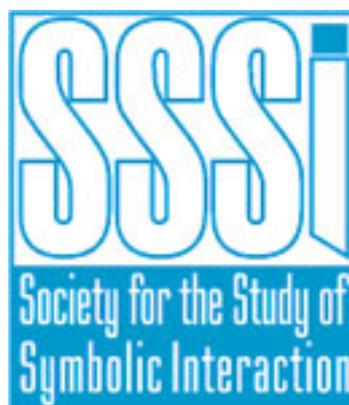


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"Talking Emotions": Gender Differences in a Variety of Conversational Contexts

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Based on numerous studies demonstrating gender differences in both language and emotions, we investigated whether women are more verbally expressive of their feelings than men. Data from eleven samples, based on four methods of data collection (observations, "hidden" observations, interviews, and content analysis), were analyzed as to whether women used more emotional words than men. In each of the eleven samples, women used significantly more emotional words. The findings relate to two theoretical issues in the literature: "dominance" versus "cultural" perspective of gender and language and the importance of context in analyzing gender differences in language.

This article examines gender differences in language and emotion, which are seen as stemming from the differing socialization of the sexes. Specifically, we examine whether Israeli women are more likely than Israeli men to express emotions in various conversational contexts. Examining gender differences in emotional talk in different contextual settings using different methods allows us to study whether the context is an important determinant in emotional talk. This approach also allows us to address which of the two perspectives—"dominance" or "difference"—better accounts for gender differences in verbal expressions of emotions in conversations. The basic premise of the various perspectives of gender and language assumes that men and women speak different languages. Men are more likely than women to speak assertively, talk more in public, and interrupt conversations. Women are less likely than men to speak in public and are more likely to use hesitant phrasing and to end statements with a question ("tag questions"). In addition, common understanding takes as "fact" that men and women talk about different things. On the

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“dominance” perspective, women’s inferior social status explains gender differences in spoken language. On the “difference” perspective, gender differences in language are seen as a result of distinctive norms and values for each gender and not necessarily as a reflection of differing statuses. We present the two approaches as dichotomous, as have many of the leading researchers in this area (e.g., Cameron 1992; Gumpres 1982; Lakoff 1990); however, other researchers have recently claimed that these two approaches are not really in opposition to one another (e.g., Tannen 1996). Although we view both perspectives as overlapping, we treat each as analytically distinct in order to make the contrast sharper, especially since each emphasizes a different etiology regarding the nature of the gender-related language nexus.

The issue of context is of particular significance for symbolic interactionists, who view relationships between individuals, as well as the context in which they occur, to be the important determinants of interactions. During the past decade, scholars have criticized the field of gender-related language for not paying sufficient attention to the context of the interaction. They suggest that differences in male/female language are dependent on the situation. The data offered here allow us to examine the importance of context in one specific area of conversations: the use of emotional terms.

Language differences between women and men have become a popular subject, mainly due to best-selling books such as *You Just Don’t Understand* (Tannen 1990) and *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* (Gray 1992). Furthermore, people believe in sex differences (Crawford 1995) and believe they can identify them. Ferber (1995), for example, found that subjects correctly identified the speaker’s sex on the basis of transcriptions of dyadic conversations. Herring (1994) states that even in computer-mediated communication, one can identify whether the writer of the message is a man or a woman, because women and men have different on-line styles.

Our study combines the literature on gender differences in language with the literature on gender differences in emotion, to examine whether gender differences exist in “‘emotional talk’—verbal expressions of emotions in conversations” (Staske 1998). Both literatures suffer from similar methodological problems: lack of attention to the situational context that provokes and maintains gender differences of emotional expression (Brody 1985:116) and failure to separate sex from other related factors when examining the effects of gender on language (Crawford 1995). Our article meets this criticism by examining gender difference in emotional talk in a variety of contexts. We first present the literature on gender differences in language and then the literature on gender differences in emotion.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN LANGUAGE

