

# Transcultural Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences

Print ISSN 4239-2636 Online ISSN 4247-2636

## Proceedings

of

The 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference: Future  
Contexts: Interdisciplinary Perspectives  
in Literature, Language & Translation  
15 & 16 October 2022

# TJHSS

BUC Press House



**Volume 4 Issue (1)**

**January 2023**

Volume (4)

Issue (1)

January 2023

**Proceedings of**  
The 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference: Future  
Contexts: Interdisciplinary Perspectives in  
Literature, Language & Translation 15 & 16  
October 2022



**Transcultural Journal for Humanities and Social Sciences (TJHSS)** is a journal committed to disseminate a new range of interdisciplinary and transcultural topics in Humanities and social sciences. It is an open access, peer reviewed and refereed journal, published by Badr University in Cairo, BUC, to provide original and updated knowledge platform of international scholars interested in multi-inter disciplinary researches in all languages and from the widest range of world cultures. It's an online academic journal that offers print on demand services.

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| ▣ <b>Print ISSN</b>  | <b>2636-4239</b> |
| ▣ <b>Online ISSN</b> | <b>2636-4247</b> |

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University of Hildesheim/  
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Email: [montanar@uni-hildesheim.de](mailto:montanar@uni-hildesheim.de),  
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Email: [freufin@uni-trier.de](mailto:freufin@uni-trier.de)

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-----  
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Universidad Complutense de  
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Email:  
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## Further Evidence for Revisiting the Notion of ‘Genderlect’ in the Discourse of Margaret Thatcher, Giorgia Meloni, and Liz Truss

**Mohamed Said Negm**

English Language Department  
Faculty of Arts  
Tanta University, Egypt

**Email:** mohamed.negm1@art.tanta.edu.eg

**Hala Tharwat El-Gendy**

English Language Department  
Faculty of Arts  
Tanta University, Egypt

**Email:** hala.elgndy@art.tanta.edu.eg

**1. Abstract:** It has been traditionally argued that differences between male and female language usage in interactional communication provide illuminating clues about how men and women are positioned socially. This paper supplements Negm's (1998) research paper entitled “The Notion of Genderlect Revisited”, by broadening the spectrum of male and female interaction to include non-literary discourse. The present study dismantles the notion that male/female varieties of language should be viewed in terms of bifurcation. It reconsiders and challenges the ways in which language form and function can reflect gender diversity, applying the theoretical perspectives of feminist linguists notably those of Robin Lakoff (1975), Dale Spender (1980), and Deborah Tannen (1990). Feminist linguistics examines how sexism manifests itself in discourse and analyses whether gender-based linguistic or verbal style can be distinguished. The discourse samples to be investigated in the present study are selected excerpts of Margaret Thatcher's, Giorgia Meloni's, and Liz Truss's speeches and interviews. Their discourse reveals how consistently their political/social identity, and their gender-related identity are reflected in their discourse. They have been displaying qualities typically associated with men: dominance, control, determination, and confidence. Their voice has become their vital key for maintaining their identity in the male-dominated political world. It is firm, rigid, emphatic, and assertive. The paper then proceeds to discuss the implications of the analysis for stylistics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and TEFL.

**Keywords:** Genderlect, Feminist Linguistics, Linguistic Sexism, Identity, Ideology

### 2. Introduction

Early feminist discussions used the terms ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ frequently contrasted with ‘sex’ referring to biological distinctions and ‘gender’ to social constructs. The sex/gender differentiation was asserted in order to claim that the biological difference had been exaggerated in order to uphold a patriarchal system of social power and to convince women that they were inherently more suitable for stereotyped domestic roles. It is believed that this patriarchal ideology pushes both men and women to behave or even speak in a specific way and to have certain expectations, which they then put into practice in their daily lives (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2016, p. 56). Kate Millett (2000, p. 46) identifies this ideological standpoint as she states that both genders are socialized to fundamentally patriarchal systems in terms of “temperament,” “role,” and “status”. As for status, a pervasive assent to the prejudice of male superiority guarantees superior status in the male, inferior in the female. Temperament is the process by which a person's personality is formed along gender stereotypes, according to the needs and ideals of the dominant group: violence, intellectual ability, power, and efficacy in the male, and complacency, ignorance, docility, and ineffectiveness in the female. Sex role complements this by prescribing a consonant, extremely detailed code of behavior for each sex.

