

## A Comparative Study of Male and Female Students in Fine Arts Institutes of Wassit Governorate

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### Abstract

Males and females differences in language use are a subject which should be given more attention. Hence the present research highlights the gendered differences in language use in academic settings. Consequently, this study attempts to investigate the differences in language use between males and females students in Fine Arts Institutes of Wassit Governorate. It attempts to achieve the following aims: 1) finding out the differences in language use between males and females students in terms of formal and informal language, nonverbal cues and interruption; 2) pinpointing the differences in language use between males and females students in terms of politeness and the topic of discussion. To achieve the aims of this research and test the validity of its hypotheses, certain procedures have been followed: 1. selecting a sample of males and female students from Fine Arts Institutes in Wassit governorate. 2. Designing questionnaire that includes questions related to the use of polite language in communication, particularly when discussing personal relationships or sensitive topics. The results of this research have revealed that there are some differences in the language use of males and females students. More precisely, females tend to use politeness, formal language and nonverbal cues in conversations more than males. They have also revealed that males tend to use interruptions and topics of conversations which related to males issues whereas females use less interruptions in conversations and choose topics which related to females issues.

**Keywords:** nonverbal cues, politeness, interruption in conversations, topic of conversation

### دراسة مقارنة بين الطلبة الذكور والاناث في معاهد الفنون الجميلة في محافظة واسط

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### الملخص

يجب ان يحظى موضوع الاختلافات بين الذكور والاناث في استعمال اللغة بمزيد من الاهتمام. ومن ثم فإن البحث الحالي يسلط الضوء على الاختلافات بين الجنسين في استعمال اللغة في الأوساط الأكاديمية. وعليه، تحاول هذه الدراسة تقصي الاختلافات في استعمال اللغة بين الطلاب والطالبات في معاهد الفنون الجميلة بمحافظة واسط. وهي تحاول تحقيق الأهداف التالية: (١) معرفة الاختلافات في استعمال اللغة بين الطلاب والطالبات من حيث اللغة الرسمية وغير الرسمية، والإشارات غير اللفظية والمقاطعة اثناء الحوار. (٢) تحديد الاختلافات في استعمال اللغة بين الطلاب والطالبات من حيث التأدب في الكلام وموضوع المناقشة. ولتحقيق أهداف هذا البحث واختبار صدق فرضياته تم اتباع بعض الإجراءات: ١. اختيار عينة من طلاب وطالبات معاهد الفنون الجميلة بمحافظة واسط. ٢. تصميم استبيان يتضمن أسئلة تتعلق باستعمال لغة مهذبة في الحوار، لا سيما عند مناقشة العلاقات الشخصية أو الموضوعات الحساسة. وقد أوضحت نتائج هذا البحث وجود بعض الاختلافات في استعمال اللغة لدى طلاب وطالبات معاهد الفنون الجميلة. بتعبير أدق، تميل الإناث إلى استعمال التأدب في الكلام واللغة الرسمية والإشارات غير اللفظية في الحوار أكثر من الذكور. وكشفت الدراسة أيضاً أن الذكور يميلون إلى المقاطعة اثناء الحوار ومواضيع الحوار التي تتعلق بقضايا الذكور بينما تكون الإناث أقل استعمالاً للمقاطعة اثناء الحوار وتميل الاناث الى اختيار المواضيع المتعلقة بقضايا الاناث.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإشارات غير اللفظية، التأدب في الكلام، المقاطعة في الكلام، موضوع الحوار

## 1. Introduction

The study of how people speak differently in various social circumstances is known as sociolinguistics. It also outlines the reasons behind why and how people communicate in various ways (Holmes, 1985).

Social dialect, also known as a sociolect, is a type of speech that is connected with a specific social class or occupational group within a culture (Meecham and Rees-Miller, 2005). In addition to the normal variety, this can include different languages, registers, dialects, styles, or other types of language (Schilling-Estes, 2006).

