‘Language shapes the perception of reality as much as reality shapes language, and that language constructs as well as reflects gender-oriented culture.’ (Benjamin Lee Whorf: 1956, 42)

Vocabulary or lexicon of a language can be the most important vehicles or tools for the emergence of its language features. Actually, differences between various languages is detectable and distinguishable, to a large extent, from the words used in each language. As a result, if we consider gender as an influencing factor in language, and believe that the language of men and women have fundamental differences with each other, it is natural to trace and to seek a significant number of these differences in lexicon or vocabulary of the specific language. Of the lexicon features that linguists believe that women and men apply them at different levels and rates. Females have lexicon from which they use words which are directly relative to the interests and realities of their lifestyle. Women use more colourwords and men use more words related to sport.

III.1. Lexical Trait

As far as the background studies on lexical density is concerned, Stegen (2007) investigation was an attempt to show whether the differences found between oral and written texts, in terms of lexical
density, in other languages also hold for Banto languages. He found that for Tanzanian Rengi language (Banto), the oral version of two narratives had a higher lexical density (56 and 54.7%) than the written versions (50.3 and 46.6%). He attributes these differences to the nature of Bantu language which is an agglutinating language. Having corroborated Halliday’s claim of higher lexical density in written language in comparison to oral texts, he states that lexical density is probably more indicative of the colloquial vs. literary style than of oral vs. written medium. Through estimating lexical density in interviews and conversations with the same subjects, Subhi and Johnson-Lewis (1989) conclude that lexical density is higher in interview but the difference is not statistically significant. They refer to 8 factors that should be controlled in experimental studies of Lexical Density (LD) including:

1. Basis for calculating lexical density
2. Expected interruption and length of speaking turn
3. Function of component units of text
4. Self-consciousness/self-monitoring
5. Personal attribute
6. Group attribute
7. Planning time
8. Topic
In her study Johansson compares two measures of lexical density and lexical diversity among different age groups. She concludes that both lexical density and lexical diversity can be used for ‘modality and developmental differences’ (Johansson: 2008, 76). However, they cannot be used interchangeably. She further suggests that lexical diversity is a better measure to be used for detecting differences between age groups than lexical density. (Johansson: 2008, 77).

There are two kinds of methods to arrive at the lexical density ratio in the spoken/written discourse. The first approach is manual, whereby the status of all words in the text is specified by the analyst, after which percentages are worked out (Ure: 1971, 448). The second method like the one devised by Stubbs (1986) is automatic, and depends mainly on computer programs. Although, the manual method consumes more time, but it has a greater degree of integrity because each problem is dealt with by the human linguist in its real context. Automatic analysis based on tailor-made software, though sufficient and reliable to a great extent, is not without problem.

Here in this part, researcher analysed three important lexical traits in men’s and women’s language, with regard to the selected theoretical framework, including 1) repetitions, 2) special lexicon (colour words) and 3) expletives, in order to examine the probable differences in their language use. Each of these three lexical traits is used for different
purposes and various reasons. For example, women’s use of repetitions in speech can be interpreted as a sign of having less power or a lower status compared to men so that by repetition, they want to gain the attention. It can also be interpreted as a sign of different genderlect and style since their world and ideology is different from that of men or else, it can be interpreted as a sign of weakness in mastery and command over language. The classification of these three traits under lexical traits is arbitrary for better organization and presentation of the analysis otherwise, they may overlap other traits as well.

III.1.1. Repetitions

With regard to sociolinguistic literature, it is generally accepted that the men and women differ in their use of repetitions in conversation and women use more repetitions in speech than men. Several researches have been conducted on the issue by researchers such as Sapir, Lakoff, Tannen, Gom, Holmes, Cameron, West-Zimmerman, and Francisco to name a few. Based on Robin Lakoff’s theory, hesitation, repetition and self-correction are signs of women’s insecurity and deficit in speech as well as women’s less important and affectional speech.