Language can reflect gender differences in social position and the culturally diverse norms attached to men and women. In the study of gender and language, male-female linguistic disparities have been explained in one of three ways: as proof of women's lack of power and inferior position to males (The Deficit Approach); as an illustration of masculine linguistic domination and control (The Dominance Approach); or alternatively, as an illustration of how men and women communicate differently but just as equally (The Difference Approach).

The notion of 'genderlect' has been initiated as a result of the growing awareness of the significant relationship between gender and language in the domains of sociolinguistics and stylistics. Tannen would be the first to relate male and female conversational styles and speech patterns to "cross-cultural communication" (1990, p. 49). Instead of dialects, Tannen claims that women and men speak various "genderlects." The study of 'genderlect' focuses on the diversity of speech as a way of varying gender-related communication. Joan Swan (2004, p. 122) defines 'Genderlect' as "a constellation of linguistic features associated either with female or male speakers." Similarly, according to Griffin (2019, p. 385) 'Genderlect' implies that male and female conversation patterns are better understood as two different cultural dialects.

"The Notion of Genderlect Revisited", a research article by Negm from (1998), is consolidated and supplemented by this paper. Negm's (1998) paper questions the idea of binary thinking in terms of language and gender. In the framework of Hewitt's (1997) approach, it re-examines and refutes the assertion that women's discourse is fundamentally distinct from that of males. Hewitt cites numerous characteristics of competitive style, style that is regarded as being characteristic of men, including interruptions, silence, emphatics, and monopolizing the floor. According to Negm (1998), many techniques and/or tactics of communication utilized by males may likewise be adopted by women. Following the theories of Tannen and Lakoff (1996), who contend that "the writer's realization of his/her characters represents a reality that has direct correlates, if not necessarily direct ones, in more naturalistic texts," Negm (1998) confirms the claim that women may acquire many of the communication strategies and methods used by men. In *The secret Agent* by Joseph Conrad, Mrs. Verloc interrupts her husband, silences him and monopolizes the floor. Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* reveals Nora to be a rebel who questions her husband's morals. She thus asks him to refrain from interrupting her and speaks firmly and forcefully. Likewise, Tennessee Williams's Amanda in *The Glass Menagerie* reveals herself as a mom who orders her son nonstop until he protests. In addition, she forces him to adopt the position of a simple listener.

By expanding the range of interactions between men and women to include non-literary discourse, the current study refutes the claim that male and female linguistic variants should be construed as being bifurcated. Applying the theoretical stances of feminist linguists, particularly those of Robin Lakoff (1975), Dale Spender (1980), and Deborah Tannen (1990), this paper reconsiders and questions the ways in which language form and function might represent gender difference. Firstly, male and female language use and speech patterns exhibit explicit distinctions, according to Lakoff (1975), who summarized these differences as follows: Compared to men, women use more hedges, tag questions, rising intonation, overly polite or proper linguistic forms, and excessively correct grammatical structures. Secondly, Spender (1980) contends that women facilitate natural conversation. Contrarily, men typically do so by interrupting and taking control. Thirdly, Tannen (1990) claims that since men and women concentrate on various facets of communication, they eventually have conflicting 'genderlect' on the same speech contexts. This genderlect style of cross-cultural communication occurs when men and women converse. Therefore, it is preferable to see masculine and feminine discourse as

two unique cultural languages rather than as inferior or superior forms of expression. In this respect, women's rapport speech promotes human connection whereas men's report talk emphasizes status and independence.

Selected excerpts of Margaret Thatcher's, Giorgia Meloni's, and Liz Truss's speeches and interviews will be used as the discourse samples under investigation. Initially, regarding Thatcher, the "Iron Lady of the Western World" (Jan. 31, 1976), she stood in her "chiffon gown," with her "face softly made up," and her "fair hair gently waved," while demonstrating characteristics traditionally associated with the male world: status, authority, persistence, power, and self-assurance. Young (1993, p. 170–1) comments that the fact that she was a woman and entirely inexperienced in the male-dominated realm of high diplomacy was still perceived as posing a threat, but her label, 'The Iron Lady' eliminated it. As nobody who was not portrayed as being made of iron could be too remarkably feminine (As quoted in Charteris-Black, 2011, p. 166). These two words succinctly describe one of her success factors in overcoming the challenge of being a woman in a position of authority. As for Meloni, given that she is a right-wing woman, her political discourse, though, incorporates more of the conventionally vigorous and male identity, which is focused on projecting competitiveness. After Margaret Thatcher and Theresa May, Liz Truss became the third female leader in British history to shatter the gender barriers, however she did so by moving the curve on women's leadership in a political arena with a male preponderance one inch farther. Truss stood up for autonomy, self-reliance, and rights advocacy. For Thatcher, Meloni, and Truss to keep their political persona in the mostly male-dominated political sphere, their voice has become firm, emphatic, and confident. They emphasize the contrast between their own very assertive male position and the ideals that are traditionally expected of women. Their speech style is propelled by this gender disparity, which helps to shape their unique political persona.