The alignment of a set of language structures with a group's social standing in a status hierarchy as a social dialect. This social demarcation of language does not occur in a vacuum. Speakers can belong to multiple groups at once, including those based on area, age, gender, and ethnicity. Some of these additional criteria may have a significant impact on how the social stratification of linguistic variety is determined. (Wolfram, 2004).

In the middle of the 1970s, the study of men and women's speech was the obsession of sociolinguistics research. According to Coates & Pichler (1998) men's speech is valued highly, while women's speech is negatively contrasted with men's; these cultural ideas are also referred to as "folklinguistics" The old stereotype that women are chatterboxes has been disproven by studies showing that males speak more than females in a variety of social circumstances, including the office, on television, in classes, etc (Coates & Pichler, 1998, p.91).

Cameron (1998) claimed that in contrast to being natural, gender is socially constructed. Cameron adds discourse makes this discrimination obvious and visible since it is the pattern of gender distinction in people's behaviour. Through the use of language and other forms of expression in their interactions with one another, people assume specific identities. Most of the time, we repeat actions, such as gestures, movements, and linguistic patterns that denote or index a specific identity without even realizing it (Lakoff, 2004). Backhaus (2016) explained how performing specific activities in accordance with cultural standards might establish one's gender. According to Cameron (1998) both men and women can use their awareness of the gendered implications connected to particular speaking and behaving styles to accomplish a variety of outcomes. Cameron (1998) added that being a member of the culture, both men and women learn how to speak appropriately and the numerous gendered implications connected to different speech patterns; they produce their own actions in the light of those meanings. This is true in society, where societal conventions determine how men and women speak. A woman should speak and talk in a way that demonstrates her femininity (Lakoff, 1975).

Holmes (1985) confirms that these social aspects have an impact on the linguistic choices made in any social interaction:

1. The participants, including who is speaking and to whom, their relationship or social distance, which refers to how intimately they know one another, and their social position, or if they are superior or inferior to one another.

2. The sort of language repertoire used will depend on the social context of the dialogue or the environment, i.e., the location of the interaction. For instance, language used in court proceedings will be official, whereas language used in cafés will be informal.
3. The language options are influenced by the topic of the contact; for example, the vocabulary used to discuss an academic issue differs from that used to handle dialogues in daily life.
4. The purpose of an encounter determines the type of language repertoires that are used; these purposes include referential, which is to provide information, or emotional, which is to express sentiments .

### **1.1 Problem**

Many sociolinguists throughout the world are obsessed with examining how male and female use language in social interactions. It is a subject which has been dealt with from a sociolinguistic angle. Hence the present research highlights the gendered dynamics of communication in academic settings. Consequently, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the differences in language use between males students and females students in terms of formal and informal language, nonverbal cues and interruption .
2. What are the differences in language use between males students and females students in terms of politeness and the topic of discussion.

By identifying these males and females communication patterns, educators and administrators could develop interventions to promote more equitable and inclusive learning environments.

### **1.2 Significance of the Study**

There are various and complicated variances between the language used by males and females based on gender. In order to shed light on these distinctions, a multifaceted theoretical framework is required, and the debate should include social elements that affect how interlocutors relate to one another, such as the purpose of the talk, the participants, solidarity, and the talk's subject.

Sociolinguistics is an important and popular domain of study since particular cultures around the world expand their base of communication and since intergroup and interpersonal relations have an increasing significance.

### **1.3 Aims**

The present paper aims at:

- 1- Finding out the differences in language use between males students and females students in terms of formal and informal language, nonverbal cues and interruption.
2. Pinpointing the differences in language use between males students and females students in terms of politeness and the topic of discussion.

### **1.4 Hypotheses**

The present paper has set out to address the following hypotheses:

1. Female students are more likely to use formal language and nonverbal cues in communication, and less likely to interrupt others compared to male students, while male students are more likely to use informal language and interrupt others in communication.
2. Female students are more likely to use polite language than male students, particularly when discussing topics related to personal relationships or sensitive subjects.

