

Language and Gender Revision Booklet



Name:

Teacher:

Target Grade:

Contents

• What do you need to know?	3
• Theory – Gender and Spoken Language	4
• Task 1 – Evaluating Theory	8
• Theory – Dominance	9
• Task 2 – Family and Gender	10
• Theory – Dominance	11
• Task 3 – Glossary	12
• Task 4 – Public Speaking	14
• Task 5 – Advertising	20
• Task 6 – Representations of Gender	22

What do I need to know about the exam?

- AQA English Language (7701/2)
- Paper 2: Language Varieties
- Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes
- There are two sections in the paper:
 - Section A: Language Diversity
 - Section B: Language Discourses
- Answer either Question 1 or Question 2 from Section A and Question 3 from Section B
- The maximum mark for this paper is 70
- There are 30 marks for Section A and 40 marks for Section B
- It is recommended that you spend about 40 minutes writing your Section A answer and 50 minutes writing your section B answer

Theories about Gender and Spoken Language

The forms and functions of talk

In studying language you must study speech - but in studying language and gender you can apply what you have learned about speech but with gender as a variable - do men and women show any broad differences in the way they use spoken language?

Before going any further you should know that the consensus view (the view agreed by the leading authorities at the moment) is that gender does make a difference. You should also know that this difference is not universal - so there will be men who exhibit “feminine” conversational qualities - or women who use the conversational styles associated with men. Computer-mediated conversation (Internet chat, for example) is interesting because here people choose or assume their gender - and this may not be the same as their biological sex.

In *Living Language* (p. 222), George Keith and John Shuttleworth record suggestions that:

- women - talk more than men, talk too much, are more polite, are indecisive/hesitant, complain and nag, ask more questions, support each other, are more co-operative, whereas
- men - swear more, don't talk about emotions, talk about sport more, talk about women and machines in the same way, insult each other frequently, are competitive in conversation, dominate conversation, speak with more authority, give more commands, interrupt more.

Note that some of these are objective descriptions which can be verified (ask questions, give commands) while others express unscientific, popular ideas about language and introduce non-linguistic value judgements (nag, speak with more authority).

Otto Jespersen, *Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin* (1922)

Otto Jespersen published a set of ideas about women's language:

- women talk a lot
- women use half-finished sentences because they speak before they have thought about what they will say
- women link sentences with 'and' because they are emotional rather than 'grammatical'
- women use adjectives such as 'pretty' and 'nice' too much. They are also fond of saying 'so pretty' and 'so nice'
- women use adverbs too much and tend towards hyperbole
- women have a smaller vocabulary than men – the words they use are the 'indispensable small change of a language'
- women know their smaller vocabulary so well that they are more fluent in speaking and less hesitant than men, who are searching for the precise word in their large vocabularies
- novels written by ladies are much easier to read and use fewer difficult words
- women often gain spoken mastery of foreign languages more easily than men, but when put to the test in translating a difficult text, men prove superior
- women, by virtue of their sex, "shrank from coarse and gross expressions"
- women had a "preference for veiled and indirect expressions" which preclude them from being as effective as men.
- women had a debilitating effect upon the language and it was reasonable for men "certainly with great justice [to] object that there is a danger of the language becoming languid and insipid if we are to content ourselves with women's expressions."
- men are responsible for introducing new words into the language

Robin Lakoff, *Language and Woman's Place* (1975)

In this book and a related article, *Women's Language*, Lakoff published claims that women:

- * Speak less frequently
 - * Show they are listening by using minimal responses *mm, yeah*
 - * Speak more quietly than men and tend to use the higher pitch range of their voices
 - * Use hyper-correct grammar and pronunciation: Standard English and clear enunciation
 - * Use a greater range of intonation and 'speak in italics': *so, very, quite*.
 - * Use question intonation in declarative statements: women make declarative statements into questions by raising the pitch of their voice at the end of a statement, expressing uncertainty.
 - * Overuse qualifiers: (for example, "I *think* that...")
 - * Hedge: using phrases like "sort of", "kind of", "it seems like".
 - * Use super-polite forms: "Would you mind...", "I'd appreciate it if...", "...if you don't mind".
 - * Apologise more: (for instance, "I'm sorry, but I think that...")
 - * Use tag questions: "You're going to dinner, aren't you?"
 - * Have a special lexicon: e.g. women use more words for colours, men for sports
 - * Use empty adjectives: *divine, lovely, adorable*, and make more emotional evaluations rather than intellectual evaluations, e.g. *great, wonderful, fantastic*
 - * Use more intensifiers: especially *so* and *very* (e.g. "I am *so* glad you came!")
 - * Use more adjectives to describe approximate amounts, *around, about*.
 - * Use euphemisms more than men
 - * Use diminutives more than men.
 - * Use more reduplicated forms e.g. 'itsy bitsy' 'teeny weeny'
 - * Use direct quotation: men paraphrase more often.
 - * Use wh- imperatives: (such as, "Why don't you open the door?")
 - * Use modal constructions: (such as *can, would, should, ought* - "Should

