CHAPTER I
Sociolinguistics has been defined as the study of language in its social context. The language in its social context means crucially the linguistic variation. In different social contexts an individual will speak in different ways - this is called stylistic variation. Moreover speakers who differ from each other in terms of age, sex, social class, ethnic group for example, will also differ from each other in their speech, even in the same context - this is called social variation. Sociolinguists are interested in both stylistic and social variations.

1.1 Differences between the language of the sex: An Overview

In what way the females speech is different from males? Are these differences purely hypothetical constructs? What are the sociolinguistic explanations given to these differences? The following overview provides an account of the differences between the language of the sex. It has been observed that women have a greater tendency to ask questions. As Fishman comments "at times I feel that all women did was to ask questions" (1978: 404). They are more likely than men to make utterances that demand or encourage responses from their fellow speakers and are therefore in Fishman's words "more actively engaged in insuring
interaction than the men" (1978: 404). They also show a
greater tendency to make use of positive minimal responses
especially 'mm, hmm' and are more likely to insert such
comments throughout streams of talk rather than (simply) at
the end.

The strategy of 'silent protest' seems to be
operative in women's speech. They adopt this strategy after
they have been interrupted or have received a delayed
minimal response (Zimmerman & West 1975; West & Zimmerman

According to Herschman (1973: 6) women have a far
greater tendency to use the pronouns 'you' and 'we' which
explicitly acknowledge the existence of the other speaker.

In the article "Some problems in the
sociolinguistics explanation of sex differences" Deborah
Cameron and Jennifer Coates (1985) found that women on
average deviate less from the prestige standard than men.
Upholding of standard usage is typically true for every
social class in modern urban societies and may even be
discovered in a fair number of other cultures and certain
communities. According to Cameron & Coates three
explanations may be given for this persistent difference:

(1) Conservatism (women stick to older forms because they
are more conservative).

(2) Status (women speak more correctly because they are sensitive to the social connotations of speech)

(3) Solidarity (women do not experience the same pressure as men to adhere to vernacular norms).

1.1.1 Conservatism:

Conservatism, although provides a viable explanation, is rife with self-contradiction. For example, Otto Jespersen (1922: 24) (cited in Cameron & Coates, Language & Communication, 1985) on the one hand asserts that women's conservatism and modesty prevent them from innovating in language while he praises men for coining new fresh expressions. On the other hand in the 18th century at the height of the struggle to fix the language, women were blamed for introducing new and ephemeral items into the English lexicon and men were supposed to have guarded the purity of standard language.

Trudgill (1974: 90) cites the example of Koasati and Chukchi as cases where the women's speech preserves older forms i.e. being conservative. Some dialectologists like Jaberg, Judd & Pop choose women as informants because their speech is more conservative while Gilieron in France considers women as poor informants, by virtue of not being conservative.
1.1.2 Status:

The status explanation of linguistic sex difference is very much tied up with an approach to variation based on social stratification (Labov, 1972, Trudgill, 1974 a) (cited in Cameron & Coates, Language & Communication, 1985). Surveys using this approach have produced the result that women have higher values than men for prestige variants and correspondingly lower values for vernacular variants. But women also show more marked patterns of style shift. This leads to disbelief of any notion of conservatism and leads to a belief that women may by hypercorrecting, i.e. trying to gain status through their speech patterns.

Trudgill speculates that women may be more status conscious than men partly because society sets higher standards for female behaviour and because women's lifestyle confers very little status in itself (Trudgill 1974: 94). They are thus under pressure to acquire status by other means such as their speech patterns. Their sensitivity to linguistic norms is associated with the insecurity of their social positions. Such insecurity on the part of women offers a clear parallel with the lower middle class, who of course provide the classic example of hyper correct linguistic behaviour.
Women use fewer stigmatized forms and more prestige forms in every social class. It is no more justifiable to call this pattern of female usage hypercorrect than it would be to call in relation to that of the working class. The notion of women’s sensitivity to prestige forms is an explanation that arises from the intrinsic maleness of the norms. Men’s linguistic behaviour is seen as normal, but when women’s differ, it has to be explained.

If women’s speech is closer to the standard, while men use more stigmatized forms, why do women in fact not have more prestige than men? The answer according to many linguists is that stigmatized variants and non-standard varieties generally possess covert prestige.

Trudgill (1972) linked the notion of covert prestige with the difference he observed in his Norwich survey. He argued that Non-standard language is associated with working class culture and has connotation of masculinity. Thus men are more influenced by vernacular norms than women and produce more non-standard variants.

Associating vernacular with masculinity has some implications: by this working class women are kept outside working class culture also men are the standard from which
women can only deviate i.e. the possibility of norms that are sex and class specific is never entertained. Working class culture and male culture are assumed to be one and the same thing.

In this status-based explanations of linguistic sex-differences methodology is also partly questionable. Both Trudgill and Labov use a standard sociological model which places heavy emphasis on occupation as an indication of social class. But this model on which all their sex difference findings depend itself uses sex differentiated criteria. Men are rated on their occupations as an indicator of social class, but women are classed with the men whom they are assumed to be dependent.

It can hardly be denied that there is a problem for sociolinguist in using the traditional model which takes the family as the primary unit of stratification especially at a time when our traditional concept of the family (man as the only bread winner) is breaking down. Under the circumstances it would be interesting to see whether a social ambition measure applied to all individual would produce significant sex differences.

1.1.3 Solidarity:

Lesley Milroy (1980: 194) asserts the importance
of solidarity as a factor influencing pattern of language use. The evidence is that a tight-knit network is an important mechanism of language maintenance. The close-knit networks to which the men have traditionally belonged serve to maintain vernacular norms. Two key notions in the work of Milroy are density and multiplexity. Density refers to the reciprocal links among a group of people. Multiplexity refers to the different kind of links between members of a network (they may know each other as relatives, friends, neighbours, workmates etc.).

There are some languages in the world which may be pointedly called women's language. Japanese is an interesting example for existence of women's language. The characteristics which are particularly of female's speech and exclusively represent women's speech in Japanese have been enumerated by Jorden (qtd in Sridevi, 1991). These are as follows:

1. special self-reference and address forms
2. special sentence-ending particles and exclamations
3. a particular pitch range and set of intonations
4. frequent use of honorific styles
5. avoidance of 'kango' (Sino-Japanese lexical items)
6. and avoidance of vulgar language.
1.2 Do Men and Women talk differently?

Jennifer Coates, in her book, *Men, Women and Language* has examined whether women and men talk differently and if so how and why they do so. She also examines the claims made by various researchers and subjects them to rigorous scrutiny and she shows that certain of their claims belong to the realms of folk-linguistics. She does not, however, suggest that all early work belong to unscientific realm for some of this research has important implications for future work in this field.

Coates also criticized early researches in the field of language and gender and gives some fascinating examples from historical texts. She demonstrates the problems of research by anthrolopoplogists and dialectologists which claimed that women's language is either conservative or innovative. She uses Cheshire's and Milroy's work to challenge the assumptions made by Sociolinguists such as Trudgill and Labov that women's speech aims at standard English, for she shows that it is rather the fact that 'less tight-knit networks which women belong to are less efficient at enforcing vernacular norms. Sara Mills found this explanation much more satisfying than the explanation usually offered, that women in the lower middle class are aspiring to be upwardly mobile. It was also
heartening to see a report of research where patterns in gendered language use were changing, thus challenging the notion that all women in every period choose particular language forms. She also points towards Milroy’s research in Belfast, where employment patterns have changed for instance: in areas of high male unemployment this social change means that women’s networks change and there is thus a corresponding change in their language use.

