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PEDAGOGICKÁ FAKULTA

Katedra anglického jazyka

**Jan Komárek**

Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání – Společenské vědy se zaměřením na vzdělávání

**MALE AND FEMALE CONVERSATIONAL STYLE IN  
EVERYDAY LIFE**

Bakalářská práce

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Josef Nevařil, Ph.D.

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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto práci vypracoval samostatně na základě uvedené literatury a pramenů.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The thesis differentiates the main varieties between men and women conversational style. Sociological factors, as well as the factors biological, play the key role in human communication. This study analyzes both of these approaches and points out the main factors that affect human language. The speech of both sexes is influenced by their need to belong to their sex and by the language used in their occupations. However, the human conversation is affected by individual approach of the speaker/listener; therefore, it is nearly impossible to record all factors influencing the human communication.

## INTRODUCTION

Human communication is an integral part of our lives. People need to gain and pass over information during their whole life. If the communication should be successful they have to know how to deal with others, how to make the topic clear or how to specify things. It is important to manage these communicational factors – in the conversation between colleagues, friends, in the family circle or even with people we have met for the first time and we will not probably meet again. Life without communication (verbal or nonverbal) cannot exist.

Additionally, life would also not exist without the differences between men and women. Let us leave out the biological differences for now and focus more on the differences in their language. The aim of this thesis is not only to refer to these differences but also to explain other aspects of human communication. That is the reason why sociolinguistics was chosen as the best device to this task – it works with people and language – the two main actors in the communication processes.

The first chapter of the thesis explains the terms such as ‘society’ and ‘social class’, creating an introduction to the field of language differences.

The following chapter then refers to the gender issues – sexist language is a troublesome topic and the thesis tries to show some variations in the speech of men and women as well as variations in grammar usage of both sexes.

The third chapter deals with the language and its usage within the context – how we speak at work, at home or with friends. The main part of this chapter therefore deals with the varieties in occupations; the language of lawyers is different from the language of scientists or doctors (so is the literature connected with these occupations). Of course, language of male doctors is different from the female ones and I will try to focus on these variations as well.

Successful conversation should also not be interrupted by inter or outer effects and this fact is stressed in the chapter number four. The term ‘conversation’ needs to be understood first. Secondly, it is very important to try to remove the barriers that are preventing people from communicating - only then can there be an effective communication (not only between men and women) without troubles. The thesis also tries to suggest some tips how to avoid these barriers and breakdowns.

The fifth chapter introduces the term of psycholinguistics and the impact of brain on language used by men and women because (as undoubtedly everyone knows) both sexes have different perception of the world and this fact mirrors in their language as much as in their thinking. Psycholinguistics therefore studies minds of individuals and brings, together with sociolinguistics, the answers to questions why and when people say certain things and express certain ideas.

These five chapters should show at least the main differences between the male and female conversational style and their impact on human communication.

The aim of the thesis is to pick and to point out different phenomena in male and female everyday conversation and point out occupational varieties. The topic was chosen with the view of growing need of classification of the characteristic means of expression of men and women – the differences are huge sometimes and the topic, although very complicated, was also chosen in order to differentiate (not to separate) the language of men and women. The language of both sexes, however it may seem the same, is full of variations and complicated expressions. Perhaps that is also maybe one of the reasons why is the human communication so beautiful.

# **1 LANGUAGE, SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CLASS**

The first chapter of the thesis deals with the connection of the language and its position within society and social class. First, this chapter briefly describes the terms ‘language’, ‘social class’ and ‘society’ and their connection with language. The whole chapter then ends with description of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and the classification of the taboo words.

## **1.1 LANGUAGE**

Language is a tool that distinguishes us from animals. It is a “medium by which speakers of the language communicate their thoughts and feelings to others” (Baugh & Cable, 2003, p.1). Language allows people to do their work, to receive information from the outside world, to study or to understand the science, philosophy, poetry or literature.

It is also very important to understand the background of this tool – economic, political or social forces shape the language everyday and this aspect is needed to be taken into account. The history of the language is connected with the history of human beings who know the rules of usage of the language. According to Baugh & Cable (ibid), the language of a powerful nation will acquire higher importance as a direct reflection of political, economic, technological and military strength. That means that for example the arts and sciences expressed in that language will have advantages, including the opportunities of propagation. On the contrary, the spread of these pieces of art will have a positive impact on a prestige of that particular language.

## **1.2 SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CLASS**

According to Crystal (2003, p.364), society, like the language, has been changing every day, therefore it is clear that these two concepts are connected. Society is coincident with civilization; so is the language (either spoken or written). Civilization consists of group of people who communicate together using certain rules and the

members of those groups know how to use them. People “belong to different social groups and perform different social roles” (Crystal, 2003, p.364).

People are identified as members of different social positions according to their jobs, social conditions, salary, power, prestige (which is usually connected with preceding conceptions), age and sex. Crystal (2003, p.364) claims that it is usually language, more than the clothing or the appearance of human beings, that forms and creates human social identity - social identity is therefore bound with social roles and social classes and adopting a social role involves a choice of appropriate linguistic form (speaker at weddings, funerals, during the meetings, ceremonials or other important social occasions).

Trudgill (1974, p.35) claims that social class, when considered as a connection to language, has very similar features – different social groups use different linguistic varieties and we, as experienced members of a speech community, have to learn to classify speakers accordingly. Every speaker of the language uses his/her own methods how to communicate with the rest of the world. However, these methods are clearly not the same and the development of social varieties can be explained in terms of *social* barriers or *social* distances. The forms of social differentiation could be illustrated on the term called the *social stratification*. “Social stratification is a term used to refer to any hierarchical ordering of groups within a society” (Trudgill, 1974, p.35).

Social classes, as Trudgill (1974, p.37) points out are therefore not defined or labelled entities but aggregates of people with similar social and economic characteristics. We must also assign great importance to social mobility which means the movement up or down the social hierarchy – the more heterogeneous a society is, the more heterogeneous is its language (Trudgill, 1974, p. 37).

### **1.3 PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT**

The text above shows that language and society are liable to certain rules – inter-relationships. These inter-relationships take many forms. There is one view, developed in various forms by different linguists, which is most frequently referred to as the *Sapir-Whorf hypothesis*, named after the two linguists, Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf (Trudgill, 1974, p.24).

This Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is dealing with the possibility that everyone's view of the world and environment may be conditioned by their language, although the opposite direction (the effect of society on language and ways in which environment is reflected in the language) is less controversial. Trudgill (1974, p.27) describes two types of environments: *physical* and *social*. The *physical* environment is simply the world around us – living in a society reflects the language and words (not only *which* words we use but also *when*, *how* and *how often* we use them). For example, English has only one expression for the white cold water – “snow”. Eskimos, on the other hand, know, because of the environment they live in, much more expressions to describe the snow. The English would not probably use connections such as “fine snow”, “soft snow” or “dry snow” because they recognizes only one type of snow and knows that it will be melted soon. The environment shapes the mind and behavior of everyone's life and distinguishing even between minor nuances could play the major role of surviving (Trudgill, 1974, p. 27).

Whorf's example of the word ‘snow’ and its various expressions in the Eskimo language is well-known and he tried to prove that language is really affected by thoughts. But according to Clark & Clark (1977, p.575) these differences probably reflect only in expertise. Eskimos are led by ecological concerns and they name different kinds of snow, where Aztecs in Mexico were not.

In English, professional skiers have specialized words for snow – ‘powder’, ‘corn’, ‘ice’, etc., whereas the rest of people has just ‘snow’. It is not possible that just because people speak English they cannot notice differences in snow.

