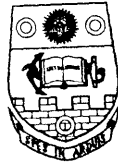


MISCELLANEA 36
UNISA 1982



ERRATA

The authors' names and full titles of the articles appearing in ENGLISH USAGE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, Vol. 13 of 1982, were omitted and are as follows:

1. REMINISCENCES AND THOUGHTS OF AN EDITOR -
An interview with Mey Hurter
2. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPMENTAL
READING - *P. Pienaar*
3. AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH - *W.D. Maxwell-Mahon*,
University of Pretoria
4. TWO PLEASE? SPEECH DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
MEN AND WOMEN IN A SIMPLE SERVICE EN-
COUNTER - *Gary Barkhuizen*, Rhodes
University
5. WORDS AS SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS BOUNDARIES -
T.D. Verryn, University of South Africa

SPEECH DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MAN AND WOMAN

ABSTRACT

Social roles which have a profound effect on a range of behaviour such as occupational choice, relations between friends, participation in political life, and the like, obviously have potential for determining language behaviour. Males and females speak as they do because they feel a particular pattern of speech to be appropriate to their sex. On the basis of utterances produced in buying a cinema ticket, an investigation was made of whether there is a statistically significant difference between men and women in certain aspects of their language use. The typical sequencing of speech acts involved in this simple service encounter was examined. In addition to the independent variable of speaker sex, another variable was introduced: sex of seller/addressee. The results of the investigation indicate that, for the dependent variables selected, there are significant differences between the language used by men and that used by women in this particular situation. The study also shows that sex of addressee did not seem to affect any of the variables under consideration. It is confirmed, then, that sex-specific speech patterns do exist and that, as a result, speaker sex should be adopted as a separate, valid and important sociolinguistic variable.

INTRODUCTION

It is known from linguistic research that in many societies the speech of men and women differs. Ethnic, social and regional groups have linguistic characteristics in common because their members communicate more frequently with each other than with outsiders. In most societies, however, men and women communicate freely with one another, and there appear to be few social

barriers likely to influence the density of communication taking place between the sexes. The development of sex varieties in language cannot, therefore, be accounted for in the same way as class, ethnic-group or geographical dialects. Why, then, do men and women use language differently and what are the differences?

Until recently, the study of sex-differentiation in language had almost been ignored. Literature on the subject was scanty. One particular report dates back to 1664. It cites different women's and men's forms in the speech of the Carib people (Jespersen, 1922). From the time of this report to the early part of this century research concerning male and female linguistic behaviour was mainly the work of sociologists and anthropologists. They wrote about men's and women's languages in other societies, far removed from Western cultures. In publications discussing language in general or a specific language, it was the usual practice to present a few paragraphs or, perhaps, a chapter on the speech of women. Otto Jespersen's text (1922) is a good example of this format. Swacker (1975:77) states that 'the underlying assumption of this sort of organisation is, of course, that male speaking patterns have established the norm and that women's language is a deviant form based on it.' She goes on to say that there is no linguistic nor statistical foundation for such an assumption.

With the emergence, in the 1960s, of sociolinguistics as an increasingly important branch of linguistics, systematic attention was given to language, including English, in its social context. Linguists began to look at the linguistic consequences of such nonlinguistic phenomena as class, race, social setting and political relations, but, according to Dubois and Crouch (1978:6), 'During the early burgeoning of sociolinguistics, little attention was paid to women ... partly due to the invisibility of women.' Nevertheless, interest in women's speech did arise. This growth in interest is due partially to external, social forces. The women's liberation movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s contributed to the amount of research done on language differences between women and men. Dubois and Crouch (1978:7) conclude that 'the development of conscious feminism, coupled with that of sociolinguistics, has generated a genuine women's sociolinguistics.' The sex of the person speaking is a valid and essential sociolinguistic variable. In recent years, a few studies have been concerned specifically with the sex of the speaker. In discussing these studies a brief outline of the main developments in this area will be presented.

