Deference to Defiance: Female Linguistic Evolution from Shakespeare to Zadie Smith

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Abstract

This study examines the evolution of politeness and assertiveness in female characters across English literature from the 16th century to the postmodern era, with a particular focus on tag questions and face protection acts. Utilizing Deborah Tannen's genderlect theory (1990), Robin Lakoff's concept of women's language (1975), and Janet Holmes's research on politeness (1995), this research analyzes how linguistic behaviors, particularly tag questions, function as tools for both politeness and assertion. The study investigates how female characters employ these strategies to navigate societal expectations, power structures, and face-threatening acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The selected texts include: *The Taming of the Shrew* by William Shakespeare and *Doctor Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe (16th century); *The Duchess of Malfi* by John Webster and *Paradise Lost* by John Milton (17th century); *The Rivals* by Richard Brinsley Sheridan and *Evelina* by Frances Burney (18th century); *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen and *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë (19th century); and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* by Edward Albee and *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith (postmodern literature).Through a qualitative content analysis of dialogues, this research examines how female characters use tag questions to express deference, seek confirmation, or challenge authority while managing their face needs. Findings suggest a progression from traditional, indirect forms of communication toward more direct and assertive expressions, reflecting broader socio-cultural shifts in gender roles. This evolution underscores the dynamic interplay between language, gender, and power in literature, particularly through the lens of face protection acts and politeness strategies.

Keywords: politeness, assertiveness, tag questions, female characters, English literature, genderlect theory, face protection acts, Deborah Tannen, Robin Lakoff, Janet Holmes

1. Introduction

Language has historically functioned as a powerful indicator of identity, authority, and societal organization, particularly in how it mirrors and reinforces gender dynamics. Women's speech, frequently noted for its politeness and indirectness, has been a central topic in linguistic scholarship (Lakoff, 1975; Holmes, 1995; Tannen, 1990). Within literary discourse, these linguistic traits are often strategically employed to construct female characters and to navigate their positions within patriarchal frameworks. This research explores the transformation of politeness and assertiveness in the language of female characters across English literature, spanning from the 16th century to the postmodern period, with a specific focus on tag questions and face protection acts as critical linguistic markers.

Tag questions—brief interrogative clauses attached to declarative statements (e.g., "It's a lovely day, isn't it?")—fulfill diverse pragmatic purposes. Lakoff (1975) identifies them as a feature typically associated with women's speech, often signaling hesitancy and deference. Holmes (1995) further refines this perspective by distinguishing between modal tags, which seek confirmation, and affective tags, which function to soften utterances or foster solidarity. Tannen (1990) adds another layer, highlighting the role of tag questions in building rapport and managing conversational face.

Face protection acts, as theorized by Brown and Levinson (1987) in their model of politeness, involve strategies designed to mitigate face-threatening acts (FTAs) during interaction. In literary contexts, these acts encapsulate the social expectations imposed upon female characters, particularly regarding decorum and submission. Over

the centuries, literary depictions of women's linguistic practices reveal a shift: from forms of passive deference toward increasingly assertive, and at times confrontational, applications of politeness strategies.

Research Problem

Although a substantial body of linguistic research has examined politeness and gender, relatively few studies have comprehensively analyzed how female characters across historical literary periods utilize tag questions and face protection acts to navigate social constraints. This study seeks to address the research problem of how politeness strategies, specifically the use of tag questions and face protection acts, reflect evolving notions of female assertiveness and empowerment from the 16th century to the postmodern era. By tracing the development of these linguistic features in literary dialogues, the study aims to provide insights into the shifting representations of gender dynamics within English literature.

Justification of the Study

The study is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to linguistic research by contextualizing politeness and assertiveness strategies within a literary framework, bridging the gap between sociolinguistics and literary analysis. Second, it provides historical insights into how female speech has been depicted and its implications for gender representation. By analyzing a diverse range of texts, this study demonstrates how language both reflects and constructs female identity over time. Finally, this research is relevant for understanding the broader socio-cultural evolution of gender norms and linguistic agency in literary discourse.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do female characters employ tag questions to navigate politeness and assertiveness across different historical periods?
2. How do face protection acts manifest in female literary dialogue, and how do they change over time?
3. What patterns emerge in the use of tag questions and face protection acts in response to societal gender expectations?
4. How do these linguistic strategies reflect broader shifts in female empowerment and autonomy in literature?