She shows that both male and female speakers can be innovative but that the salient difference is that between conscious and unconscious change. Women engage in linguistic change which tends towards the standard and is therefore conscious, whereas male change goes largely unnoticed because it is towards the vernacular. She dismisses the notion that it is women’s role as a mother which leads to language change, since peer group pressure is more important than parental pressure in this respect.

There are also similarities between Cameron’s and Coates book as both believe in the notion of women’s language being a source of strength, rather than simply seeing it as a form of disadvantage. Similarly, they are concerned with the problem of relating non-linguistic elements to formal linguistic elements on a one to one basis.
However, Cameron says, "If language oppresses us in and of itself, there is no one to fight and no escape from its tyranny (1986, P.82)." Coates chooses a less determined language model, but seems to waver in whether she thinks language is a 'reflection' of reality or a 'reinforcer' of the status quo. In the beginning she says clearly that language 'reflects' social conditions. But in the end the strong statements of language as a 'reflection' are modified. Yet, if language simply reflects social variation, one might ask how it can play a role in the maintenance of the status quo where Cameron uses the 'she' pronoun throughout as a generic pronoun. Coates has used the someone/they form. So unobstrusive is her use of non-sexist forms.

Although Sara Mills found Coates' book a thoroughly well researched and well written one, there were certain areas where she encountered problems. For e.g. despite the attempt in her report on Milroys work to show that language patterns change because of social changes, there are occasions when all women are treated as if the same. There is a risk where Cameron puts it, of reifying 'domination by presenting as eternal and natural what is in fact historical and transitory' (1986, P.83). The problem occurs when she discusses Henry Tajfel's work on disadvantaged groups, and
applied his framework to describe the low self-esteem of women. This can only be done if one assumes that women are a homogenous group without difference of class or race. Although it is clear that many women have a poor self image, it is perhaps better to make explicit which women are being considered, so that it does not seem as if this is the case for women as a biological group. Her description of social stratification theory does not make an obvious criticism and this is one that Cameron makes- that women are placed in the same class as their husbands regardless of their class position determined by their own income, their education, or their parents class position (Cameron 1985, P.51).

Cameron shows that a central problem in research into gender and language difference is the explanation of results, and Coates explanations of difference are generally extremely insightful. However, on some occasions her explanations relied on stereotypes of women as a group for example when she tries to answer the question of why women should ask more questions than men. She suggests "Perhaps women feel less inhibited about asking for information, since this does not conflict with the sex-role prescribed by society."

But this statement assumes that all women accept this role and that there is one role for women without
distinction of class or race.

On another occasion she explains the fluency of girls and again there was a question that why fluency was being explained as a result of a subservient position rather than as a dominant position as it would be if boys were found to be more fluent.

This problem of lack of specificity and drawing on stereotype occurred again with the description of women's cooperative speech style. But it is important to remember that this style is not 'natural' to women and has developed mainly through the interventions of consciousness raising groups.

1.3 Differences discerned at different linguistic levels:

The differences between the males and females language can be discerned at different levels of linguistics.

1.3.1 Phonological differences:

The phonological differences between the speech of males and females have been noticed in a variety of languages, for instance, the Chukchi language, spoken in Eastern Siberia, varies phonologically depending on the sex of the speaker, females generally use /s/ where males use
[ts] or [r]. For example the word for 'people' is pronounced as:

**Women**
/samkissin/

**Men**
/ramkitsin/ 'people'

Men and women of the Gros Ventre tribe in Montana have differences in the pronunciations. The velar plosive /k/ is replaced by an affricate in the men's speech, for example:

**Women**
/wakinskiho/ 

**Men**
/wadinskiho/ 'new born child'
/kjasta/ 
/djasta/ 'bread'

In fact, in this community anyone who uses the wrong pronunciation is considered to be bisexual by the older members of the tribe so the fear of being laughed at for such errors has helped to erode the use of the language by the younger generation who tend to speak English.

In Yukhagir a north-east Asian language, both women and children have /ts/ and /dz/ whereas men have /tj/ and /dj/. Old people of both sexes have a corresponding /cj/ and /jj/ which shows that difference is not only sex related but also age-graded. Coming to an Indo-Aryan language family in Bengal, men often substitute /l/ for initial /n/ whereas women and children and uneducated do not do so (Jennifer Coates 1986).
1.3.2 Morphological differences:

At the morphological level also the males and females differ with each other. A language described by Edward Sapir which is spoken by the Yanas (California) where the language spoken by men is different morphologically from that used in other situations (from men to women, and women to men, and women to women). Here the words which are used in this men to men variety are longer than those in communal language. In some cases the men add a suffix to the primary form, following a rule which can roughly be stated here: "When a word in the communal language ends with a long vowel, a diphthong or a consonant or if the word is a monosyllable the men's language adds a suffix /-na'/,", for example:

\[
\begin{align*}
/ba/ \ 'stag' & \rightarrow /bana/ \\
/au/ \ 'fire' & \rightarrow /auna/ \\
\end{align*}
\]

"When a word in the men's language ends in a short vowel /a,i,u/ this vowel is lost and the preceding consonant becomes voiceless" thus

\[
\begin{align*}
/b,d,g,dz/ + \text{short vowel} & \rightarrow /p't'k'ts'/ \\
\end{align*}
\]

for example:

\[
\begin{align*}
/gagI/ & \rightarrow /gak'/ \ 'crow' \\
/p'adza/ & \rightarrow /pa'ts'/ \ 'snow'
\end{align*}
\]
Another rule can be accounted for by the principle of morphophonemic economy (the tendency of all languages for words to get simplified):

cf omnibus ————> bus
refrigerator ————> fridge etc.

Mens language seem to preserve historically older forms. Sapir suggested that the reduced female forms symbolize women's lower status; the men's fuller forms are associated with ceremony and formality. This is an interesting case of male speech being associated with conservatism and linguistic purity characteristics now conventionally associated with women's language.

Kurux, a Dravidian tribal language spoken in Bihar, Orissa, Bengal and Madhya Pradesh shows difference in the use of language among males and females. According to Abbi (1991) Kurux women speakers have distinct set of grammatical rules operating in verb endings, demonstrative pronominals and some nominals. The rules are such formed that men to men, women to women or women to men conversations differ in lexical and grammatical forms.

Women use different plural suffixes than their male counterparts. Consider:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Men's speech (plural)</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Women's speech (plural)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kukko-r</td>
<td>'boys'</td>
<td>kukka: x dd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p[gi-r</td>
<td>'old men'</td>
<td>p[gi = ɔ:1lɛ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malu-r</td>
<td>'dances'</td>
<td>malu:alɛ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kukkoe-r</td>
<td>'girls'</td>
<td>kukkoe: xaddɛ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pacco-r</td>
<td>'old women'</td>
<td>pacco: alɛ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, women use ibray 'this' (proximate); hubray 'that' (located halfway between proximate and remote) and ɑbray 'that' (remote) while men use ibrar, hubrɔ and ɑbrɔ respectively.