I. MALE AND FEMALE LINGUISTIC BEHAVIOUR

As a result of the abovementioned studies, a number of sex

differences in language have been discovered. These differences fall into two categories (Bodine, 1975:131).

a) The first type of differentiation is called *sex-exclusive differentiation*, which means that certain forms in the language are generally exclusively used by either one sex or the other. The differences are inherent in the language system. Sex-exclusive differentiation is relatively uncommon in European languages. Japanese is a language in which women and men use some sex-exclusive particles and some sex-exclusive pronouns, in addition to particles and personal pronouns which are common to both sexes. The sex-exclusive particles differ only slightly, but the sex-exclusive personal pronouns are entirely different words. The common Japanese word for 'I' which may be used by any speaker is 'watakushi'. There is an abbreviated form of 'watakushi', namely 'atashi', which is used exclusively by females, and a completely different word for 'I', namely 'boku', which is used exclusively by males.

b) The other type of differentiation is called *sex-preferential differentiation*. Differences here are in the frequency of occurrence of any form in the speech of men and women. A particular form is available to both men and women; however, one of the sexes uses it more often than the other does. Differentiation is thus based on language use. This is represented diagrammatically by Key (1975:34) as follows:

Full usage

*Female
usage*

*Male
usage*

Limited usage

Feminine

Masculine

General usage in language is thus seen as a continuum with the extremes correlated with male and female usage. This article will not deal with differences in the language system; rather, the discussion will centre on sex-based differences in speech and language behaviour – that is, differences in language use.

In this new area of 'women's sociolinguistics', there have been two main emphases: language used *by* women (and how this differs from men's speech) and language used *about* women (the language everyone uses when talking about women). Lakoff (1973:48) incorporates both these emphases in her term 'women's language',

which means 'both language restricted in use to women and language descriptive of women alone.' Language (in this case English) used by men and women is the subject of this article.

At some stage in a discussion of male/female speech differences it is necessary to ask *when* the differences begin to appear and *how* the different patterns are learned. Little, in fact, is known about the ways in which males and females learn the speech styles appropriate to their sexes, nor is much known about how sex-specific language acquisition fits in with the overall learning of gender-related roles and behaviour. There are, however, a few speculations. Key (1975: 61) states that imitative behaviour, which leads to language learning, begins at a very early age. She goes on to say that even before an infant learns language,

he or she is learning social differences in expression and response to other humans - that is, the infant not only responds to humans but makes different responses to different categories of persons, depending upon the sex and relationship.

There are definite differences in adult behaviour (which includes linguistic behaviour) towards male and female infants, such as pink and blue clothes, different play equipment, different bedtime stories, and so on. As the infants develop, different treatment continues, and this treatment reinforces the separation of the sexes by specifying different sex-roles and expectations for males and females. During the early period of language acquisition, children thus have plenty of opportunity to establish well-defined sex differences in language behaviour. There are observable differences in the speech styles of boys and girls during this stage, as can be seen, for example, when children play house, or shop, and modify their own speech according to the roles they are playing. Key concludes by saying that 'Whatever the immediate explanation, it lies in the pattern of cultural factors regarding expectations and roles of male and female' (p.65). Because women are largely responsible for early child care Lakoff (1973) suggests that both sexes first learn 'women's language' from mothers and other female figures, such as nursery school teachers, grandmothers, nursemaids, etc. As the girls grow older they retain this way of talking, whereas boys begin to change to more male forms, probably due to the influence of their peers.

Many researchers have speculated about the social and psychological implications of the observed sex-differentiation in spoken language. Lakoff (1973), for example, argues that language gives concrete expression to implicit social norms. Men and women are socially different in that society lays down different social roles for them and expects different behaviour patterns from them.

Language reflects and reinforces this social order. She maintains that sex differences in language use actually reflect not only different roles but also unequal roles or status, and that when males and females are referred to by divergent terms, and when they differ in their language styles, they are reminded of their divergent roles. In our society the male is dominant while the female plays a subordinate (or submissive) role. Lakoff argues that the observable differences between men's and women's linguistic behaviour reflect the inferior status of women in our society.

Some of the psychological characteristics of males which Key (1975:26) lists are: aggressive, assertive, decisive, authoritative, competitive, courageous, domineering, independent, as well as blunt, boastful, combative, sadistic and violent. Females, on the other hand, are affectionate, gentle, dependent, emotional, excitable, illogical, passive, submissive, as well as bitchy, fickle, secretive, superficial, wily and whiney. Since language reflects these differences, male speech is said to be assertive, adult and direct, whereas women's speech is immature, hyperformal or hyperpolite, and non-assertive.

In linguistic studies there are many examples of instances where female usage shows an attempt at 'proper', 'better' or more 'correct' language. One can observe, even within the same family where the rearing and schooling have been identical, that very often the women use standard English and the men do not. The most detailed evidence is at the phonological level. Lagov (1966) showed that, allowing for social class, women use a far higher percentage of postvocalic [r] (a prestige feature in New York) than men. In London English, men are more likely than women to use glottal stops in words like 'butter' and 'but'. Differences have also been noted in the -ing ending of verbs. In Norwich English, Trudgill (1972) points out that within the same social class, women use a higher percentage of standard -ing forms than men do in words like walking, sailing and running. Men, on the other hand, use a higher percentage of the non-standard -in' form.