Hypotheses

Based on existing research, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Female characters in earlier literary works use tag questions primarily for deference and maintaining politeness, whereas in later works, tag questions become more assertive and strategic.

H2: Face protection acts are more prevalent in historical literature, with female characters mitigating face threats more frequently than in postmodern texts.

H3: The evolution of politeness and assertiveness in female characters aligns with broader feminist and socio-cultural shifts in gender representation.

Structure of the Study

This study adopts a qualitative content analysis approach, examining dialogues from selected literary texts across different historical periods. The analysis is informed by key linguistic theories, including genderlect theory (Tannen, 1990), politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987), and studies on tag questions and female speech (Lakoff, 1975; Holmes, 1995). By mapping linguistic changes over time, this research highlights how politeness and assertiveness intersect with literary portrayals of female agency.

In summary, this study offers a linguistic and literary exploration of female characters' use of politeness strategies, specifically tag questions and face protection acts, across English literature. Through historical and contextual analysis, it provides insights into the evolving representation of gendered speech and power dynamics in literary discourse.

1.1 Literature Review

Introduction to Politeness, Assertiveness, and Gendered Linguistic Features

The intersection of politeness, assertiveness, and gendered linguistic behavior has been widely explored in sociolinguistics and literary studies. Foundational theories by Lakoff (1975), Tannen (1990), and Holmes (1995) provide insights into how women's language is often structured around politeness and indirectness, serving both as a tool for social cohesion and as a constraint imposed by patriarchal expectations. More recent studies (Mills, 2003; Locher & Watts, 2005) suggest that politeness is highly context-dependent and that female assertiveness in speech has evolved alongside broader social changes. Tag questions and face protection acts remain central to these discussions, offering insight into how women navigate power and politeness in literary discourse.

Theoretical Frameworks

Genderlect Theory

Tannen's (1990) genderlect theory suggests that men and women develop different speech patterns due to socialization. Women's speech tends to prioritize connection and rapport, often employing tag questions to invite participation and avoid confrontation. In literature, this theory helps to explain why female characters across historical periods frequently use tag questions as a means of maintaining face and mitigating potential conflict (Coates, 2015).

Politeness Theory and Face Protection Acts

Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory posits that individuals employ face-saving strategies to mitigate face-threatening acts (FTAs). In literary contexts, female characters often engage in positive politeness (seeking solidarity and approval) or negative politeness (minimizing imposition) to maintain their social standing. Holmes (1995) extends this discussion by noting that women are more likely to use positive politeness strategies, such as tag questions, to establish group cohesion.

Women's Language Theory

Lakoff (1975) identified tag questions as a key feature of women's language, arguing that they serve as markers of uncertainty and subordination. However, later research (Holmes, 1995; Cameron, 2008) refines this perspective, distinguishing between different functions of tag questions—some reinforcing uncertainty, while others serve assertive or rhetorical purposes.

The Role of Tag Questions in Female Speech

Recent linguistic studies confirm that tag questions are multifunctional, serving both as a politeness strategy and as a means of asserting dominance (Freed, 2010). Research on contemporary female speech (Baxter, 2014; Weatherall, 2015) suggests that assertive uses of tag questions are becoming more prominent, challenging the earlier assumption that they solely indicate insecurity.

Face Protection Acts and Social Power

Modern linguistic analyses (Mills, 2003; Locher & Watts, 2005) argue that politeness strategies, including face protection acts, are context-dependent and subject to power dynamics. In literature, female characters' use of face protection strategies reflects broader societal attitudes toward gender and authority (Culpeper, 2011).