we turn up the heat?” “Would you like to just pass me that cup?”)

- * Use indirect commands and requests: (e.g. “My, isn't it cold in here?” - request to close a window)
- * Avoid slang and avoid coarse language or expletives: ‘Oh dear’ rather than ‘Shit’
- * Avoid making threats, using aggressive language and insults
- * Lack a sense of humour: women don’t tell jokes well and don't understand the punch line of jokes.

**William O’Barr and Bowman Atkins,
*Women’s Language or Powerless Language? (1980)***

O’Barr and Atkins studied language use in the courtroom to test if Lakoff’s ideas fitted this specific context. They found that the language use associated with women by Lakoff was exhibited by both men and women whenever they were in a powerless situation in the courtroom. They renamed these features of language ‘powerless language’ rather than ‘women’s language’ and pointed to women speakers who did not fit Lakoff’s claims (they were in powerful positions in the courtroom, being well-educated professionals who were accorded status in the courtroom).

Task 1 – Evaluating Theory

Consider what you have read so far of Jespersen, Lakoff and O’Barr and Atkins.

Answer the questions below:

1. Do the earlier ideas still have influence on our ideas about women’s language?
2. What are *your* experiences of women’s language in the various situations of your everyday life?

Theory – Dominance

Dominance and difference

Studies of language and gender often make use of two models or paradigms - that of dominance and that of difference. The first is associated with Dale Spender, Pamela Fishman, Don Zimmerman and Candace West, while the second is associated with Deborah Tannen.

Dominance model - Zimmerman and West (1975)

This is the theory that in mixed-sex conversations men are more likely to interrupt than women. It uses a fairly old study of a small sample of conversations, recorded by Don **Zimmerman** and Candace **West** at the Santa Barbara campus of the University of California in 1975. The subjects of the recording were white, middle class and under 35. Zimmerman and West produce in evidence 31 segments of conversation. They report that in 11 conversations between men and women, men used 46 interruptions, but women only two. >From their small sample Zimmerman and West conclude that, since men interrupt more often, then they are dominating or attempting to do so

Esther Greif (1980) adds the findings that:

- Both parents interrupt daughters more than sons
- Fathers interrupt more than mothers

Geoffrey **Beattie**, in 1982, was critical of the Zimmerman and West findings: "The problem with this is that you might simply have one very voluble man in the study which has a disproportionate effect on the total." Beattie also questions the meaning of interruptions: : "Why do interruptions necessarily reflect dominance? Can interruptions not arise from other sources? Do some interruptions not reflect interest and involvement?"

Geoffrey Beattie himself claims to have recorded some 10 hours of tutorial discussion and some 557 interruptions (compared with 55 recorded by Zimmerman and West). Beattie found that women and men interrupted with more or less equal frequency (men 34.1, women 33.8) - so men did interrupt more, but by a margin so slight as not to be statistically significant.

Task 3 – Family and Gender

Consider the way you interact with your family at home – **does your experience match the conclusions of Zimmerman and West?**

- Give examples and try to explain why you think it does/doesn't
- Transcribe a conversation at home in order to support your argument
- Use the data you have transcribed to provide evidence
- Link to theory

Write an evaluation based on your findings.