The *social* environment is reflected in the kinship vocabulary – the important kin relationships are those which are signaled by single vocabulary items; words like *brother*, *sister*, *mother*, *husband* are parts of this English vocabulary. Other communities, however, use the term *father* for description of every male member of the family in the age of parents, i.e. the uncle (clearly the father's brother) is described as a “father” as well. The description of the family members also differs with the political and social changes throughout nations and families – Trudgill (1974, p.28) mentions Russia as a typical example of these changes; the first World War, the revolution and collectivization of agriculture resulted in a reorganization of the family member's names (*brother's wife* was earlier called *nevestka*, today it is *zhena brata*, *wife of brother*).

To sum up the chapter, it is really important to realize that it is not only the world that shapes our language but also the people and their relationships with others. Every human being is different and the language it uses is shaped by many factors, as described above.

#### 1.4 TABOO WORDS

Every society has its own system of *values* that affects the language and therefore the society itself. The way through which this happens is a phenomenon people know as *taboo* - “Taboo can be characterized as being concerned with behavior which is believed to be supernaturally forbidden, or regarded as immoral or improper; it deals with behavior which is prohibited or inhibited in an apparently irrational manner” (Trudgill, 1974, p.29). Apparently, taboo is concerned with things people are not supposed to talk about or do – when applied to the language, the usage of certain words and expressions is forbidden.

In general, “those who use such words in a language, have failed to adhere to public rules and therefore they have to be punished. Breaking the rules, however, usually connotes with gaining the power, strength or freedom” (Trudgill, 1974, p.29).

According to the previous text, taboo words reflect the system of values of a particular society – most cultures then avoid speaking about sex, religion, excretion or God and devil. The usage of terms belonging to the group of taboo words is taken as an attack to humanity. Nowadays, in the age of technology, when spreading the information is a matter of seconds, the acceptance of these terms in society is even more unrealistic. Television companies are provoking general public by broadcasting programmes that are not suitable for too young or too old people (Crystal, 2003, p.384).

Not only are these words unaccepted by most of the people; the secondary effect of the existence of these expressions is the one on the language. The strong reluctance of speakers to utter these words causes the disappearance of another type of words – those which are phonetically similar. Trudgill (1974, p.32) provides example of the usage of the word *cock* which practically disappeared thanks to its sexual connotation; that is the reason why Americans rather use the expression *rooster*.

Taboo words are usually something forbidden in the conversation between men and women. They try to avoid it because crossing this barrier basically means ‘to kill’ themselves in the company, society or community. Kraft (2006, p.155) says that “if we want to cross a taboo we have to recognize it first!” He also asks whether there exist some taboos that should never be crossed. Women are, for example, more emotional than men and therefore they usually do not talk about sensitive or unpleasant things (especially when in conversation with a man seen for the first time). On the other hand, when men are ‘on the hunt’ (and not only then) they try to captivate their ‘victims’ by simulating feelings they think they are expected – they need to cross the taboo in order to be liked or admired (Kraft, 2006, p.184).

Conversation between both sexes is therefore led very carefully because one wrong word or one inappropriate allusion can lead to total social suicide on both sides.

To sum up this chapter, we need to realize that the recognition of the importance of the fact that language is a very variable phenomenon has led many language scientists to the conclusion that this variability is connected with the society. Everyone is different and these, even the slightest differences, create a human being and human beings, using their own code – the language - create society. The understanding of geography and anthropology is also required when dealing with society, so is the dialectology. Language is a complex object to be studied – how, when and why does it change is one of the topics sociolinguistics is dealing with.

## 2 LANGUAGE AND GENDER

Men and women are different, therefore the language they use is different as well. This chapter deals with the term 'gender' and its connection with spoken language. Below the basic differences between the two genders are pointed out and the terms 'sexist language' and 'stereotyped language' are explained.

### 2.1 GENDER

“The term 'gender' typically refers to the social process of dividing up people and social practices along the lines of *sexed identities*” (Beasley, 2005, p.11). Femininity, together with masculinity could also be undoubtedly situated under the term 'gender'. One or more categories of sexed identity are usually privileged or devalued. According to Beasley (2005), in most Western societies gender divides into two distinct and separate categories of human beings as well as to the division of social practises into two fields; his 'gendering' could be seen in Western society on the examples of strong associations between men and public life and between women and domestic life, although men and women occupy both of these posts nowadays.

In the terms of language, there is a widespread awareness of the way in which it displays social attitudes towards men and women. Highly criticised has been mainly the creation of vocabulary and grammar which reflected only traditionally male-oriented view of the world. Thanks to this aspect, women have been interpreted as something 'lower'; they had low status in a society (Crystal, 2003, p.368).

Moreover, modern authors (Gramley & Pätzold, 2004, p.209) distinguish between *sex* and *gender* when they say that '*sex*' refers to biological category which is usually fixed before birth and '*gender*' refers to social category which is associated with certain behaviour. Gramley & Pätzold, (2004) use an example with bicycle – bike saddles designed for women are usually wider than saddles for men (because women have wider pelvic girdle) – this is a *sex difference*. Bikes without a crossbar (so riders can wear skirts) are designed in response to a gender difference, since there is no biological reason why women wear skirts and men do not (*a gender difference*).

Of course, according to some authors, this example of differences between the terms 'sex' and 'gender' does not affect the variations in the speech of men and women but it affects the functionality of the world around them and, as a result, it is this functionality that shapes the minds and words of every single human being.

## 2.2 GENDER AND GRAMMAR

When focused on the distinctions between the male and female language the grammatical part of the problem cannot be omitted although the grammar does not play the major role in this thesis. On the other hand, without this chapter the thesis cannot be complete.

According to Jesenská (2010) the term 'gender appeared in English in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and came from Old French *gendre* (Modern French *genre*), from Latin *genus/generis*, translating Greek *génos* – kind. Today, it is a grammatical distinction, in which such parts of speech as nouns, adjectives and determiners are marked as masculine and feminine (as in French and Spanish), or masculine, feminine and neuter (as in Czech, German, Greek, Latin and Slovak). In such languages, these parts of speech, when used together, must agree gender – the feminine endings in Latin phrases *illae feminae bonae* (nominative: those good women), masculine endings in *illi viri boni* (nominative: those good men) and neuter endings in *illa oppida bona* (nominative: those good towns) (Jesenská, 2010, p.46).

In English, grammatical distinctions of gender are mainly confined to the third-person singular pronouns, *personal*, *reflexive*, and *possessive* (*she/her/hers/herself* versus *he/him/his/himself*). The term non-personal, rather than neuter is usually preferred for *it/its/itself*. A contrast of personal and non-personal as also found with the relative pronouns *who/whom* versus *which*. *She/her* is widely used to refer to a ship or other means of transport (i.e. *She runs well before the wind*), to a country (i.e. *England will never forget those who gave up their lives for her*) and sometimes to machines (i.e. *She sounds rough, maybe the engine needs tuning*). A baby or young child (especially when the sex is not known) is sometimes referred to as *it*. Plural *they/them* is genderless in English, being used for people and things. Its use with singular reference for people is common, especially in spoken language (Jesenská, 2010, p.46).

Some natural-gender distinctions between pairs of nouns show a derivational relationship (i.e. *bride/bridegroom*, *hero/heroine*) but most have no morphological connection (*father/mother*, *uncle/aunt*, *mare/stallion*). Some feminine endings are criticized as pejorative and sexist, especially by feminists (i.e. *authoress*, *poetess*, *usherette*, *stewardess* – these appear to be more disliked than *actress*, *waitress*, etc.). In recent years, conscious attempts have been made to use the unmarked or masculine term for both sexes – words like *flight attendant*, *bartender* or *chairperson* are used every day. Still, there seems to be no move to abolish titles such as *princess*, *duchess* or *countess* (Jesenská, 2010, p.47).