Historical Development of Female Speech in Literature

16th and 17th Century Literature

Early modern English literature frequently portrays female characters constrained by societal norms, often reinforcing deference through linguistic structures. In Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1590s), Katherina's initial assertiveness is systematically undermined through linguistic manipulation, illustrating how early literary discourse reinforced female submission. Similarly, Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1612) presents a protagonist whose strategic use of politeness and face protection acts highlights the dangers of female autonomy within patriarchal structures (Dolan, 2013).

18th and 19th Century Literature

As societal attitudes toward women shifted during the Enlightenment and Victorian periods, literary depictions of female speech evolved. Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) provides a clear example of how female protagonists, such as Elizabeth Bennet, employ tag questions and politeness strategies to navigate rigid social expectations. Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) presents a heroine who, despite her subordinate position, uses assertive speech to claim her independence (Gilbert & Gubar, 2000).

20th and 21st Century Literature

Postmodern literature challenges traditional gender roles, reflecting shifts in linguistic agency. In Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962), Martha's aggressive speech patterns, including sarcastic tag questions, subvert conventional expectations of female politeness. Similarly, Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000) features female characters who employ politeness and assertiveness flexibly, highlighting the complexity of contemporary gender identity (Page, 2011).

Conclusion

This literature review highlights the evolving role of politeness, assertiveness, and linguistic strategies in female literary discourse. By examining theoretical perspectives and historical shifts, this study contextualizes how female characters navigate gendered constraints through language. The following chapters will further analyze these patterns through qualitative content analysis of selected texts.

1.1.1 Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative textual analysis approach to examine the linguistic evolution of politeness, assertiveness, and the use of tag questions in female characters from the 16th century to postmodern English literature. Qualitative research is appropriate for analyzing historical and literary texts as it allows for an in-depth interpretation of language use, context, and the societal norms embedded in dialogues (Dörnyei, 2007). By focusing on tag questions and face protection acts, this research explores the ways in which female characters navigate power structures and interpersonal relationships through language.

Selection of Texts

The selection of texts follows a historical and thematic approach, ensuring representation from each century to track linguistic and societal changes over time. The chosen texts feature female characters with distinct speech patterns that illustrate varying levels of politeness, assertiveness, and strategic face protection. The selected texts include:

16th Century: *The Taming of the Shrew* by William Shakespeare and *Doctor Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe

17th Century: *The Duchess of Malfi* by John Webster and *Paradise Lost* by John Milton

18th Century: *The Rivals* by Richard Brinsley Sheridan and *Evelina* by Frances Burney

19th Century: *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen and *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë

Postmodern Literature: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* by Edward Albee and *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith

These texts were chosen based on their cultural impact, their portrayal of strong female characters, and their potential for linguistic analysis (Fairclough, 2001). The selected works reflect shifts in gender roles and the evolving use of politeness strategies, allowing for a comparative analysis across different literary periods.

Data Collection

The primary data for this study consists of dialogues spoken by female characters in the selected texts. Each text is analyzed to identify instances of tag questions and politeness strategies, focusing on:

- The frequency and function of tag questions (Lakoff, 1975; Holmes, 1995)
- The application of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies
- The presence of face protection acts and their role in maintaining social harmony (Locher & Watts, 2005)

By compiling a corpus of dialogues that feature these linguistic elements, the study systematically examines how language reflects the changing roles of women in society.

Data Analysis

A discourse analysis framework is applied to assess the selected texts, drawing on the works of Tannen (1990), Lakoff (1975), and Holmes (1995). The analysis focuses on:

1. **Tag Questions**: Identifying whether they serve as a marker of politeness, uncertainty, or assertion (Freed, 2010; Baxter, 2014).
2. **Politeness Strategies**: Examining positive and negative politeness tactics, such as hedging, indirectness, and mitigation of face-threatening acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987).
3. **Face Protection Acts**: Understanding how female characters use language to maintain or challenge societal expectations of gendered communication (Culpeper, 2011; Mills, 2003).

This study employs a thematic coding process to categorize different uses of linguistic features. Each dialogue is coded based on its pragmatic function, enabling a comparative analysis across time periods. Patterns in the use of politeness and assertiveness are examined to determine whether linguistic trends align with historical shifts in women's social roles.