A few examples of female characters’ use of repetitions in the corpus are provided below:

**Jaya:** ‘I can’t bear this place, it stinks, I can’t even eat my food...I can’t bear it, I can’t.’ * (That Long Silence)
Rati: ‘Look at me, Mummy, look at me.’ *(That Long Silence)*

Manju: ‘I’m frightened, I’m frightened.’ *(If I Die Today)*

‘The silly old fool!’ she said with immense scorn and anger. ‘The silly old fool.’ *(If I Die Today)*

Charu: ‘It’s no use, it’s no use talking to him.’ *(A Matter of Time)*

Sumi: ‘I want the job so much, Gopal, I want it so much for Seema and me.’ *(A Matter of Time)*

Lata: ‘I can’t go on, Tony, I can’t, I can’t...’ *(Small Remedies)*

Madhu: ‘It’s all right, Som, it’s all right. I want it too.’ *(Small Remedies)*

Malu: ‘Not in my room, I swear, never in my room!’ *(Moving On)*

Jiji: ‘It’s okay,’ I say, ‘it’s okay.’ *(Moving On)*

Devi: ‘Don’t be angry with me, Savi, please don’t be angry.’ *(In The Country of Deceit)*

Savi: ‘Devi, Devi, what have you done? How could you? How could you?’ *(In The Country of Deceit)*

Furthermore, a few examples of the male characters use of repetitions in the selected novels are provided as below:

Dilip: ‘I didn’t mean it, you know I didn’t.’ *(That Long Silence)*
Rahul: ‘I can’t... Mummy, I can’t...’ (That Long Silence)

Prem: ‘It’s never too late, no, never too late.’ (If I Die Today)

Tony: ‘Oh, sorry, sorry, sorry.’... ‘Have I hurt you? Let me see, let me see.’ (If I Die Today)

Gopal: ‘I’m glad for you. I’m very glad.’ (A Matter of Time)

Ramesh: ‘Marry her, she’s a good girl, she’ll make you a good wife, I am sure of that. Marry her.’ (A Matter of Time)

Tony: ‘Hold on, Madhu, hold on, I’m here, I’m with you, I won’t let go, I’m here, Madhu, I’m here.’ (Small Remedies)

Venkat: ‘I’m sorry, ma’am, I’m sorry.’ (Moving On)

Raja: ‘Ma’am, please don’t send me away, please don’t send me away from you.’ (Moving On)

Ashok: ‘Say something. Please say something.’ (In The Country of Deceit)

KN: ‘I’m waiting, yes, I’m waiting.’ (In The Country of Deceit)

Overall, as illustrated in the following table, the female character’s use of repetition, as expected, is more than male characters. The figure is almost three times bigger than that of male characters. Table 1, presented below, demonstrates the frequency of appearance of repetition in the corpus.
Table 1: Repetition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Novels</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That Long Silence</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I Die Today</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Matter of Time</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Remedies</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving On</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the Country of Deceit</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A glimpse at the above table shows that, in all six selected novels, female characters used more repetitions than male characters especially in *That Long Silence* and *A Matter of Time* in which the difference is highly significant. To provide a more vivid analogy, the result of the table is converted to and illustrated in the following chart. The female characters used ‘repetition’ for 75% which is three times bigger than that of male characters’ that is 25% only.
The analysis above supports Lakoff’s observations that women use more repetition compared to men and that indicates females’ insecurity and unwillingness to express their opinion or to avoid explicit and direct statements. However, it also supports Tannen’s claim that genderlect or men’s and women’s use of language is different. Repetition can be also the sign of the women’s inability to express with confidence due to patriarchy society and also poor vocabulary.

It is worth mentioning that the novelist, Shashi Deshpande also could successfully write and reflect the proper genderlect for both female and male characters with regards to the use of ‘repetition’ discussed above.

**III.1.2. Special Lexicon (Colour Words)**

Men and women have their own lexicon and vocabulary as a part of their own genderlect to use Tannen’s term. Women’s special lexicon is
more associated with cooking, fashion, decoration, colours, feelings, love and grief, and so forth.