The fact that women use the more standard, prestige linguistic forms seems to contradict their position of subordination. Trudgill (1972), however, explains that there is a very close relationship between sex-differences in linguistic usage and status aspirations. He states that women are more status-conscious than men and, as a result, try to compensate for their subordination by signalling status linguistically. Mary Key (1975:104) sums it up by saying that 'females attempt some kind of equilibrium by reaching a higher status in language to compensate for their lower status as members of society.'

Why do men seem to prefer the less prestigious, non-standard variants? The reason suggested is that males identify non-standard speech with masculinity. One often finds that when males reach all-boy high schools or start playing in various sports teams they begin to swear more, use more slang and indulge in other forms of non-standard speech. Key (1975:104) notes that 'it appears to be general American tradition that a red-blooded male would rather be caught dead than be grammatical.' By using masculine speech males identify themselves with those male characteristics mentioned above and thus maintain a group solidarity. Peer groups may exert a strong influence on one's learning and maintaining differentiated speech styles. When an individual speaks the same 'language' as a particular group he will be accepted by that group. In order to remain a member he will have to continue using the same speech forms that the group uses. In most male groups the speech forms peculiar to that group are usually non-standard ones. The members will thus have to use non-standard forms to remain part of that group. Labov (1973) found that deviants from all-male peer groups tended to use more standard speech forms; 'lames' (that is, individuals isolated from Black male street culture) are more likely to pronounce the postvocalic [r] and to use other nonvernacular forms. To sum up, Trudgill (1972:182) states that:

Privately and subconsciously, a large number of male speakers are more concerned with acquiring prestige of the covert sort and with signalling group solidarity than with obtaining social status, as this is more usually defined.

In conclusion, then, men and women speak as they do because they feel a particular pattern of speech to be appropriate to their sex. This kind of appropriateness is reinforced by various social pressures. Different social attributes and different patterns of behaviour are expected from men and women, and sex differences in speech are a reflection of this fact.

II. SERVICE ENCOUNTERS

In a 1969 paper (cited by Swacker, 1975) Roger Shuy deplored the lack of sociolinguistic research which dealt specifically with the sex of the speaker. In his paper, he presented several studies which indicated that speaker sex variation is a quantitative linguistic reality. In the years following this article, various studies concerned specifically with speaker sex have emerged. One of these is 'Speech differences between women and men: on the wrong track?' by Brouwer, Gerritsen and de Haan (1979). They investigated, on the basis of a large number of utterances produced in buying a train ticket, whether there is a statistically significant difference between men and women in certain aspects of

their language use (sex-preferential differentiation). Differences which they looked for were those most often mentioned in the literature (Jespersen, 1922; Key, 1972; Lakoff, 1973); for example, the number of words used to deal with a set task, diminutives, civilities, forms of language expressing insecurity such as repetitions, hesitations, self-corrections, requests for information and so on. In addition to the independent variable of sex of speaker, three other variables were introduced in their experiment: sex of addressee, age of speaker, and time of ticket purchase (rush-hour or normal). Their results show that there are few significant differences between men's and women's speech in this particular situation, with regard to the variables mentioned above. What emerged, however, was that the sex of the addressee seemed to affect almost all of the variables under consideration.

What Brouwer et al. studied was a particular type of discourse - a service encounter. Merritt (1976: 321) defines a service encounter as follows:

By service encounters I mean an instance of face-to-face interaction between a server who is 'officially posted' in some service area and a customer who is present in that service area, that interaction being orientated to the satisfaction of the customer's presumed desire for some service and the server's obligation to provide that service.

A typical service encounter is one in which a customer buys something at a store or asks for information at an 'Information Desk'. Another type of service encounter, which is examined in this paper, is buying a ticket at a cinema. It was hypothesized that women buy a cinema ticket in a different way from men. The buyers' spontaneous speech was studied through use of the observation method; the informants were observed by means of a hidden tape-recorder without their knowing it. So, besides being further study on a particular type of discourse, the service encounter, this article takes a look at sex-based differences in speech in a particular situation. It also has the advantage of being the type of research which resembles Labov's fourth-floor study, about which Labov (1972:69) himself said: 'We see rapid and anonymous observations as the most important experimental method in a linguistic program which takes as its primary object the language used by ordinary people in their everyday affairs.'

