

Language

Information not in textbook

Gender & Communication

- Boys child-play – fairly large groups
 - Competitive
 - Clear goals
 - Organized by rules and roles
 - Status
 - Must do to be valued
 - Hide weakness
- Girls child-play – pairs or small groups
 - No preset, clear cut goals
 - No preset, clear cut rules or roles

Mix of Textbook and Non-textbook (already posted on website)

Features of Women's Communication

Communication is seen as primary way of establishing relationships – talk is the essence of relationships

- Equality
- Support
- Relationship level
- Maintenance Work
- Responsiveness
- Personal, concrete style
- Tentativeness

Features of Men's Speech

Men define the goals of talk as exerting control, preserving independence, and enhancing status.

- Arena for proving self & establishing prestige
 - Give advice
- Instrumentality
- Conversational dominance
- Fairly absolute, assertive ways
- More abstract
- Not highly responsive

Misinterpretations b/t men & women

- Showing support
- Trouble talks
- The point of the story
- Relationship communication

Gender Speak

- Remember – language is a prime means of communicating cultural views
 - including views of gender
 - bias expressed may be internalized

- **Spotlighting**
 - highlighting of person's sex also reinforces standards of men as leaders
 - do you hear
 - male lawyer, male physician, male mayor- NO
 - female lawyer, female physician, female mayor– YES
 - makes women appear to be the exception rather than part of the normal fabric of our culture
 - Highlighting by adding “ess” to the end of a word also highlights female not as powerful as male counterpart
 - Poetess, sculptress, actress

- **Media stories**
 - focus on woman's physical appearance and men's accomplishments
 - stories of women newsmakers – leisure/lifestyle pages
 - men on front pages

Guidelines for the Use of Nonsexist Language

- Avoid generic use of gendered pronouns
- Avoid the use of the word man to apply to all people
- Do not assume that people whose gender is unknown or unspecified are male.
- Avoid titles, labels, and names whose connotations are not parallel

- Avoid connecting certain professions with only one gender
- Avoid making unwarranted assumptions about the inherent abilities or characteristics of men and women; make sure the adjectives do not contain implicit judgments.

Interpersonal Communication, 6th ed
by Trenholm & Jenson, pg 110

TABLE 4.1

Guidelines for the Use of Nonsexist Language

In writing or in speaking, it is easy to perpetuate gender stereotypes without realizing it. As a result, many professional organizations provide guidelines for reducing bias. Listed here are some typical recommendations for using more inclusive language.

1. Avoid the generic use of gendered pronouns.

Biased

A person's facial expression does not always reveal his true feelings.

As someone ages, his financial needs change.

Unbiased

Facial expressions are not always indicators of a person's true feelings.

As one ages, one's financial needs change.

2. Avoid the use of the word man to apply to all people. In general avoid most -man words.

Biased

Mankind

Man-made

Congressman

Fireman

Policeman

Unbiased

Humankind, people

Manufactured, hand-made

Representative, member of Congress

Fire fighter

Police officer

3. Do not presume that people whose gender is unknown or unspecified are male.

Biased

Dear Sir

Nowadays people work so hard that they have no time to spend with their wives and children.

Unbiased

Dear Colleague, Dear Editor, etc.

Nowadays people work so hard that they have no time to spend with their families.

4. Avoid titles, labels, and names whose connotations are not parallel.

Biased

The men and the ladies

The men in the office bought coffee for the girls.

Betty is Mr. Smith's assistant.

Mr. and Mrs. John Andrews

I now pronounce you man and wife.

Unbiased

The men and the women (or the gentlemen and the ladies)

The men in the office bought coffee for the women in the office.

Mrs. Bates is Mr. Smith's assistant.

Mr. and Mrs. Andrews (or John and Mary Andrews)

I now pronounce you husband and wife.

5. Avoid connecting certain professions with only one gender.

Biased

An executive should take *his* subordinates' feelings into account.

A nurse should communicate clearly with *her* patients.

Unbiased

Executives should take subordinates' feelings into account.

Nurses should communicate clearly with their patients.

6. Avoid making unwarranted assumptions about the inherent abilities or characteristics of men and women; make sure that adjectives do not contain implicit judgments.

Biased

Although a woman, she heads up a large corporation.

Although a man he is sensitive and caring.

I now pronounce you man and wife.

The men were aggressive; the women were pushy.

Unbiased

She is head of a large corporation.

He is sensitive and caring.

I now pronounce you husband and wife.

The men and women were assertive.