Colour is one of the psychologists’ tools to study human’s psyche, and although it is a materialistic and precise reality, on individual’s tendencies towards certain colours indicates their own special feeling and world. An accurate analysis of each person’s use of colours can show his/her gender and condition. The utilization of shading words like beige and sea green/blue among women is exceptionally huge, yet no man utilizes them. Lakoff states that women utilize more exact shading terms than men. The accompanying portions demonstrate how the female characters in Shashi Deshpande’s anecdotal world utilize shading words as their own particular uncommon vocabulary:

wear my green and yellow maxi today...’(That Long Silence)

Ai: ‘She has a golden-brown wheat colour, the colour of honey’

(That Long Silence)

‘Nice sari,’ she said. And then, ‘But an awfully dull colour, isn’t it?’

(A Matter of Time)

Manju: ‘All of them went into a blue funk.’ (A Matter of Time)

Lata: ‘Those white flowers, they’re delicate and fragrant’

(Small Remedies)
Aru: ‘Sumi! That’s a grey hair!’ (Small Remedies)

Devayani: ‘But he’s not, he’s a golden . . . golden...Golden Retriever.’ (In The Country of Deceit)

Table 2, the frequency of appearance of colour words in the corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Novels</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That Long Silence</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I Die Today</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Matter of Time</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Remedies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving On</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In the Country of Deceit</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we can see in table 2, it is very interesting that no male characters used colour words any here in the corpus. The finding which is also illustrated in the following pie chart proves Lakoff’s findings that women use more precise colour terms than men. In addition, it indicates women’s own genderlect and women’s special lexicon associated with their own tendencies towards certain colours which shows their own special feeling and world. Beauty and elegance, are part of women’s world and nature, so using color words to express that inner part are the
best tools to satisfy and represent that womanly natural disposition. Besides, women spend more time for buying cloths and decorating home, so it is so obvious, they use more color vocabularies. Although, the use of such special lexicons, entirely depends upon age, occupation, class, religion and some other social factors too.

Chart 2: Special lexicon (Colour Words)

The result of this analysis is consistent with Lakoff’s observations and, in fact, proves the claim by Tannen and Spender as well. Use of colour words is a part of the differences in the genderlect or women’s and men’s use of language at the lexicon level.

In the Indian context and in Shashi Deshpande’s selected fictional world, female characters use other special lexical traits as well, apart from colour words. They frequently talk about fashions particularly
Sarees and hair style and cooking terms. However, we selected only colour words for analysis in this study.

**III.1.3 Expletives**

Coarse language or expletives is one of the interesting examples of the impact of culture and social values on language. Expletives are language forms whose usage is considered as impolite and improper from cultural, social and religious points of view. However, linguists generally are of opinion that men have tendency to use more expletives than women. Social situations allow men to use taboo words and phrases.

Some linguists believe that the reason beyond this fact that women have no tendency to use taboo language lies in their marginalized status in society. Furthermore, the expectation of society from women is higher than men to be more polite. Some other sociologists believe that expletives are commonly used in societies where the mutual trust between people is pale and down. People do lie very often and when the speaker is faced with the listener’s doubt and rejection, he/she is forced to swear in order to prove his/her honesty.

Lakoff (1974) specified that women talk with super neighborly structures, for example, through double speaks, while men utilize more conversational expressions, for example, exclamations. Women all the more as often as possible expressed ‘poo’, ‘piss’, and ‘damnation’, while men all the more much of the time utilized ‘fuck’, ‘cunt’, ‘mongrel’, and
'cockerei'. By utilizing the BNC (British National Corpus) as his database, Baker (2008) outlines the utilization of interjections by gendered creatures. He found that out of 7 most regular exclamation words (fuck, crap, piss, cunt, cock, bastard, hell) in his review. There appeared to be gendered inclinations for words.

In addition, swearwords can be arranged into three sorts as takes after:

1. Misogynistic exclamations: words that are utilized to affront or debase women, for example, cunt, bitch, prostitute, twat, and pussy.

2. Misandric exclamations: words that are utilized to affront or debase men, for example, douche, knave, dick, Asshole, and cock.

3. Gender unbiased exclamations: words that are customarily seen by society as unequivocal however don't really have a gendered tone, for example, fuck, piss, poo, damnation, and mother fucker.