1.3.3 Lexical differences:

In most languages, the pronouns system marks sex distinctions in the 3rd person (e.g. he/She) but the distinction is less commonly made in the first and second persons where sex of speaker is involved. Japanese is a language which marks sex in all three persons of the pronoun. (Bodine: 1975 a). The first person from Watakushi which can be used by either male and female speakers but male speakers use bo'ku and women atashi (an abbreviated form of Watakushi). There are two second person pronouns: anata which can be used to male and female addressee and Kimi, a form used exclusively by men when addressing men or women of equal or inferior rank.
In his work on Trobriand islanders, Malinowski (1929 quoted in Yaguello 1978) established that their kinship terminology organised on the basis of two criteria:

1. Same / different sex
2. Older/ Younger

This means that the words for sister, for example, will vary depending on the sex of speaker and according to whether the speaker is older or younger than the sibling.

For the relationship involving the term *Sister*, the Trobrianders have three terms namely *Lugata*, *tuwag*₂, *bwadagu*. They make no distinctions between a man’s sister and a woman’s brother (both are *Lugata*), nor between a man’s brother and woman’s sister if the age difference is the same in both cases (*tuwag*₂ or *bwadagu*).

1.3.3.1 Colour terms:

Females and males seem to include different lexical sets in their total repertoire depending on the range and kinds of field they are involved in. Lakoff’s best known example is that of colour terms which according to her, are used more confidently by females than males. There are some colour terms which are common to both for example red, green, pink, blue but there are some colour terms which
are exclusively used by females for example: beige, magenta, fawn, ultramarine.

1.3.3.2 Particles:

Besides colour terms, we also find differences between the speech of women and that of men in the use of particles that grammarians often describe as meaningless. There may be no referent for them, but they are far from meaningless: they define the social context of an utterance, indicate the relationship the speaker feels between himself and his addressee, between himself and what he is talking about. For example a female might say:

*Oh dear, you've put the peanut butter in the refrigerator again.*

whereas a male will say:

*Shit, you've put the peanut butter in the refrigerator*

1.3.3.3 Evaluative Adjectives:

Similar sorts of disparities exist elsewhere in the vocabulary. For instance, a group of adjectives which have, besides their specific and literal meanings, another use, that of indicating speaker's approbation or admiration for something. Some of these adjectives are neutral as to
sex of speaker, either men or women may use them. But another set seems, in its figurative use, to be largely confined to women's speech. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Women's only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>great</td>
<td>adorable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terrific</td>
<td>charming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cool</td>
<td>sweet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neat</td>
<td>lovely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>divine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3.4 Syntactic differences:

We may find that syntactically too women's speech is peculiar. Although there is no such rule in English that is exclusive to male or female, at least one rule that a woman uses in more conversational situation than a man is a tag question, for example, for a single strong sentence like war is terrible a woman might say war is terrible, isn't it? (Lakoff: 1973).

1.4 Stereotypes attached to the differences

There are several stereotypes attached to the gender differences which range from linguistic to extra-linguistic considerations. As part of these stereotypes, women were admonished to suffer in silence and the penalties for failing to heed these instructions were severe.
1.4.1 **Effeminate language:**

According to Bernstein all forms of aggressive, assertive, hostile and vigorous language were defined as acceptable for men and placed under taboo for women. The men tend to avoid words that sound feminine or weak.

School words tend to be the words of women. Boys usually prefer tough and colourful short words while teachers and girls lean towards longer and floral synonyms.

1.4.2 **Emotive language:**

Havelock Ellis (1894) considers language of males as abstract, rational, and creative while the language of females are considered to be emotional, practical, receptive and concrete.

1.4.3 **Refined language:**

Edward T. Hall (1986) presumes that women are more concerned with refinement in language than men. There are certain expressions which may be attributed to women as part of their use of refined language. For example, the distinction between *may* and *can* in which the former denotes "ability" while the latter denotes "permission". Hall attributes to women the usage distinction maintained between *can* and *may* and opines that men and boys use *can* while women and girls use *may*. 
1.4.4 Phonetic stereotype:

Jonathan Swift (1955) in an experiment, asked a number of males and females to write a series of non-sense words and found out that men used more consonants while the women used more vowels and liquids and produced a string that resembled Italian, but according to Elizabeth Elstob, there are many examples of women whose writings abound consonants.

Benajah Jay Antrim (1843) assumes that vowels are feminine "because they are the soft and delicate voices" and consonants are masculine "because they are more harsh and irregular" (Baron 1986).

James Buchanan contends that women exhibit "improper pronunciation, lack a natural, easy and graceful variation of the voice".

Thomas Wilson (1724) complains that because women's education is neglected "many a pretty lady, by the silliness of words, lost the admiration which her face has gained" (Baron 1986).

1.4.5 Registral stereotype:

The idea that women know fewer words than men is related to general stereotype of women conservatism.
Wilfred asserts that there are certain words that are exclusive to women's repertoires, for example, adorable, sweet, precious, cunning, cute etc. They also use French colour terms as beige, mauve which means nothing to men and men always avoid such feminine terms.

Joseph Jastrov asked a group of 50 males and females to write a list of 100 unconnected words and found out that men's words came in descending order of frequency under the categories of the animal kingdom, proper names, verbs, implements and utensil adjectives, the vegetable kingdom, geography and landscape features. Women had a greater tendency to refer to wearing apparel and fabrics, interior furnishing, foods, building material, stationary, the arts, amusements and kiship. The greatest difference appeared in the area of food: women used 179 words to refer to food while men used only 53.

According to Flexner, women do not develop their own slangs as they stay at home but learn them from their husbands. He finds that even the working women do not develop their slangs because either they have short careers or they are also less involved in their jobs. He believes that men use slangs for its shock value, its expression of action or violence.
1.4.6 Gossip

Women's gossip is an aspect of female language use, distinguished from more general concepts of women's speech style and of gossip. Gossip is described here in terms of its socio-linguistic features, with an emphasis on its functions which form the basis for the division of gossip into four categories: house talk, scandal, bitching and chatting.

The problems of studying women's language are those of women's studies in general: the lack of concrete data, the sexist bias of the data available, the necessity of generating new perspectives from 'nowhere' from our own experience, our own intuition.

Gossip has been defined a way of talking between women in their roles as women, intimate in style, personal and domestic in topic and setting, a female cultural events which springs from and perpetuates the restrictions of the female role, but also gives the comfort of validation.

It seems that women form a speech community with language skills and attitudes of our own, as well as those shared by the wider speech community. There continues to be a debate about how best to describe "women's language" as Lakoff calls it (1975); as a style (Thorne and Henley 1975)
(cited in Deborah Cameron 1990) or as a genderlect (Cramer 1974). Gossip is a narrower term than these, a specific type of women's 'language' or 'style'.