### 3. Research Questions

This study aims to disprove the notion that male and female linguistic varieties should be seen as different from one another. To achieve this objective, the following research questions are addressed:

- 1- What "genderlect" variables can be found in the selected speeches of Margaret Thatcher, Liz Truss, and Giorgia Meloni?
- 2- According to the "Difference Theory," are the features of their discourse typical of a man or a woman?
- 3- How is the speech style of Thatcher, Truss, and Meloni consistent with their sexual and social/political identities?
- 4- Are there strict boundaries between male and female discourse?

### 4. Research Methodology

This study refutes the assumption that male and female linguistic varieties should be regarded as dichotomous by using feminist linguists' theoretical views, notably those of Lakoff (1975), Spender (1980), and Tannen (1990). Initially, the interplay between language and gender gained interest with Lakoff's publication of *Language and Woman's Place* in 1975. According to Lakoff's "Deficit" perspective, the language differences between men and women serve as evidence of women's lower standing and lack of authority in comparison to males. Moreover, Dale Spender's *Man Made Language* (1980) is often used as an illustration of the "Dominance" perspective. The dominance theory shows how language disparities between men and women are a result of masculine superiority. Furthermore, *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* by Deborah Tannen (1990) is thought to contribute to the "Difference"

perspective. Tannen is concerned with the differences between men's and women's conversational styles. She claims that neither men's dominance nor women's submissiveness can account for these differences. Women and men have distinct but absolutely equal "genderlects."

The discourse samples under analysis include selected excerpts of speeches and interviews by Margaret Thatcher, Giorgia Meloni, and Liz Truss. One important work, *The Collected Speeches of Margaret Thatcher*, edited by Robin Harris in 1997, is used as the basis for the analysis of Thatcher's discourse. Regarding Meloni's discourse, the study is based on two translated speeches that are accessible online, notably those she delivered in 2020 at the Chamber of Deputies and in 2022 at the National Conservatism Conference. As for Liz Truss, the study recognizes three of her significant speeches as instances of her discourse, including the speech at the Centre for Policy Studies in 2020, her first Downing Street address as prime minister in 2022, and the speech at the Conservative Party Conference in 2022.

Margaret Thatcher, Giorgia Meloni, and Liz Truss exhibit traits normally associated with men: status, authority, perseverance, power, and self-assurance. They underline the contrast between the forceful masculine stance and the conventional female norms. This gender discrepancy influences their talking style, which contributes to building their distinct political character.

## 5. Theoretical Framework

The 'Difference Approach' is frequently associated with Tannen's writings, specifically her (1990) book *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. Tannen is concerned with the disparities in conversational style between men and women. She contends that men and women speak in distinct ways. Nevertheless, according to Tannen, these discrepancies cannot be explained by women's submissiveness (Lakoff, 1975) or men's dominance (Spender, 1980). One explanation is the fact that women and men "have different, but equally valid styles" (Tannen, 1990, p. 17). Tannen (1990, p. 49) compares the speech of men and women to a "cross-cultural communication" which is vulnerable to a conflict of conversational styles and techniques. That is, they supposedly speak several 'genderlects' rather than dialects.

