from them. In order to achieve the goals of the paper, the researcher resorted to an Ivorian TV debate show named «ON SE DIT LES GBÊ". The tools for this study were based on an analytical approach and its three tables categorized as rude responses, interruptions, and sarcasm. After the analysis of the data, the results showed that the influence of politeness in speech from Ivorian males and females involves the participants in the interaction, from both genders and promotes respect and successful communication. Differences in the language use of men and women in speech also determine the group of listeners and their responses.

Keywords: Politeness, Gender, Communication, Ivorian, Speech

L'IMPACT DU GENRE SUR LA POLITESSE ET LA COMMUNICATION DANS LES DÉBATS IVOIRIENS

Résumé : Le présent article vise à étudier l'impact du genre sur la politesse et la communication dans les débats ivoiriens. De plus, cette enquête tente de clarifier les domaines touchés par les impacts du genre sur la politesse et la communication, et les raisons qui en découlent. Afin d'atteindre les objectifs de cette étude, le chercheur a eu recours à une émission télévisée ivoirienne de débat dénommée "ON SE DIT LES GBÊ". Les outils de cette étude étaient basés sur une approche analytique et ses trois tableaux classés en « réponses grossières », « interruptions » et « sarcasmes ». Après l'analyse des données, les résultats ont montré que l'influence de la politesse dans le discours, de la part des Ivoiriens, hommes et femmes, implique les participants dans l'interaction, des deux sexes et favorise le respect et une communication réussie. Les différences dans l'utilisation de la langue par les hommes et les femmes dans le discours déterminent également le groupe d'auditeurs et leurs réponses.

Mots-clés : Politesse, Genre, Communication, Ivoirien, Discours

Introduction

Many sociolinguists have recently been interested in language and its constant change. A language is a system of signs consisting of concepts, labels, and gender-appropriate terms. Language also has a real impact on how we perceive and see things. Although the language we use every day is seen only as a means of communication, language is also a means of socialization and a means of maintaining attitudes and values. Gender is a concept for identifying differences between men and women in terms of sociocultural influences. Gender is the spiritual and cultural interpretation of the differences between men and women. Gender is typically used to describe the division of roles deemed appropriate for

males and females. There is a lot of ambiguity and misunderstanding about the terms "gender" and "sex" in society, but the two terms actually have different meanings. R. Nugroho (2008) argues that gender is a distinction between female and male roles in which social and cultural structures are shaped and not due to structures conferred at birth. If "sex" is something we are born with, "gender" is born as an understanding that grows and develops in society. Gender is the sociocultural aspect of a person as male or female. An aspect of gender leads to (general) gender roles. This is the hope that determines how women and men should think, act and feel. For D. Tannen's (1990) genderlect theory, women listen carefully to others, express their feelings, and communicate to build relationships. Women also like expressing their emotions both when speaking in public and in private conversations. However, men are generally involved in conversations in which they seem stronger, more independent, and more in control. For instance, men may interrupt to get attention, but avoid asking questions because the conversational initiative will shift to the other side of the conversation. Genderlect theory aims at showing the differences in language use between men and women and help us know and understand how others communicate. J. Coates (2015) conducted various studies on the effect of speaker gender on linguistic diversity and showed that some speech is preferred only by women and some is preferred only by men. For example, in interactions between men and women, women generally ask more questions, speak politely, and interrupt less than men. And contrary to the myth that women speak more than men, some studies show that men listen less and talk more than women (Catalan, 2003:55).