III. THE TYPICAL SEQUENCING OF SPEECH ACTS IN BUYING A CINEMA TICKET

The taping took place at two cinemas in Grahamstown; the one, His Majesty's Theatre, had a male ticket-seller, while the other, The Odeon Theatre, had a female selling the tickets. The purchase of

a ticket at both cinemas occurs in the following way. The buyer enters the service area and stands outside the ticket-office. He is separated from the seller by a glass window. Sometimes there is a queue, especially just before starting time or if the film is a popular one, but often a ticket can be ordered immediately. One has to talk through a hole in the glass window and it is usually the buyer who initiates the speech act. The seller does not say anything before the buyer has spoken and usually says nothing except 'Thank you' when the purchase is over. The ticket can be ordered in different ways however. The diagram on the following page shows the typical sequencing of speech acts when a ticket is being bought. In explaining the route a ticket buyer could take, I will start from step one and move systematically through to step nine.

Step 1

This step is straight forward. By simply being in the ticket office (Merritt calls this the service area), the server is offering his service; that of selling tickets to customers. He may also supply information about the film, starting time, number of seats available, etc.

Step 2

The customer's presence in the service area can be seen as a tacit request for service. The buyer's position is outside the ticket-office, on the other side of the window. The mere presence of server and buyer in the service area overcomes the problem of availability. Schegloff (1968:1089) explains: 'a person who seeks to engage in an activity that requires the collaborative work of two parties must first establish, via some interactional procedure, that another party is available to collaborate.' The location of both seller and buyer shows that they are both available to interact.

Step 3

It is usually the buyer who speaks first. After step 2 one has a choice; either 3a(1) or 3(b). In both of these steps a ritual greeting such as 'Hallo' or 'Good evening' has been placed in brackets as it is not always present.

If the buyer chooses 3a(1), then, after the information has been supplied (3a(2)), he will move to 3b. The most common move from step 2 is directly to 3b.

1.
*Tacit offer of
 service:*
 (Presence in
 ticket-office)

2.
Tacit request for service:
 (Presence at ticket-office
 window)

TIME

3a(1).
*(Ritual greeting) Request for
 information:*
 (Hallo) (Is there place
 upstairs? How much are ...?
 What time does ...?)

3a(2).
*Information
 compliance:*
 (Yes. R1.15.
 About 10 o'clock.)

3b.
*(Ritual greeting) Request
 for service:*
 (Hallo) (May I have two
 please? Two please. Two.)

4a(1).
Positive response:
 (Mainly gestural;
 physically tearing
 off and handing
 over the tickets).

5(1).
*Request for payment
 information:*
 (How much are ...?)

4b.
*Negative
 response:*
 (Sorry, sold
 out.)

4a(2).
*Cost declaration —
 request for payment:*
 (That'll be R2.30)

5(2).
Thanks for tickets:
 (Thank you. Thanks.)

TIME

5(3).
*Payment information
 compliance:*
 (R1.15 each)

6.
Covering payment:
 (Primarily gestural;
 hands over money)

7.
*Receipt and
 overpayment return:*
 (Primarily gestural)

8.
Ritual closing:
 (Thank you.)

9.
Ritual closing:
 (Thank you.)

TYPICAL SEQUENCING OF SPEECH ACTS IN BUYING A CINEMA TICKET

Step 4

If the response to the request (3b) is negative, the speech event is closed (step 9). Usually at a cinema, if the tickets are sold out, the ticket-office will be closed and a FULL HOUSE or SOLD OUT sign will be displayed in the window. But 4b could apply to the first person who approaches the window after the last ticket is sold, but before the office is closed.

A positive response results in the seller tearing off a ticket and handing it to the buyer. The response is thus mainly gestural; the seller does not answer 'Yes'. If the response is positive, four things could happen: 4a(2), 5(1), 5(2) or directly 6 (the most common move).

Step 5

5(1) will obviously not take place if payment information is supplied in 3a(1). One may find that the information requested in 5(1) is not only payment information but other types as well. At this stage in the discourse, though, it is usually payment information that is required. Step 5(3) follows 5(1) which then proceeds to 6. Often the buyer thanks the seller when the tickets are handed over (4a(1) to 5(2)) and then either proceeds to 5(1) or to 6.

Step 6

Here the buyer pays for his ticket. This step might be accompanied by 'There you are' or the customer's counting the money aloud.

Step 7

The seller receives the money and gives the buyer any change that there might be.