Anthropologist Gluckman's main thesis is that gossip defined as a 'general interest in the doings, the virtues and vices of other' has a social function in maintaining 'the unity, morals and values of social groups' (Gluckman 1963) (cited in Cameron 1990). Paine emphasizes on the other hand, the importance of gossip as a 'genre of informal communication' (1967: 278). Women's gossip illuminates the 'unity, morals and values' of women as a social group and provides the informal communications networks that transmits these female values and concerns.

The description of gossip which follows is organized in terms of a sociolinguistic framework presented by Ervin Tripps, a framework in which 'verbal behavior' is studied in terms of the relations between the setting, the participants, the topic, the functions of an interaction, the form, and the values held by the participants about each of these (Erwin Tripp 1964: 192).

Gossip is essentially talk between women in our common role as women. Gossip is 'language of intimacy' as Rubin describes it, an intimacy arising from the solidarity
and identity of women as members of a social group with a pool of common experience (Rubin 1972: 513).

It is the nature of this common experience which not only gives gossip its topics and style, but makes gossip a basic element of the female subculture. As Millet put it, 'like the members of any repressed group, [women] are verbal persons, talking because they are permitted no other form of expression and 'those out of power must settle for talk' (Millet 1971: 61). Gossip may be derogated by men as trivial but it is also seen as a threat. Women have been prevented from talking together by ridicule, interruption, physical constraint and even by statute (Oakley 1972: 10) and the fear of gossip and its subversive power has been associated with witchcraft (Gluckman 1963: 314; Oakley 1974: 16).

Gossip, a language of female secrets, is one of women's strength and like all our strengths, it is both discounted and attacked. The secretive, even furtive air of much gossip is one index of the extent to which these male attitudes have been internalized.

Whatever the specific topic, the wider theme of gossip is always personal experience, it is in terms of the details of the speakers' lives and the lives of those around them that a perspective on the world is created.
Gossip is allusive; its 'characteristic note' is the rising inflection, sometimes accompanying a tag question, the implicit reference to common knowledge, common values- the group values to which Gluckman refers, women are not only sharing information but are asking each other; what does this add to what we know about these people? What is its significance? What do we feel about it?

The replies to these questions like the questions themselves, are frequently paralinguistic in form: the raised eyebrows, the pursed lips, the sigh or the silence. Paralinguistic responses are also important to acknowledgement and validation of each speaker's contribution; Hirshman found that women are more likely than men to give minimal responses (for example: mm-hmm) as feedback to another speaker's statements especially another woman's. Hirshman further suggests that males tend to dispute the other persons utterance or ignore it, while females acknowledge it, or often build on it.

1.4.7 Conversational Insecurity

The discussion of the way women act, including the way they talk, often rely on some notion of a female personality. Women as seen to be more insecure, dependent and emotional than men because of the way that they are
Socialization is seen as the means by which male-female power differences are internalized and translated into behaviour producing properly dominant men and submissive women has probably been the most explicit in offering this personality-Socialization explanation for women's speech patterns:

Linguistic behaviour, like other facets of personality is heavily influenced by training and education. Women speak as they do- and men speak as they do- because they have from childhood been rewarded for doing so, overtly or subtly. Also, they speak as they do because their choice of speech style reflects their self image (Lakoff 1979).

Pamela Fishman has examined the behaviour in terms of the interactional situation in which it is produced. She has taken up two examples of women's conversational style: "question-asking" and the use of 'you know'. Both show the women's tendency to be more 'insecure' and 'hesitant'. Rather then using these as evidence of personality traits, she has planned to explore the character of conversational interaction in which they occur.

Lakoff argues that the asking of questions is a prime example of women's insecurity and hesitancy. She deals with women's two interrogative devices tag questions (isn't
it? couldn't we) (1975) and questions with declarative functions (Did you see this in the paper?; Should we do a grocery shopping?) (1979).

Instead to interpreting question-asking as the expression of an insecure personality, she has considered the questions interactive attributes. What work does a question do? Question-asking attempts to establish one of the pre-requisites of conversation. The two people who are conversing must display the agreement by entering into the mutual orientation on one another, and they must speak and respond to one another as one aspect of their mutual orientation. They must take turns speaking; and they must display connectedness between what they say to one another. Sacks has noted that questions are a part of a category of conversational sequencing devices; questions form the first part of a pair of utterances, answers being the second part (Sacks, 1972). Questions and answers are linked together. Questions are both explicit invitations to the listener to respond and demand that they do so. The question has a right to complain if there is no response forthcoming. Questions are stronger forms interactively than declaratives. A declarative can be easily ignored. The listener can say that they did not know the speaker was finished or they thought the speaker was musing aloud.
Women ask questions so often because of the conversational power of questions not because of personality weakness. With men, women have more problem starting conversation and keeping it going. The greater use of questions is an attempt to solve the conversational problem of gaining a response to their utterance.

Lakoff discusses hedging as another aspect of women's insecurity. By hedges she refers to the frequent use of such phrases as 'sorta', 'like' and 'you know'. In the transcripts, just as Lakoff has predicted, the women used 'you know' five times more often than men. Why is that? According to Lakoff, one would expect 'you know' to be randomly scattered throughout women's speech, since its usage is supposed to reflect the general insecurity of the speaker. If, however, 'you know' does some kind of work in conversation, we would expect its occurrence to cluster at points in conversation where the interactional context seems to call for its usage. And it was found in the data, that thirty of the women's 87 "you know's" occur during six short segments of talk. These were all places where the women were unsuccessfully attempting to pursue topics. The six segments of talk total 10 minutes.

'You know' displays conversational trouble but it is often an attempt to solve the trouble as well. 'You know'
is an attention-getting device, a way to check with one's interactional partner to see if they are listening, following and attending to one's remarks. When we consider 'you know' interactively, it is not surprising to find that its use is concentrated in long turns at talk where the speaker is unsuccessfully attempting to carry on a conversation. In the data eight out of ten of the "you know's" occur immediately prior to or after pauses in the woman's speech. Pauses are places where speaker change might occur, i.e. where the man might have responded. Because the man does not respond and the woman continues talking to keep the conversation going, they become internal to the woman's speech. 'You know' seems to be an explicit invitation to respond. At the same time, it displays the man's position as a co-participant when he has not displayed it himself.

In another piece of data, two of the five "you know's" follow interval pauses, as in the first transcript we examined. The other three cluster around the man's two minimal responses. Minimal responses display minimal orientation but not full participation. They fill the turn-taking but add nothing to the substantive progress of the talk, to the content of the conversation.

The use of 'you know' around minimal response displays and attempts to solve the same problem as its use
around pauses. In both cases there is a speaker change problem. The women are either trying to get a response or have gotten an unsatisfactory one. The evidence for women's insecurity is in fact evidence of the work they are doing to try to turn insecure conversations in successful ones.

Now the question is why do women have more conversational trouble than men do? The answer is because men often do not do the necessary work to keep conversation going. Either, they do not respond or they respond minimally to conversational attempts by the women. In the few instances where men have trouble in conversations with women they use the same devices to try to solve their problems. In conversation with their superiors men use what has been regarded as women's conversational style. The underlying issue here is likely to be hierarchy, not simply gender. Women's conversational troubles reflect not their inferior social training but their inferior social position.