The following excerpts are a few examples of the use of expletives by women characters in the selected texts:

**Manju:** ‘I was a damn fool, Prem.’ *If I Die Today*

**Cynthia:** ‘Damn it, you know what I’m saying. We’d stopped having sex.’ *If I Die Today*

**Charu:** ‘Hrishi’s an ass.’ *A Matter of Time*

**Charu:** ‘Five. Damn damn damn, I should have finished this chapter by now.’ *A Matter of Time*
Jiji: ‘Damn them, damn them!’ *(Moving On)*

Devi: ‘He never married after Ma left him, what shit!’ *(In The Country of Deceit)*

On the contrary, the men have tendency to use more expletives than women as it is expected with regards to the facts discussed above. The following examples are from men using expletives in their conversation in the corpus:

Ravi: ‘Open your mouth, you bitch.’ *(That Long Silence)*

Ravi: ‘Your mother is another whore like you.’ *(That Long Silence)*

Ashok: ‘Complacent bastards, he shook all of you up.’ *(If I Die Today)*

Prem: ‘The damn fool! He’s asking for trouble.’ *(If I Die Today)*

Rekha: ‘Damn you, damn you, damn you!’ *(Small Remedies)*

Chandru: ‘Yes, write the truth and damn everything and damn everybody else.’ *(Small Remedies)*

Raja: ‘Your own father, damn it!’ *(Moving On)*

Raja: ‘You’re talking rubbish.’ *(Moving On)*
Ashok: ‘So I was right. That son of a bitch!’ *(In The Country of Deceit)*

Ashok: ‘Don’t do this to me again. I was shit scared.’ *(In The Country of Deceit)*

Table 3, Frequency of appearance of “Expletives” in the corpus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expletives</th>
<th>Novels</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That Long Silence</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I Die Today</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Matter of Time</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Remedies</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving On</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>In the Country of Deceit</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is highlighted in red colour, female characters’ use of expletives is significant only in *A Matter of Time* where the male characters did not use any expletives. A glimpse at the major female characters diagram in chapter one and Appendix I at the end, will make us understand that Charu, Sumi’s young daughter, uses most of the expletives. It is quite meaningful that women, if not never, but rarely use expletives.
However, new generation and young females like Charu and her sister Aru are the only characters who use most of the expletives. As provided in Chart 3: Expletives below, the female characters’ share for using expletives is 27%, which is much less than that of male characters’ that is 73%.

Chart 3: Expletives

The table 3 and the above pie chart vividly shows the overall share of women’s and men’s use of expletives in the corpus. The male characters’ use of expletives is significant. It clearly indicates that women use more superpolite forms than men, which is in tune with Tannen’s findings that women’s genderlect is different from that of men.

The use of more expletives can be related to Lakoff’s notion of dominance and power as well. In this regard, men use more expletives because they are dominant and powerful and have no fear to lose their
social status. While, women are of the marginal spaces and weaker status so that they are forced to use more polite forms. It is more applicable to adults than the children, and so age is quite significant as mentioned above.

It seems that Deshpande was successful in portraying the realistic scene of Indian society through her fictional world. Accordingly, Deshpande's female characters as representatives of the macrocosmic Indian society, use more superpolite forms compared to men, mainly because of their different world than due to the patriarchal hegemony or their deficit language.

III.2. Syntactic Trait

In simple words,'syntax' is the study of sentence structure which attempts to explain what structures are grammatically correct in a particular language based on the syntactic rules. These rules specify the underlying structure. Moreover, syntax is concerned with the ways in which words can be combined together to form phrases and sentences of all kinds.

Noam Chomsky defines syntax as ‘the study of the principles and processes by which sentences are constructed in particular languages. Syntactic investigation of a given language has as its goal the construction of a grammar that can be viewed as a device of some sort
for producing the sentences of the language under analysis.’ (Chomsky: 2002, 46)

The idea of linguistic structure can be considered as a syntactic level in sentences, where sexual orientation morphemes are regularly joined by sex related syntactic examples which are dialect particular. So, linguistic structure is worried with the arrangement and understanding of expressions and sentences. The female and male characters’ use of syntactic choices can be interpreted as the tactics to represent themselves. The study of gender and language use at syntactic level is focused on three distinct syntactic features in here including Tag Questions, Sentence Incompletion and Modal Constructions.