Steps 8 and 9

Step 8 may occur before 9, or the other way round, or they may both occur together. Step 8 always takes place, but often step 9 is left out; in fact, most times it is omitted.

The most common sequence in buying a cinema ticket is as follows:

1 - 2 - 3b - 4a(1) - 6 - 7 - 8

The speech event and the factors of situation, setting and topic were almost the same for all. At both The Odeon and at His

Majesty's the buyer's aim was the same: to purchase a cinema ticket. Each informant might, in fact, have used exactly the same form of utterance, unlikely as this theoretical possibility may be. This study resembles the Brouwer et al. (1979:37) study in that 'The pragmatic aspect - the function of the utterance - is the same for every informant, and the semantic aspect - the content of the message - offers but limited possibilities.' In other words, the utterance used when buying a cinema ticket is rather formulaic, with very small scale variation. It is precisely this variation which was studied. It was found that in the utterances certain optional speech forms were used more by men than by women, or vice versa. There are a number of variables which, according to the literature, might be used differently by men and women: number of words, diminutives, politeness formulas, requests for information, hesitations, repetitions and self-corrections. As in the Brouwer et al. paper, quantitative analyses and statistical operations were used in this study. Previously many of these language aspects had only been speculated about introspectively, for example in Lakoff's (1973) paper, 'Language and women's place'.

IV LIMITATIONS

Before proceeding, it is necessary to bear in mind that there might have been certain factors involved which could have influenced the outcome of the study. First of these is the fact that the taping was carried out in Grahamstown. Grahamstown is a stately city steeped in history. Its character is that of an English market town. The tall spires of the churches, the many monuments and the well-preserved nineteenth century architecture lend Grahamstown a dignity and charm that is unique in South Africa. It is the academic centre of the Eastern Province, and one of the principal educational places in South Africa. From all over the Republic, South West Africa and Zimbabwe, students flock to its famous schools and to Rhodes University.

Most of the sample consisted of university students, all of whom were White, English speaking, between the ages of 18 and 24 and presumably middle class. The other people (non-students) who were part of the sample were also English speaking Whites. Consequently, the sample consisted of a particular situation. Any features found to be characteristic of males and females in this situation need not be characteristic of *all* males and *all* females. To illustrate further, it is a particular type of female who purchases her own cinema ticket. It was observed that if a male/female couple approached the ticket-office, it was usually the male who ordered the ticket. So if a female buys a ticket, it might be that she was not accompanied by a male friend, or that she was on her own.

Something else which might have affected the results is the type of cinema. The Odeon and His Majesty's are very similar. They are the old, dimly lit, spacious type and are both located in the centre of town. There are notable differences though. The Odeon's ticket-office is situated indoors (in an entrance hall), whereas His Majesty's has the ticket-office window outside the main entrance facing the street. Also, when purchasing a ticket at His Majesty's one has to look up to the seller, while at The Odeon the seller is seated and is thus below the buyer's own head level.

Finally, the films themselves might have had an important part to play. When taping was done at The Odeon, the film being screened was 'North Dallas Forty', a film about a popular American college football team. Showing at His Majesty's was 'Apocalypse Now', a story about an American soldier who, during the Vietnamese war, was sent on a mission to find a mad colonel (Kurtz, played by Marlon Brando) who became too involved in the raging war. It is based on Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Both films proved to be popular and attracted a large enough audience to enable the taping to be completed in one session.

METHOD

I. INFORMANTS

Serving as informants were 25 men and 25 women who bought their tickets from a male seller at His Majesty's, together with 25 men and 25 women who bought their tickets from a female seller at The Odeon. This made a total of 50 men and 50 women. They were selected in the following way: out of the total number of people recorded, all the women were chosen (25 in each of the taping sessions), plus the closest man who bought a ticket before each of the women. The average age was about 22 years for both the men and the women. After a pilot study it was decided that age would not be considered as an independent variable as the range was too narrow. There were only six informants who were out of the 18-24 range. This results from the fact that the majority of the sample was made up of university students. As mentioned above, all the informants were English speaking Whites.

All the subjects bought their tickets from the ticket-office window and since the tape-recorder and the microphone were placed under cover and none of the buyers discovered them, it can be assumed that the informants were unaware that their utterances were being recorded.

II. DESIGN

On account of various researchers (Brouwer et al. 1979; Crosby and Nyquist, 1976) using sex of addressee as an independent variable, it was decided to do the same in this study. Their results show that the sex of the seller/addressee has an influence on the addresser's speech.