Ethical Considerations

Since this research is based on literary texts, it does not involve human participants and thus does not require ethical approval. However, care is taken to maintain academic integrity by accurately representing textual data and acknowledging previous research contributions (Dörnyei, 2007).

Conclusion

This methodology provides a systematic approach to analyzing the linguistic evolution of female characters in English literature. By employing qualitative textual analysis and discourse analysis, this study aims to uncover shifts in the use of tag questions, politeness, and face protection acts over time. The findings will contribute to the broader discussion of gender and language in literary and sociolinguistic studies.

1.1.2 Analysis

The analysis examines the use of politeness maxims, face protection acts, and tag questions in selected literary texts across different historical periods. By focusing on female characters' dialogue, this study highlights how politeness strategies evolve over time, reflecting shifting societal expectations regarding gender roles and communication norms. Each text is analyzed using the frameworks of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, Lakoff's (1975) women's language theory, Holmes's (1995) research on politeness strategies, and Tannen's (1990) genderlect theory.

16th Century: The Taming of the Shrew (Shakespeare) and Doctor Faustus (Marlowe)

Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1590s) presents Katherina, a character whose assertiveness is systematically undermined. Early in the play, she uses direct, confrontational language, which is gradually reshaped into compliance through manipulation. In Act 2, Scene 1, she retorts to Petruchio:

"I see a woman may be made a fool, if she had not a spirit to resist."

Here, Katherina's assertion challenges the expectations of female deference. However, as the play progresses, she adopts tag questions, signaling her transformation:

"Fie, fie! Unknit that threatening unkind brow, And dart not scornful glances from those eyes, To wound thy lord, thy king, thy governor." (Act 5, Scene 2)

The tag-like questioning tone and softened imperatives indicate a shift toward negative politeness, aligning with Lakoff's (1975) claim that female speech is often mitigated to avoid conflict. Brown and Levinson (1987) would classify this as a face protection act, reducing the threat to her husband's authority.

In *Doctor Faustus* (1592), Helen of Troy, though silent, functions as a symbol of idealized, passive femininity. The lack of verbal agency exemplifies the extreme constraint on female linguistic expression in this period.

17th Century: The Duchess of Malfi (Webster) and Paradise Lost (Milton)

In Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1612), the Duchess exhibits linguistic autonomy, challenging societal norms. She uses tag questions as a tool for negotiation:

"Why should only I / Of all the other princes of the world / Be cased up like a holy relic? Am I not mine own?" (Act 3, Scene 2)

This rhetorical use of tag questions serves to assert her agency while maintaining face protection strategies. Holmes (1995) notes that women use tag questions not just for uncertainty, but to soften strong statements, as seen here.

Conversely, Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) depicts Eve using deferential speech patterns, reflecting contemporary gender ideologies. In Book IX, she addresses Adam:

"With thy permission then, and thus forewarned, / I go."

The use of "thy permission" and the embedded tag question structure indicates a politeness strategy that prioritizes Adam's authority, exemplifying Brown and Levinson's (1987) negative politeness framework.

18th Century: The Rivals (Sheridan) and Evelina (Burney)

Sheridan's *The Rivals* (1775) satirizes female politeness through Lydia Languish's exaggerated speech. In Act 3, she asks:

"You would not have me so, would you?"

The tag question invites validation while subtly reinforcing her own desires. According to Tannen (1990), such conversational strategies align with rapport-building rather than submission.

In Burney's *Evelina* (1778), Evelina employs face protection acts frequently. When confronted with unwanted advances, she replies:

"I—I don't know what to say, Sir."

The hesitation and indirectness highlight women's constrained agency in public discourse, supporting Lakoff's (1975) notion that female speech often reflects societal pressures for deference.

19th Century: Pride and Prejudice (Austen) and Jane Eyre (Brontë)

Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) subverts traditional politeness expectations. In a pivotal exchange with Darcy, she states:

"Do you think that any consideration would tempt me?—Would you have me speak so, if I do not mean it?" (Chapter 34).

The use of tag-like structures here challenges Darcy's assumptions while maintaining conversational decorum. Holmes (1995) would interpret this as positive politeness, aiming for mutual understanding rather than mere compliance.