**III.2.1. Tag Questions**

Tag questions, modal constructions and question intonation in statements show uncertainty in women’s language use. However, we have analysed them separately in this study to examine this trait in detail. As mentioned earlier, the 14 factors or clues selected based on Lakoff’s theory, sometimes overlap each other.

Linguists including Fairclough are of opinion that tag question distinguishes women’s language from men’s language (genderlect). In tag question, the speaker/writer asks something from the audience/reader, mostly information, and the audience/reader is considered as the
provider of the required information. Too much use of tag question can be considered, to a large extent, as a sign of hesitation and uncertainty.

Particularly, the issue is more serious and important in the case that the intention of the speaker is not to ask a question and he/she can use a statement to express his/her intention, but the question form is used. Studies have shown that women use tag question more than men in their speech. Some researchers like Robin Lakoff believe that the issue is directly related to the uncertainty and the instability in women’s speech. However, Halliday argues that people involved in communication or a verbal action may use an incompatible form. For example, they may use question for giving a command. So far as the theoretical framework is concerned in this research, Robin Lakoff remarks that, ‘in certain contexts, women use question tags more often than men do. (Lakoff: 1975, 34)

The tag question provides the addressee a kind of leeway, so that he/she is not forced to go along with the speaker’s views. However, other studies on the tag questions and whether men or women do use more tag questions or not, has provided some contradictory results. Some researchers found out that women use more tag questions (Case, 1988). On the other hand, other researchers found that men use more tag questions (Dubois and Crouch, 1975; Lapadat and Seesahai, 1977). Furthermore, other researchers found that there is no significant
difference between men’s and women’s use of tag questions (Cameron: 2007, 74).

It is worth mentioning that tag questions can also function as the expressions of politeness and as facilitators of communication. With regard to the different functions of tag questions, Holmes is of opinion that men use tag questions more to express their uncertainty but women use tag questions to ease communication to a large extent. (Holmes: 1992, 319)

Coates and Cameron (1998) introduced two functions of tag questions: a) an affective signal for expressing solidarity and b) an affective modal function. In the case of the modal function, tag questions are speaker oriented and show a kind of request or inquiry for further information and/or a confirmation of the received information. Coates and Cameron are of opinion that men use more modal tags and women use more affective tags. (Coates and Cameron: 1998, 322)

In the corpus, the researcher found quite a number of examples illustrating the use of Tag Question a few examples from each novel are provided here:

**Vanitamami:** ‘Sounds impressive, doesn’t it?’ (*That Long Silence*)

**Jaya:** ‘He’s Secretary in some ministry, isn’t he?’ (*That Long Silence*)

**Mriga:** ‘I’d like to go to your place. Shall I?’ (*If I Die Today*)
Manju: ‘It was brave of him, wasn’t it?’ (*If I Die Today*)

Charu: ‘Beautiful, isn’t it?’ (*A Matter of Time*)

Sumi: ‘We will, won’t we?’ (*A Matter of Time*)

Madhu: ‘This is no way to live, is it, Kaku?’ (*Small Remedies*)

Madhu: ‘But it’s not the same, is it, Kaku?’ (*Small Remedies*)

Jiji: ‘I think this chutney is good, don’t you?’ (*Moving On*)

Jiji: ‘Not nice, is it?’ (*Moving On*)

Devi: ‘We’ll make it a happy house, won’t we, Devi?’