- (A): The independent variables in this study are therefore:
- Sex of speaker (1) Male
 - (2) Female
 - Sex of addressee (1) Male
 - (2) Female

(B): Dependent variables: Only the utterance used in a request for service (to order the cinema ticket) and in a request for information were investigated. Any further interaction, such as casual conversation between buyer and seller or buyer and partner, as well as ritual closings, were not taken into account. In the following examples the interaction which was studied is italicized.

- (1) Buyer: *Two please*
Seller: Thank you.
Buyer: Thank you.
- (2) Buyer: *One please ... Is there an age restriction?*
Seller: Yes, but if you want to come you can come.
You come at your own risk.
Buyer: I thought there was quite you know a strict thing ... I didn't realise ... Thank you.

To get one's ticket at both cinemas, it is sufficient to say 'Two please', or simply 'Two'. At both cinemas no seat booking is required and there is no differentiation, according to seating, in the price.

According to the literature, there are many variables which could be used differently by men and women. However, in this study there are only three dependent variables. It was hypothesised that men and women would use these differently when buying a cinema ticket.

- (1) A pilot study revealed that the initial request for service could take a number of possible forms, the most common being:
- A. Two
 - B. Two please.
 - C. Can I have two please?

55 out of the 100 requests for service took form B. B can be considered as a core and it differs from form c (27 out of the 100 requests) in that something has been added to the front of it. Additions or preliminaries take the following forms:

- (a) Can/may/could I have two please?
- (b) Give me two please.
- (c) Um, just two please.

Dependent variable (1), then, is:

(X1) core versus (Y1) preliminary + core

(2) The second dependent variable is *number of words*; that is, the number of words used in the request for service, or in the request for information.

It has been said, often, that women talk too much or use a lot of words when only a few are necessary. Swacker (1975:76) provides the following examples. In Jutland they say, 'The North Sea will sooner be found wanting in water than a woman at a loss for words.' Also, the Scots say 'Nothing is so unnatural as a talkative man or a quiet woman.' Swacker's quantitative investigation, however, shows that women use fewer words than men to deal with a set task. This idea will be examined further here.

Dependent variable (2) is thus:

(X2) 0-2 words versus (Y2) 3 or more words

(3) It was found that when 'please' was used as the ultimate word in the request for service utterance, its final consonant z was often devoiced to s. The reason could be the following: the most important word in the utterance is obviously the one referring to the number of tickets that the buyer wants to purchase. The added 'please' is merely a civility and is not really needed in the request. It would be possible for a buyer to express politeness by not completing the word 'please', that is, by saying only pli: . As a result, many informants 'faded' when they came to the end of the word. Final z became devoiced.

As stated in the introduction, female usage shows an attempt at 'better' or 'correct' language, especially at the phonological level. It was assumed, therefore, that this variable would be used differently by women and men.

Dependent variable (3) is:

(X3) -voice versus (Y3) +voice

III. PROCEDURE

(a) *Collecting the data*

Spontaneous speech can best be studied through use of the observation method: the informants are used without their knowing it. Labov (1972:69) states: 'We see rapid and anonymous observations as the most important experimental method in a linguistic program which takes as its primary object the language used by ordinary people in their everyday affairs.' It is possible to observe merely by listening, but this observation is very difficult to check. Rather, in this study a hidden tape-recorder and microphone were used. This method could be objected to on ethical grounds. However, it was felt that it could be used without being unscrupulous, as no one engages in intimate, personal conversations with a ticket seller.

The tape-recorder (Uher 4400 Report Stereo) was placed under cover inside the ticket-office. The microphone was concealed behind a notice at the hole in the window. The experimenter was seated inside the ticket-office with a clear view of the buyers. Undetected, the experimenter wrote down the sex and approximate age of each informant. There were no difficulties with either.

The recording at His Majesty's took place on a Friday evening in May, 1980. The taping time was 7.25pm to 7.50pm (starting time, 8.00pm). At the Odeon taping took place on a Saturday evening in the same month. The taping time was 7.50pm to 8.10pm (starting time, 8.00pm). Since both films proved to be popular and since recording was carried out on popular nights for visiting the cinema, a constant stream of buyers passed the ticket-office. There was never any sign of a long queue, although some buyers may have waited briefly for a few seconds.

(b) *Processing the data*

All utterances were transcribed from the tapes. The independent and dependent variables were noted. Because the study produced data which consisted of scores in discrete categories, the scores were represented by frequencies in a 2 x 2 contingency table, and chi-square tests of association (corrected for continuity) were performed to determine whether there was any significant difference between the two independent groups. In other words, the tests were used to discover whether there was any significant difference between the way men and women used the dependent variables and if there were differences when the informants bought tickets from a male or a female seller.