### **1.5 Procedures**

The researcher has administered the study tests by conducting the following:

1. Selecting a sample of males and female students from Fine Arts Institutes in Wassit governorate.
2. Designing questionnaire that includes questions related to the use of polite language in communication, particularly when discussing personal relationships or sensitive topics.
3. Studying the students' answers based on the use of formal or informal language, nonverbal cues, and interruptions.
4. Examining the data using statistical methods to determine if there are significant differences between the communication styles of male and female students.

### **1.6 Limitations of the Study**

The research is limited to examine specific aspects of language use, such as formal and informal language, nonverbal cues, interruptions and the differences in language use between male students and female students in terms of politeness and the topic of discussion, but not other relevant factors that could impact the communication between male and female students. The research deals with males students and females students of two institutes in Wassit governorate . The age range of the students is 18-19 years.

## **2. Gender and Social Factors**

It is important to note that, despite the fact that gender typically interacts with other social factors like status, class, the speaker's role in the interaction, and the (in)formality of the context, there are instances in which the speaker's gender appears to be the most important factor influencing speech patterns. In some societies, a woman's gender and social standing together enhance the differences in speech patterns between males and females. In others, many elements interact with one another to create more intricate patterns (Holmes, 2008). However, for particular linguistic forms, gender identification appears to be a key element influencing speech variance in a number of groups. For example, when determining how speech patterns are accounted for, the speaker's gender can take precedence over socioeconomic class distinctions. Holmes (2008) declares that, in these societies, it appears that expressing one's gender identification is crucial .

## 2.1 The Use of Standard English

Labov (1966) had studied language variation in different social groups. In one study, he examined the use of the rhotic "r" sound in New York City English. He found that women tended to use this sound less frequently than men, especially in more formal settings. Labov suggested that this could be because women are more likely to conform to the linguistic norms of their social group, which may not include the rhotic "r" sound. In terms of standard English, Labov suggested that it reflects the norms of the dominant group in society, which may not include all linguistic varieties. Lakoff (1975) wrote an influential book titled "Language and Woman's Place." In this book, she argued that women tend to use language in ways that reflect their subordinate status in society. According to Lakoff, women are more likely to use hedging and polite forms of speech, which can make them seem less confident and assertive than men. She also argued that women are more likely to use tag questions and other forms of language that seek confirmation or approval from others. In terms of standard English, Lakoff suggested that the language has been constructed and standardized by men, and that it reflects male values and ways of thinking. As a result, women may feel excluded or marginalized by standard English. Holmes (1985) is another linguist who has written extensively on gender and language. In her book "Women, Men and Politeness," she argued that women tend to use language in ways that are more polite and indirect than men.

Holmes suggested that this could be because women are socialized to be more concerned with social harmony and avoiding conflict. In terms of standard English, Holmes argued that it reflects the values and norms of the dominant group in society, which is often male. She suggested that this can lead to linguistic discrimination against women and other marginalized groups. Eckert (1998) had studied language variation in different social groups, including teenagers. In one study, she examined the use of language among high school students in Detroit. She found that boys and girls tended to use different linguistic features, and that these features were linked to their social identities. For example, boys were more likely to use nonstandard forms of grammar and vocabulary, which were associated with a "cool" or rebellious identity. Girls, on the other hand, were more likely to use standard forms of grammar and vocabulary, which were associated with a more conventional or "proper" identity. Eckert suggested that this reflects the different social expectations and norms that are placed on boys and girls. Wardaugh (2006) in his book "An Introduction to Sociolinguistics," discussed the relationship between language and gender. He notes that there are often differences in the way that men and women use language, but he cautions against overgeneralising or stereotyping these differences. Wardaugh also explained the role of Standard English, noting that it is an important tool for communication and social mobility. However, he acknowledges that Standard English may reflect the norms and values of a particular social group, and that it may not be equally accessible to all speakers.