According to a study by J. Coates (2015), in English, the language used by the male group is different from the language used by the female group. These differences exist in all aspects of language, including vocabulary, grammar, and discourse. When dealing with language, it is assumed that both groups speak differently. These differences tend to put the male group in a higher and more dominant position, while the female group in a subordinate and dependent position. Female groups are expected to be milder (ladylike) than male groups (R. Lakoff, 1973). Women are more chatty and gossipy than men, speak more politely, do not curse, and use more adjectives (reflecting an emotional rather than a rational disposition), and are thought to have less control over vocabulary than men (J. Coates, 2015). Men and women, cannot live without communication. The lack of communication and consideration can create false impressions and lead to negative consequences. People therefore need to find a middle ground to achieve healthy communication, and this study shows that that middle ground lies in communication and politeness. It is also done by analyzing the three categories of interruptions, rude replies and sarcasm. The purpose of this research is to explore the effects of gender on politeness and communication among Ivorian males and females and clarify differences in language use between them. Thus, the research questions are as follows : how does gender affect politeness and communication among Ivorian males and females? What are the differences between Ivorian women and men's language use? There are five sections to this investigation. The first section is the introduction which includes the research problem, purpose, significance, and organization of the study. The second part is the literature review, including some previous studies on the issue of politeness and genderlect; the third part is the theoretical framework and methodology consisting of the key related theories, and the method of analysis used to conduct this study. Then, the findings of the research will be discussed in the fourth part. Finally, the last part is the conclusion of the whole study.

1. Review of literature

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness is a perpetual cycle of giving and taking among all communities, whether or not they are isolated from the contemporary world. The theory of politeness was divided into two types: positive face and negative face. Positive face refers to the constant and positive self-image people have and the part of them that seeks other people's approval. Negative face refers to the claim to territories, rights to non-distraction or interruption, and personal domains. The appropriateness or rudeness of the material and the recipient are tied to societal norms while using each type. By examining speech in a variety of contexts, J. Holmes, and Meyerhoff, M. (1999) have provided the most detailed and useful narrowing of linguistic politeness, particularly when it comes to communication between the sexes. She also draws the conclusion that women are gentler listeners because they are sensitive to their partners' sentiments, whereas men are more focused on gaining the upper hand in a conversation. According to R. Clift (1999), irony breaks into two branches, with sarcasm being one of them. Irony has two main characteristics: it is a generic phrase that encompasses sarcasm, and it is a linguistic play that is offered by a speaker who lacks experience and animosity. The speaker's perspective needs to be examined more in order to determine whether the speaker is conscious of their use of irony and whether their speech contains any aggressiveness or sentiment. R. Clift clarified that Sarcasm is designed as an aggressive weapon against another party in communication, whereas irony does not always imply this. He also described irony as a sort of sarcasm.

According to an empirical psycholinguistic research by C. Lee and Katz from 1998, listeners perceive aggression as the dividing line between sarcasm and irony. The use of emotive terms by speakers when combining both irony and sarcasm is oddly enough, highly fascinating. Both sexes prefer various conversational emphases, according to Coates' (2004) research. Women tend to choose collective conversational styles that express support for various speakers and significantly stress the other person's support in most western nations. But when it comes to men, their style of discussion sometimes comes across as competitive and places more emphasis on individualism and a hierarchical relationship than on empathetically listening to and supporting the other person. In contrast to women, men have not been extensively examined, according to Coats (2016). In the past, the terms "man" and "individual" may be used interchangeably, but more lately, concerns about men and manliness have surfaced, and there have been more studies on men as they embark on a quest to understand themselves and focus on what defines or labels them as men. Women were always thought to have a different perspective, unique brain science, and a different love, career, and family life than men. The positive side of this is that women were able to converse and be studied outside of the system of oppression and lack of authority, which strengthened their language ability, qualities, and appreciation for women's speaking abilities. Communication is a skill that is developed and enhanced every time we speak, not one that is greatly influenced by gender.

2. Theoretical framework and methodology

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The main theories used for the analysis of this study are genderlect theory by Deborah Tannen (1993) and politeness theory by P. Brown and S. Levinson (1987).

-Genderlect Theory

The underlying premise of this theory is that communication between men and women differs. The idea is that these genders should be viewed from a cross-cultural standpoint because they utilize language differently. Genderlect is a dialect that is used by people of various genders to communicate. Initially, Deborah Tannen presented the theory of genderlect in her 1990 book "You just don't understand." The 1981 book "Women and Men Speaking" by Kramarae also laid the groundwork for genderlect. The development of genderlect was influenced by sociocultural and semiotic practices. This theory's foundation is a cross-cultural perspective, which contends that language is an essential component of culture and aids in the interpretation of various signs and the extraction of meaning. The genderlect facilitates comprehension of various genders' distinctive communication vocabularies and communication methods. The notion holds that men and women speak different dialects of the same language, which can cause misunderstandings and contradictions. Women are more prone to speak with others and build their communication on emotions in order to connect with them. Men are often seen as competitive and autonomous since they frequently engage in dialogue to obtain a special status. In general, this theory aids in comprehending the variations between men and women's communication styles, as well as the linguistic patterns they employ to accomplish their objectives. The fundamental use of this theory is to clarify how communication differences can result in misunderstandings, miscommunication, and other problems.