Crystal (2003) also mentions the focus on inventing a neutral third-person singular pronoun in English. He gives an example of the sentence: “If a student loses – key, – should report the loss to the bursar.” The sign “–“ is traditionally filled by *he* or *she*. Crystal suggests using combination like *he or she* or *she or he* but this seems to be stylistically awkward. In writings we can use *(s)he* but this does not help with *his* or *him*. Many writers (as well as the author of this thesis) choose to rewrite sentences in order to avoid this problem – *If students lose their key*, *If a key is lost by a student*, *it needs ...*

As could be seen grammar and gender is something which cannot be forgotten about when considering the differences in male and female speech.

### 2.3 SEXIST LANGUAGE

At the beginning of this chapter a note has to be made – all examples of sexist language are to be considered as examples of English sexist language. The reason for this is simple – the topic of the thesis is a male and female conversational style and it serves us well for this English written thesis – the sexist language is the same in content all around the world (improper words, sexual allusions).

Jesenská (2010, p.47) claims that “sexist language is a language that presents stereotypes of men and women, sometimes to the disadvantage of both, but usually to the disadvantage of women.” Crystal (2003, p.177) basically agrees with her by stating that when there is something “sexist” it is “discrimination against one sex, typically men against women.”

Sexist language usually represents men and women unequally, as if members of one sex were somehow less completely human or had fewer rights than members of the other sex. According to Jesenská (2010, p.47), sexist language can be discussed in two ways:

- 1) as the extent to which the English language system is inherently sexist,
- 2) as the extent to which some ways of using language are sexist.

To consider the first approach, one of the things to look for is symmetry versus asymmetry in the English lexis (vocabulary) – i.e. generic term is *a horse*, female is *a mare*, male is *a stallion*, young horse is *a foal*, young female is *a filly*, young male *a colt*. Easily said, the term for different kind of horses is changing according to their “state”; whether they are young or male or female.

The second approach can be seen on an ambiguity of words *Man/man*. The word *Man* is used generically for *men, women, boys and girls*, while *man* is used meaning *men* only (not *girls, women, or boys*). That means that one expression of the word “*man*” describes people as a group and the other expression describes only males. The second approach shows the possibilities of language and vocabulary while there is nothing “to play with” in the first approach – it is given.

Society perceives females and males differently because our expectations and gender roles are different. Different criteria are set for either gender, higher for females and lower for males. This creates two moral codes – one for females (this code is more strict and conservative), the other for males (more flexible and dynamic code) (Trudgill, 1974, p.95).

The Eastern society is, at least according to modern medias and lifestyle in these parts of the world, probably used to this model of moral codes more than the Western one. European women are having more and more power over men nowadays and men are not as much as strict with their women as they were a century ago. On the other hand, sexist language is not dying out because the conviction of men that they should rule the world is not dying out either.

## **2.4 STEREOTYPED LANGUAGE**

Both men and women tend to use certain phrases and words typical for these genders. There are many generalizations, for example, that the tone of women’s voices

is or should be soft and feminine, while men's tones are (or should be) deep and masculine. In female gatherings (by men named as 'hen parties') voices are *shrill* or *cackling*, women's intonation is often *whining* and *nagging*. In contrast, many men are said to sound *gruff*, speak *roughly* and have *hard* or *harsh* voices (plus they *bark out* commands) (Crystal, 2003, p.368-369).

Below are some examples of stereotyped language of men and women according to Jesenská (2010, p. 50):

- "Women tend to use such words as *adorable*, *cute*, *lovely* or *sweet* in describing people and objects and such vocatives as *my dear*, *darling*, *sweetie*,
- Men tend to be more direct and less inclined to show their feelings; tradition also requires them to be laconic (*the strong/silent type*),
- Women often use a great amount of adjectives and adverbs (*My dear, it's just simply too wonderful to see you*),
- Women are often eager to talk about feelings and emotions, while men don't tend to use words concerning the feelings,
- Women frequently use *so*, *such* and *quite* as intensifiers (*it's been so nice to see you again*), or as qualifiers (*he's so helpful, it's such a shame he can't be here*),
- Women are considered to be more polite and more concerned about correct and proper grammar and pronunciation,
- In conversations, women are believed to be insecure and hedging (using tags such as *do you?* or *isn't it?* and qualifiers such as *I think*)
- Women, traditionally, do not use obscene or blasphemous language (they 'leave' it to men)
- Women are more likely to use polite euphemisms for topics such as death and sex
- Men typically talk about 'important' topics such as politics, sports or war, whereas women's talk is 'trivial' and usually gossip" (Jesenská, 2010, p.50).

Such stereotypes are being viewed negatively even by women. This judgment of women's styles of speech appears to be linked to lower social status in relation to men. Still, the question remains – does lower status lead to negative opinions or does certain speech characteristics lead to lower status? (Jesenská, 2010, p.51) Even the amount of the examples could be stunning, it introduces the biggest and well known differences in male and female thinking and speaking. It validates the public opinion that men are harsh, even brute, direct and do not show their feelings while women are acknowledged to be soft, sensitive and they tend to show their emotions.

If there are some conclusions to be made from the text above, it is clear that the differences between men and women's language are very important throughout the society. Different social attributes and behaviour is expected from men and women and sex varieties are symbols of this fact. Men and women speak as they do because they feel a need of a particular language that belongs to their sex. This kind of appropriateness is somehow reinforced by various social pressures – being linguistically inappropriate means to embarrass yourself; or you simply feel uncomfortable when being among 'more educated' people. Of course, really educated people know that sexist language can harm their social status and they do not use it. In general, sexist language is taken as something wrong and it is connected (in public opinion) with low social classes. The truth is, that the sexist language is used all throughout the society.

### 3 LANGUAGE AND CONTEXT

Human communication greatly depends on the ability to understand each other. But people always need to know *what* they are talking about; they need to be in the context. This chapter introduces this term as well as a few fields of English where the knowledge of context is crucial. Men and women are also behaving in different ways at different workplaces. A female doctor may use different expressions than a male doctor or, of course, male politician and vice versa. This chapter tries to focus on at least some of these crucial variations in occupational language.

#### 3.1 CONTEXT

As written above – language, as other forms of social activity, has to be appropriate to the speaker who is using it. This is why, in many communities and societies, men and women’s speech is very different. There needs to be a certain amount of a ‘social behaviour’ – there are certain occasions and situations that require specific rules or behavior and disobeying these rules could mean ‘social suicide’. When we meet the president we should be very polite, when we meet friends outside the house we will be probably not so concerned about our polite manners. Language varies therefore not only according to the social characteristics of the speaker but also according to the social context in which he/she finds himself/herself. Social context therefore means that “the same speaker uses different linguistic varieties in different situations and for different purposes” (Trudgill, 1974, p.103).

“The totality of linguistic varieties used in this way – and they may be very many – by a particular community of speakers can be called that linguistic community’s *verbal repertoire*.” (Trudgill, 1974, p.103). Many social factors can come into play in controlling which variety from this verbal repertoire is useful in particular occasions. Trudgill (1974, p.103) shows us another example of this *verbal repertoire* – if a speaker is talking to the people he works with about their work, his/her language would be very likely different from the language that he/she uses at home with his/her family.