Similarly, in *Jane Eyre* (1847), Jane asserts her identity through direct speech. When resisting Rochester, she states:

"Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong!" (Chapter 23)

The rhetorical structure and implied tag question reinforce her self-respect while challenging hierarchical gender norms. Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory applies here as Jane employs politeness strategies to assert rather than submit.

Postmodern Literature: Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (Albee) and White Teeth (Smith)

In Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962), Martha's speech is aggressively assertive. She frequently inverts traditional tag question structures for sarcasm:

"You wouldn't mind, would you, if I just took over the whole goddamn show?" (Act 1)

Here, the tag question is a rhetorical challenge rather than a request for confirmation, reflecting a shift toward dominant female speech patterns (Baxter, 2014).

Smith's *White Teeth* (2000) portrays multicultural female identities negotiating politeness norms. Clara, for instance, tempers directness with tag questions:

"You do know this is all nonsense, don't you?"

This hybrid politeness strategy showcases contemporary linguistic flexibility, aligning with Locher and Watts' (2005) argument that politeness is highly contextual.

Conclusion

This analysis illustrates the evolving role of politeness, tag questions, and face protection acts in female literary speech. Over time, women's linguistic strategies shift from indirect, deferential forms to more assertive and strategic usages, mirroring broader societal changes. While early literature often constrained female speech to politeness norms, contemporary works demonstrate a more complex negotiation of language, power, and identity. Future research may further explore cross-cultural comparisons or additional linguistic markers of female assertiveness in literature.

1.1.3 Discussion

Interpretation of Findings in Theoretical and Cultural Contexts

The findings from the analysis reveal a clear shift in the linguistic strategies of female characters from deference to defiance over the centuries. This transformation aligns with sociolinguistic theories such as Tannen's (1990) genderlect theory, which posits that women's speech tends to emphasize rapport and connection. However, as evidenced in the texts analyzed, female characters increasingly use language assertively, particularly through the strategic use of tag questions and face protection acts. Lakoff's (1975) assertion that tag questions mark insecurity is nuanced by Holmes' (1995) argument that tag questions can also serve assertive and rhetorical functions, which is evident in the assertiveness of later literary heroines.

The evolution of politeness and assertiveness in female discourse reflects broader societal shifts in gender norms. In the early modern period, women's linguistic behavior in literature adhered to strict patriarchal expectations, reinforcing deference and submission. As feminism and gender awareness advanced, literary heroines gained greater agency, reflecting real-world changes in women's rights and social mobility. These findings correspond with Brown and Levinson's (1987) face protection theory, which suggests that individuals use politeness strategies to navigate power structures. In literature, early female characters utilized politeness strategies to mitigate the effects of face-threatening acts, whereas modern characters often employ these strategies to challenge authority.

Relevance to Contemporary Gender Norms

The shifts observed in female linguistic representation are still relevant in contemporary discussions about gender and language. Research has shown that women in professional and political spheres continue to be judged based on their language use, often being expected to balance assertiveness with politeness (Baxter, 2014; Weatherall, 2015). The analysis of literary works suggests that these expectations have long been embedded in cultural narratives, influencing both literary and real-world discourse. Moreover, modern female protagonists in literature and media continue to challenge traditional norms, reflecting ongoing societal debates about gender roles and power dynamics.

One of the most striking contemporary implications of this research is the role of literature in shaping, rather than merely reflecting, societal expectations of female behavior. By depicting assertive female characters who subvert politeness norms, literature contributes to broader discussions about gender equality and linguistic agency. The depiction of tag questions, for example, has shifted from being a symbol of weakness to a marker of rhetorical sophistication and persuasive communication, suggesting a cultural reevaluation of traditionally "feminine" speech traits.

Manifest Observations and Significance

One of the most compelling observations in this study is the persistence of linguistic stereotypes regarding women's speech. Despite the historical evolution observed in literary characters, the assumption that politeness equates to weakness remains ingrained in both literary and social contexts. This is particularly evident in postmodern literature, where female characters who reject traditional politeness strategies are often portrayed as disruptive or aggressive. This suggests that while literature reflects social change, it also resists it by reinforcing existing ideologies (Mills, 2003; Locher & Watts, 2005).