## **2.2 Gender and Politeness**

According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness, being courteous is a way to counteract face-threatening activities, or behaviors that endanger a person's positive or negative face. Negative face is the desire to be free from imposition or interference, whereas positive face is the desire to be loved and respected. According to Brown and Levinson, women are socialized to be more polite than men because they are expected to be more concerned with keeping a positive face and refraining from imposing themselves on others. They do admit, however, that based on cultural norms and individual characteristics, the degree to which politeness is tied to gender may vary.

Similarly, Labov (1966) discovered that women tended to use more standard English and were more likely to use polite phrases, such as "please" and "thank you," than men in his study of the speech of New York City department store clerks. Also, he discovered that women were more inclined to adopt prestigious word variations, indicating that they were more concerned with upholding their good reputations. However, Labov pointed out that there might be individual variations and cultural considerations that alter the association between gender and politeness, as did Brown and Levinson.

Generally, it is suggested by Brown, Levinson, and Labov that there is a difference in politeness between men and women based on gender. They do admit, however, that individual characteristics and cultural norms may have an impact on this link.

## **2.3 Nonverbal communication**

Men and women employ different nonverbal communication techniques. Gifford & Hine (1994) cited research that showed women frequently used more nonverbal cues than men do, such as gestures and facial expressions. Culture can affect the patterns of nonverbal communication, claims Matsumoto (2006). For instance, research has shown that Asian cultures use nonverbal clues to transmit meaning more frequently than Western cultures. According to Hall (2011), women are often better than men in deciphering nonverbal cues, according to Hall (2011). When it comes to reading nonverbal cues like body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions, women are more adept than men.

## **2.4 Topic of Conversation**

The disparities in conversational themes between men and women are currently the subject of scientific study. According to certain studies, men and women have different communication preferences and styles, which may influence the subjects they like to talk about. Women tend to participate in more personal talks and divulge more personal information than men, according to a study that was published in the journal "Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin." Contrarily, men are more inclined to chat about sports and current events and to have more competitive and confrontational interactions (Eagly & Wood, 1991).

Women are more inclined to talk about relationships and emotions than males are to talk about politics and business, according to a different study in the journal "Sex Roles" (Mulac, Bradac, & Gibbons, 2001).

It's crucial to keep in mind that these studies only show broad trends, and that there are sizable gender-specific differences. The conversational subjects that people choose to engage in can also be influenced by individual variances in personality, culture, and setting.

### 2.5 Interruption in Conversations

The researcher suggests that there may be differences in the ways in which males and females interrupt each other in conversation.

One study conducted by Zimmerman and West in 1975 found that men interrupt women more often than women interrupt men in mixed-gender conversations. The researchers observed conversations between college students and found that men assertively and more frequently interrupted women than women did. The phrase "male dominance interrupting female subjugation" has been used to describe this phenomenon.

Recent studies, however, have refuted this idea and revealed that interruption patterns might be more intricate than previously believed. For instance, a 1978 research by Fishman discovered that women actually interrupt each other more often than males do in conversations amongst people of the same gender. Gender was not a significant predictor of interruption frequency in discussions among bilingual German-Italian speakers, according to a 2016 study by Grieser and Kupisch.

Overall, it seems that males and females interrupt one another differently in conversation, although these tendencies could be influenced by a number of variables, such as the conversation's context, the speakers' cultural backgrounds, and the gender of their conversation partners.

### 3. Methodology, Findings and Discussion

The researcher used a quantitative survey to show the impact of males and females variance in language use. This part of the research contains the findings that will be discussed with tables and short descriptions. The two fine arts institutes in Wassit were where the research was conducted. Students from several departments who were chosen at random were given the survey forms. The researchers gathered information from the two institutions, interviewed the students, and used their answers to analyze how language is used in daily life. They were asked to complete a set of questions that the researchers had prepared. The participants' ages range from 18 to 19. The following tables give short descriptions about the differences between males and females in language use:

**Table 1: Formal and Informal**

Options	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Formal	5 (36%)	9(64%)	14(70%)
Informal	4(67%)	2(33%)	6 (30%)

According to table 1, the researcher's findings show that formal language is used by 70% of all students while using language. Among them males are 36 percent and females are 64 percent. On the other hand, the researcher sees that 30 percent of the total students do not use formal language. Among them males are 67 percent and females are 33 percent. The table's outcome reveals that students at Wassit's fine arts institutions frequently utilise both formal and informal language.