It is obvious that there are many occasions in which we use different tones, words or linguistic strategies. The language of journalists is not the same as the language of lawyers or doctors. The following chapters will try to focus on some specific language environment.

### **3.2 OCCUPATIONAL VARIETIES**

According to Crystal (2003, p.370), the term ‘occupational dialect’ has been for a long used for the distinctive language associated with a particular way of earning a living. He also says that these varieties are not like regional or class dialects – it is difficult to change our accent or dialect when we move into a new part of the country and neighbors immediately identify “where this new guy comes from”.

Occupational varieties, according to Crystal (2003, p.37), are not like that. They may be taken as a part of the job, as ‘a coat’ – people in the job use to wear it when at work and they put it down after finishing their daily duties. Simply, when they stop working, they stop to use the language of work. There are no class distinctions here. Factory workers have the duty to master the particular set of words in order to manage their work to be done – they develop slang and jargon which is hard to understand for the outsiders. The more specialized the occupation, the more complex and more technical the set of words will be. Most of the occupations are linguistically distinctive to some degree even if that should concern only a few words; from doctors and managers to miners, policemen or gravediggers (Crystal, 2003, p.37). The fact is, that every job ‘contains’ at least minimum of specialized words and the knowledge of these words is crucial for the people who work in this field.

Crystal (1987, p.378) claims that “there is no theoretical limit to the number of special purposes to which language can be put.” The whole new areas of expression have emerged – broadcasting, computing, commercial advertising and many others. Special styles have also developed in religion, law, science, politics, commerce, press or medicine. All these branches need their special language and the language of men and women in these branches, however unbelievable it may seem, differs significantly, as following chapters show. Many scientists and media show men as the strong ones and women as the weaker, more emphatic ones. These opinions are based on historical

experience and next chapters, dealing with some of the jobs, are trying to show whether it is the same today.

### 3.2.1 RELIGIOUS ENGLISH

Religious English is not as important nowadays as it was a few centuries ago. Religious education is slowly dying out because people live faster and they usually do not have time to ‘bother’ with God’s word. Still, religious English plays a major role in the history of the Great Britain and cannot be omitted from this enumeration of language varieties in occupations.

Religious English has a number of specific features. There is a unique phonological identity in genres such as spoken prayers, sermons or litanies. The usage of graphology is also very distinctive mark of biblical texts or liturgical leaflets. Crystal (2003, p.371) claims that there are three main reasons why religious English is the most distinctive of all occupational varieties:

- “It is consciously retrospective – it “calls” back to its origins, that means to the early period of the English language. The texts are also subjected to disciplined and periodic reinterpretation (such as the legal English – see 3.2.3).
- It is consciously prescriptive – it is concerned with issues of orthodoxy and identity (textual and ritual).
- It is consciously imaginative and exploratory – people make their personal response to the claims of religious beliefs while these responses vary, from the highly structured to the totally unpredictable” (Crystal, 2003, p.371).

It is the truth indeed that female priests are not to be seen so often as the male ones. That is the main reason why the differences in their speech are hard to observe. In addition, the religious language that is used (as show the three points above) does not offer much for the change in the preachers language – it is strict but using enchanting words, it describes stories from the Bible but still it has to ‘lure’ people into the church (Crystal, 1987, p.384).

Historically, men only were allowed to be priests and the language of Church is therefore the language of men; the tradition seems to continue. Everyday language of religious persons usually tries to avoid taboos and vulgarisms because these words are not allowed by Bible and Catholic Church. On the contrary, the usage of kind words

and soft expressions is recommended to use by these people. Every religion has its set of taboo words and this set is dependent on the historical experience of this religion. It is nearly impossible to detect every taboo word in the world (in religious context) thanks to the amount of religions, cults or tribal habits.

### 3.2.2 SCIENTIFIC ENGLISH

It is impossible to know every scientific word because the language of science comes from lexicons and theories shaped centuries ago (plus the theories are changing every day) and the brain can conceive only limited amount of information. Therefore ordinary people are able to understand only fragments from this particular field. It is possible to use a vocabulary from a chosen area of science but the difficulty of full comprehension will still be here (mainly because of the structuring of sentences and discourses).

The high proportion of technical vocabulary in combination with less usual patterns of grammatical structure results into a difficulty to understand this 'language of science'. Typical examples of these misunderstandings are to be seen at the doctor's office – millions of people are there every day and still they sometimes do not understand the language they are spoken at. "Scientific language is therefore criticized for opaqueness and impenetrability. The persistence of this problem has led to various remedial measures, in the form of science journalism, general reference books (...) and communicative-aware organizations" (Crystal, 2003, p.373).

Scientific English, like the English of religion, is depending on certain patterns that need to be followed and these rules need to be often followed. Scientific language depends on the subject of science (the subject of research) and is also affected by academic language – usage of titles, special, even unintelligible words or long expressions (Crystal, 1987, p.380).

Women in scientific branches tend to use more emphatic language (where possible) and their language is affected more by their feelings, which leads to 'enlightening' the topic sometimes. Men, on the other hand, are harsh in their speech and they go straight to the point however unpleasant the topic may be. They tend to not to mix personal part of their life with the part professional.

Of course, both sexes are affected by the job they do, some a bit more, some a bit less but the truth is that the language of the scientists is hard to understand unless a person becomes one of them.

### 3.2.3 LEGAL ENGLISH

According to Crystal (2003, p.374), legal English shares with the science a concern for coherence and precision and with the religion a respect for ritual and historical tradition. It is also criticized for being impenetrable (like scientific language) and willful in its mystique (like religious English). Legal English has been always pulled in different directions – its statements have to be phrased in the way so that we can follow their general applicability and, on the other hand, they should remain specific enough to be able to apply to individual circumstances. Finally, they have to be expressed in such a way that people can be certain about the intention of the law respecting their rights and duties. This is why legal language has developed such a complex grammatical structure. It has long sentences because it tries to work with many different issues in a single statement. It is also repetitive – it needs to make clear whether a new statement applies to the previous one (a part of it or a whole) or whether it is something completely new. It uses coordinated phrases and long lists of items because it wants to reduce the uncertainty about whether the law applies in a particular case. “More than any other variety, legal language has to impose order on the fuzziness of the English lexicon” (Crystal, 2003, p.374).

Men who have become lawyers or judges are aware of their high status and they act accordingly. Their language has no place for funny moments or useless phrases. After all, they had to study hard and their language should mirror their education. Moreover, legal English is full of laws, codices or regulations that require correct usage of language they are written in (Crystal, 1987, p.386). Men in these professions tend to be hard and strict – they need to insist on their demands and opinions and to be able to bargain at a right time.

Women have to be strict and harsh as well for there is no place for a weak personality in this field. Their language has to be free of emotions and personal opinions however tempting it may be. They speak according to their status as well and they have to follow the patterns of written legal English.

Men and women using legal English are (like scientists) bound by the written form of this type of English and there is not much space to be creative, although some personal affections are not excluded.

