
GENDERLECT STYLES

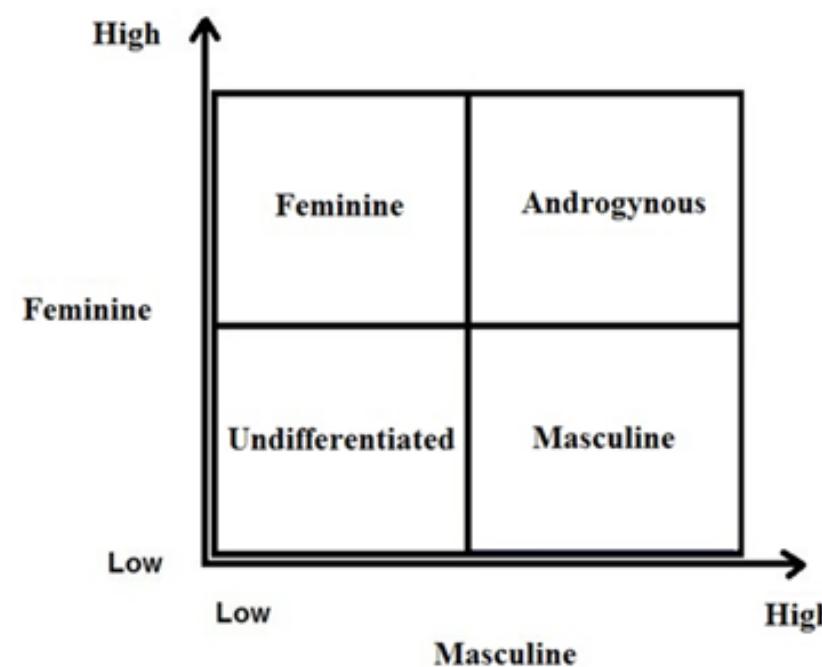
CHUN ZHOU, MONDAY, 04/17/2017

GENDER AND COMMUNICATION

- What's the difference between gender and sex?
 - Sex is a fact; gender is an idea
 - “Gender roles” are a product of culture rather than biology
- There are more similarities between men and women than there are differences, and great variability of communication style exists among women and among men than between the two groups
- Have you noticed any obvious differences between how men talk vs. how women talk in your life?

ACTIVITY: MEASURING YOUR GENDER ROLE

- Feminine items include: 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, 29, 32, 35, 38, 41, 44, 47, 50, 53, 56, and 59
- Masculine items include: 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34, 37, 40, 43, 46, 49, 52, 55, and 58



ACTIVITY: MEASURING YOUR GENDER ROLE

- *Competition*: Baxter and Shepherd (1978) found that masculine and androgynous individuals were more likely to approve a competition as a method of managing conflict than were feminine persons.
- *Help seeking*: Johnson (1989) found that feminine individuals were more confident that professionals could help them with their personal problems. Feminine and androgynous individuals were likely to recognize that they were in need of help.
- *Social influence*: Falbo (1977) found that masculine and androgynous undergraduates of either sex tended to receive more favorable peer evaluations than feminine individuals following group discussions.
- *Feminism*: Minnegrode (1976) found that feminist females scored higher on the masculinity scale than nonfeminist females.
- *Political ideology*: Hershey and Sullivan (1977) reported that among men, liberal political attitudes were associated with androgyny, while among women, liberal political attitudes were related to a traditionally masculine sex role orientation.