The research findings do not indicate a consistent pattern in the effects of gender on spoken language. For example, in the case of gender differences in the amount of

talk, James and Drakich's (1993) critical review concluded that whereas some studies found that in some circumstances women talk more than men, other studies found no gender differences. In the case of interrupting conversations, James and Clarke (1993), also in a critical review, concluded that the majority of the research found no significant gender differences. A review by Aries (1996) does not support the claim that women use more tag questions and qualifiers than men, and Clark (1997) did not find significant gender differences in the expression of sentiment. The likeliest explanation for these inconsistencies is that to the extent that gender-related language differences exist, they should be considered within the context of the conversation, as has been done by many researchers in the 1990s. Research in the 1990s began emphasizing the importance of the context in gender differences in language and particularly the relationship between speech partners (e.g., Hall, Bucholtz, and Moonwoman 1992; Staske 1996). For example, tag questions between mother and child may have different significance than tag questions between a subordinate and her boss. Staske (1996) sees the partner in the conversation as a primary social influence on both the expression and the experience of human emotion. James and Clarke (1993) also attribute the inconsistent finding about interruptions as stemming in part from situational variables. The conclusion of the reviewers regarding amount of talk, tag questions, and interruptions is that gender-related language differences should be studied within the context of the situation and that the failure to do so may explain inconsistent findings. In the present study, by examining emotional talk differences in diverse contexts, we will ascertain whether (1) gender differences are evidenced in emotional talk and (2) whether these differences are context related.

Still, the extant data have led to several findings that have become widely accepted. In the interactional process of communication there are some gender differences. Women tend to do a greater amount of "conversational work" than men. They nurture conversation to keep it going by responding according to the rules of polite interaction, whereas men dominate the conversation and violate the rules of turn-taking (Fishman 1978; Kollock, Blumstein, and Schwartz 1985; Watts 1992). Women encourage communication and disclosure and thus use talk to form and enhance relationships to a greater degree than men (Smith-Lovin and Robinson 1992). Among married couples, women take responsibility for maintaining intimate relationships; they do the emotion work in an attempt to change their partners' emotional behavior when the latter fail to express their intimate feelings (Cancian and Gordon 1988; Duncombe and Marsden 1994).

Another area in which gender differences in language has been found is topics of talk. As long ago as 1922, Moore reported that women spoke with women mainly about men, clothes, buildings, and interior decoration, whereas men talked with men mainly about money, business, and leisure time activity. Seventy years later, Bischooping (1993), who controlled some of the methodological problems of the earlier study, arrived at remarkably similar findings, although with less marked differences. These findings of gender differences in conversation topics have been consis-

tently replicated through multiple measurement methods (Aries 1976; Ayres 1980; Landis 1927; Pederson and Breglio 1968). Thus the findings are relatively consistent regarding conversational work and conversational topics but not about whether men and women use language differently.

Two major theoretical perspectives explain gender differences in conversations: "difference" and "dominance." The "difference" perspective views the distinctive styles of interaction as "cultural," originating in sex-segregated peer cultures. Boys and girls are seen as learning to talk differently. Boys play in larger, hierarchically structured groups, whereas girls group themselves more loosely in clusters of best friends. In talking, boys are competitive and assertive, whereas girls are cooperative, observe the norm of consideration for other people, use hedging strategies, and respect the speaking rights of others. These styles are carried into adulthood. Miscommunication in cross-sex conversations, seen as resulting from the mix of men's and women's cultural forms, reinforces gender identities. The difference perspective on gender differences in language stemmed from sociolinguistic work on cross-ethnic communication and from ethnographic studies of linguistic aspects of children's play (Cameron 1992; Coates 1986, 1989; Maccoby 1990; Maltz andorker 1982; Tannen 1990).

The dominance perspective argues that gender differences in language reflect the social gender power structure and that there exists a "women's language." Its linguistic features indicate subordinate status, as expressed (in part) by submissive and hesitant speech. In contrast, men's speech is seen as stronger and more direct, expressing a dominant, powerful style (Lakoff 1975, 1990). Accordingly, researchers focused on the existing power relationships between women and men in the social structure. Men, in their dominant position, are viewed as playing a significant role in restricting women's verbal behavior, thus reinforcing women's subordinate status; for example, men interrupt women more than women interrupt men, and men "overlap" women more than women "overlap" men (Fishman 1978; O'Barr 1982; O'Barr and Atkins Bowman 1980; Thorne and Henley 1975; Thorne, Kramarae, and Henley 1983; Zimmerman and West 1975).