RESULTS

The results for the independent variable *sex of speaker* are

presented in the following 2 x 2 tables. For each dependent variable, every informant in both groups (men and women) obtains one of two possible scores. These scores are represented by frequencies in the 2 x 2 tables. Dependent variables (1), (2) and (3) are presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

TABLE 1: Dependent variable (1)
(X1) core versus (Y1) preliminary + core

	MEN (N=50)	WOMEN (N=50)
Y1	5	20
X1	45	30

Significant main effect: $x^2=10,5$; $0,005>p\geq 0,001$; $df=1$

TABLE 2: Dependent variable (2)
(X2) 0-2 words versus (Y2) 3 or more words

	MEN (N=50)	WOMEN (N=50)
Y2	13	24
X2	37	26

Significant main effect: $x^2=4,3$; $0,02>p>0,01$; $df=1$

TABLE 3: Dependent variable (3)
(X3) [-voice] versus (Y3) [+voice]

	MEN (N=42)	WOMEN (N=42)
Y3	21	31
X3	21	11

Significant main effect: $x^2=4,1$; $0,02>p>0,01$; $df=1$

Regarding dependent variable (1), a significant difference was revealed for sex of buyer ($0,005>p>0,001$). More women than men used Y1 (preliminary + core). However, differences due to the sex of seller were not significant. With regard to the second dependent variable (number of words), differences due to the sex

of buyer were significant ($0,02 > p > 0,01$). Men use fewer words when ordering a cinema ticket. No significant difference was revealed for sex of ticket-seller. For dependent variable (3), a significant difference was found for sex of buyer ($0,02 > p > 0,01$). Women were more 'correct' in their pronunciation of 'please'. Once again, no significant differences were found for sex of addressee.

DISCUSSION

In this section, the results relating to the two independent variables will be discussed separately.

SEX OF BUYER

The hypothesis that there are differences in the way men and women purchase a cinema ticket is verified by the results. Differences were found in men's and women's usage for all three dependent variables. With regard to the first of these (core versus preliminary + core), it was found that women use the longer form far more than men. A possible explanation may be that the women *do* use more polite speech forms. 'May I have one please?' does, after all, sound more polite than 'Two please' or 'Two'. Lakoff (1973:56) was correct then, when she stated that it is 'the general fact that women's speech sounds much more "polite" than men's.' Women are thus confirming their positions as the inferior sex; by using polite forms, Lakoff argues, women are revealing their insecurity and lack of assertiveness.

Women use more words than men in their requests for service and for information. This does not confirm Swacker's (1975) finding that women use fewer words than men to deal with a set task. However, the result does reflect the general opinion that women tend to be more 'wordy' than men. A possible reason for this finding may be that, as Brouwer et al. (1979) found, 'women ... are more likely to request information.' The frequent requests for information, then, would account for the greater number of words in the women's utterances. This again confirms the hypothesis that women are more insecure than men.

Dependent variable (3) was also used differently by men and women ticket buyers. The women tended to use the 'better' or more 'correct' forms of this phonological variable: more women finished the word 'please' with a +voice final consonant. It seems true, therefore, that women are aiming towards 'a higher status in language to compensate for their lower status as members of society' (Key, 1975:104).

Crosby and Nyquist (1976) found in one of their studies that no significant differences were revealed in the speech of men and women when requesting information from an information booth. They give various reasons. Firstly, the interchanges were too short to permit variation, and secondly, rituals (such as information-seeking interaction) diminish sex differences (they cite Lakoff, 1973). One reason which Brouwer et al. (1979:46) give for not finding any significant differences for a number of their dependent variables is as follows: 'The speech event "requesting a ticket" is so simple that any insecurity on the part of the women does not become manifest in the speech act itself.'

In both of the above studies dealing with sex differences and service encounters, no significant differences were found. This study, however, found that differences were revealed for all three dependent variables when males and females bought cinema tickets. A possible reason for this may lie in the choice of dependent variables. These findings do not imply that linguistic differences based on sex will be found for any variable in this particular situation (buying a cinema ticket).