Dominance model - Dale Spender

Dale Spender advocates a radical view of language as embodying structures that sustain male power. She refers to the work of Zimmerman and West, to the view of the male as norm and to her own idea of patriarchal order. She claims that it is especially difficult to challenge this power system, since the way that we think of the world is part of, and reinforces, this male power:

"The crux of our difficulties lies in being able to identify and transform the rules which govern our behaviour and which bring patriarchal order into existence. Yet the tools we have for doing this are part of that patriarchal order. While we can modify, we must none the less use the only language, the only classification scheme which is at our disposal. We must use it in a way that is acceptable and meaningful. But that very language and the conditions for its use in turn structure a patriarchal order."

Dominance model - Pamela Fishman

Pamela Fishman argues in *Interaction: the Work Women Do* (1983) that conversation between the sexes sometimes fails, not because of anything inherent in the way women talk, but because of how men respond, or don't respond. Her very memorable phrase for the work that women do to keep a conversation going is 'conversational shitwork' (1977)

In *Conversational Insecurity* (1990) Fishman questions Robin Lakoff's theories. Lakoff suggests that asking questions shows women's insecurity and hesitancy in communication, whereas Fishman looks at questions as an attribute of interactions: Women ask questions because of the power of these, not because of their personality weaknesses. Fishman also claims that in mixed-sex language interactions, men speak on average for twice as long as women.

Jennifer Coates (1980s)

On the issue of topic management and topic shifts:

- Men will often reject a topic of conversation introduced by women while women will accept the topics introduced by men
- Men discuss 'male' topics e.g. business, sport, politics, economics
- Women are more likely to initiate conversation than men, but less likely to make the conversation succeed

Task 3 – Glossary

- Create a glossary of key terms linked to Language and Gender and any other theories you have studied
- In your glossary define and give examples of each key term/theory
- Investigate/research any terms that you are unsure of
- Use the table below to create your glossary
- Add other terms you learn as you continue your study

Key Term/Theory	Definition	Example
Hedges		
Patriarchy		
Matriarchy		
Dominance		
Interruptions		
Tag Questions		
Politeness		
Verbal Hygiene		
Heteronormativity		
Representation		

Swearing		
Etiquette		
Anthropomorphism		
Social group		
Social Network		
Marking		
Tautology		
Patronyms		
Endearment		
Matronyms		
Connotations		
Collocations		
Lexical Priming		

Task 4 – Public Speech

- Read the following speech and annotate applying theories that you have already studied
- Consider how Watson is representing herself
- Identify devices used in her public speech

Public speaking: Analysing a rhetorical speech

On Saturday, September 20, British actress and Goodwill Ambassador for UN Women, Emma Watson, gave a speech about gender inequality and how to fight it. In doing so, she launched the HeForShe initiative, which aims to get men and boys to pledge to join the feminist fight for gender equality. Below is the full transcript of her thirteen-minute speech. Highlight and make notes on various characteristics that make this a good persuasive speech:

*Your
notes*

“Today we are launching a campaign called for HeForShe. I am reaching out to you because we need your help. We want to end gender inequality, and to do this, we need everyone involved. This is the first campaign of its kind at the UN. We want to try to mobilize as many men and boys as possible to be advocates for change. And, we don’ t just want to talk about it. We want to try and make sure that it’ s tangible.

I was appointed as Goodwill Ambassador for UN Women six months ago. And, the more I spoke about feminism, the more I realized that fighting for women’ s rights has too often become synonymous with man-hating. If there is one thing I know for certain, it is that this has to stop.

For the record, feminism by definition is the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities. It is the theory of political, economic and social equality of the sexes.

I started questioning gender-based assumptions a long time ago. When I was 8, I was confused for being called bossy because I wanted to direct the plays that we would put on for our parents, but the boys were not. When at 14, I started to be sexualized by certain elements of the media. When at 15, my girlfriends started dropping out of sports teams because they didn't want to appear muscly. When at 18, my male friends were unable to express their feelings.

I decided that I was a feminist, and this seemed uncomplicated to me. But my recent research has shown me that feminism has become an unpopular word. Women are choosing not to identify as feminists. Apparently, I'm among the ranks of women whose expressions are seen as too strong, too aggressive, isolating, and anti-men. Unattractive, even.

Why has the word become such an uncomfortable one? I am from Britain, and I think it is right I am paid the same as my male counterparts. I think it is right that I should be able to make decisions about my own body. I think it is right that women be involved on my behalf in the policies and decisions that will affect my life. I think it is right that socially, I am afforded the same respect as men.