-Politeness Theory

The politeness theory is a notion that first surfaced within the pragmatic linguistics paradigm. According to this theory, specific methods are used by the interlocutors to ensure effective communication. These techniques allow for the creation of a communication environment that is as comfortable as possible. The works "Politeness: Some Universals on Language Usage" by P. Brown and S. Levinson presented the core concepts of the politeness theory. The writers used the concept of "face" as the foundation of their theory, drawing on the writings of American sociologist E. Goffman (1967). It depicts two opposing human needs: the need to have one's own independent point of view and some measure of relative freedom of opinion (the "negative face"), and the desire to be accepted and valued by the interlocutor (the "positive face"). As a result, politeness is defined as the capacity for individuals to employ interaction techniques in response to communicative circumstances. In order to construct their theory progressively, Brown and Levinson look at each communicant's activity from the standpoint of a threat that person might face. The authors' argument holds that when communicating, people have a tendency to shield their own faces, which prevents them from being plain and direct. This foundation allows us to distinguish between the methods of positive politeness (such as showing interest or sympathy) and negative politeness (such as apologizing or expressing pessimism). Additionally, while measuring face-threatening activities, three fundamental socio-cultural factors are taken into account: social distance between interlocutors, the extent of their respective influence, and ranking. (J. Holmes, 2006). Scholars from other scientific disciplines turned their attention

to the thorough theory put out by the researchers. The idea was utilized, for example, to compare speaking acts across cultures and to study gender and social psychology.

2.2. Methodology

-Method of the Study

The current investigation was conducted using a quantitative analytical method. While the analytical technique provides additional information that deepens comprehension with regard to the explanations of the outcomes from the analyst's point of view, the quantitative approach provides information that explores the study's questions.

-Population and Sample of the Study

Sequences of debates between Ivorian men and women that took place in Cote d'Ivoire make up the population of this study. We focused on an Ivorian TV show called "ON SE DIT LES GBÊ ". "ON SE DIT LES GBÊ!" is a debate show in which all social issues are discussed and all viewpoints are expressed. The show's host, journalist B. Guigré, has four guests each day whose opinions differ on a specific topic in order to share their experiences. An "expert" on the subject will also be on hand to provide commentary, explain, or even solve any problems that arise during the program. The choice of the debates we analyzed took into account those in which we have the presence of both genders, male in a party and female in the other. The debates included impolite behavior like interruptions, rude responses, and sarcasm. To determine how men and women use politeness in their conversational themes, they were examined and studied.

-Instrument of the Study

To make the collection of the data easy, an observation sheet was used (see appendix). While listening to the different debates, we completed the observation sheet. It consists of three sections. The first section was about the theme of the debate. In the second section, the sequence of the interaction we had to examine was written down. Finally, in the last section a checklist was broken down into the areas for this investigation (interruptions, rude responses, and sarcasm). After analysis, a cross was drawn in the appropriate area (interruption, rude response or sarcasm) Words and phrases were counted separately for each category as separate units. Each discussion has three categories, with a male and female designation for each. When it came across any of these categories, we edited the dialogues and filled them in according to gender. By looking at characteristics including non-violent communication, different kinds of politeness, and genderlect attributes, the results show how gender affects manners and communication.