(*In The Country of Deceit*)

Savi: ‘You are coming to Bangalore, aren’t you?’ (*In The Country of Deceit*)

The corpus also provided numerous examples of tag questions produced by men, which serve as a perfect evidence to show that men produce less tag questions than women do:

Mohan: ‘Too soon after Rahul, isn’t it?’ (*That Long Silence*)

Ravi: ‘She works in Tata Hospital, doesn’t she?’ (*That Long Silence*)

Guru: ‘You’re quoting now, aren’t you?’ (*If I Die Today*)

Prem: ‘You make a fetish of the truth, don’t you?’ (*If I Die Today*)

Tony: ‘It’s Divali, isn’t it?’ (*Small Remedies*)
**Tony:** ‘I can’t speak to any female, that’s it, is it?’ *(Small Remedies)*

**Venkat:** ‘...It’s your own house, isn’t it?’ *(Moving On)*

**Raja:** ‘You’ll never take anything seriously, will you?’ *(Moving On)*

**Ashok:** ‘Fussy, are we?’ *(In The Country of Deceit)*

Table 4, Frequency of appearance of “Tag Questions” in the corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tag questions</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Novels</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That Long Silence</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I Die Today</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Matter of Time</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Remedies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving On</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the Country of Deceit</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>79</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A glimpse at the above table shows that, in all six selected novels, female characters used more tag questions than male characters especially in *If I Die Today* and *A Matter of Time* in which the difference is highly significant. To provide a more vivid analogy, the result of the table is converted to and illustrated in the following chart. The female characters’ share in using ‘tag questions’ is 78% which is almost three times more than that of male characters’ that is 22% only.
The finding is in tune with Lakoff, Tannen and Spender’s claims and proves that women use tag questions more than men in conversation. It also indicates that women, regardless of their geography, have the same conditions with regards to the notion of stereotype and particularly their genderlect, to use Tannen’s term, in the current context.

**III.2.2. Sentence Incompletions**

The use of incomplete sentence, based on the findings of researches conducted by many researches including Lakoff, indicates the unequal status and men’s control of conversation and women’s subordinate condition that force them to leave their sentences incomplete.
In his book entitled *Language: Its Nature, Development and Origins*, Otto Jespersen argues that women’s use of language is deficient in terms of their use of special vocabulary and complex sentence constructions in their writing and speech. Moreover, women often use incomplete sentences more than men (Jespersen: 2013, 38). In fact, like Lakoff, he is of opinion that women have a more limited vocabulary compared to men, and women use simpler sentence structures than men, resulting in the frequent use of incomplete sentences. However, some others believe that women’s use of sentence incompletion is a sign of respect and a politeness strategy.

In the present study, the researcher found the same that women’s use of incomplete sentences is quite significant and is more than men. The following are few examples of women’s incomplete sentences excerpted from the selected texts:

**Jaya:** ‘My uncle lived here, my brother ...’ (*That Long Silence*)

**Jaya:** ‘But, but ...’ (*That Long Silence*)

**Sonu:** ‘I... I...’ (*If I Die Today*)

**Mriga:** ‘He didn’t mean it, I’m sure. . .’ (*If I Die Today*)

**Sumi:** ‘Aru, Am...’ (*A Matter of Time*)

**Charu:** ‘Oh well...’ (*A Matter of Time*)

**Lata:** ‘Sometimes I wonder...’ (*Small Remedies*)
**Madhu:** ‘Not between us. With us. We...’ (*Small Remedies*)

**Jiji:** ‘And if you need anything ...’ (*Moving On*)

**Jiji:** ‘No, I’m serious ...’ (*Moving On*)

**Devi:** ‘How can I do such a thing, am I really going to ...’

(*In the Country of Deceit*)

**Savi:** ‘I never thought you would do such a dirty thing, just for sex...’

(*In the Country of Deceit*)

On the contrary, men also use incomplete sentences though less frequently than women.

The following are some of the examples of male characters’ use of incomplete sentences in Shashi Deshpande’s selected fictional world:

**Dada:** ‘The Chinese, you mean? But that ...’ (*That Long Silence*)

**Rahul:** ‘Mummy, I can’t...’ (*That Long Silence*)

**Prem:** ‘What the hell. . .’ (*If I Die Today*)

**Prem:** ‘Since Guru came. . .’ (*If I Die Today*)

**Gopal:** ‘No, Shankar, I don’t want any coffee. Aru, you...’

(*A Matter of Time*)

**Hrishi:** ‘She’s a good girl, I like her, but...’ (*A Matter of Time*)
**Hari:** ‘I don’t want people to suffer because of me...’ (*Small Remedies*)

**Chandru:** ‘When I see Somya’s face...’ (*Small Remedies*)

**Venkat:** ‘Otherwise, I’d have …’ (*Moving On*)

**Raja:** ‘Yes, but …’ (*Moving On*)

Table 5, presented below, demonstrates the frequency of appearance of incomplete sentences in the corpus.

A glimpse at the table shows that, in all six selected novels, female characters used more ‘incomplete sentences’ than male characters especially in *That Long Silence* and *If I Die Today* in which the difference is highly significant.

Table 5: Sentence incompletions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Novels</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>That Long Silence</em></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>If I Die Today</em></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A Matter of Time</em></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Small Remedies</em></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Moving On</em></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>In the Country of Deceit</em></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Female characters in the above table appear to use incomplete sentences 47 times while the male characters use the same 18 times. To provide a more vivid analogy, the result of the table is converted to and illustrated in the following chart. The female characters’ share for using ‘incomplete sentences’ is 72%, which is significantly more than that of male characters’ use of the same that is 28%.

The findings support the theoretical framework and the claims that women generally use more incomplete sentences for certain reasons as mentioned above than their male partners in spoken or in written discourse.

Chart 5: Sentence incompletions
The result of this analysis is also in tune with Lakoff’s observations and, in fact, proves the claim by Tannen and Spender as well. The use of ‘incomplete sentences’ indicates the unequal status and men’s control of conversation and women’s subordinate condition that force them to leave their sentences incomplete. This, in fact, can be interpreted as a part of the differences in the genderlect or women’s and men’s use of language as well.

**III.2.3. Modal constructions**

Be that as it may, a few scientists found no sexual orientation contrast as far as utilizing modular developments in their dialect utilize. The general example of results crosswise over different observational analysts demonstrate that women utilize more modular development than men in discussion. This is because of the fact that modal constructions may be used for different functions and purposes.

Robin Lakoff argues that there are several forms in which politeness can be expressed including modal constructions. Lakoff is of opinion that “women’s more use of modal constructions conveys their uncertainty, and in fact their choice of speech style indicates their self-image. She believes that women speak with uncertainty and imprecision which signifies their deference and politeness as well.” (Coates: 2002, 103)

Jennifer Coates examined gender differences from the perspective of the use of epistemic modals. She is of opinion that that epistemic
modals are generally negative politeness strategies that used to signify a speaker’s respect and sensitivity. In her research, she analyzed the epistemic modals or modal constructions in two parallel texts from distinct sources and realized that women used more modal constructions in comparison to men. “These modals occurred in discussions about sensitive topics involving self-disclosure, where the style was cooperative rather than competitive.” (Coates: 2002, 118)

Furthermore, Jennifer Coates’s interpretation is that women use modal constructions not because they doubt the truth of their propositions, but to convey and present their respect for the addressee. The use of modal constructions occurs more frequently when conversation is personal, topics are sensitive, and self-disclosure is intimate.

In her article “Women/Men”, Ann Harriman argues that “Women use more modal constructions. A modal construction occurs when a speaker expresses doubtfulness, possibilities, or probabilities about incidents that did and events that will happen” (Harriman: 1996, 48).

The modal words selected for this study include ‘would, must, may, can, could, might, shall and should’ which have been traced in all the six selected novels as the research corpus. With regard to the use of modal constructions, the following are a few examples of female
characters’ use of the selected modal constructions excerpted from the six selected novels:

**Jaya:** ‘I thought I **would** go down and strangle that man.’

*(That Long Silence)*

**Jaya:** ‘I **must** talk to him, I want to talk to him.’ *(That Long Silence)*

**Manju:** ‘Leave me alone. Please. I **must** be alone.’ *(If I Die Today)*

**Manju:** ‘I **can** go home by myself.’ *(If I Die Today)*

**Aru:** ‘**Would** you like me to go away?’ *(A Matter of Time)*

**Madhu:** ‘What **can** I do?’ *(A Matter of Time)*

**Savitribai:** ‘All right, now you **can** begin.’ *(Small Remedies)*

**Lata:** ‘No one else **could** have given me that understanding.’ *(Small Remedies)*

**Jiji:** ‘How **can** I stop her?’ *(Moving On)*

**Jiji:** ‘And how long **would** you have stayed here?’ *(Moving On)*

**Devi:** ‘You **would** never do such a thing. You can’t!’ *(In The Country of Deceit)*

**Devya:** ‘So you knew I **would** come.’ *(In The Country of Deceit)*
On the contrary, men also use modal constructions less frequently than women. The followings are some of the examples of male characters’ use of modal constructions in

Shashi Deshpande’s selected fictional world:

**Mohan:** ‘I must do something.’ (*That Long Silence*)

**Mohan:** ‘I can’t tell you, Jaya.’ (*That Long Silence*)

**Prem:** ‘I must do it now.’ (*If I Die Today*)

**Prem:** ‘Would you like to lie down?’ (*If I Die Today*)

**Gopal:** ‘What can I do about it?’ (*A Matter of Time*)

**Ramesh:** ‘I may not be able to give them the entire amount today.’

(*A Matter of Time*)

**Tony:** ‘It must have scared you.’ (*Small Remedies*)

**Tony:** ‘They couldn’t do much.’ (*Small Remedies*)

**Venkat:** ‘You can always get someone else.’ (*Moving On*)

**Raja:** ‘I must warn you I believe in happy endings.’ (*Moving On*)

**Ashok:** ‘Would you like to see the land?’ (*In The Country of Deceit*)
Iqbal: ‘I must bring Naseem here.’ (In The Country of Deceit)

The complete list of all the selected clues excerpted from the selected texts, particularly the modal constructions used by female and male characters is provided as Appendix I at the end of this thesis.

To compare the female and male characters use of ‘modal constructions’, a glimpse at the following table would be enough to realize that, in all six selected novels, female characters used more ‘modal constructions’ than male characters especially, in If I Die Today and in A Matter of Time in which the difference is highly significant.

Table 5, presented below, demonstrates the frequency of appearance of modal constructions in the corpus.

Table 6: Modal constructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Novels</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That Long Silence</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I Die Today</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Matter of Time</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Remedies</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving On</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the Country of Deceit</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>555</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Female characters used incomplete sentences 555 times while the male characters used the same 221 times. To provide a more vivid analogy, the result of the table is converted to and illustrated in the following chart. The female characters’ share for using ‘modal constructions’ is 72% which is significantly more than that of male characters’ use of the same that is 28%.

Chart 6: Modal constructions

The result of this analysis is also in tune with Lakoff’s observations and, in fact, proves the claim by Tannen and Spender as well. The use of ‘modal constructions’ indicates the unequal status and men’s control of conversation as well as women’s subordinate condition that have forced them to leave their sentences incomplete. This, in fact, can be interpreted as a part of the differences in the genderlect or women’s and men’s use of language as well. Furthermore, it can support Jennifer Coates’s interpretation that women use modal constructions not because they doubt the truth of their propositions, but to convey and present their
respect for the addressee. It is probably a meaningful interpretation with regard to the essential importance of respect in Indian culture.

Researcher analysed three important lexical traits in men’s and women’s language, with regards to the selected theoretical framework, including 1) repetitions, 2) special lexicon (colour words) and 3) expletives, in order to examine the probable differences in their language use and syntactic level which is focused on three distinct syntactic features including Tag Questions, Sentence Incompletion and Modal Constructions.

In Lexical Traits the share of women was more than that of men in repetitions (75% female, 25% men) and special lexicon (colour words 100% women) specially in that long silence and A matter of time and If I die today. But expletive language use, as it was expected, the share of male is more in comparison with women (73% male, 27% female). In all novels except A matter of time, men used more expletive words.

At Syntactic level women again showed vivid difference in language use in comparison with the use of language by men. In Tag questions (78% female, 22% male) women used more Tag questions in If I die and A Matter of Time. In sentence incompletion and use of modal construction women’s share is equally 72% and men’s 28% in the same novels.