### 3.2.4 POLITICAL ENGLISH

Politicians usually tend to manipulate their voters. That is the reason they never hesitate to use euphemisms, jargon or foreign expressions. Jesenská (2010, p.61) names five different approaches to the manipulative ability of politicians:

- 1) Newspeak – First used by G. Orwell in his novel *1984*; the aim of the newspeak was to reduce the number of words in the English language – it had to reduce the thoughts and ideas of people that were considered dangerous. Basically, newspeak is a language used by politicians and government officials which is difficult to understand or which does not mean what it seems to mean.
- 2) Doublespeak – Doublespeak is a language that has no real meaning or has more than one meaning and is intended to hide the truth. It usually makes bad things seem good ('negative patient care outcome' is nothing else than 'the patient died'), it pretends, misleads and distorts reality.
- 3) Eurospeak – This new "jargon" has its roots in 2004 when the European Information Association published a 350-page dictionary called *Eurojargon*. It is a dictionary of abbreviations, acronyms nicknames and terminology used in the European Union's agencies, institutions, schemes, projects and programmes. Eurocrats use them without further explanation and it is difficult for those who do not know it to understand it.
- 4) Political Correctness (PC) – political correctness is basically a belief that language and practices which could offend political actions (negatively) should be eliminated. Political correctness works with nowadays terms such as gender, race, class or age – the keepers of political correctness say that people see only certain things in certain ways and this makes PC a powerful form of censorship.
- 5) Technospeak – Technospeak is a blend of *technology* and *Newspeak* and this term first appeared in the 1980's. It refers to an informal term for a prose style used by high-technology industries and the marketing and publicity groups that surround them – typical for Technospeak is a usage of acronyms (*RAM*, *ROM*), number-and-letter

groups (*Windows 97*), fixed phrases (*hard disc, Random Access*) or word-plays (*VisiOn*) (Jesenská, 2010, p.62-73).

Male politicians (however hated they sometimes are) are, together with lawyers, doctors and scientists, masters of their craft. In addition, they have to be very inventive. They are able to use rhetorical and dramatic techniques which we associate with advertising or media. Politicians have to be actors – they have to work on the assumption that what their opponent says is a lie, irrelevance or waffle. It is again a male politician that is aware of his high social status (and longer paycheck) and acts according to this fact. He has to be full of authority, he has to speak because silence means not telling the truth; he has to be strict with his opponents but kind to voters (Crystal, 2003, p.378).

Women in politics are quite a new phenomenon. They have even higher motivations than men in this field and so are their ambitions. Female politicians are aware of their ‘motherly love’ – a power that affects people – and play with people’s feelings. Together with men in politics they tend to use all types of languages mentioned above (of course, beside the Technospeak) to manipulate people’s will and their (re)election.

### 3.2.5 NEWSMEDIA ENGLISH

The media reflect all aspects of the human condition and through them we are allowed to be close to various aspects of human life – religion, politics, science, literature or sport. The language of the media usually varies with the format; a newspaper will communicate with the people in a different way than, for example, a radio or a TV channel.

As Crystal (2003, p.380) puts it, the situation is even more complicated when we are speaking about the news. Reporting news (in spoken or written form) is one of the most difficult situations to be found in area of language use. The main problem here is the constant battle against pressures – in order to fit the column or a radio window the reporters are forced to cut as many as possible. If they will not, someone else will do it instead of them. The main word has the editor (Crystal, 2003, p.380).

Another problem (*ibid*) is also the constraint imposed by a favoured conception of audience. The reader/viewer/listener wants to find new and shocking information in the media every day. This is another ‘outside pressure’ that makes the job of a reporter

harder – the finished product may differ significantly from what is first submitted. Moreover, once the publication or channel finds one way to ‘sell themselves’, it tends to stay with it and imposes it vigorously on its material. Shortly, it is very easy to identify media according to the language and features they use (Crystal, 2003, p.380).

On the other hand (ibid), broadcasting media are responsible for the emergence of the varieties of their own. These media are in continual search for new ideas and formats and they are constantly afraid of being stereotyped, old. The only ‘language style’ they usually perform is the one in programmes for children or game shows. Weather reporting is also one of the best examples of the language style because language here is reduced to bare essentials (Crystal, 2003, p.384).

James Monaco (Monaco, 2000, p.152) says that “film is not a language in the sense that English, French, or mathematics is. First of all, it’s impossible to be ungrammatical in film. And it is not necessary to learn a vocabulary.” He wants to say that the medium of television is understandable even for infants. Moreover, even the simplest visual images are interpreted differently in different countries or parts of the countries (Monaco, 2000, p.152).

Both men and women are usually solving only one problem when being at the TV – how to look good. Precise and quick language is on the second place but still plays the major role. Moreover, broadcasting has also greatly increased popular awareness of linguistic diversity (Crystal, 1987, p.392). Everyday speakers at the radio or in the TV studios, either men or women, have to have very professional approach to their job, otherwise it would be a death of their careers.

Again, more empathy could be observed in the female appearance in front of the TV cameras (the question is whether it is not pretended) but if they want to be at least on the same level as their male colleagues they must look (or sound, in the case of radio programmes) serious. There is no place for mistakes and language of these people has to be perfect.

The possibilities of usage of the language in society are nearly never-ending. It is always the context that plays the main role in human communication; we have to differ whether we are talking to an officer, butcher or politician. The fact is that people are forced to solve problems and dilemmas every day and it depends on their ability to use the language correctly with the knowledge of the language of particular groups. Still, context is only one small wheel in a huge machine called ‘language’.

Men and women are sometimes forced to use the language of the opposite sex or to “adapt” themselves to conditions in their jobs – if they want to be successful they simply need to do this. Going against conventions is usually not the best way to succeed – they can lose their jobs and this possibility is not the option nowadays. Higher position at their place of work costs more than recreating their vocabulary.

## **4 CONVERSATIONAL BARRIERS**

Once again – the human language is a complicated tool and fully understanding of it is a matter of hard studying. However, there are many things that complicate a communication of two (or more) people. Before dealing with the conversational barriers the term ‘conversation’ is explained. Then some features of ‘perfect’ communication are described and finally some tips to get rid of communication barriers are presented.

### **4.1 CONVERSATION**

Language is not only a symbol of humanity nowadays – its development is quick and carefully worked-out at the same time. It is the bearer of the information and expresses the mood of the speaker. But what really makes the language exceptional is the fact that without it it would be impossible to create, establish and maintain human relationships among two and more people. Conversation helps people to find out everything about the others, probably subconsciously, without even knowing it. However, even conversation has its rules – improper pause between words, incorrect usage of an intonation or simple misunderstanding of certain expressions could lead to embarrassing events in the spoken language (Crystal, 1987, p.116). There is no need to stress that if this should happen when applying for the job or at the company meeting, the consequences could be immense for the speaker.

Conversation (or communication) “can be considered as a personal process that involves the transfer of information and also involves some behavioural input. Communication is something people do. It does not exist without people taking some form of action. It has all to do with the relationship between people” (Ludlow & Panton, 1992, p.2).

Deborah Tannen describes “a perfectly tuned conversation as a vision of sanity – a ratification of one’s way of being human and one’s place in the world” (Tannen, 2003, p.4-5). It is absolutely important that the person we are talking to understands the meaning of the words we produce and the body language we produce incidentally. If these conditions are not realized, one’s psychological well-being suffers and there are

questions arising about competence and self-confidence of an individual. Language is a social phenomenon which is connected with values of the society that it is used in and with the whole society structure. In short, every aspect of the language is evaluated differently – accents or dialects of the language, for example, carry a different meaning (Trudgill, 1974, p.20).

Differences in some language may lead to differences in perception of the world. It is clear that the Czech speaker perceives the world differently than the English one. And what is more, the translation, if not well-made, can change the meaning of the whole sentence or structure. Therefore, it is sometimes very hard to understand the other nation's speaker, because even if the participants of the conversation know how to work with the second language, the social environment of this language remains hidden to them.

