

**EÖTVÖS LORÁND UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCES
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

ABSTRACT OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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**THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNICATION OF
MONOLINGUALS AND GREEK–HUNGARIAN BILINGUALS IN RESPECT OF
GENDER**

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1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

As far as my dissertation is concerned, the reason why I have chosen the fields of gender linguistics and bilingualism is that they represent privileged scientific fields for me. The diverse linguistic attitude of women and men, moreover the remarkable endowments of bilingual individuals, their random codeswitchings and their colourful personalities, all convey elevated research fields. Besides my personal interest, we should not ignore the positive impacts of these two scientific fields on the society. Both bilingualism and gender linguistics play a substantial role as disciplines in linguistics. Bilingualism is substantial for the reason why more than the half of the Earth population is bilingual, or lives in bilingual environment (Grosjean, 1982). Migration, mixed marriage, being closed to another ethnic group, immigration, exchange student programme, religion, warfare, employment and language learning all contribute to bilingualism or multilingualism (Bartha, 1999). It is indispensable to be aware of their every day appreciation, whether they are part of linguistic genocide, are in the periphery, or whether their human dignity is affected sometimes because of their language usage. It is a must, to research on the attitude and the discourse of the bilinguals in order to understand their reactions, codeswitchings, and in order not to consider either their codeswitchings or their mixed language usage as anomaly or inaccurate language usage, since these are normal attributes of bilingualism. Those researches which refer to childhood bilingualism, contribute to understand the process of early second language acquisition, with the help of which, processes could be revealed regarding the acceleration progress or the retardation of second language acquisition. It is an aid for both language teachers and language learners as well (Navracscics, 2007). The exploration of brain activity provides data concerning the storage and the activation of languages. Summing up all these, I consider the research of bilingualism substantial.

Gender linguists have to face several sceptical criticisms, for the reason why this scientific field is underestimated by some people. However, gender can be found as independent variables in most linguistic researches, no matter the researcher focuses on phonemes, morphemes, lexis, dialect, hedges, word activation or standard language usage. Gender linguistics, with its researches and collection of data, contribute to a great extent, to highlight how women and men use the diverse attributes of language, moreover, reveal how women and men behave in different cultures, in private life and in various fields of public life (Huszár, 2009). Gender linguistics unveils the roots of the linguistic diversities of the two genders concerning cultural anthropological, sociological, anatomical, demographical and

religious aspects as well. It is essential, that gender linguistics reveals the linguistic means of sex discrimination, highlights the recognition and the avoidance of sexist connotations. It also provides the acquisition of „crossing-over” procedures in everyday situations, in order to avoid confrontations, misunderstandings, with the help of which, the two genders may communicate more successfully and live more harmonious life. Therefore, it is indispensable that more gender linguistic researches will be published in the future.

The topic of my research is the comparative analysis of the communication of monolinguals and Greek–Hungarian bilinguals in respect of gender. By collecting and analysing empirical data, I intend to justify, that people living in bilingual environment, have more flexibility, which is manifested concerning gender.

The objective of my research, after analysing the spontaneous speech sequence of both monolinguals and bilinguals, is to get a picture of the diverse speech behaviour form of the two genders, and to prove that the two genders use different speech strategies, which is more striking among monolinguals. According to my expectations, these diversities will be less, concerning bilinguals, since they are more flexible and tolerant individuals than the monolinguals.

My hypothesis is that there will not be as many discrepancies in the language usage of the bilinguals as in the monolinguals, from the aspect of genders, for the reason why the behaviour and the views of the person, having been exposed to two languages from early childhood, are more tolerant, than that of the monolinguals. According to my hypothesis, people living in bilingual environment, are more likely to adapt to each other, which is manifested from the aspect of the communication of genders.