SEX OF ADDRESSEE

Although Brouwer et al. (1979) found no significant differences between the language use of men and women, they did find that the sex of addressee was an important factor in determining usage of the dependent variables. When buying a cinema ticket, however, differences due to the sex of the seller were not significant. There are a number of possible explanations:

- (a) Both the male and female seller were elderly people. They had been working in their respective cinemas for a long time and had probably been seen before by most of the informants. In other words, there was no one new or unusual in the ticket-office. A beauty queen, a five year old child or a bald woman in the ticket-office would surely have caused some alteration to the normal request for a ticket.
- (b) Only one male and one female seller were used in this investigation. To be sure that no other uncontrolled variables cross the independent variable *sex of addressee*, it would be necessary to use a larger number of male and female addressees.
- (c) It seems as though the code used in ordering a ticket is a relatively fixed or formulaic one. Buying from a male or female seller is not going to change it significantly.
- (d) The request for a cinema ticket is such that it can be thought

of (and even rehearsed) beforehand. When the buyer reaches the ticket-office window, he 'knows' what he is going to say. It is as though he cannot see through the glass. An unusual ticket seller, however, may cause the buyer to alter the form of his request (see point (a) above).

In conclusion, then, it is clear that this study confirms that there are sex-specific speech patterns in the service encounter which was examined. The variables chosen may be few, but the results nevertheless show that differences do exist. Sex, therefore, should be regarded as an essential and separate sociolinguistic variable, besides those most commonly used in sociolinguistic research, such as age, social class, race, education and geographical region. Swacker (1975:82) points out that 'any sociolinguistic research which does not, at least, specifically give consideration to the sex of the informant might well be of questionable validity.'

REFERENCES

- BODINE, A. (1975). 'Sex differentiation in language.' In B. Thorne and N. Henley (eds), *Language and sex: difference and dominance*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House Publishers. 130-152.
- BROUWER, D., GERRITSEN, M. and DE HAAN, D. (1979). 'Speech differences between women and men: on the wrong track?' *Language in Society*, 8, 33-50.
- CROSBY, F. and NYQUIST, L. (1976). 'The female register: an empirical study of Lakoff's hypothesis.' *Language in Society*, 6, 313-322.
- DUBOIS, B. and CROUCH, J. (1975). 'The question of tag questions in women's speech: They don't really use more of them, do they?' *Language in Society*, 4, 289-294.
- DUBOIS, B. and CROUCH, J. (1978). Introduction. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 171, 5-15.
- FERGUSON, C. (1976). 'The structure and use of politeness formulas.' *Language in Society*, 5, 137-151.
- GOFFMAN, E. (1977). Replies and responses. *Language in Society*, 5, 257-313.
- JESPERSEN, O. (1922). *Language, Its Nature, Development and Origin*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- KEY, M. (1972). 'Linguistic behaviour of male and female.' *Linguistics*, 88, 15-31.
- KEY, M. (1975). *Male/Female Language*. Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press.

- LABOV, W. (1966). *The Social Stratification of Speech in New York City*. Washington, D.C.: Centre for Applied Linguistics.
- LABOV, W. (1972). *Sociolinguistic Patterns*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- LAKOFF, R. (1973). 'Language and woman's place.' *Language in Society*, 2, 45-79.
- MEDITCH, A. (1975). 'The development of sex-specific speech-patterns in young children.' *Anthropological Linguistics*, 17, 421-433.
- MERRITT, M. (1977). 'On questions following questions in service encounters.' *Language in Society*, 5, 315-357.
- ROBINSON, W.P. (1974). *Language and Social Behaviour*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- SCHEGLOFF, E. (1968). 'Sequencing in conversational openings.' *American Anthropologist*, 70, 1075-1095.
- SIEGEL, S. (1956). *Nonparametric Statistics: For the Behavioural Science*. New York: Mc Graw-Hill.
- SWACKER, M. (1975). 'The sex of the speaker as a sociolinguistic variable.' In B. Thorne and N. Henley (eds), *Language and Sex: difference and dominance*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.
- THORNE, B. and HENLEY, N. (eds). *Language and Sex: difference and dominance*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.
- TIMM, L.A. (1976). Review of Lakoff's 'Language and women's place'. *Lingua*. 39, 244-252.
- TRUDGILL, P. (1972). 'Sex, covert prestige, and linguistic change in urban British English of Norwich.' *Language in Society*, 1, 179-195.
- TRUDGILL, P. (1974). *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction*. Aylesbury, England: Penguin Books.

PRONUNCIATION BY PROFESSIONALS ON SABC-TV

*The accented sections of words have been underlined.

communal, lamentable, integral, estimate litchen

(for 'litchen'), Gronn Prix (for Grand Prix).

A.D.A.