It is nearly very common in the situation when a man meets a woman – they will probably not have problems with understanding each other but their thinking and usage of language will be different. They are affected by age, emotions, social status and processes in the brain and all these facts will change the conversation significantly (Jesenská, 2010, p.44). Male and female conversational style in everyday life is therefore varying – every conversation is different and every man and woman has their own way to transform their thoughts into words. Unless there will not occur any barriers or breakdowns in the communication.

#### **4.2 BARRIERS AND BREAKDOWNS**

According to Crystal (1987, p.342), “the discovery that language can be a barrier to communication is quickly made by all who travel, study, govern or sell.” Communication barriers between two or more people are not only problems of foreigners but also of two friends who have met just outside the house. Our exemplary friends are of the same sex and they probably find the way out of their momentary misunderstanding but what if they are man and woman? And what if the man secretly loves the woman? The risk of rise of the barrier is then even higher.

Robert G. King (1979, p.19) differentiates between *barriers* and *breakdowns*. He says that they are related, but different. Barriers exist, breakdowns occur. Barriers are obstacles to be overcome and something which stands in the way and prevents people

to perform a perfect and successful communication. They do not exactly prevent communication but they make it difficult by interfering with mutual understanding and accomplishing the goals of speakers.

There may be barriers in the sender (the one producing the message), in the receiver (the one to whom the message is addressed) and also in the message. They occur in the physical, social and cultural environment. If the barriers are not overcome, the breakdowns may appear – the conversation “breaks down”. The fact is that the conversation itself will not necessarily end, but these breakdowns may prevent the speakers from the successful and productive exchange of information. Therefore, breakdowns are result of communication barriers. “Barriers cannot prevent interaction; rather they distort the interaction, at least from the point of view of the sender” (King, 1979, p.19).

The term *breakdown* can be used as a description of two different malfunctions. Firstly, the breakdown can occur when the communication is not efficient, that means that the receiver did not understand the message in the same way the sender understood the message. The meanings of receiver were different from the meanings of the sender – the receiver got the message but he is unable to “decipher” it, although the sender tried to do as best as he could.

Secondly, the breakdown occurs when the communication is not effective. In this case, the receiver understands the message and the intentions of the sender, but he is not willing to listen or react to what was told. From the point of view of the sender, the communication was not successful because he did not get the desired response. However, from the point of view of the receiver, the communication was a success – the receiver is just unwilling to respond.

These two examples also show another important features of the language that need to be distinguished and noted – terms efficiency and effectiveness. Efficiency describes the ability of reaching the best results at a cost of minimum resources used while effectiveness simply means to be effective; to be fast, neat, clear and successful (King, 1979, p.20).

Barriers between men and women are usually caused by misunderstandings or wrong expressions from the side of the speaker. Other barriers are created by performing the conversation outside – noise is a huge problem when communicating. One of the most typical barriers observed in communication of men and women is *silence* – one of the speakers is shy or unable to follow the topic (mostly completely

different from favourite topics of the opposite sex). Another problem could be *body language* that can affect the whole communication into undesirable direction – gestures and poses can be the most effective barriers when (im)properly worked with (Pease & Pease, 2008, p.256).

### 4.3 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

There are a few tips how to avoid barriers in communication but before that, it is important to understand how these barriers are originated. Ludlow & Panton (1992, p. 9) claim, that in order to communicate well we need to know ourselves, our frames of reference and limitations. We also need to be able to assess other people. Only then can we hope to find the best ways in which to communicate effectively with others.

Ludlow & Panton (1992, p.9) also give some of the reasons why we do not assess other people well:

- “We assume that they are going to behave the same way in every situation – the communication then lacks enthusiasm and proves to be useless.
- We try too hard to put everyone into consistent categories – this stereotyping does not allow us to be objective during the conversation.
- We are too influenced by first impressions – the appearance of the person should not be an obstacle in the conversation.
- We are positively influenced where we have common characteristics with other people, i.e. same school, same functions, etc., ... - we are, unconsciously, more open when being in the conversation with the people of the same “level”.
- We are too influenced by apparent negative points, i.e. if someone is not very good at short-term decision making we might think that he will probably be not a very good long-term decision maker either.
- We make constant errors because of our own limited frames of reference and self-concepts – the modesty is the best recipe in achieving a success in a conversation.
- We are not sufficiently interested in, or pay enough attention to other people – common “mistake” in many conversations; we rather think about more

pleasant things than to listen to someone whose speech does not interest us”  
(Ludlow & Panton, 1992, p.9).

All these problems can cause considerable troubles in the process of communication that consist of sending, receiving, understanding (perceived meaning) and accepting (using feedback). These seven points above are also applicable to the conversation of men and women but they do not complete the list of pieces of advice for successful communication.

Possible ways to effective communication between both sexes are many. The points above show the main ones but, for example, eye contact cannot be forgotten as well as touch or mimics (Pease & Pease, 2008, p.267). Effective communication depends on the will of both communication partners and is not as much dependent on the content as on the mood and sympathy of speakers.

#### **4.4 BARRIERS TYPICAL FOR COMMUNICATION**

During the conversation, there are always some noises or other barriers every time the process is conducted. It can be compared with the tuning of the radio – only the right frequency allows us to perform undisturbed conversation. Ludlow & Panton (1992, p.10) present several factors that affect interpersonal communication and that are usually the cause of communication barriers:

- *Status effect* – this feature occurs when one person is considerably higher in the hierarchy than another, i.e. when the subordinate misunderstands the order of the superior.
- *Semantic problems* – these troubles occur when people use either the same word in different ways or different words in the same way. They also occur when people use jargon or professional jargon (which they expect others to understand) or language which is outside the other’s vocabulary.
- *Cultural differences* – they affect communication between people from different departments in the organization. They also occur between people who have experienced different social and religious environments; i.e., In England an invitation to dinner at 8 pm would see most guests arriving at about 8:15, in Germany would it mean at 8:00 exactly, in Greece 9 to 9:30, in India even later...

- *Perceptual distortions* – is usually caused by having a poor self-concept or self-understanding, or a poor understanding of others.
- *Physical distractions* – this could mean a lot of noise (car noises from outside the room, typewriting from a nearby office), poor lighting or even a frequent movement of body posture, fiddling with a pen in a hand, etc, ...
- *Poor choice of communication channels* – very important nowadays; if you want an immediate response from the receiver, you will probably use a mobile phone than an e-mail or voicemail box.
- *No feedback* – One-way communication is quicker, two-way communication is more accurate. It helps both the sender and the receiver measure their understanding and correct misunderstandings (Ludlow & Panton, 1992, p.10-12).

Typical communicational barrier for male speakers (except for the barrier linguistic) in the everyday life is the roughness he leads the conversation. It could be his biggest plus, it could be his biggest minus – he blocks the process of communication by creating such an unpleasant atmosphere. On the other hand, women (as being emphasized many times before) tend to be talkative and speak with no bigger problems – again, this could be their biggest minus for men are usually used to another type of conversation as mentioned above (Tannen, 1992, p.110).

Barriers in communication are therefore created (from the bigger part) by the speakers themselves and some tips how to avoid these troubles are mentioned further.

#### **4.5 DEALING WITH BARRIERS**

Obviously, communication barriers are one of the biggest problems of conversation. Everyone is affected by them and everyone is producing them. Still, there are a few things every participant of the conversation can do in order to make communication easier, without any breakdowns and misunderstandings.

One way of reducing the effects of the barriers is *being cautious* during the communication process and *being aware* of the ‘message’ of the conversation. Ludlow & Panton (1992, p.12) are describing the process of thinking of sender, receiver and what should they be both aware of.