The novelty of the topic being researched is that, most of the researches of gender linguistics focus on monolinguals’ speech behaviour, therefore I considered it useful, to make a comparative linguistic analysis of bilinguals regarding genders, and subsequently compare the monolingual data to the bilingual ones. I have chosen to record spontaneous speech sequences for the reason why, the recording provides more accurate picture of oral language usage, since contact occurrences and linguistic variables may be kept tab in the framework of informal discourse on different levels. A survey collects solely restricted number of information about real language usage, and the informants’ answers do not substitute the patterns of spontaneous language usage (Kiss, 1995). Referring to the Bernstein hypothesis, a spontaneous discourse considers the variants of discourse circumstances, provides real communicative situation, and does not create an irrelevant situational task, as opposed to the irrelevant, formal data supply, interviews and surveys. The large-scale representative surveys

with their invariable questions, may be advantageous for the reason why they are quantifiable and repeatable, however, they refer to an invariant settled language choice pattern of the speaker (Bartha, 1999). The familiar language usage – even in the case of spontaneous speech sequence – is coherent and unconscious, since there is no conscious speech control, therefore familiar language usage is the pure source of informal discourse situation (Kiss, 1995).

2. THE STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

In the **first chapter** of the dissertation I itemize the history of the researches as regards bilingualism, its development and types, the unique endowments and neurolinguistic attributes of the bilingual individual, the storage of languages, semantic representation, bilingual mental lexicon, multilingualism, the types of codeswitching and the identity of bilinguals and multilinguals. The **subsections** comprise Greek bilingualism, the circumstances of Greek minorities living in Hungary, the diachronic analysis of gender linguistics and its achievements, the subject of the research, its objectives, hypotheses and finally, the problematic background of the research.

In the **second chapter** of the dissertation I detail the participants of the research, the circumstances of the analysis, and the methods of the research as well.

The **third chapter** comprises the achievements of the research and their analysis. The subsections constitute the numerical results of the monolingual and bilingual corpora, highlighted by examples and charts. The linguistic research fields involve the levels of fast speech-processes, lexis, syntax, communicative strategy and problem solving. Within these linguistic fields I itemize the occurrence of assimilation, assimilation combined with elision, elision, „feminine” adjectives, interjections, swear words, syntactic errors, question tags, minimal responses, overlap, compliments, hedges, gossip, interruption and directives in both corpora concerning genders.

The **fourth chapter** involves the statistics of codeswitchings. I implemented my statistical analysis by SPSS software, in order to demonstrate the frequency of codeswitching to Hungarian or Greek language. In this chapter, charts, cross tabulations and bar charts reflect correlations, significance and the frequency of codeswitchings produced individually.

The **fifth chapter** includes the discussion, in which I compare the frequency of the data of the two corpora concerning genders, and in addition, I analyse the relevancies and the discrepancies between my data and gender linguistic, cultural anthropological and bilingualism-based bibliographies treated by me. I illustrated the results supporting the referred

bibliography with examples deriving from the corpora. I supervised, to what extent predictions in the hypotheses were justified, or contradict the previously mentioned notions.

The last **sixth chapter**, comprises consequences in which, I summarize the linguistic fields embraced by the dissertation, the relevances and the discrepancies of my results and the referred bibliography, also the discrepancies of the results concerning monolingual and bilingual corpora, moreover the achievements which correspond or contradict the hypotheses.

The **appendix** constitutes the questionnaire of „Language Experience and Proficiency”, moreover, the two times, two hour long transcription of spontaneous speech sequence of monolingual and bilingual population.

3. MATERIAL, METHOD, PARTICIPANTS IN THE EXPERIMENT

In my research, I have analysed two corpora, which comprise the two times, two hour long, dictaphone recorded transcription of Hungarian monolinguals’ and Greek–Hungarian bilinguals’ spontaneous speech sequence. The individuals, participating in the research were group of friends whom I had previously known well. The Greek–Hungarian bilingual individuals also formed a group of friends. The population of the bilinguals relevant to the monolinguals, comprised a five member group aged over 25, constituting three men and two women. Individuals participating in the research have either one or two Greek parents -there is only one exempt-, whose parents immigrated to Hungary in the 40-ies and 50-ies escaping from the Greek civil war. The immigrated parents’ children, participating in the research, were given birth here, who were exposed to Greek language input from their early childhood, not only in their home spontaneously, but deliberately in kindergartens and educational institutions as well, where they could acquire Greek grammar, and increase their vocabulary. Getting acquainted with the bilinguals deeply, was outstandingly important for me from the aspect of the research, in order to obtain a relevant picture of their cultural identity, to understand their codeswitchings, and interpret their linguistic manifestations and the results adequately. Furthermore, it was indispensable to reveal their affection to Greek and Hungarian language, to explore the circumstances of their settling and identity. I elaborated a questionnaire, so as to be able to answer these questions. In order to understand the bilinguals’ past, linguistic competence, and their affection to the Greek roots, I made them fill in another questionnaire, which was elaborated by the North-western Bilingualism and Psycholinguistics Research Laboratory i.e. the document of „Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire” (Blumenfeld-Kaushanskaya, 2007).