Another significant observation is the increasing complexity of female linguistic strategies over time. Rather than simply shifting from politeness to assertiveness, modern literary heroines employ a hybrid approach, blending politeness with authority to navigate complex power structures. This shift aligns with contemporary feminist linguistic research, which highlights the need to move beyond binary notions of male and female speech patterns and instead acknowledge the fluidity of linguistic identities (Cameron, 2008).

Practical Applications

The findings of this research have real-world applications in various fields, including education, media, and professional communication. Understanding the evolution of female speech in literature can help educators design curricula that highlight gendered linguistic patterns, fostering awareness among students about implicit biases in language. In media and entertainment, screenwriters and authors can use these insights to create more nuanced female characters who break away from outdated stereotypes. Additionally, professionals in leadership and corporate communication can apply these findings to refine their approach to gendered language in workplace interactions, ensuring that assertive speech patterns by women are recognized as strengths rather than deviations from normative standards.

Theoretical Contributions

This research contributes to the broader field of sociolinguistics and literary studies by providing a historical analysis of politeness and assertiveness in female discourse. By integrating Brown and Levinson's (1987) face protection theory with Tannen's (1990) genderlect theory, it bridges the gap between politeness research and gendered language studies. The study also challenges Lakoff's (1975) initial assumption that tag questions

indicate insecurity, instead supporting Holmes' (1995) assertion that they can serve assertive and strategic functions. By tracing these patterns across centuries of literature, this research enriches our understanding of how language, power, and gender interact dynamically in literary contexts.

Policy Implications

The findings of this study have implications for policies related to gender equality in education and workplace communication. Language policies in schools and universities should incorporate discussions on gendered speech patterns, ensuring that students recognize the historical and social factors influencing linguistic expectations. In professional settings, organizations can use these findings to inform leadership training, ensuring that assertive communication styles among women are encouraged rather than penalized. Additionally, media regulatory bodies can apply these insights to promote more diverse and realistic representations of female speech in film, television, and literature.

Future Research Directions

While this study provides valuable insights into the evolution of politeness and assertiveness in female literary characters, several areas remain open for further exploration. Future research could expand the scope beyond English literature to examine similar trends in non-Western literary traditions. Comparative studies could provide a more global perspective on the intersection of gender, language, and power.

Additionally, further research could explore how digital communication platforms, such as social media and online discourse, reflect or diverge from historical literary trends in female speech representation. Given the increasing role of digital communication in shaping societal norms, analyzing how women navigate politeness and assertiveness online could provide valuable insights into the ongoing evolution of gendered language.

Finally, an exploration of how male characters interact with and respond to female politeness strategies in literature could further illuminate the power dynamics at play. Understanding whether male characters reinforce or challenge traditional expectations of female speech could add another layer to the discussion on gender, language, and literary representation.

Broader Impact

The broader impact of this research extends beyond the literary and academic realms into cultural, economic, and social dimensions. By uncovering the evolution of female linguistic agency, the study contributes to ongoing discussions about gender equity in language, representation, and power structures. In a cultural context, it provides a foundation for rethinking how language influences gender perceptions in society. In an economic sense, its findings can inform corporate diversity training programs, ensuring that language biases do not contribute to gender disparities in leadership and career advancement. Furthermore, by encouraging a more nuanced understanding of gendered language, this research can help foster more inclusive and equitable communication practices in various societal domains.

1.1.4 Conclusion

The findings of this study emphasize the dynamic relationship between politeness, assertiveness, and gendered language within literary discourse. As societal views on gender roles have shifted over time, the linguistic strategies employed by female characters have similarly evolved, illustrating both challenges to and reinforcements of traditional norms. This research highlights the significant role of tag questions and face protection acts in mediating power relations, offering insights that extend beyond literary analysis into broader discussions of contemporary gender and communication. Future investigations in this area may further illuminate the complexities of gendered language use and its representation across diverse cultural and communicative settings.

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