The sender should always ask himself/herself ‘*To whom* should the message go?’ He/she has to realize to whom is he/she speaking to and, more importantly ‘*Why?*’ What are his/her motives and how should he/she choose the words during the communication. The sender must also know *what* he/she wants to communicate (that means, he/she has to be clear about the topic). He/she has to choose appropriate *time* for his/her reception and *language* that is understandable for the receiver. Last thing is to choose a *location* which will not interfere with the reception, understanding and acceptance of the message (home?, privately?, in a group?) (ibid).

The receiver has also a few options how to make the communication easier. He/she should be fully *attentive* to sender and *listen carefully* to the message that has been sent. If he/she does not understand the message, he/she should not be afraid to *ask for clarification or repetition* where necessary (ibid).

Finally, both the sender and receiver should realize that misunderstandings are bound to occur and therefore they should *be alert* at all time. Then they have to *listen* to each other carefully, *test* their understanding of the message and *share their opinions, feelings and perceptions* generated by the message (Ludlow & Panton, 1992, p.12-14).

Men and women in everyday life usually do not try to get rid of communicational barriers because they are not even aware of them. If so, the tips above should be typical examples of how to solve these problems and become better speakers and listeners. Women are said to be much better listeners (and even better speakers, because of their soft language and fluency) and they are more open to solutions that help to remove communicational barriers. Men on the other hand are said to not have that effort – they are either too proud or too self-confident to do something in the matter of barriers of communication. According to some authors, the ability to solve problems in communication is therefore dependent on the will of the speaker/listener and on the personality of the speaker/listener.

Obviously, the communication between two people is not as easy and uncomplicated as it may look. There are many features of the conversation which can decide whether the conversation will or will not be successful. The study of communication barriers should be taken as a serious one because what can be worse than misunderstandings between native speakers?

## **5 LANGUAGE AND PSYCHOLOGY**

Language is the major component in understanding the human behavior. Human language is complex and allows us to communicate at different levels. Therefore, one of the disciplines, connected to sociolinguistics, is psycholinguistics. It studies psychological processes involved in language. The brain of a woman is different from a brain of a man and vice versa. Psycholinguistics is therefore one of the main branches of linguistics that is able (working with biological data) to find out the biggest variations in the male and female speech.

The next chapters are trying to decipher the message of psycholinguistics and its features – they are briefly describing this ‘language science’ and the troubles it has to deal with. The last chapter shows the connection between the language and thoughts and how thoughts are affected by human language.

### **5.1 PSYCHOLINGUISTICS**

“Psycholinguists study understanding, producing and remembering language, and hence are concerned with listening, reading, speaking, writing and memory for language” (Harley, 2001, p.2-3). In other words, psycholinguistics is interested in the way we acquire language and in the way in which it interacts with other psychological systems.

One reason why we take language for granted is that it usually happens so effortlessly and, most of the time, so accurately – when you listen to someone speaking, you simply understand him/her. There are only special circumstances that make us realize the complexity of human language and the connection of language and brain: if we are searching for a word but cannot remember it; if we try to learn a second language as an adult; if we are visually impaired or hearing-impaired or we meet someone else who is; if one of our relatives had a stroke which affected their language... These are just a few examples of possible application of psycholinguistics.

Harley (2001, p.2) lists eight functions of language – the primary function of language is, of course, to communicate. We can also use it to express emotions (by swearing, for example), for social interaction (by saying “bless you!” when someone

sneezes), to make use of its sounds (various children games), to attempt to control the environment (magical spells), to record facts, to think with and to express identity (Harley, 2001, p.2).

According to Jesenská (2010, p.104), language is major component of understanding human behavior – different areas of study emphasize different aspects mentioned above. For example, the study of anatomy emphasizes the components of the articulatory tract (such as tongue or voicebox); neuropsychology deals with the roles of different parts of the brain in human behavior; linguistics examines the language itself. Finally, psycholinguistics simply examines the psychology of the language – it studies the psychological processes involved in language (Jesenská, 2010, p.104).

Psychologists believe that we store representations of words in a mental dictionary. Psycholinguists call this mental dictionary the *lexicon*. It should contain all the information that we know about a word, including its sounds, meanings or the written appearance. The lexicon must be huge; the reasonable estimate is that an adult knows about 70,000 words. Word recognition can be thought of as a rather like looking a word up in a dictionary – when we know what the word is, we then have all the information about it, such as what it means and how to spell it (Harley, 2001, p.6).

Psycholinguistics deals with problems that can be summarized in a few questions: when we see or hear a word, how do we access its representation within the lexicon? How do we know whether an item is stored there or not? What are the differences between understanding speech and understanding visually presented words? Psycholinguists are interested in the processes of lexical access and how things are represented (Harley, 2001, p.6).

The reason why psycholinguistics is mentioned is its contribution to the studies of speech of men and women. Harley (2001, p.63) claims that “girls appear to have greater verbal ability than boys, while boys appear to be better than girls at mathematical and spatial tasks. The sexes diverge noticeably in performance from about the age of 11.” He also claims that it is not only the biology that shapes the language of an individual but also the social context that is also very important (Harley, 2001, p.63).

It is therefore clear that biology goes hand to hand with society (in terms of language development) and such a connection cannot be omitted in this thesis. Of course, men and women are different biologically and this difference plays (together with sociological differences) major role in the study of their language.

## 5.2 CONTROVERSIES IN MODERN PSYCHOLINGUISTICS

Psycholinguistics has to deal with many problems nowadays. There are nine troublesome topics, mentioned by Harley (2001, p.18-20) that this branch is trying to solve and that deserve our attention. They are mentioned at least briefly in order to show the complexity of psycholinguistics:

- 1) Psycholinguistics is trying to discover the processes involved in producing and understanding language. These processes need to be discovered in order to complete understanding of the language (Harley, 2001, p.18-20).
- 2) The second problem is the question of whether apparently different language processes are related to each other (i.e., to what extent are the reading processes involved in processes of speaking and vice versa) (ibid).
- 3) The third question is whether or not processes in language operate independently of one another or whether they also interact. Another aspect of this theme is at what stage does context have an influence or when do different types of information have their effect (i.e., does the meaning of a sentence help in recognizing the sounds of a word or in making decisions about the sentence structure?) (ibid).
- 4) What is innate (or typical) for the language? Psycholinguistics tries to find out the answer (ibid).
- 5) Next question makes us think whether we need to refer to explicit rules when dealing with language processing (ibid).
- 6) Sixth problem mentioned by Harley is sensitivity of the results of experiments to the particular techniques employed. In other words, he asks whether we would get different results if we tried another ways to get them during those experiments. He emphasizes that the distinction between data and theory could be very big (ibid).
- 7) Seventh point deals with the concentration on people whose brain (or parts of their brain) is damaged – the language of these people can be very helpful for the (psycho)linguists because they will understand more the connection of language and brain processes (ibid).
- 8) The eight topic deals with cognitive processes. How is possible that some people are able to learn two, three or more languages without difficulties while others have problems with their own mother tongue? How do they translate between them? This is another topic psycholinguistics deals with (ibid).

- 9) The final point is probably the most important – the psycholinguistic research should be applied to everyday problems. Language is taken for granted in many cultures but there are still many occasions when problems occur: in rehabilitation patients with brain damage, in learning to read, in developing computer systems that can understand and produce language (ibid).