But sadly, I can say that there is no one country in the world where all women can expect to see these rights. No country in the world can yet say that they achieved gender equality. These rights, I consider to be human rights, but I am one of the lucky ones.

My life is a sheer privilege because my parents didn't love me less because I was born a daughter. My school did not limit me because I was a girl. My mentors didn't

assume that I would go less far because I might give birth to a child one day. These influences were the gender equality ambassadors that made me who I am today. They may not know it, but they are the inadvertent feminists that are changing the world today. We need more of those.

And if you still hate the word, it is not the word that is important. It's the idea and the ambition behind it, because not all women have received the same rights I have. In fact, statistically, very few have.

In 1997, Hillary Clinton made a famous speech in Beijing about women's rights. Sadly, many of the things that she wanted to change are still true today. But what stood out for me the most was that less than thirty percent of the audience were male. How can we effect change in the world when only half of it is invited or feel welcome to participate in the conversation?

Men, I would like to take this opportunity to extend your formal invitation. Gender equality is your issue, too. Because to date, I've seen my father's role as a parent being valued less by society, despite my need of his presence as a child, as much as my mother's. I've seen young men suffering from mental illness, unable to ask for help for fear it would make them less of a man. In fact, in the UK, suicide is the biggest killer of men between 20 to 49, eclipsing road accidents, cancer and coronary heart disease. I've seen men made fragile and insecure by a distorted sense of what constitutes male success. Men don't have the benefits of equality, either.

We don't often talk about men being imprisoned by gender stereotypes, but I can see that they are, and that when they are free, things will change for women as a

natural consequence. If men don't have to be aggressive in order to be accepted, women won't feel compelled to be submissive. If men don't have to control, women won't have to be controlled.

Both men and women should feel free to be sensitive. Both men and women should feel free to be strong. It is time that we all perceive gender on a spectrum, instead of two sets of opposing ideals. If we stop defining each other by what we are not, and start defining ourselves by who we are, we can all be freer, and this is what HeForShe is about. It's about freedom.

I want men to take up this mantle so that their daughters, sisters, and mothers can be free from prejudice, but also so that their sons have permission to be vulnerable and human too, reclaim those parts of themselves they abandoned, and in doing so, be a more true and complete version of themselves.

You might be thinking, "Who is this Harry Potter girl, and what is she doing speaking at the UN?" And, it's a really good question. I've been asking myself the same thing.

All I know is that I care about this problem, and I want to make it better. And, having seen what I've seen, and given the chance, I feel it is my responsibility to say something.

Statesman Edmund Burke said, "All that is needed for the forces of evil to triumph is for good men and women to do nothing."

In my nervousness for this speech and in my moments of doubt, I told myself firmly, "If not me, who? If not now, when?" If you have similar doubts when opportunities are presented to you, I hope those words will be

helpful. Because the reality is that if we do nothing, it will take seventy-five years, or for me to be nearly 100, before women can expect to be paid the same as men for the same work. 15.5 million girls will be married in the next 16 years as children. And at current rates, it won't be until 2086 before all rural African girls can have a secondary education.

If you believe in equality, you might be one of those inadvertent feminists that I spoke of earlier, and for this, I applaud you. We are struggling for a uniting word, but the good news is, we have a uniting movement. It is called HeForShe. I invite you to step forward, to be seen and to ask yourself, "If not me, who? If not now, when?"

Thank you very, very much. "

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Learning to persuade

Leaders need to be able to *persuade* people well. "Rhetoric" is the art and science of persuading people by use of written and/or spoken language. Here is a list of rhetorical devices (features of a persuasive speech). You will probably be able to spot many of these in a good rhetorical speech. You may also be able to get some of these into your own persuasive speeches.