-Data Analysis

To examine the data, the following steps were taken: The information was organized based on whether the responses were delivered by men or women. At this phase, the material is investigated using Tannen's (1993) theory of gender disparities in topic selection. The data is presented in a single table that includes an analysis of the three researched categories (interruptions, harsh reactions, and sarcasm) as well as their units. Furthermore, the table includes the frequency and percentage of each unit, as well as the total frequencies and percentages for both males and females. Once analyzed with Tannen's (1993) gender difference theory and P. Brown and S. Levinson's politeness theory, the number of

interruptions, rude responses, and sarcastic responses that men and women make on a given occasion explain that sometimes you make plans. , especially stylistic strategies.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 : Occurrences of the different categories by males and females in the debates

GENDERS	CATEGORIES		
	Interruption	Rude responses	Sarcasm
Males	11	14	09
Females	05	07	10
Total	16	21	19

Table 2 : Frequencies of the different categories by males and females in the debates

GENDERS	CATEGORIES		
	Interruption	Rude responses	Sarcasm
Males	68.75	66.66	47.36
Females	31.25	33.33	52.63
Total	100	99.99	99.99

3.1. Politeness according to Interruption

The information acquired from the contents of the speeches was organized into the preceding tables (tables 1 and 2). They were studied quantitatively and analytically in order to answer the examination questions and establish the scope of this inquiry. The current section analyzes the categories and their units. It gives light on the most commonly utilized categories by both men and women. Based on the statistical study, we distinguished the percentage disparities between Ivorian males and females in several categories. As a result, when presenting these findings, we took into account the replies to the study's questions. The first table contains information on the occurrences of the various categories by Ivorian males and females in the Ivorian debates. As for the table number two, it explains the disparities in frequencies and percentages in all categories and items in those debates by the same males and females. According to the table above, sixteen (16) cases of interruption were noted after the observation of the Ivorian debates. It clearly appears that Ivorian males use interruption more than Ivorian females. Among the sixteen instances of interruption, the result indicates that the overall number of interruption was higher for males which was eleven (11) representing (68.25%) while in female usage of language was five (05), that is (31.25 %). For example, let's consider some of the cases of interruption made by males (from number 1 to 4) and females (from number 5 to 6):

1. (*Gerer bizi c'est quoi ? c'est comme baka*)
 - **Female** : Ecoute-moi, écoute-moi.....
 - **Male** : Ne vous rabaissez pas en tant que femme. (interrupting the female)

2. (*Les hommes doivent ils regarder des Novelas ?*)
 - **Female**: Non non attends....
 - **Male** : Non mais je pense qu'il faut dire les choses réalistes. (interrupting the female)

3. (*Boite de nuit à 15 ans ? Hors de questoin.*)
 - **Female** :Ils disent des insolences.....
 - **Male**: Mais attention, c'est l'éducation qu'on porte hein (interrupting the female)

4. (*En Cote d'Ivoire on rit de tout*)
 - **Female** :....Ya des gens qu'on ne peut pas attacher...
 - **Male** : critiquer et puis attacher c'est pas pareil hein (interrupting the female)

5. (*Les hommes doivent ils regarder des Novelas*)
 - **Male**: Sery, c'est de quel genre de culture tu veux parler d'abord ?
 - **Female** : Eh, laissons affaire de cultu là (Interrupting the male)
 -

6. (*Gerer bizi c'est quoi ? c'est comme baca*)
 - **Male**: Il ya des femmes qu'on prime, mais vous on ne peut jamais vous primer.
 - **Female** : maintenant, excuse-moi...(Interrupting the male)

The conclusions of this investigation correspond with those of West and Zimmerman (1983), who state that 75% of interruptions (21 of 28) were incidences of men interrupting women, and that silence indicates dominance. This study also agrees with the findings of Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) on the structure of the conversation, and the result of male interrupting female (68.75%) clearly justifies that males interrupt more to regain control of the conversation, and females tend to listen more by using the silent device to exercise the dominant part of the debate. This has a significant impact on communication between men and women, causing them to focus on how not to be interrupted rather than the way to convey the information. Interrupting a discussion is seen as a violation of the rules of communication. According to Lakoff (1990), interruption can be perceived as an aggressive speech act, and the above table shows that 68.75% of males interrupt females and 31.25% of females interrupt males. This result reveals that in this case, the male character was more aggressive toward the female figure in order to express his opinions and protect himself through interruption. Interrupting other speakers is obviously a bad practice that leads to the speaker becoming a conversational bully.