These nine points show only partially the huge scope of field of psycholinguistics. They are not discussed into details but they should still give the reader an overview of the complex connection of the language and brain processes. While “using brain” every day in a social contact, the need of psycholinguistics grows up and it has its top table together with sociolinguistics. The topics above show everyday problems of studying everyday language of men and women. The complex field of psycholinguistics is trying to focus on human brain and the variations in the speech of normal people (if the term ‘normal’ means a healthy, average human being); of course, its main purpose is to study deviations in human thinking (and thinking of men is, according to many scientists, definitely different from the thinking of women) and to describe/remove them. Psycholinguists simply use “observational and experimental data to construct theories” (Harley, 2001, p.4).

### **5.3 LANGUAGE AFFECTING THOUGHT**

Language and thought are usually looked at from one point only – from how thoughts affect language. But the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis mentioned above says exactly the opposite – the language affects thought. These words above do not need to be repeated, although some interesting facts, concerning this hypothesis, deserve attention.

The example of the word ‘snow’ (see chapter 1.3) shows one thing – it is unimaginable to learn certain things without learning the special vocabulary that has been developed for them. It does not definitely mean that expertise is gained only in this way. In many cases it is on the contrary – the expertise comes first and the specialized vocabulary comes later (Trudgill, 1974, p. 27).

The education of the children (their “developing” into adults) may be also shown as an example of gaining this expertise. The “highly specialized” language (that means

the language they hear every day from their parents and other adults) is a distillation of generations of human experience and this knowledge is effectively transmitted to children through this “adult jargon” (Clark & Clark, 1977, p.555). The process is cumulative – learning of new words allows children to get new information from different areas of knowledge and, on the contrary, these new areas enable them to learn new words; and the circle continues.

Language is important whenever people talk to themselves as they try to keep track of where they are in a problem or in a list of things to do. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis wants to show that language affects thoughts – because of the complicated language people speak and its variations, some concepts are difficult, sometimes impossible, to deal with. No convincing examples of these differences have shown up but language can be stretched and adapted to fit the needs of virtually any group of experts. What this suggests is that differences in the language reflect the culture and not vice versa.

According to many language scientists, language is a tool and every tool has its manual; language must be capable of expressing certain ideas – experiences, social relationships or technological facts. It must follow certain rules and it has to conform to people’s limitations – every one of us has only limited memory and different “brain processes” happen in our head every minute.

The reason psycholinguistics was mentioned in this thesis is the close connection of this linguistic science with society (sociolinguistics). It helps us, through language, to reconstruct pictures, solve problems or keep tracking of things in memory. Without these abilities the communication between humans would be impossible. The conversation between men and women follows certain rules and it is the brain that controls this conversation. As written above, the thoughts of women, when in the conversation, are different from the thoughts of men. Language is therefore affected by thought more than one could think and psycholinguistics, together with sociolinguistics, plays the key role in identifying these variations (Harley, 2001, p.63).

## 6 CONCLUSION

From the text above, it is clear that the conversational style of men and women differs in many ways. The speech of both sexes is influenced by biological and sociological aspects and these two factors help to evolve the language of every individual from the early age. That is what makes every human being unique – it is the (in)correct usage of language based on the knowledge of language, its usage within the context and the speaker's/listener's ability to get rid of barriers in communication. Women have other abilities than men in this field and this thesis tried to point out some of the most apparent ones.

First, there was a need to define the terms like 'language', 'society' or 'social class'. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis showed that language is affected by people and their relationships with other people. Every society has its own system of values and these values are defining the usage of the language. This is also connected with the usage of taboo words – women tend not to use them while men are 'courageous' enough to include them into their vocabulary, even if it should mean that they will embarrass themselves.

Both men and women usually tend to use certain phrases or words typical for their sex. Women are more emotional and use a great amount of adjectives, adverbs, intensifiers and euphemisms. Men, on the other hand, use harsh language, go straight to the point and talk about 'serious' things, like politics, economy, war or sports. Nowadays society has to solve the problem of sexist language that affects the ability of men and women to (mostly) work together. This phenomenon is also dependent on media and on the fact whether people talk about Western or Eastern society – even that women are having more power than centuries ago, men still want to show that they are the ones who rule the world.

The thesis also wanted to show some differences in the everyday language of doctors, lawyers or television reporters. It is very important to realize that the context of the language is crucial for understanding its proper usage. The thesis shows that language of men and women in their occupations is affected by their sex but the need of keeping their jobs is sometimes forcing them to use specific language corresponding to their professions.

Conversation between men and women (and, of course, between two people of the same sex) is sometimes full of inconveniences. Of course, the ability to solve communicational problems is depending on the will of the speaker or listener but women tend more to remove the barriers in communication by listening and trying to get rid of them. Men are too self-confident to do something with these problems.

Last chapter of the thesis is devoted to the topic of psycholinguistics which, together with sociolinguistics, analyzes the creation of language, this time from the view of biology. Psycholinguistics helps to solve problems, reconstructs pictures or keeps tracking things in memory. The thoughts of women in conversation are different from the thoughts of men and these variations (and not only they) are shaping the language nowadays.

The thesis tried to differentiate the language of men and women in everyday language by pointing out the most important features of their language. Both sexes speak different in different occupations and different situations (even under similar circumstances) and it is nearly important to record all these variations. On the other hand, these variations are making every single person unique and successful communication would not be possible without them.

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## RESUMÉ

Bakalářská práce je zaměřena na zjišťování rozdílů ve vyjadřování mužů a žen, a to jak v průběhu každodenního života, tak i během vykonávání určitých povolání. Na základě uvedené literatury byly identifikovány hlavní znaky definující vyjadřovací styl obou pohlaví a problémy související s každodenní konverzací, jako jsou sexismy, tabu nebo bariéry mezi mluvčími (stejně národnosti). Byly též předloženy návrhy či připomínky, jak se těchto nežádoucích projevů zbavit, případně je omezit.

## ANOTACE

<b>Jméno a příjmení:</b>	Jan Komárek
<b>Katedra nebo ústav:</b>	Katedra anglického jazyka
<b>Vedoucí práce:</b>	Mgr. Josef Nevažil, Ph.D.
<b>Rok obhajoby:</b>	2011

<b>Název práce:</b>	Mužský a ženský konverzační styl v každodenním životě
<b>Název v angličtině:</b>	Male and female conversational style in everyday life
<b>Anotace práce:</b>	Bakalářská práce se zabývá rozdílným vyjadřováním mužů a žen v průběhu jejich každodenního života, komunikačními bariérami, souvisejícími s jejich vyjadřovacími schopnostmi a rozdílností projevu mužů a žen v několika vybraných zaměstnáních. Za pomoci uvedených zdrojů byly identifikovány nejvýznamnější rysy v řeči obou těchto pohlaví. Následně bylo navrženo, jak se vypořádat s překážkami v komunikaci či s nadužíváním sexismů.
<b>Klíčová slova:</b>	Jazyk, pohlaví, konverzační styl, sexistický jazyk, jazyk v zaměstnání, komunikační bariéra, tabu, sociolinguvistika, psycholinguvistika
<b>Anotace v angličtině:</b>	The bachelor's thesis deals with the different usage of the language of men and women in their everyday life, communicational barriers related to their abilities to speak and with the differences in the speech of men and women in several chosen occupations. There were identified the most important features of the language of both sexes with the help of sources listed. Consequently, it was proposed how to deal with the obstructions in the communication or with the excessive usage of sexist language.
<b>Klíčová slova v angličtině:</b>	Language, gender, conversational style, sexist language, occupational language, communicational barrier, taboo, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics
<b>Přílohy vázané v práci:</b>	0 příloh
<b>Rozsah práce:</b>	46 s.
<b>Jazyk práce:</b>	AJ