Specific rhetorical devices

- Rhetorical questions (questions that don't require an answer)
- Catchy / quotable, memorable statements
- Three part lists (lists of three related things)
- Quotations from someone else influential
- Vulnerability (or apparent vulnerability)
- Honesty (or apparent honesty)
- Short sentences (4 words or less)
- Use of general words (very open-ended words)
- Emotive language (emotional words)
- Collective pronouns (we, us)
- Directly addressing the audience or subsets of the audience
- Use of statistics (facts and figures)
- Academic terminology (words that you might hear in schools or textbooks)
- Colloquialisms (informal language)

- Metaphors (non-literal expressions)
- Appeal to personal experience (may be in the form of short stories)
- Superlatives (the extreme case e.g. greatest, biggest, strongest)
- Direct imperatives used in moderation (command statements)
- Reference to a greater cause
- Abstract nouns (such as; courage, love, peace etc...)
- Use of ethical / moral terminology (e.g. right, wrong, good, bad, evil...)
- Well placed pauses
- Repetition of selected words or phrases for emphasis
- Valuing the audience
- Antithesis (putting opposite or contrasting words close together)
- Appropriate humor
- Conditionals (take the form: "If A then B")

General features of a good persuasive speech:

- Well balanced (use a variety of rhetorical devices)
- Conveys genuine emotion
- Well-structured / logical
- Appeals to various types of character (intellectual / emotional)
- A good length (generally no longer than 10-15 minutes depending on the audience)
- A good pace (steady- not too slow and not too fast)- the speed people think
- Adopts a humble possible position
- Challenges attitudes, values and ideals

Things to avoid:

Avoid overusing one rhetorical device (e.g. too much academic language, you can relate to the speaker, too many imperatives- it may sound too bossy)

Avoid extreme emotion (unless they are extreme circumstances)

Avoid belittling / name calling anyone who disagrees

Task 5 – Advertising

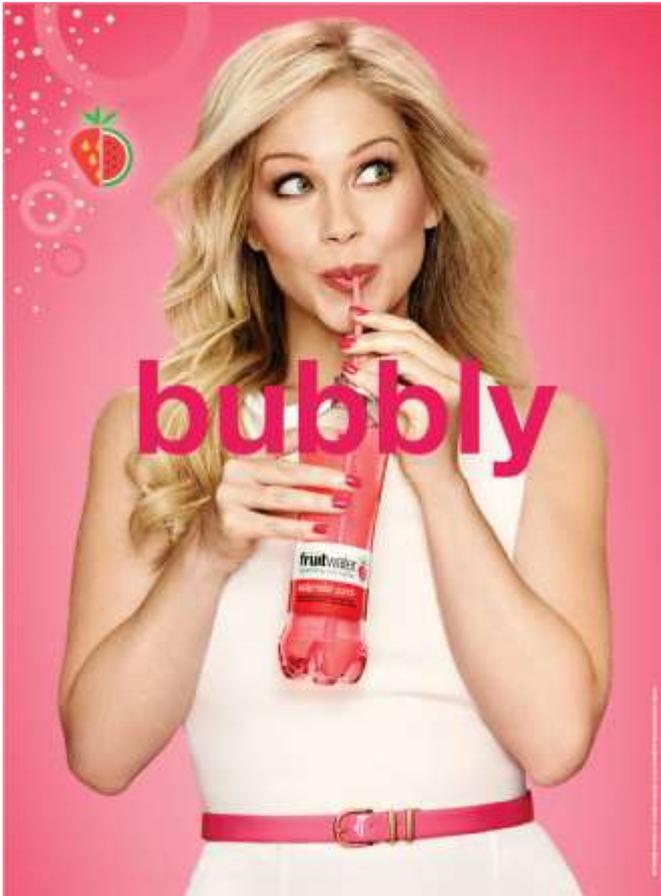
- Annotate the features of the adverts below
- Answer the following question:

How is advertising used to create representations of gender?

In your response you could include the following:

- Compare the advertising strategies
- Explain and analyse the features of the advertisement
- Apply theory to your analysis and be critical
- Consider context





introducing fruitwater, a new naturally flavored sparkling water beverage with zero calories and billions of bubbles. fruitwater is a tasty time-out for your perfectly imperfect life. keep sparkling.

Task 6 – Representations of Gender

1. Create an A4 collage of how gender is represented in the media. Remember to use a range of information that you have investigated, cut outs from magazines, headlines, screenshots and images.



Find a range of material to show how the representation of gender has changed over time.

2. Write a 500 word evaluation about how the gender is represented in the media.

Points to include:

- What do your findings suggest about the representations of gender?
- How is gender portrayed?
- What language devices are used?
- Who is the target audience? Why?
- How is language used to create the representation?
- How can the representations link to theory?
- Any other issues you want to discuss

Feedback: