Sexiest Language Essay, Research Paper

Language is the basis to all cultures in the world, today. Whether it is in writing, sign language, or body language, it is a must in every civilization. Language is perceived differently through the male and female genders.

Many forms of sexist language have been identified into three forms – language that ignores women, language the defines women narrowly, and language that depreciates women (Wetherall 276). Women have been discriminated for years. This all strings back to when the female was thought to be less of a person, since early civilization. It has been the use of masculine genetics that has concealed women. Since that time we have came a long way in equaling women’s rights. The problem now, is that language still portraits women as something less in society. The narrow definition of women in language relates to the observation that women are more often discussed in relationships, whereas men are more often discussed in what they do (Wetherall 276). A perfect example is when women are given their spouse’s last name after being married. This is a show of ownership of sorts. Women do not have accompany this tradition if they do not feel it is necessary. Language described women, in the past, in a negative manor and it is hard to break free from such stereotypes. In a study of female and male terms listed in the dictionary you will find many more unfavorable, sexual and trivializing to describe women that men (Wethrall 276). Women have taken a large leap towards equality but it will take some time before sexist language and discriminative language will cease.

I did a survey where I asked twenty people, “If a girl fools around with five guys in a month and a guy fools around with five girls in a month what would you classify the man and woman?” All twenty of the people I asked said the girl is a slut. Sixteen of the people said the man was a “pimp”(which is a good thing). The other four said he is a male slut. Why is this so? Just because the person is a female, she should be classified as a slut? This is how society thinks. Women should not be stereotyped this way. Men do the same things and they are thought of as the “Bomb”. I asked five men and five women how they would address a woman who was a chairperson. This is a direct statement of how or language is sexist towards women. Because of this sexist language, our society faces the consequences. Sexist view can influence people’s perception of women (Wetherall 277).

Research theoretical developments on language, power and social relationships suggests more subtle and complex associations between language and social behavior than those initially used to describe the significance of sex bias in language (Wetherall 277). For example, discourse analysts explore how the production and organization of social categories in conversation are influenced by the context and function of the particular interaction (Wetherall 277). The use of sexist language makes the idea of inequality live on. When people constantly use this sexist language it becomes routine and people start to use this in their every day conversation or even just in their minds. The routinization of sex bias in language makes sexism more covert and hence a legitimate way of communicating racism (Wetherall 277). With this common and accepted racism being used in everyday life, it shows how men have maintained their monarchy in social groups. For example, when I was younger there was a girl on my baseball team who was very good, but everyone emphasized how good she was “for a girl”, not a person. Sexist language is a direct suppression of women and is so commonly used, it goes unnoticed. Though, steps are being taken to stop sexist language, for example it is not longer a policeman it is a police officer, still, there has to be more done to prevent in from existing.

Our language reflects the fact that, historically women engaged in public activity that has been suspect (Jamieson 125). The whole idea is that when society speaks of a human being it is usually thought to be a male. For instance when a man is interviewed, he is judged as an individual while a woman is categorized as a “women” (Jamieson 127). Language is not only a way to communicate, but, also a way to judge the character of society .

Starting at age two or three when boys and girls first learn to communicate they are placed in two separate categories. This separation continues through childhood and up to their teenage years when they become men and woman. Woman are brought up to be clean, proper, and always be on their best behavior. Men are brought up to play in the dirt, be messy, and act like tough guys. When men and woman become their own self and have their own traits they will then began to interact and communicate with each other. At this time different language will be shared with each other and many agreements as well as disagreements will occur. A man will usually overpower the woman with words, because a mans language is a lot stronger in content. As each generation goes by men have been more successful and always in a higher power position than woman have been in.

In the mid 1970’s, a survey was taken, that is showing words that are used on men and their parallel meaning towards women.

Masculine TermsFeminine Terms

acts as a leaderaffectionate

aggressivecheerful

ambitiouschildlike

analyticalcompassionate

assertivedoesn’t use harsh language

athleticeager to sooth hurt feelings

competitivefeminine

defends beliefsflatterable

dominantgentle

forcefulgullible

has leadership qualitiesloves kids

independentloyal

individualisticsensitive to others needs

makes decisions easilyshy

masculinesoft-spoken

self-reliantsympathetic

self-sufficienttender

strong personalityunderstanding

willing to take a standwarm

willing to take risksyielding

(Jamieson 124)

This surveys shows the comparison and the difference in meaning of words

thought to “fit” with the men and women of society. It is rather disgusting how such stereotypical thoughts could be evident in our world in the seventies.

Woman have been discriminated though language in almost every kind of sense. Even in religion, women are not seen as the higher power. Just look at all the priests and the pope, all of the higher powers are male. Jesus was male, and only selected male apostles (Aburgbae, Waisbitt 122). although some changes have been made is certain hymns and gospels, such as: “Good Christian Men, Rejoice” was changed to, ” Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”, the church has a long way to go with modifying their language and stereotypical ideas against the females of this world. Yet those kinds of obstacles and struggles are worth fighting for, if you expect results (The Women’s Review of books 27).

Stereotypes that are put on women through language are numerous. A woman with strong opinions and very determined is a “bitch”, while a man is very ambitious. If a woman is good at sports then she is manly but a man is just filling his athletic potential. A woman dresses or acts sexy is a “slut” while a man is just showing off his nice body. Women are stereotyped by society every day and that is mainly powered by our societies language.

It is not only women who are discriminated against. Through language, men are also stereotyped as well. Men are very often thought to be hard nosed and insensitive, football watching, pieces of garbage. Most of these stereotypes are made from females because they see these actions in men who they become involved with. For instance, if a man feels like sitting on the couch and watching football, but his girlfriend really wants to go to the movies and they end up on the couch for the afternoon then the man is thought of as a chauvinistic, insensitive, typical male. This is not the case, sometimes guys just do not feel like going to the movies or out to dinner. Also there are affectionate guys in the world, but no women is going to have it their way all of the time.

Body language also differs greatly between genders. For instance, if a woman makes the first move (sexually) then she is a “whore”. If the guy doesn’t make the first move then he is considered to be not a “real man”. Luckily, these stereotypes are starting to change. Body language is most evident in how a person walks around and carries him or herself. For example, if a woman walks without grace then she is walking manly and visa versa, if a man doesn’t walk all tough then he is “girly”. Also walks around in kind of a feminine way, then the person is considered to be homosexual. If a man walks in a tough, “manly” fashion, then he is considered to be a tough guy or hard-nosed. These body language factors are not as prominent as the language stereotypes but they are still around.

Although women carry many of their own disbelieves about men, men have their share of misunderstandings about woman. For example women feel that men are very insensitive, self-centered, human beings. And in return men feel that woman are very sensitive and become to emotional over everything. When in fact these are all misconceptions of the male and female gender communication system. Men are really very sensitive people just like women, but they hold a lot of their emotions inside of them. Women are looked at as being too sensitive because they express their emotions a lot more than men. In today’s society we want to believe communication has expanded as well as improved greatly. To a certain extent it has, but there are still a lot of areas that improvement is needed in order to communicate correctly.