This viewpoint holds that until men and women acknowledge their profoundly rooted social and sexual differences, they are destined to misunderstand one another (Crawford, 1995, p. 1). Men and women concentrate on various facets of communication. Tannen asserts that women attempt to forge connections and solidarity while males use discourse to build hierarchy and authority (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p. 326). For men, conversation is a "contest, a struggle to preserve independence." However, for women, "conversations are negotiations for closeness ... a struggle to preserve intimacy" (Tannen, 1990, p. 25). Tannen categorizes these conversational differences as follows:

Women frequently emphasize intimacy or connection, seeking toward consensus, and refraining from showing superiority. Men, on the other hand, emphasize independence because it is important in a society where status is valued (Tannen, 1990, p. 27). Symmetry is the key component of female connection. Asymmetry is a key component of male status: People are not all the same and are positioned differently in a hierarchy (Tannen, 1990, p. 30). Additionally, women view their position as symmetrically being one of empathy and understanding, whilst males view it as asymmetrically being one of problem-solver and advisor (Speer, 2004, p. 31).

The terms "rapport-talk" and "report-talk" can also be used to describe gendered-linguistic variations. The language of talk is essentially a language of rapport for the majority of women, serving as a means of creating connections and negotiating relationships. Thus,



displaying common interests and matching experiences is given preference. However, for the majority of males, talking is essentially a strategy for maintaining their sense of autonomy, power, and status. This is accomplished through demonstrating one's expertise and by commanding attention through verbal performances like jokes, storytelling, displaying knowledge, or providing detailed reports (Tannen, 1990, p. 91). As confirmed by Lakoff, women's language "submerges a woman's personal identity" by limiting her ability to speak out firmly and by promoting claims that imply triviality and uncertainty regarding the subject-matter she is discussing (Lakoff, 2004, p. 42). In turn, these special speech patterns and interactional practices associated with women are used as justifications for maintaining women in a derogatory position and for failing to treat them as fully human beings (Lakoff, 1973, p. 47). To put it another way, the overall outcome of these inequities is that women are orderly kept away from the positions of power and authority on the grounds that, as evidenced by their linguistic and social behavior, they are incapable of holding such positions (Lakoff, 2004, p. 42).

Women are more likely than males to talk at a lower volume and higher pitch, speak for shorter periods of time, and structure their views as questions. On the other hand, speaking more firmly, for a longer period of time, and louder could fit the macho image better (Tannen, 1990, p. 303-304). Similarly, according to Lakoff (2004, p. 49), more rising intonation is used in sentences by women than by men, functioning as requests for assurance, acceptance, permission, affirmation, and confirmation from others. Coates (1986) claims that the lower pitch levels that are characteristic of some women in politics —Margaret Thatcher being the classic example— contribute to the social acceptability associated with a man's voice. Such women, according to Coates, behave in a way that assimilates to the norms of males, which is a tactic they may be employing to boost their status (Weatherall, 2005, p. 52). Similarly, Wardhaugh (2006, p. 318) indicates that it was said about Margaret Thatcher that her voice was inappropriate for her position as British Prime Minister because it was too shrill. She was instructed to talk more slowly, with a lower voice pitch, a smaller speaking range, and an authoritative, somewhat monotonic manner in order to be taken seriously.

Males are skilled at trying to divert the conversation, match, or derail discussions. But that kind of reaction is unusual for women. They are forced to pay close attention, waiting for their turn. They do "not interrupt with challenges, sidetracks, or matching information" (Tannen, 1990, p. 183). Over and above, one of the primary instances of male authority, according to Spender (1980, p. 87), is the masculine linguistic pejorative, which is used to control language and so suppress women's meanings and reinforce their muted and submissive nature. Women are not given a fair hearing when they communicate in a manner that does not appeal to men. They "are "queried", they are interrupted, their opinions are discounted, and their contributions devalued." Spender (1980, p. 44) elaborates that men may exert power and control over women through interruption. In fact, she justifies this stereotype by claiming that silence is the preferred state for women in patriarchal societies.

Tannen (1990, p. 304) acknowledges that speaking in ways that are traditionally associated with masculinity is a sign of leadership and power. A man's actions that increase his authority also increase his sense of masculinity. However, a woman runs the danger of undermining her femininity in the eyes of others if she adjusts her style to a position of power. This tension between femininity and power is never more important than when women are in political leadership positions. Often, women must decide whether to project the image of a strong leader or a decent lady. A man's value is increased if he projects the qualities of force, rationality, directness, mastery, and power. But nevertheless, a woman is at risk of diminishing her

femininity if she comes out as assertive, rational, direct, authoritative, or powerful (Tannen, 1990, p. 307). Margaret Thatcher is an example of a woman who was told to talk more masculinely in order to fill a role that had previously solely been held by males (Wardhaugh, 2006, p. 318).

For women, obtaining power or authority is difficult, and once they do, their path is paved with thorns. Women in positions of power, Tannen (1990, p. 311) explains, experience “a double bind”. This is attributable to the fact that they are perceived as ineffective leaders if they communicate in manners that are typical of women, and they are perceived as insufficient women if they communicate in ways that are typical of leaders. To put it another way, women are supposed to just talk like they always have, but this frequently fails. One obvious step would be for them to adopt a more masculine speech pattern. This doesn't work either because women who talk like men are viewed negatively:

Apart from the repugnance of women's having to do all the changing, this doesn't work either, because women who talk like men are judged differently—and harshly (Tannen, 1990, p. 21).

That is due -in part- to the fact that when women tend to achieve their independence instead of intimacy or interdependence, they defy the expected and stereotyped gender roles. In this respect, Wardhaugh, (2006, p. 318) comments that Margaret Thatcher was so effective that her new speaking manner ended up becoming something of a trademark, appreciated by her supporters and despised by her opponents.

Tannen comes to the conclusion that a huge step toward bridging the communication gap between men and women is to break free from the confines of “a monolithic conversational style” (1990, p. 21) which may be accomplished through having a grasp of each other's conversational styles and the proper communicative alternatives.

## **6. Data Analysis**

Margaret Thatcher understands that effective communication and systematic linguistic choice could become essential to persuading a large enough portion of society of her new powerful and ambitious agenda to transform “Britain from a dependent to a self-reliant society” (1984). As she states:

As the old politicians learnt to use oratory so we must use the instruments now at our disposal. Perhaps a different style, a different technique, but once mastered it is one which enables us to bring the message into every home in a more intimate way than ever before. We must become adept at all of these techniques of communication (Thatcher, 1975, as quoted in Crines & Heppell & Dorey, 2016, p. 201).

Women use more color terminology than men do, and they can distinguish between various hues and shades of the same color with greater accuracy. This shows that women tend to talk about things that are mostly superficial, unimportant, and related to their personal interest, rather than crucial or worldly issues associated with masculinity (Lakoff, 2004, p. 43). Thatcher, on the other hand, perfectly embodies her epithet, “The Iron Lady,” as she uses feminine jargons like “red,” “chiffon,” “gown,” “makeup,” “soft,” “fair,” and “hair,” while speaking about ideals, freedom, and policy, which are often associated with men rather than women. As she states:

I stand before you tonight in my Red Star chiffon evening gown my face softly made up and my fair hair gently waved, the Iron Lady of the Western World, a cold war warrior, an amazon philistine, even a Peking plotter. Well, am I any of these things? Well yes... Yes, I am an iron lady...if that's how they wish to interpret my defence of values and

freedoms fundamental to our way of life... They can call me what they like (Thatcher, 1976, quoted in Crines & Heppell & Dorey, 2016, P. 87 ).

Men are adept at trying to change the subject, match, or derail conversations. But for women, that type of response is atypical. As they wait for their turn, they are compelled to pay close attention. They don't interject with questions, diversions, or matching details (Tannen, 1990). On the contrary, Margaret Thatcher regularly interrupts her interviewers, for example:

- Douglas Keay, *Woman's Own*: So, they do not hold back ...  
Margaret Thatcher: So that they do not hold back the others, but also to try to get them up to standard, but because of this experience, I really began to think that it is our job as Government to see to it that these children do get that basic education (1987).
- Michael Jones, *Sunday Times*: But you are requiring of a ...  
Margaret Thatcher: But you cannot if you are a leader, you cannot run away from the difficult decisions (1990).

Another area where disparities are observed in the speech of men and women is the usage of particles that grammarians usually refer to as "meaningless," such as "Oh dear" and "Goodness" (Lakoff, 2004, p. 44). Additionally, contrary to men, women employ more "hedges" or "fillers" such as "I think", "well", "you know" or "kind of", refraining from making declarative or assertive statements (Lakoff, 2004, p.79). Thatcher as well as Meloni and Truss use these particles and hedges to convey, power, authority, certainty, and conviction; they are not void ones as in:

- Oh yes, we have been to the IMF. But unlike the last Government, we went not as a nation seeking help but as a country giving help to others - a much more fitting role for Britain. (Thatcher, 1982, quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 202).
- Well, we in the Conservative Party believe that Britain is still great (Thatcher, 1976, quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 47).
- I think you know I am not a Marxist! So, I do not think that economics determine everything (Thatcher, 1991, quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 482).
- I think we have to focus above all on the world of high finance and the great economic powers that are imposing their will on the nation-states (Meloni, 2020).
- I know that we have what it takes to tackle those challenges. Of course, it won't be easy. But we can do it. We will transform Britain into an aspiration nation (Truss, 2022).

Women tend to use empty adjectives like "divine" and "charming," which lack any sense of power and control in contrast to masculine adjectives like "great" or "terrific" (Lakoff, 2004, p. 45). Thatcher and Truss use traditional male adjectives like "terrific," "great," "destructive," and "dangerous." Thatcher (1978) states that "Envy is dangerous, destructive, divisive - and revealing." Moreover, to show her gratitude, she says: "And may I say thank you ... for getting our Conference off to a flying start with such a terrific speech" (1989). She also frequently uses the word "great." In different instances, she announces that:

- We are fighting as we have always fought - for great and good causes (Thatcher, 1975, quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 21).
- These are the two great challenges of our time - the moral and political challenge and the economic challenge. They have to be faced together and we have to master them both (Thatcher, 1975, quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 33).

- With achievements like that, who can doubt that Britain can have a great future (Thatcher, 1975, quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 34).

In her first Downing Street Address as a prime minister, Truss declares that “what makes the United Kingdom great is our fundamental belief in freedom, in enterprise, and in fair play.” She also expresses her authority with adjectives such as “determined,” “firm,” and “strong,” saying that “I am determined to get Britain moving, to get us through the tempest and put us on a stronger footing as a nation” and “I am driven in this mission by my firm belief in the British people” (Truss, 2022).

Compared to men, women use more "tag questions." A tag is less assertive than an outright statement in both usage and syntactic structure. Therefore, a tag question denotes uncertainty (Lakoff, 2004, p. 48). Thatcher, Meloni, and Truss, however, raise the following forceful and relentless questions:

- Do British workers have no deep feelings for freedom, for order, for the education of their children, for the right to work without disruption by political militants? (Thatcher, 1975, quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 19).
- What are our chances of success? It depends on what kind of people we are. What kind of people are we? We are the people that in the past made Great Britain the workshop of the world, the people who persuaded others to buy British, not by begging them to do so but because it was best (Thatcher, 1975, quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 33).
- What is the purpose of continuing this war? ... If it is to win power, then those who wish to do so must be prepared to proceed democratically through the ballot box and not through the bullet (Thatcher, 1979, quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 104).
- We now stand before the new challenges: how to revive the economy, how to enlarge our liberties, how to restore the balance between trade unions and the community, how to further our European partnership while protecting legitimate British interests, how to simplify the welfare maze which often baffles those who most deserve help, how to regain an underlying sense of nationhood and purpose (Thatcher, 1977, quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 69).
- Why is the family an enemy?... Because it is our identity... so they attack national identity, they attack religious identity, they attack gender identity, they attack family identity (Meloni, 2022).
- Have these people ever seen a tax rise they don't like? Or an industry they don't want to control? ... My friends, does this anti-growth coalition have any idea who pays their wages? It's the people who make things in factories across our country. It's the people who get up at the crack of dawn to go to work (Truss, 2022).

In the sense that it suggests action be taken as a favor to the speaker rather than outright demanding compliance, a request can be perceived as a covert, polite order. A blatant or an overt order, on the other hand, conveys the speaker's power and authority (Lakoff, 2004, p.50). In these instances, Margaret Thatcher and Liz Truss employ overt as well as covert orders:

- We have a message. Go out, preach it, practice it, fight for it (Thatcher, 1979, quoted in Crines Heppell & Dorey, 2016, p. 200).
- It is up to us to give intellectual content and political direction to these new dissatisfactions with socialism in practice, with its material and moral failures; to

convert disillusion into understanding (Thatcher, 1977, quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 49).

- We have to move this country in a new direction, to change the way we look at things, to create a wholly new attitude of mind. Can it be done? (Thatcher, 1979, quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 79).
- I ask all who have the spirit - the bold, the steadfast and the young in heart - to stand and join with me as we go forward (Thatcher, 1981, quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 135).
- We must fight for change again – challenging what is unfair and unjust today (Truss, 2020).
- I want to live in a country where hard work is rewarded ... Where women can walk home safely at night... And where our children have a better future. To deliver this, we need to get Britain moving (Truss, 2022).

The majority of men communicate primarily as a way to retain their sense of independence, authority, and prestige. This is done through highlighting one's knowledge and commanding attention through verbal acts like jokes, storytelling, or giving in-depth reporting. However, For the majority of women, talking is fundamentally a rapport-building language that they use to establish connections and negotiate relationships (Tannen, 1990, 91). Through different instances, Thatcher suppress the opposing view to the postulation that the dichotomy of "rapport-talk" and "report-talk" may be employed to express gender variances. When discussing the most recent surveys with the press, Thatcher comments “we never count our chickens before they have hatched, and we don't count No. 10 Downing Street before it is thatched” (Thatcher, 1979, as quoted in Crines & Heppell & Dorey, 2016, p. 193). She also provides in-depth reporting with accurate figures, factual information, and statistical results. For instance:

The Soviet Union is spending 20 per cent more each year than the United States on military research and development. Twenty-five per cent more on weapons and equipment. Sixty per cent more on strategic forces. Some military experts believe that Russia has already achieved strategic superiority over America. The balance of conventional forces poses the most immediate dangers for NATO (Thatcher, 1967, as quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 40).

In contrast to the postulation that males employ rhetoric to establish authority, whereas women attempt to establish affiliation and unity, through symmetrical intimate style, Thatcher and Truss eloquently emphasize that:

- Where there is discord, may we bring harmony. Where there is error, may we bring truth. Where there is doubt, may we bring faith. And where there is despair, may we bring hope (Thatcher, 1979, as quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 93).
- On high-spending councils, Labor supports the town hall bosses. We stand up for the ratepayers. On de-nationalization, Labor defends state monopoly. We stand up for the customers. On trade union reform, Labor sides with the trade union bosses. We stand up for the members. On council house sales, Labor loves to be the Landlord. We stand up for the tenants. On taxes, Labor wants more of your money. We stand up for the taxpayers (Thatcher, 1984, as quoted in Crines & Heppell & Dorey, 2016, p. 191).
- The status quo is not an option. That is why we cannot give in to the voices of decline. We cannot give in to those who say Britain can't grow faster. We cannot give in to those who say we can't do better. We must stay the course. We are the



only party with a clear plan to get Britain moving. We are the only party with the determination to deliver. Together, we can unleash the full potential of our great country. That is how we will build a new Britain for a new era (Truss, 2022).

Additionally, by invoking their own experience and demonstrating that they could relate to their people's circumstances and challenges, Thatcher and Meloni would establish a shared identity or "ordinariness" with people (Crines & Heppell & Dorey, 2016, p. 165) or what is called "rapport" talk in the form of "report" one (Tannen, 1990). In a variety of speeches, Thatcher, Meloni, and Truss address the audiences utilizing phrases such as "we are now the very model of a stable economy," "we are free to do anything we like," "we want to defend the value of the human being," "we will defend God, country and family," "we reversed the National Insurance increase," or as "our future prosperity," "our faith," "our own strength," "our duty," "our unity and determination," "our homeland," "our patriotism," "our purpose," "our task is to counter this drift," and "our share of the common burden." Thatcher also sides with the members of the "silent majority" (Dorey, 2015). For example, as she explicitly conveys:

My policies are based not on some economic theory, but on things I and millions like me were brought up with an honest day's work for an honest day's pay; live within your means; put by a nest egg for a rainy day ... (Thatcher, 1981)

The use of metaphor is essential in describing the difference between men's and women's discourse. Margaret Thatcher, Liz Truss, and Georgia Meloni used metaphors that are frequently used in the world of men, such as fighting, warfare, victory, and adventure. The following are some of Thatcher's, Truss's, and Meloni's metaphorical positions:

- Yet I face the future with optimism ... Just as success generates problems, so failure breeds the will to fight back (Thatcher, 1977, quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 54).
- The right way to attack unemployment is to produce more goods more cheaply, and then more people can afford to buy them (Thatcher, 1978, quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 84).
- All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing (Thatcher, 1979, as quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 233).
- We are fighting unemployment by fighting inflation ... That is why it is not a question of choosing between the conquest of inflation and the conquest of unemployment (Thatcher, 1981, quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 140-1).
- I have reminded you where the great political adventure began and where it has led. But is this where we pitch our tents? Is this where we dig in? Absolutely not (Thatcher, 1987, quoted in Harris, 1997, p. 284).
- Our main enemy today is the globalist drift of those who view identity, in all its forms, to be an evil to be overcome (Meloni, 2020).
- We did not fight against, and defeat, communism in order to replace it with a new internationalist regime (Meloni, 2020).
- As strong as the storm may be, I know that the British people are stronger (Truss, 2022).
- We will keep an iron grip on the nation's finances (Truss, 2022).

Thatcher, Meloni, and Truss advocate for women's rights, dignity, and equality in every context, while explicitly stating that they are not feminists and that being mothers and housewives comes before being political leaders. Thatcher finds it simple to comprehend the conflict between the feminist and family lobbies—those who think a woman's place is to

challenge males in business, politics, and the professions, and those who think her place is in the home. That is because she is someone who has coupled a political career with raising a family. Although Thatcher believes that the house must always be the center of one's life, she also believes that it should not be the border of one's goals (Harris, 1997, p. 395). Additionally, Thatcher (1990) declares that "I want to see more women in public life because this country will be better served if it draws fully on the rich talents of women as much as men." In a similar vein, Meloni radically reveals that she is "a woman," "a mother," and a "Christian" while bearing the weight of being the first woman to lead the country (2022). Furthermore, in a contentious speech, Truss (2020) criticizes pink bus feminism and advocates diverting UK politics from current challenges of race and gender. Truss (2022) describes herself as "Destiny's Child Feminist" in an interview conducted by the BBC. She intends to convey the idea that women should be self-reliant enough to struggle for their own rights and liberties without the need for government protection. They are not always "victims." Truss continues by saying that she has to fight for her political position, pay increase, and housing prospects while balancing raising her two daughters and pursuing her political career.

## **7. Conclusion: Summary and Implications**

### **7.1. Summary**

This study challenges binary thinking about language and gender. It reconsiders and refutes the idea that women's speech is radically opposed to and distinct from men's. By applying feminist linguistic methodologies, certain aspects of Thatcher's, Giorgia Meloni's, and Liz Truss's discourse have been investigated, illuminating the consistency of their sexual and political identity. Efficiency, tenacity, and decisiveness are characteristics that are typically associated with men as opposed to women. It's not always the case, though, as Thatcher, Meloni, and Truss set out to be exceptional in traits often associated with men, such as leadership, courage, firmness, and determination. They have masculine speech pattern.

### **7.2. Implications**

The first implication of this study is that language is pragmatically employed as a means of disseminating identities and ideologies. To put it another way, discourse is a context in which participants bargain for ideologies and social standing. In discourse, speakers and writers may reflect their identities and attitudes. These attitudes may be ones of integration or solidarity. On the other hand, power relations in discourse might also be evident. As power and solidarity are paradoxically related, the illusion of solidarity may be strategically employed to seize control.

The study also implies that it is more logical to emphasize men and women's shared language usage rather than analyzing or teaching language in terms of bifurcation or discrimination. Social attitudes and issues, such as gender boundaries, roles, and expectancies have long been represented in educational curriculum. One implication of this study is that there should be regulations supporting the use of non-sexist as well as non-bifurcated language in official documents and educational materials.

As for stylistics, in literary works, it is critical to consider the implications of gendered identities and genderlect. In a narrative, for instance, readers might infer the author's gendered identities as well as social and ideological stances not just from the narrator's voice but also from the characters' exchanges with one another. This is due to the propensity of the narrative to alternate between character and narrator focalization.

In the framework of this study, another implication is the notion of interactive meaning. Semantic and pragmatic views are integral to the proper assessment and interpretation of a message. This is because texts and discourses offer indications and cues for interpretation rather

than determining how they should be interpreted. This methodology contrasts markedly with the formal analysis of texts that was common until the 1970s. Formal semantics is typically connected with a constrained understanding of sentence meaning. However, there are other categories of meaning that cannot be taken into account in terms of their propositional content. Thus, context is important, as is awareness of how gendered and social identities influence interpretation.

The viewpoint of looking at gender patterns in language can also be useful in a variety of fields, including sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and conversational analysis. All of these disciplines are connected through communication, which is the language-based interchange of concepts, knowledge, traditions, and ideologies. This highlights how linguistic and social relationships are inherently ideological.

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