In my research, I analyse only one variable, which is the gender-based linguistic discrepancy, apart from the social status of the participants. I have recorded the discourse of friends on a 2 hour long motor tour, in a settled way (maximum 5 persons), which yielded spontaneous linguistic manifestations. The settled situation was indispensable for the reason why, it was the best way to record continuous, unperturbed speech sequence. Considering the bilinguals, at the beginning, their discourse was also recorded in a car, subsequently, for a longer period, they continued the conversation in a restaurant. I transcribed the two hour long recordings, in which I indicated the interruptions and the overlaps highlighted by gender-based publications, and considered the most important to be indicated from the aspect of my research. I analysed the discrepancies of the two genders in respect of diverse linguistic levels such as: fast speech- processes, lexis, syntax, communicative strategy and problem solving. As far as communicative strategy is concerned, I focus on the frequency of elements like interjections, swear words, minimal response, tag question, overlap, compliment, hedges („such”, „sort of”, „you know”), directives, topic change, gossip and interruptions. I compared the data deriving from the monolingual recording to the results of the bilinguals’ speech analysis, and I examined the relevances and the discrepancies as well. Finally, I made a comparison between the results of the attitude of the bilinguals revealed in the introduction, the cultural anthropological, gender-based publications, and the data of my monolingual and bilingual corpora, so as to justify to what extent my achievements support or contradict other researchers’ conclusions.

4. SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS, THESES

The novelty of my research is, that most of the gender linguists analyse monolinguals’ manifestations, and we meet less researches which indulge in the spontaneous speech sequence of bilinguals, moreover, Greek–Hungarian ones. The analysis of familiar speech is up-to-date, and fits into the current advance of linguistic sciences, since most of the current linguistic trends examine linguistic issues embedded in social and cultural aspects. There is a strong necessity for the analysis of familiar speech, since most corpora meant to be analysed, comprise sentences figured out by linguists, which do not reflect real language usage (Dobos, 2006).

In respect of the publications of gender linguistics, bilingualism and cultural anthropology, moreover, in the framework of the data deriving from the two corpora, I summarize the following **theses**:

- The linguistic discrepancies between the two genders outlined in the hypothesis within the Greek–Hungarian discourse, occurred in less number, than in case of their monolingual counterparts.
- More tolerant and flexible attitude highlighted by researchers of bilingualism, were also manifested by the bilingual women in my corpus, who were constantly participating in the discourse during spontaneous speech, they were neither pushed into the background, nor were in silence, moreover, they constantly contributed to the float of the communication with their remarks.
- Direct disagreements, trivializing and joking in the Greek–Hungarian corpus, support the attributes of Greek communication from cultural anthropological aspect.
- Researchers of bilingualism highlight the bilingual individuals' more sophisticated metalanguage awareness, creativity, ethnic tolerance, expansion of communicative influence, emotional flexibility and their colourful personality. These attributes were manifested in the explicitness, collaborating attitude and emotional flexibility in my bilingual corpus. I experienced emotional flexibility in such remarks, where the speakers, despite their teasing admitted having „caused pain”, and agreed finally. Their explicitness was revealed in the usage of more interjections, compliments, praising, clout and disagreements.
- Verbal quip, passionate dispute, heated arguments, verbal duals, irony, analogy, telling jokes, contrastive arguments, opposition before explanation, usage of metaphors, ironical yes or no questions and knowledge emphasized by cultural anthropologists and Greek gender linguists, were all experienced concerning the participants of the bilingual corpus, despite the fact that all of them but one were born in mixed marriages. Greek culture was reflected by not only their verbal characters, but their reactions and attitude as well.
- Culture and language influence each other, and culture is a key factor in language development, the quality of language competence, the content of the mental lexicon, in preserving and forming identity (Navracscics, 2011). The influence of language and culture is supported by my bilingual corpus, namely in verbal duals, the knowledge in Greek culture, religion and celebrations, moreover, in women's more intense verbosity.
- According to a Greek linguist Christina Kakava, opposition is such a social practice, which is pervasive, popular, expected and allowed in Greek culture. Kakava claims, that Greek culture predisposes the Greek to oppose explicitly (Kakava, 2002). Direct disagreement occurred quite frequently in the Greek–Hungarian discourse, which was natural, however, it did not result in unsolved, offended feelings, since with the help of avoidance techniques, apologies, and admitting the insult, they were capable of ending the dispute.