1.5 Language & Sex: A Case of Double Standards

Literature dealing with language of sex is replete with certain contradictions reflecting double standards—an attitude that may be attributed to male dominance.
On the one other hand their (women's) conservatism is applauded since it is through conservatism that they are able to maintain and uphold certain standards, on the other hand the same conservatism becomes a disqualification as it hinders the process of innovation. The simultaneity with which women are praised for conserving the traditional forms of language and condemned for not allowing innovations to occur is nothing but an act of contradiction. Such contradiction may also be discerned at the level of spelling and pronunciation. There are some who found women's pronunciation to be exemplary while there are others who mocked it as ignorant, abrasive and sloppy. Some considered women to be poor spellers, others found them better spellers than men.

Certain beliefs and myths are generated with a view to further intensify the binarity of opposition between 'we' and 'they' and situate women out of the precints of male discourse.

Men generally consider women's language very illogical and contradictory. For as opposed to men, women base their ideas on stereotyped notions of human behaviour devoid of and even incapable of logical thinking.
As part of their belief and myth the normative behaviour of interaction are evolved by men to which women are expected to observe. Since the 14th century the etiquette books advised women to speak as little as possible. It was their duty to listen to their fathers and husbands. Harriet Lane (1922) also suggests women to keep silent. According to him "You can make your eyes smile, speak for you and say more perhaps than words could express".

The ambivalent position of women in Indian Society has further added impetus to the double standardness and contradiction. On the one hand she has scaled the heights of glory enjoying the status of a goddess and mother while on the other hand she has faced the depths of degradation hence being looked down upon as an object of sex and libidinal satisfaction. If at one time she was an active and equal partner of all the vedic rituals, at other time she was not allowed to learn even their sacred language, Sanskrit. The language of the Medieval Indian drama clearly testifies that even the women of higher class of the society were not allowed to speak sanskrit. They used to speak the language of the people of lower class. This clearly reflects the social stratification and sex discrimination even in the choice of the language and its use even in the modern period.
this tendency of sex discrimination is prevalent as it is well known that the literacy rate among the women in India is much low. We see the typical parental view in our daily life that they support boys education and discourage the girls from going to school as their social role is predetermined and limited to child rearing and housekeeping. Tolkappiyam imposes restrictions on the way a woman should talk while a man can speak anything he wants to and express his knowledge a woman can speak only on a few subjects limited to the family circle. e.g. :-

kilavi collin avalari kilavi
"women should speak only known subjects"

kilavorkkavin uranotu kilakkum
"man should speak anything to express his knowledge"

Women's speech has been perceived not just as different but as dangerous. According to Camden, when the Celtic Britains were forced from their homeland in the 5th century Germanic invasion then on the way they married strange women and cut their tongues, so that they may not corrupt the languages of their children.

J.B. Du Tertre (1654) writes about the Caribs that the women had a language different from men and it was a sort of crime to speak otherwise among themselves when they are not obliged to converse with the men. We see that males
understand the females language even then they avoid using it or even admitting that they understand it and invented *jargon* which was not understood by women.

Max Muller recognises the exclusion of women from certain aspects of language and he allows women a greater role in language development. Although he does not have as high an opinion of the feminine in language as of the masculine, he does concede that women influence the progress of language and he even admits that their idioms are to be found in public as well as domestic language.

1.6 The Female Register

Sociolinguists (e.g. Swacke 1975) and anthropologists (e.g. Hall 1959) are aware of the fact that sex, like social class of subcultural group, is a variable which strongly affects speech (Thorne and Henley 1975) while sex inclusive differentiation (i.e. separate male and female languages) now appear to be an almost non-existent phenomenon, sex preferred differentiation seems to be wide spread across a number of languages and language families (Bodine 1975). A particular recent study indicates that syntax (Labor 1966) intonation (Breud 1972) and pronunciation (Trudgill 1972) in spoken English all vary as a function of the sex of the speaker.
The study of female register is based on an empirical study of Lakoff's hypothesis. Lakoff maintains sex differences in languages usage not only in different roles; they actually reflect unequal roles or status. Our society is then portrayed as one in which males are valued more than females (Broverman, Clarkson and Rozen-Krantz 1972; Goldberg 1968, Gornick 1971; Hacker 1951).

The inferior status of women in society as a whole, argues Lakoff, is echoed by observable differences between men's language and women's language. Men's language, according to Lakoff's thesis, is assertive, explicit and direct. Women's language is immature, hyperformal or hyperpolite and non-assertive.

The female register is both expressive (e.g. polite rather than direct and informative) and non-assertive. Lakoff cites three studies which purported to test the occurrence of the female register. The first using a questionnaire, found that male and female respondents did not differ in the extent to which they felt they used the female register. The second failed to find sex differences in freshman composition themes. The third study, in which subjects created cartoon captions also failed to reveal sex differences. None of these studies provided a valid test of the hypothesis that women's speech differs from men's speech.
in the ways specified. The first study confused self awareness with actual practice.

The second study involved formal written language and did not necessarily reflect actual speech or informal writing. The third study used a highly artificial and contextless situation.

In contrast to Lakoff's study an observational study was performed by Kriedberg and reported to Berko-Gleason (1975). Kriedberg analyzed speech samples of mothers and fathers and of male and female daycare teachers to very young children. He found out the imperative were used more by males than females did and that parents used the imperatives much more than teachers did. While Lakoff did not formally specify the infrequent use of commands as a characteristic use of the female register. Kriedberg's study clearly supports the hypothesis that female speech is less forceful or dominant than male speech. The data appear especially compelling in view of the observation that male teachers far exceeded the female teachers in the use of the imperative even though male daycare teachers hardly conform to the masculine stereotype of our culture. It is worthy of note, on the other hand, that Kriedberg also found differences which are not explicitly predicted by Lakoff's model. These were the differences due to the role (parent vs teacher).
Based on Lakoff's analysis of the characteristics of "women's language", we predicted that the female register would be more marked in women's speech than in men's speech.

Three studies were done in order to test Lakoff's hypotheses that female register is an expression of inferior status. Two of the three studies supported the first hypothesis based on Lakoff that women employ the female register on to a greater extent than men. One of the studies was a lab study in which extraneous factors were controlled but in which artificiality was low but in control was also low. In the police station study it was found that role (police personnel, client) produced highly significant differences, with the female register characterizing the client speech. In the information booth study no significant differences emerged, although the male-male speech was marked by less use of the female register.

Three explanations are given to show why the information booth study failed to reveal significant differences when the other two studies did. First, it is possible that the interchanges were too short to permit variation. In many instances the conversations observed at the information booth lasted only a few seconds.
A second reason for the difference in findings between the studies is that study II (information booth) focussed on the characteristics of the female register, politeness, while the other two studies gave more importance to other characteristics (e.g. hedges). Whether hypercorrect and overly polite speech characterizes women's speech to the extent that lack of commitment (or involvement) characterizes women's speech is clearly a question for a further research. It may well be that non-assertiveness ought to be considered the central feature of the female register, and that politeness ought to figure less prominently.

The final and most satisfactory explanation for the lack of finding in study III (police station study) is that the information seeking interaction represented a well-established ritual in our culture (Schegloff 1968). As Lakoff notes, rituals diminish sex differences. In contrast to study II, study I and III measured the female register is less ritualized situations. The implication of the third explanation is that differences between women's speech and men's speech are, to some extent, context specific i.e. in some contexts the difference will be exaggerated and in some they will be attenuated. This conception is consistent with Lakoff's position.
While the empirical data support Lakoff's hypotheses that the female register is used more by women than by men, they do not necessarily justify her further assertion that women's speech reflects the low status of women in our society. If we assume that the obtained sex differences in speech were due primarily to sex-status differences, than we should also expect that other types of status differences (in this case, job status) would affect speech. Such was not the case.

Unlike status, role did have a highly significant effect on speech in study III. Given these findings, it seems most prudent to attribute sex differences in use of female register to sex differences in roles. It has been shown that role affects spoken language (Robinson 1972) we might note, that in Berko Gleason's (1975) sample, parents and teachers enjoyed an equally high status vis-a-vis the children to whom they were speaking.

That women and men in our culture play different roles in widely recognized (Garskof 1971; Rossi 1972). Parsons (1965) has characterized the male role as instrumental and the female role as expressive. Lakoff's own distinction between politeness and directness closely parallels Parsons distinctions between expressive and instrumental behavior. Her contrast between assertiveness and
commitment and female non-assertiveness and lack of commitment adds a dimension to the Parsonian analysis of sex roles. However, Lakoff's conception of sex roles may be more complete than Parson's, the results of study III strongly favor a Parsonian analysis of sex differences in language due to role differentiation rather than to status differentiation.

The mere fact that males and females are assigned to stereotyped roles indicates that ours is a sexist society. As Lakoff points, this sexism is detrimental to women, depriving them of the opinion of acting assertively and directly in situations where assertiveness and directness are most functional. A point which Lakoff does not address is that sexism is also detrimental to men, since it limits their options of acting non-assertively and politely in situations where non-assertiveness and politeness are more functional. Lakoff's muted admonitions notwithstanding, we will not create a more egalitarian society by eliminating the female register. Rather, as our society becomes increasingly androgynous, sex differential usage of the female register ought to diminish and, hopefully one day disappear.
1.6.1 Women's derogatory terms for men:

Much of the research concerning 'women's language' has focused on differences in pitch and intonation, expressions of uncertainty, and politeness and correctness of form all predicated on the assumption that women are socially and linguistically conservative and therefore, more likely to use standard or prestige forms. Barbara Risch (1987) has done the study. This study is about the derogatory terms that women use to refer to men. The frequency and variance of response that results from the study calls into question the assumption that women are more prone to use standard form of speech and suggests that the standard/nonstandard distinction is more appropriately applied to the contrast between public versus private discourse than to that of the speech patterns of women versus the language use of men.

A behaviour is considered taboo when social opinion inhibits or prohibits it in an irrational manner. Linguistic taboos, associated with particular words or sets of words, exists in most cultures. Such words are not only considered inappropriate for a certain context, but are forbidden in most communicative contexts. For native speakers of English, some of the strongest taboos apply to words associated with sex. It is not meaning of these words
that is considered taboo, because it is permissible to express that meaning through other lexical forms; the irrational response characteristic of linguistic taboos is a response to the form of the word.

Lakoff (1973) makes reference to the euphemistic terms that men use to refer to women. She suggests that through the use of terms which appear to be polite forms (such as 'lady'), men can make covertly insulting reference to women. Dell Hymes also points out that men have an abundance of overtly derogatory terms for referring to women. Is it impossible that women could have a lexical set of referring to men in an overtly derogatory manner? Such a set of terms would be considered taboo, and perhaps such language behaviour in women is merely too 'unladylike' to mention.

Women are generally perceived as being more status conscious than men and are thought to be restricted by more standard forms of speech. Non-standard forms are considered to be associated with masculinity or toughness (Trudgill 1974: 88). Taking into account the mechanism of perceptual defuse and the assumption that women are more status conscious than men, women would be more inhibited about the production of linguistic taboos and unlikely to admit to them. However, other studies by Trudgill indicate that
female speakers under thirty, particularly those of the working class, are less constrained by prestige forms of speech and therefore more likely to use non-standard forms (1972: 191). The question is whether young, middle class women have a set of derogatory terms which they use to refer to men and if so, what comprises such a set.

1.7 Communicative Strategies of females & males:

The term communicative competence was first used by Dell Hymes (1972). In Chomsky’s views child internalises a set of rules which enable her/him to produce grammatical sentences while according to Hymes, the child learn not just grammar, but also sense of appropriateness. It is not sufficient for the child to be linguistically competent in order to function in the real world; he/she must also have learned when to speak when to remain silent what to talk about how to talk about it in different circumstances, etc.

According to Jennifer Coates (1986) the sex differences prevail in communicative competence. Sex differences in communicative competence are part of folk knowledge. We all believe that women talk more than men, that women gossip, that men swear more than women, that women are more polite and so on. Research in this area often directly challenges cultural stereotypes, since much of the
folklore associated with male/female differences turns to be false.

1.7.1 Turn taking in Conversation:

The most influential proposal about turn-taking was made by Sacks, Schegloff and Jeffersen. They divided the rules in 2 components.

1. Turn constructional component
2. Turn allocation component.

1.7.1.1 Turn-constructional component

Turns are constructed of units which are constructed of units which turn out to be syntactic units: words, phrases, clauses & sentences. Each unit has a completion point; roughly, participants can be expected to know what it would take for an instance of that unit type to be completed. The completion of such a unit constitutes a transition-relevance place and turn-exchanges occur at these places.

1.7.1.2 Turn allocation component:

It turns out that the fact that Sacks Schegloff and Jefferson set out to account for, follow three rules. The rules come into play in order at each transition relevance place.
1.7.1.2a In this, the "current" speaker selects next technique is applied i.e. to say that the current speaker will select the next speaker and then the person selected has both the right and obligation to speak and no one has such a right or obligation.

1.7.1.2b If the first rule is not applied than the speaker may self-select himself at the transition-relevance point. And if self selection is instituted, the first person to do so get the turn and turn exchange takes place.

1.7.1.2c If both the "current speaker selects next" technique and self selection technique is not being used than the current speaker may continue.

The rules mentioned above apply one after the other that means the later rules only come if the earlier ones have not been involved. On the other hand, the presence of the later rules in the system imposes constraints on the earlier ones. The rules assign only one turn at a time. Second no one has a right to a new turn except at a transition-relevance place, within units, the current speaker has right to the turn to talk.

1.7.1.3 Sometimes, the speaker deliberately begin to talk at other positions besides the transition-relevance point with the intention of dislodging the current speaker
from his or her turn before a natural ending point. This gives rise to interruptions.

1.7.1.4 Contradictory to this, the rule system also account for the fact that there are times when more than one person is speaking and that they are common. First of all the rules guarantee that any such instances will be localized to transition relevance place. Rule 2 can give rise to overlaps since the next turn has to be self-selected. If more than one speaker wants the next turn, it is quite likely that each will start talking at the same time.

