

Sapiro, Chapter 10
Gender, Communication, and Self-Expression

- 1. Language is a construction that reflects the political views of its speakers - what Marx and Engels called “practical consciousness.”**
 - a. If we use it unconsciously, it will control our thinking.
 - b. We have words for what is important - no words mean something does not exist, is not important.
 - c. Language is affected by context.

- 2. Inequalities of address (fill in the boxes left out on pp. 326-7).**
 - a. Titles and Terms of address.
 - b. Gender tags applied only to women.
 - c. Residue of *femme couverte* of common law.
 - d. “Co-ed” encodes male violence towards female power - never used to describe male students; in 70s, quickly became pornographic shorthand for “nubile”; it’s now used only to describe a college-aged woman who is murdered or attacked.
 - e. “Girl” is a word with no cognate: men are either “boys,” “men,” or the age-neutral “guy.” “Gal,” the logical cognate, is not in general use. Much inappropriate use of “girl” for women over 18 - considered by some to be a compliment because age is so negative for women. But compare “boy” for African-American men, which is a derisory term.

- 3. Gender-neutral language.**
 - a. Gender can be modified; “men” to “people” or “human” as example.
 - b. Hearers still attribute gender to neutral words - engineer, president, selfish, etc.

- 4. Differences in male and female language in use.**
 - a. Vocabularies - subjects; swearing.
 - b. Self-deprecation.
 - c. Inflection.
 - d. Pitch and breathiness.
 - e. Right-of-way and interruption.

- 5. Body language**
 - a. Women tend to condense into space, while men expand (example: airport waiting-lounge body language).
 - b. Women’s “bubble” of protected space is more elastic and invadable than men’s.
 - c. Women may telegraph fragility or helplessness through body language of impersonating attractive “feminine” affect, whereas attractive “masculine” affect tends to be “stay away from me” or “give me my space.”
 - d. Hand gestures, playing with hair and clothing, and other typically “feminine” body language seen as subordinating.