- Gender is not constant, yet, a behavioural pattern which is formed by performative speech acts, a construct, defined by the terminology of constructivism, whose formation is influenced by the social and cultural background of the speakers, their age and position in their profession (Huszár, 2009). For the reason why the similar field of interest, and friendship of my speakers, created homogeneous company in both of my corpora, therefore I could manage to record familiar, informal discourse, diminishing the performative characteristics of gender.

- When we compare the attitude or the communication of the two genders, we have to consider the certain era and historical age in which we analyse the discourse, in addition, the cultural roots as well. Amy Sheldon's view, according to which, dichotomy is culture-and environment bound, is to be highlighted (Juhász-Kegyese, 2011). As a consequence, it is substantial for the gender researcher to observe the cultural anthropological traditions and linguistic attributes of the researched individuals or communities.

- I would like to emphasize Ann Weatherall's view on speech accommodation – i.e. the assimilation to our speech partner during the interaction –, since it is not indifferent, whether our speech partner is in higher status, elder, authoritative or not. For this reason, I opted for a group of friends, who have previously known each other, had shared memories, therefore, they could communicate with each other uninhibitedly.

- The attributes of gender identity are continuously forming, transforming, reorganizing, since social conversation, speech methods in groups, cultural roots, and last but not least stereotypes based on the two genders, all affect the communicative practice of the individual (Juhász-Kegyese, 2011).

- The achievements of my monolingual corpus, support the bibliographies treated by me on the following levels: mispronunciation (fast speech process), interjection, swear words, syntactical mistake (non standard language use), tag question, minimal response, compliment, overlap, gossip, interruption, topic change, furthermore, problem solving, i.e. on 12 linguistic fields.

Concerning my bilingual corpus, 10 linguistic fields supported the bibliographies, namely in „feminine” adjectives, interjection, syntactical mistake, tag question, minimal response, compliment, overlap, interruption, swear words and gossip.

- The following linguistic levels did not support the bibliographies treated by me, in the monolingual corpus i.e. „feminine” adjectives, imperatives, hedges, namely in 3 cases, since men used more „feminine” adjectives, and hedges, contradicting the bibliography, moreover, women used more directives. As far as the bilingual corpus is concerned, the bibliography

was not justified by 5 cases, namely in fast speech process (mispronunciation), directives, hedges, problem solving, topic change, for the reason why women used more directives, mispronunciation, and the same topic change, furthermore men used more hedges. On the other hand, the problem solving of the bilingual men, was more flexible and less assertive, furthermore, the bilingual women's problem solving proved to be fiercer than it was expected.

- The less gender-based discrepancies concerning bilinguals, outlined in the hypothesis, were justified on the following linguistic levels: fast speech process, positive adjectives, interjections, syntactical mistakes, compliments, interruptions, overlaps, topic change, and in problem solving.

- The following linguistic levels did not justify the hypotheses: „negative” adjectives, swear words, tag questions, minimal response, gossip information, directives, and in case of the researched hedges. On these levels, bilinguals produced more discrepancies in respect of gender, than that of their monolingual counterparts.

- During the bilingual discourse, the least diversities as regards gender, could be kept tab in case of topic change (99:99), assimilation combined with elision (9:9), interjection (20:26), and syntactical mistakes (256:237).

The dissertation could be primarily useful for those, who are engaged in the research of gender linguistics and bilingualism. It may provide useful information for gender linguists from the aspect of the gender-based linguistic discrepancies characterizing bilinguals, moreover, researchers focusing on bilingualism, may familiarize with bilingual individuals from gender linguistic aspect. The dissertation can contribute to indulge in the attributes of both disciplines by the diachronic gender linguistic and bilingualism-based researches, references and types, highlighted in the introduction; in addition, it provides a global view on both scientific fields. Those who are interested in, how men and women manifest themselves in remote subcultures, may also find fascinating facts in the dissertation.

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