The overlap between the current speaker and a self selector, has to do with slight misprojection of a transition relevance place means to say that it is the misjudgement by the participants in the conversation about when to begin their talk as "self selecting" next speakers. Tannen gives three kinds of overlaps:

1.7.1.4a Cooperative Sentence building: Here the overlap occurs as the speaker and auditor try to compete the utterance together. For ex:

Steve: the Huntington Hartford is on the Southside
Deborah: on the other? across.
1.7.1.4b Requesting and giving verification:

One of the speaker asks for verification during the ongoing talk of the current speaker without a change of turn taking place.

Steve: Right where central Park met Broadway. That building

Deborah: By

Steve: Shaped like that

Deborah: Columbus circle...that Columbus circle. Here's columbus circle...

Deborah: Here's central Park west

Peter: That the Huntington Harford west

1.7.1.4c Choral repetition: Participants repeat or rather anticipate, what the current speaker is saying, thus producing a simultaneous near-repetition of what the turn-holder is saying.

1.7.2 Minimal responses: The males may even challenge or dispute their partner's utterances or ignore their comments i.e. they would offer no response or acknowledgement at all (Hirschman: 1973) or may respond unenthusiastically (Fisman
or slowly in what has been described as a delayed minimal response (Zimmerman & West 1975).

1.7.3 Topic control

When talking to women, men seem to use not only interruptions, overlaps and delayed minimal responses but also deny women the right to control the topic of conversation. Men disobey the normal turn-taking rules in order to control topics. Control of topics is normally shared equally between participants in a conversation. In conversation between speakers of the same sex, this seems to be the pattern; but when one speaker is male and one female, male speaker tends to dominate. Zimmerman & West (1975) have also pointed out certain mechanisms used mostly by men as compared to women for controlling the topic of development and the introduction of new topic.

1.7.4 Hedges:

It is also claimed that when women speak they make their utterances more tentative by using form-hedges-such as, you know, sort of, just in sentences like: It was you know, very interesting.

Fishman (1980) tapped the daily conservations of 3 American couples and found out that the women used you know 5 times more than men.
1.7.5 Verbosity:

There is a widespread belief in our society that women talk more than men, yet research findings consistently contradict this. Men have been shown to talk more than women in settings as diverse as staff meetings, television panel discussion, experimental pairs and in spontaneous conversation. When asked to describe 3 pictures male subjects took an average 13.00 minutes per picture compared with 3.17 minutes per female subjects (Swaker 1975).

1.7.6 Tag Questions:

A tag question, in its usage as well as in its syntactic shape (in English), is midway between an outright statement and a yes-no question; it is less assertive than the former, but more confident than the latter. A tag question, being intermediate between these, is used when the speaker is stating the claim but lack confidence, in the truth of that claim (Dubois & Crouch 1975).

Lakoff suggested that women are perceived as expressing themselves in a more tentative way than men. According to Lakoff tag question decrease the strength of assertion.

Seigler & Seigler (1976) presented students with 16 sentences, 4 of which were assertions with tag-questions.
The students were asked to guess whether a woman or a man produced the sentences originally. The results supported the Lakoff's hypothesis.

While it is generally assumed that there is a connection between tag questions and female linguistic usage, one of the rare studies which set out to test this assumption empirically found it unproven.

Women's use of tag questions Even if it had been shown that tag questions betoken insecurity and lack of commitment and inspire depreciation in the hearer, we could still make no statements about their use in women's speech without examining many specific situations. For example, suppose a certain linguistic form to indicate respect and a social situation, happy hour in officer's mess, where a male Air Force Colonel and a newly commissioned female second lieutenant are exchanging pleasantries. We might expect more respect tokens in lieutenant's speech. If a female Air Force Colonel were talking to a male second lieutenant, wouldn't we still expect to find more such tokens in the lieutenant's speech? In other words the number of difference form token might be a function not so much of sex as of social role.
Dubois & Crouch (1975) used as their data the discussion sessions following various formal papers given at a day conference. They tested all the formal tag questions (such as 'probably Industrial too, isn't it') as well as 'informal tags' (such as Right? O.K? as in that's not too easy, right?).

A total number of 33 tag questions were recorded (17 formal and 16 informal) and these were all produced by men.

Insofar as there is at least one genuine social context in which men did and women did not use tags, the claim that such questions signify an aviodance of commitment, and cause of the speaker to 'give the impression of not being really sure of himself, of looking to the addressee for confirmation, even of having no views of his own' is open to serious doubt. Whether similar results will be found in other social situations and strata also remains a question to be answered by further empirical study. The question 'There are stylistic and structural features of language which typically are found in the speech of women but not in that of men, aren't there?' needs confirmation, categorization and elaboration by systematic research.
1.7.7 Questions:

Fishman (1980) analysed the transcripts of couples in conversation for questions as well as for you know. She looked at yes/no questions such as did you see Sarah last night? as well as at tag question. The women in her sample used three times as many tags and yes/no questions as the men. During the 12 1/2 hours of conversation transcribed, a total of 373 questions were asked, of which women asked 263 (2 1/2 times as many as men).

Such findings so far suggest that women use interrogative forms more than men and that this may reflect women's relative weakness in interactive situations; they exploit questions and tags in order to keep conversation going.

1.7.8 Commands and directives:

We can define a directive as a speech act which tries to get someone to do something. Goodwin (1980) observed the group play of girls and boys and noticed that the boys used different sorts of directives from the girls. The boys used explicit commands:

(a) Michael: Gimme the pliers (Poochie gives pliers to Michael)

(b) Huay: Get off my steps (Poochie moves down the steps)
Michael, the leader of the group often supported his commands with statements of his own desires:

(c) Michael: Gimme the wire -- Look man I want the wire cutter right now.

The girls by contrast, typically used directives such as the following:

(a) Terry: Hey y'all let's use these first and then come back and get the rest Cuz its too many of 'em.

(b) Sharon: Let's go around Subs and Suds.

Pam: Let's ask her 'Do you have any bottles ?

The form let's is hardly used by boys: it explicitly includes the speaker in the proposed action. The girls use of gonna exploits suggestions for future action as a form of directive:

Sharon: We gonna paint 'em and stuff.

The model auxiliaries can and could are also used by the girls to suggest rather than demand action:

Pam: We could go around looking for some bottles.

Sharon: Hey may be tomorrow we can come up here and see if they got some more.

Men make more direct declarations of fact or opinion than women, including suggestions, and "statements
of orientation" as Strodbeck and Mann (1955) describe them or "statements of focus and directions" as they are described by Soskin and John (1963).

1.7.9 Swearing and taboo language:

The folk linguistic belief that man swear more than women and use more taboo words is widespread. Flexner claims that 'most American slang is created and used by males'. Lakoff (1975) also claimed that man use stronger expletives (damn, shit) than women (oh dear, goodness) but her evidence is purely impressionistic.

Kramer (1974) analysed cartoon from The New Yorker. She found that cartoonists make their male characters swear much more freely than the females characters. Labov (1971:207) says in middle class groups women generally show much familiarity with and much less tolerance for non-standard grammar and taboo.