**Table 2: The use of nonverbal cues**

Options	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Yes	3(37%)	5(63%)	8(40%)
No	4(67%)	2(33%)	6(30%)

In table 2, the researcher sees that 40 of the total students use nonverbal cues while using language. Among them males are 37 percent and females are 63 percent. On the other hand, the researcher finds that 30 percent of the total students do not use nonverbal cues. Among them males are 67 percent and females are 33 percent. The result of the table shows the extensive use of nonverbal cues among the students of fine arts institutes in Wassit.

**Table 3: The use of interruption**

Options	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Yes	8(60%)	4(40%)	12(60%)
No	3(37%)	5(63%)	8(40%)

In table 3, the researcher finds that 60 of the total students use interruption while using language. Among them males are 60 percent and females are 40 percent. On the other hand, the researcher sees that 40 percent of the total students do not use interruption. Among them males are 37 percent and females are 63 percent. The result of the table shows the extensive use of interruption among the students of fine arts institutes in Wassit.

**Table 4: The use of politeness**

Options	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Yes	4 (40%)	8 (60%)	12 (60%)
No	6 ( 75%)	2 (25%)	8 (40%)

In table 4, the researcher noticed that 60 of the total students use politeness while using language. Among them males are 40 percent and females are 60 percent. On the other hand, the researcher finds that 40 percent of the total students do not use politeness while using language . Among them males are 75 percent and females are 25 percent. The result of the table demonstrates how frequently manners are used by Wassit's fine arts students.



**Table 5: The Topic of discussion**

Options	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
<b>Social and fashion</b>	5(36%)	9(64%)	14(70%)
<b>Sports and Political</b>	8(60%)	4(40%)	12(60%)

In table 5, the researcher finds that 70 of the total students use social and fashion topics as topics of discussion while using language. Among them males are 36 percent and females are 64 percent. On the other hand, the researcher sees that 60 percent of the total students use sports and political topics as topics of discussion. Among them males are 60 percent and females are 40 percent. The result of the table shows the differences in topics chosen by the students of fine arts institutes in Wassit.

## Conclusion

Research studies have found that there are some differences in the language use of males and females. According to this study, female's students typically use more formal and standard language than males students. It has also been discovered that males may be more prone to use topics connected to sports, politics, or other more "masculine" issues, whereas females tend to use language that is more personal and emotional, such as sharing feelings and experiences. The use of nonverbal communication also seems to be different between males and females . Males may be more prone to utilize nonverbal signs connected to dominance and status, such as taking up more physical space or making direct eye contact, whereas females may be more likely to use facial expressions and gestures to convey emotion and build relationships with others. It is significant to remember that these variations are not constant and may change based on the person and the situation. Furthermore, "masculine" and "feminine" language is social constructs that can differ throughout cultures and historical times.

The study discovered that when it comes to etiquette and the subject under discussion, women tend to use more indirect methods, like hedging and indirect demands, whilst men tend to use more direct strategies, such imperatives and direct requests. Males tend to use language that is more focused on factual information and precise details, whereas females typically use language that is more focused on relationships, emotions, and personal experiences. About interruptions: Males tend to interrupt females more frequently than they interrupt other guys, according to research. This can be interpreted as a lack of regard for the female's contribution to the discourse and courtesy. Finally, females tend to employ more nonverbal indicators than males do to demonstrate courtesy and conversational participation, such as smiling, nodding, and making eye contact. It's crucial to remember that these variations are generalizations and might not apply to everyone. In addition, cultural and societal norms, which can differ among areas and groups, influence these differences.

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