3.2. *Politeness according to rude responses and sarcasm*

Language is a means of communicating emotions, social relationships, and facts. In this investigation, politeness is defined as a disposition that demonstrates good concern for interlocutors. This concept is based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) definition of politeness as displaying concern for people, demonstrating warmth for the addressee through good politeness behavior. Using this criteria, interrupting, unpleasant comments, and sarcasm to the opponent are examples of negative politeness in the Ivorian discussions we naturally saw. Positive politeness, on the other hand, includes refraining from interrupting, unpleasant answers, and sarcasm. Based on the results in this study, men tend to give more rude responses than women. The tables above show that the female figure gave 7 rude responses (33.33%) while the male character doubled this number; that is, they gave 11 rude responses (66.66%). These are some examples of rude responses by Ivorian males (7-8) and females (9) according to the data:

7. (*Gérer bizi c'est quoi ? c'est comme baca*)
- **Female** : ...les femmes souffrent. Tu le sais. On doit les primer...
 - **Male** : ...Ya des femmes qu'on prime. Mais vous on ne peut jamais vous primer. Qui va vous présenter ?
8. (*Je ne cotise pas pour quelqu'un qui ne cotise pas pour moi*)
- **Female** : ...Moi je le fais pour l'amour de mon cœur...
 - **Male**: ...si je suis content je vais te donner l'argent. Si je ne suis pa content aussi je ne te donne rirn ...
9. (*Tu m'as rendu service contente-toi de mon merci*)
- **Male**:... ils n'habitent pas chez lz pasteur...
 - **Female** :...Donc toi a part transport tu n'en as pas besoin quoi ? tu n'as pas de besoin dans toi ta vie là...

Contrary to the categories of interruption and rude responses in which the number of occurrences and frequencies of males is higher than that of females, the results from the tables show that the category of sarcasm is dominated by females (52.63%). Sarcasm was solely employed by the female figure in this investigation, as a safe tool to make her argument in an indirect way, rather than offering a straightforward answer, as males like to do. When the masculine character assaults with rudeness, the female responds with sarcasm. Furthermore, men in this situation rely on spontaneous reactions and less sarcasm because they talk in a direct manner, therefore the male figure used less sarcasm in his debates, but concentrated on rude responses to divert the female figure's attention away from the themes that she attacked him with. This is an instance of sarcasm uttered by women :

10. (*c'est le bon mari qui fait la bonne épouse*)
- **Female** : ya des moments quand on parle et qu'il ne comprend pas, on prend le bâton et on tape dessus.
 - **Male** : Donc tu bats ton homme alors....
 - **Female** : Non, c'est une manière de parler

In this example of sarcasm, we can observe that the female, in a sarcastic way says that she is going to beat her husband with a stick if that man bahaves badly. In a nutshell, she means that the role of a woman is to improve the behaviour of her husband so that he becomes a good man.

Conclusion

Men and women are thought to be linguistically different. We use a variety of communication skills in everyday conversations. This investigation proves that there are real differences between men and women when it comes to conversational interruptions, rude responses, and sarcasm. Although the results of this study may be quite limited, they do suggest that Ivorian male and female individuals may behave differently when a conversation is interrupted during a debate, or when they receive a rude answer or sarcasm. According to the results of this paper, we found that men attempted to interrupt the conversation more often than women in the debates. When we pay more attention to context, we can accurately identify interruptions based on the nature of the topic, the topic chosen, and the speaker and

recipient. After observing and listening to the debates, we discovered that females have stronger speech and better expressiveness than males. Therefore, we note that women appear to be good listeners, and they express their agreement or disagreement in polite terms. In contrast, males utilized interruptions to fill turns and clearly displayed a lack of encouragement or interest. According to the second and third categories, we found that rude reactions and sarcasm lead to men's reactions to short and strong shocks of passionate speech, caused by disappointment or anger. In addition, men used rude responses and sarcasm to express their irritation with women. They also try to be rude and react rudely as a defense against points. In contrast, females tend to use more sophisticated language than males and also tend to use their rude responses sparingly, using sarcasm instead of overtly.

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**Appendix
Observation sheet**

Section one : Theme of the debate

.....

Section two : sequence of the debate

Male :.....

Female :.....

Male.....

Female :.....

Section Three : Analysis of the sequence of interaction

GENDERS	CATEGORIES		
	Interruption	Rude responses	Sarcasm
Males			
Females			