THE ORIGIN OF THE THEORY

- Author: Deborah Tannen, a linguistic scholar
- Both objective and interpretive approach: different styles of communication between men and women
- Semiotic tradition: communication as meanings through linguistics that are different between men and women
- Socio-cultural tradition: communication styles are representative of the larger difference in culture

GENDERLECT STYLE

- Genderlect: different speech styles between two genders
- A term suggesting that masculine and feminine styles of discourse are best viewed as two distinct cultural dialects
 - Though the use of words being spoken may be the same, the meaning and values provide linguistic differences in communication styles

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”



George Bernard Shaw

GENDERLECT STYLE

- At the risk of reinforcing a reductive biological determinism, Tannen insists that there are gender differences in the ways we speak
- Tannen's cross-cultural approach to gender differences departs from much of feminist scholarship that claims conversations between men and women reflect men's efforts to dominate women

GENDERLECT STYLE

- Boys and girls learn different rules of communication as they grow up:
 - Communicate to assert your ideas, opinions, and identity
 - Use talk to solve problems or develop a strategy
 - Speak in a way that attracts attention to yourself
- Girls and women learn different rules of communication as they grow up:
 - Use communication to create and maintain relationships
 - Involve others in conversations and respond to their ideas
 - Show sensitivity to others and to relationships



DIFFERENT MOTIVATIONS

- Women seek human connection and intimacy, while men are concerned mainly with status and independence
 - Respect: everybody deserves to be treated with respect vs. looking up to someone
 - Tannen does not believe that men and women seek only status and connection respectively, but these are their primary goals
- **Rapport talk:** the typical conversational style of women, which seeks to establish connection with others
- **Report talk:** the typical monologic style of men, which seeks to command attention, convey information, and win arguments

RAPPORT TALK VS. REPORT TALK

■ 1. Private Speaking vs. Public Speaking

- Wordy-women-mute-male stereotype: women talk more than men
- Tannen finds that women talk more than men do in private conversations
- Women speak an average of 20,000 words per day; men speak about 7,000

RAPPORT TALK VS. REPORT TALK

■ 2. Telling a Story

- Tannens notes that men tell more stories than women do
- Telling jokes is a masculine way to negotiate status, and when men aren't trying to be funny, they tell stories in which they are heroes, often acting alone to overcome great obstacles
- Women tend to express their desire for connection by telling stories about others
- On rarer occasions when a women is a character in her own story, she usually downplays herself

RAPPORT TALK VS. REPORT TALK

■ 3. Listening

- Women show attentiveness through verbal and nonverbal cues: holding eye contact, offering head nods, reacting with “uh-huh”, “right”
- For a man concerned with status, that overt style of active listening means “I agree with you”
- A woman interrupts to show agreement, to give support, or to supply what she thinks the speaker will say (a cooperative overlap)
- Men regard any interruption as a power move to take control of the conversation

RAPPORT TALK VS. REPORT TALK

■ 4. Asking Questions

- Tannens thinks that men and women annoy each other with their different ways of asking questions
- Men don't ask for help because it exposes their ignorance
- Women ask questions to establish a connection with others
- Tannen notes that when women state their opinions, they often tag them with a question at the end of the sentence: "That was a good movie, don't you think?" to soften the sting of potential disagreement or invite open, friendly dialogue

RAPPORT TALK VS. REPORT TALK

- 5. Conflict
 - Men usually initiate and are more comfortable with conflict
 - To women, conflict is a threat to connection to be avoided at all costs

RAPPORT TALK VS. REPORT TALK

■ 6. Social Connection

- Men connect through activity
- Women connect through conversation

SPEECH COMMUNITIES

- Children are socialized from birth
 - Mothers of girls talked more, asked more questions, used longer sentences, and were more likely to verbally acknowledge their daughters' comments than mothers of boys
 - Mothers of boys were more likely to use directives—telling their sons what to do than mothers of girls
- Speech Community – a community of people who share understandings about goals of communication, strategies for enacting those goals, and ways of interpreting communication

SPEECH COMMUNITIES

- Tannen: sensitivity training is an effort to teach men how to speak in feminine voice; assertiveness training effort to teach women to speak in masculine voice
 - She believes that understanding each other's styles and the motives behind them is a first move in overcoming destructive responses

TO SUMMARIZE ...

- Gender and communication
- The origin of the theory
- Genderlect
- Motivations for genderlect
- Rapport talk vs. report talk
- Speech community