Gomm (1981) recorded 14 conversation between young British speakers and found that male speakers swear more often than the female speakers. Moreover, both women and men swear more in the company of their own sex; male usage of swear word in particular drops dramatically in mixed sex conversations.
1.7.10 Politeness:

A particular factor in linguistic variation which has often been connected to female speech is politeness, as first described by Lakoff (1973a, 1973b) manifested not only by means of intonation, but also through the use of particular formulae of courtesy, through the use of tag questions at the end of interrogatives, and the use of longer, less direct and peremptory sentences. She suggests her own three rules of politeness:

1. Formality: don't impose/remain aloof
2. Hesitancy: give the addressee his options
3. Equality: act as though you and the addressee were equal/make him feel good

Leech's view of politeness involves a set of politeness maxims analogous to Grice's maxims. Among these are:

1. Tact Maxim: Minimize cost to other, Maximize benefit to other.
2. Generosity Maxim: Minimize benefit to self, Maximize cost to self.
3. Approbation Maxim: Minimize dispraise of other, Maximize praise of other.
These add up to "an essential assymetry in polite behaviour, in that whatever is a polite belief for the hearer and vice-versa." (Leech 1983: 169).

Notwithstanding the belief that women are more polite than men, Brown's (1980) study of the language of women and men in Mayan community in Mexico, suggests that the level of politeness depends on the social relationship of the participants. This means that linguistic markers of politeness are a good indication of social relationship of the participants.

Brown tested 3 hypothesis and confirmed the first one that women do use more particles. However, her data did not confirm her other 2 hypothesis that:

(1) Women use more strengthening particles when speaking to women
(2) Women use more weakening particles when speaking to men.

1.7.11 Powerless and powerful language:

O'Barr and Atkins (1980) (cited in Coates, 1986) argue the powerless language has been confused with women's language because, in societies like ours, women are usually less powerful than men. Many women therefore typically use powerless language, but this is the result of their position
in society rather than of their sex. While powerless and powerful language often correlate with female and male speakers, it is important that sociolinguists and others interested to explore male/female differences in language keep the non-linguistic variables of sex and social status apart. Brown argues that negative politeness where the speaker apologizes for intruding uses of impersonal structures (such as passives) and hedges assertion is found where people are in an inferior position in society. O'Barr and Atkins (1980) in their study of courtroom language observed that manuals for lawyers on tactics in court often treated female witnesses as special case. This leads to wonder if female witnesses differed linguistically from male witnesses. O'Barr and Atkins (1980) analysed transcripts of 159 hours of trials in a North Carolina Superior Criminal Court, looking at features which they call women's language or WL (and which are largely based on Lakoff). They are as follows:

(1) Hedges e.g. sort of, kind of, I guess
(2) (Super) polite forms e.g. would you please --, I would really appreciate it if...
(3) Tag questions
(4) Speaking in Italics e.g. emphatic so and why; tonational emphasis is equivalent to underlining word in written language
(5) Empty adjectives e.g. divine, charming, sweet etc.
(6) Hypercorrect grammar and pronunciation
(7) Lack of sense of humour e.g. poor at telling jokes
(8) Direct quotations
(9) Special vocabulary e.g. specialized colour terms
(10) Questions intonation in a declarative context.

O'Barr and Atkins argue that Lakoff's description of features as women's language is inaccurate. They show that the frequency of WL features in the speech of the witnesses in their study correlates not with sex.

"You know", like the tags question and the parenthetical I think has been regarded as a linguistic hedging device, and consequently as a "women's language" form.

"You know" has been labelled a "verbal filler" (Brown G. 1977), "a softening connective" (Crystal and Davy, 1975) a "a cajoler" (Edmondson 1981), a compromiser (James 1983), "a hedge" (Lakoff 1975; Brown and Levinson 1978) and a "conversational greaser" (Wong-Fillmore 1976). This profusion of labels reflects the fact that you know serves a number of different, though closely related, functions in interaction. Identifying its meaning in any particular utterance requires careful attention to features of the
specific discourse and situational context in which it was uttered, as well as to linguistic features such as intonation and syntactic context. And any useful description of its distribution in the speech of women and men clearly requires a prior functional analysis of this kind, if it is to contribute to an understanding of sex differences in language use.

Lakoff (1975) includes a category of lexical items which she labels "hedges" defined as "words that convey the sense that the speaker is uncertain about what he (she) is saying, or cannot vouch for the accuracy of the statement. She goes on to distinguish three different uses of hedges. First, they may occur in what she describes as a "fully legitimate" usage where the speaker is genuinely unsure of the facts (1975). Second, "there is another justifiable use in which the hedge mitigates the possible unfriendliness or unkindness of a statement— that is, where it is used for the sake of politeness. And finally, Lakoff suggests there is a third use of hedges, a use which she implies is not "legitimate" or "justifiable".

It is the third use of hedges, Lakoff suggests, which characterizes "women's language" the language of those who are "out of power" in the society (1973: 53).
An analysis of I think (Holmes 1985) described as a hedge, also revealed a pattern of functional distribution according to the speaker's sex which challenged Lakoff's (1975) claims using prosodic and syntactic criterias, as well as contextual information. Two broad functional categories of I think were established, namely Deliberative I think and Tentative I think.

First, at the level of discourse, occurrences of you know always serve an intratextual coherence function, tying participants turn together in a variety of ways. Hence, particular realizations may claim a turn for the speaker, request feedback, or yield the floor, to the addressee.

Second, all occurrences of You know quite clearly function as verbal fillers. In other words, the pragmatic expression you know in all its realization and contexts, gives the speaker linguistic planning time. But then, so do many other lexical items, such as sort of, I guess and I think. It is scarcely surprising that all instances of you know should function similarly at this level of analysis. What distinguishes you know is its interactive meaning. Instances of you know are addressee-oriented. It is an essentially interactive pragmatic device drawing the addressee into the conversation, and this clearly
differentiates between *you know* and fillers such as *sort of*, which is context-oriented, and *I guess* or *I think* which are speaker-oriented forms. Moreover, all instances of *you know* allude specifically to the relevant knowledge of the addressee in the context of utterance.

Beyond this level, one must recognize diversity of function and meaning. There are at least two broadly distinguishable subcategories of *you know*, one reflecting the speaker's confidence, the other, the speaker's uncertainty. At what Ostman (1981: 39) calls the "Politeness Modality" level, *you know* expresses different degrees of uncertainty or confidence in the speaker's attitude to the addressee or to the content of the message.

Ostman (1981) for instance, finding that in her data men use *You Know* as a "lexical hedge" more frequently than women.

Holmes (1984) suggests that one (female) person's feeble hedging may well be perceived as another (male) person's perspicacious qualification. There is no doubt about the fact that *you know*, particularly with a rising intonation, may be used primarily to appeal to the addressee for reassurance. It may equally be used, however, as an "intimacy signal" (Holmes 1970) and as a positive politeness strategy expressing solidarity by generously attributing
relev ant knowledge to the addressee. In the data, at least, women use *you know* with this positive function more frequently than men do.

O'Barr and Atkins rename the linguistic features normally associated with women's speech *Powerless language*.

Connie C. Eble and David Shores (1977) discusses the two areas of language use in our culture in which the most obvious sex linked feature in American English usage is the absence of swear words and obscenities in the speech of well mannered women but in men's speech this feature is present which is not for mixed company. Jokes and vocabulary which are presumably expected among men are indications of coarseness and indiscretion when used by women of comparable social status.