

Images

Chapter 3



Photo courtesy of Ryan McVay/Getty Images.



Gender Biases in Language

- 1970's research conducted to uncover linguistic sexism.
- Early research found that language patterns:
 - Often trivialized women.
 - Sexualized and devalue women.
 - English Language puts women into second class status.



Gender Biases in Language

- Infantilizes women: girls used to refer to women.
- Makes women invisible: (masculine generic).
- Marked women as possession or property of men: Mrs.



Gender Biases in Language

□ *Linguistic sexism*—
inequitable treatment of
women and gender issues
that is built into the
language.



Gender Biases in Language

Masculine generic

- The use of masculine nouns and pronouns to refer to all human beings.
- Research have shown that masculine generic terms are not gender neutral.



Gender Biases in Language

- Henley, 1989 Crawford 2001; Ivy et al., 1995; Romaine, 1999; Switzer, 1990 (over 40 studies)

Found that terms like man and he produce thoughts about men and not people in general.



Gender Biases in Language

Masculine Generic

- Mankind**
- He**
- His**
- Forefathers**
- Founding fathers**
- Man-made**
- Manpower**
- Salesman**
- Workmanship**



Gender Biases in Language

Men

Lord

Sir

King

Master

Women

Lady

Madam

Queen

Mistress



Gender Biases in Language

- *People=male bias*—assumption that a male is the subject
- *Animal=male bias*—bias toward using masculine pronouns and believing animals are male.



Language & Out-groups

- Dominate groups often use derogatory terms to describe out-group members.

- Terms focus on physical and social differences between in-group and out-group members.
 - Example: many terms for women describe them by appearance or body parts.



Language & Out-groups

Slang

- Refers to women as animals, food, and aspects of nature.
- Slang referring to women tends to have more sexual meaning than slang referring to men.



LANGUAGE & VIOLENCE

- According to feminist theorists, people overuse the passive voice when talking or writing about rape and other violence against women.
- The tendency to focus on the victims rather than the perpetrators in violence against women is widespread.



LANGUAGE & VIOLENCE

- Terms like *domestic violence*, *spousal abuse* and *abusive relationships* may function to hide the fact that most serious violence in relationships is committed by men against women.



LANGUAGE & VIOLENCE

- Nancy Henely et al found that reporters in reporting violence against women used passive voice for rape & murder.

Does it matter?



LANGUAGE & VIOLENCE

- When news reports were identical except for use of active or passive verb participants in study believed:
 - Both male and female thought violence against women was more acceptable.
 - Males but not females thought the victim had suffered less harm & perpetrator was less responsible.



LANGUAGE & VIOLENCE

1. In The U.S., a man rapes a woman every 6 minutes.
2. In the U.S., a woman is raped by a man every 6 minutes.
3. In the U.S., a woman is raped every 6 minutes.



LANGUAGE & VIOLENCE

□ Tendency is to focus on victims of violence rather than on the perpetrators.

■ Why do women stay?

■ Taking the emphasis away from perpetrator's acts make it harder to perceive him as responsible for his behavior.



MEDIA IMAGES

- Women are underrepresented in the mass media.
- Women are underrepresented in prime-time network commercials for all products except health and beauty items (Ganahl, Prinsen & Netzley, 2003).
- Women and girls are underrepresented in comics.



MEDIA IMAGES

Similar patterns of under representation have been shown in cultures such as:

- Kenya
- Portugal
- Japan

where the ratio of males to females on TV is 2:1

MEDIA IMAGES

- In movie roles, men are likely to be portrayed as aggressive and dominant, women as passive and relatively powerless (Haskell, 1997).



Photo courtesy of Digital Vision.



MEDIA IMAGES

- In popular comic strips, female characters are less active than male characters (Brabant & Mooney, 1986, 1997).
- In male-oriented magazines, men are more likely to be shown in occupational roles and rarely as fathers or husbands (Vigorito & Curry, 1998)



MEDIA IMAGES

- Although most women are employed they are seldom shown working outside the home.
- Women are shown doing housework (accurate).



Voices of Authority

- Women are relatively inaudible as experts.
- News media focuses on the actions, opinions, and expertise of men rather than women.
- Women are judged more by their appearance than their performance.

FACE-ISM & SEXUALIZATION

- *Face-ism*—measured by comparing the size of the body and head and expressing it as a proportion (Archer, Iritani, Kimes & Barrios, 1983).
 - The facial prominence in published images is usually higher for men.



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FACE-ISM & SEXUALIZATION

- Study of 1,700 photos from magazines and newspapers showed the average for men was .65 and for women only .45
- Face-ism favoring men even occurred in women's magazine.



FACE-ISM & SEXUALIZATION

- Zuckerman & Kieffer 1994 found fascism index favored European American over African American people.
- Black women had the lowest face-ism index of all.



DIVERSITY & MEDIA

- Images of African American women are biased in racist as well as sexist ways (West, 2004).
 - Mammy—happy slave whose huge breasts and perpetual smile symbolize her as a nurturer, while her dark complexion, bandana-covered hair, broad features and fat body mark her as asexual



DIVERSITY & MEDIA

- Jezebel—black woman portrayed as immoral, seductive, promiscuous
- Matriarch—domineering, aggressive, strong, unfeminine; often portrayed as a hostile, tongue-lashing nag that drives men away and bullies everyone else

INVISIBLE WOMEN



Photo courtesy of Michelle R. Kaufman.

- Many women are left out of media representations:
 - Older women
 - Bigger women
 - Poor women
 - Athletic women
 - Women as experts or voices of authority



LANGUAGE, IMAGERY & STEREOTYPES ABOUT MEN & WOMEN

- *Stereotypes*—widely held beliefs about members of a social group
- *Schema*—network of associations around a group, or mental network that guides people as they experience the world around them
- *Gender stereotypes*—networks or schemas of related beliefs that reflect the “common wisdom” about women and men



LANGUAGE, IMAGERY & STEREOTYPES ABOUT MEN & WOMEN

- Most people believe men and women are different in:
 - Physical characteristics
 - Personality
 - Behavior
 - Occupations



LANGUAGE, IMAGERY & STEREOTYPES ABOUT MEN & WOMEN

- Physical appearance is the 1st perception
 - It is conveyed within one-tenth of a second.

- Physical appearance guides our expectations about women and men.

THE CONTENT OF GENDER STEREOTYPES

- Physical stereotypes:
 - Women—dainty, soft, graceful
 - Men—tall, strong, sturdy

THE CONTENT OF GENDER STEREOTYPES

- Sexuality stereotypes:
 - Women who are particularly strong in physical skills or personality traits tend to be stereotyped as lesbians.



Photo courtesy of Photodisc.

THE CONTENT OF GENDER STEREOTYPES

- Men who are more effeminate and enjoy “girly” pursuits such as fashion and decorating are stereotyped as gay.

THE CONTENT OF GENDER STEREOTYPES

- Personality traits:
 - Women—*affective* and *communal*—concerned with feelings and other people
 - Men—*instrumental* and *agentic*—active agent and effective “doer”

 - These beliefs are shared across cultures.

THE CONTENT OF GENDER STEREOTYPES

- Role stereotypes:
 - Women—housewife/mother, sexy woman, athletic woman, career-oriented woman
 - Men—blue-collar worker, athletic man, macho, businessman



ARE STEREOTYPES ACCURATE?

- Stereotypic judgments are a result of multilevel automatic cognitive processing: sampling, encoding, and retrieval.



ARE STEREOTYPES ACCURATE?

- *Sampling bias*—in forming a belief about a person, thinking about those one has previously encountered—a non-random sample
- *Selective encoding*—entering into memory stereotype-congruent rather than stereotype-incongruent examples
- *Selective retrieval*—remembering stereotype-congruent rather than stereotype-incongruent examples

THE IMPACT OF STEREOTYPES



Photo courtesy of Vicky Kasala/Getty Images.

- *Stereotype threat*—when people know there is a negative stereotype about their group’s abilities, the pressure caused by their fear of confirming the stereotype can interfere with performance



THE IMPACT OF STEREOTYPES

- Stereotype threat: the fear of confirming a negative stereotype impacts performance negatively.

- Stereotypes may act as self-fulfilling prophecies.

THE IMPACT OF STEREOTYPES

- Stereotypes can prime sexist behavior, such as sexual harassment or sex discrimination.
- Stereotypes are relatively static—people tend to maintain stereotypical beliefs even when they are challenged by new or incongruent information (von Hippel et al., 1995).




Stereotypes, Status, and Power

- People with more power tend to engage in stereotyping of people with less power.
- Dominants use stereotypes more often than less powerful subordinates.
- Subordinates pay attention to individual information more than more powerful dominants.




Stereotypes, Status, and Power

- We pay attention to information consistent with the stereotype and ignore information that is incongruent with the stereotype.
- Stereotypes about lesbians and gay men are even more resistant to change than gender because sexuality is not visible.



THE PROBLEM OF PORNOGRAPHY

- Several scholars suggest that *pornography* should be defined as material that combines sexual themes with violence, dehumanization, degradation or abuse, whereas material that is merely sexually arousing without these other themes should be called *erotica*.



THE PROBLEM OF PORNOGRAPHY

- The production of pornography is a \$10 billion business, making it bigger than the NFL, NBA, and MLB combined.

THE PROBLEM OF PORNOGRAPHY

- Female stereotypes in pornography: naughty housewives, sexy secretaries, barely legal teens
- Racist subtypes are present in pornography such as Black women as animals, Asian women as torture victims.

THE PROBLEM OF PORNOGRAPHY

- Playboy and Deep Throat legitimized “adult” entertainment in the U.S.
- Pornography had been mainstreamed into U.S. culture

PORNOGRAPHY & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Many of the blatantly violent pornographic images of women are actually documentation of sexual violence or humiliation—some women in these films report having been coerced.
- Experimental research has found that viewing pornography has at least temporary effects on men's negative attitudes and behaviors toward women.

PORNOGRAPHY & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- When pornography is used for masturbation, men may be conditioning their bodies to use violence against women as a stimulus for pleasure.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

- Transforming Language
 - *Feminist language reform*: efforts to eliminate gender bias in the structure, content and usage of language, and to provide nonsexist alternatives.
- Alternative Images
 - Reversing stereotypes (e.g., *Xena: The Warrior Princess*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*)
 - Inclusion of feminist messages in popular music