The dominance perspective generally looks at mixed-sex interaction but has less to say about women talking to each other or men talking to men (Cameron 1992), since it focuses on the relationship between the superior and the subordinate, the powerful and the powerless. The difference perspective, in contrast, focuses mainly on sex-segregated peer cultures. We point out that while advocates of each of these perspectives generally tend to view each as distinctive, and in opposition to one another, Tannen, in *Gender and Discourse* (1996), argues that this dichotomy between culture and power is a false one. We, too, tend to accept Tannen's contention that these two perspectives complement one another; however, we believe that a marked difference still exists in the emphasis regarding the etiology of these differences. The diverse samples in the current study and our findings (discussed below) present us with a unique opportunity to examine which of these two perspectives best explain gender differences in language.

Gender Differences in Emotion

Emotions have an important effect on our lives. Our lives are ordered and organized by our needs, motives, and concerns (Bower 1992). Women report experiencing, expressing, and valuing emotions more than men do (Allen and Haccoun 1976; Allen and Hamsher 1974; Block 1983; Sprecher and Sedikides 1993). Block (1983), for example, found that women talk more about emotional issues and are more sensitive to others' emotional reactions. In his review on emotions, Brody (1985) concluded that women are both stereotyped and report themselves as being more sad, scared, and emotionally expressive and less angry than men, as well as more articulate about "talking emotions" than are men. Still, he cautions us that emotions are multidimensional constructs, composed of multiple components: (1) physiological-experiential cognitive, (2) behavioral/expressive, (3) attitudinal, and (4) regulatory. Gender differences in verbal emotional expression may not signify gender differences in emotional experience, for gender differences may be manifest in some, but not in all, components of emotion. Indeed, the present investigation is not based on self-reports like the studies we cite but, in part, on observations in "natural settings," and it is limited to the use of verbal terms in conversations and not about emotionality per se.

Izard (1991) contends that infants, due to their individual emotional thresholds, will differ in the frequency in which they express their emotions, which influences the responses they invite from those around them. In turn, the way others respond to the emotional expressions of infants and children will reinforce their expressive style and hence their personalities. Thus, if parents' responses to their children depend on the sex of the child, each sex will develop different expressive styles. Adams et al. (1995) also found that parents' use of emotional terms differed according to the child's gender. Both parents' references to emotions (e.g., sadness, fear, anger, affection) were more frequent and more varied with daughters than with sons. Both parents also were more likely to express their sadness and their dislikes to their daughters than to their sons. Furthermore, among the children themselves, the daughters expressed a greater variety of emotions than did the sons when they were almost seven years old but not when they were only three years and four months old, strongly suggesting the impact of socialization on emotions. Other studies report that mothers talk more about emotions with their daughters than with their sons (Dunn, Bretherton, and Munn 1987; Kuebli, Butler, and Fivush 1995). Fivush (1989), for example, found sex differences in conversations between mothers and their children: with daughters the conversations focused on the emotional state or reaction itself (e.g., "Did you like the movie *ET*?"), but with sons, mothers often discussed the causes and consequences of their emotions (e.g., "Why was Big Bird angry?"). She suggested that the mothers may be teaching their sons to control their emotions, whereas they may teach their daughters to focus on the emotion itself and therefore be more sensitive to emotional states. Accordingly, women learn that emotions are an important aspect of life experience that are worthy of discussion (Adams et al. 1995). The above body of research, for the most

part, has demonstrated that parents construct emotions differently when addressing their daughters than their sons. However, the literature, perhaps surprisingly, has not been concerned with demonstrating whether in their adulthood women are more likely than men to verbally express their emotions.

In sum, many studies have shown that men and women talk differently. And numerous studies have demonstrated that women are more likely than men to be emotional. However, none has linked these two literatures and examined whether gender differences in emotional talk are reflected in different conversational settings, although some studies of marriage show that wives are more prone to greater emotional expression than their husbands (Gottman and Levenson 1992; Levenson, Carstensen, and Gottman 1994; Notarius and Johnson 1982). We examined the actual differences in verbal expressions of emotion during conversations, to determine if women employ more emotional terms in their conversations than men. Moreover, the fact that the conversations occurred in a variety of settings (and were based on different methods of data collection) enables us to consider the contextual issue of emotional talk. To the extent that gender differences in emotional speech will be found, will they be characteristic of specific situations (or specific ways of data collection), or will they "override" the specific situation? If we find that only in some samples (e.g., kindergarten children) but not in others (e.g. switchboard operators) women use more emotional terms than men, the argument for the importance of the situation affecting gender language would be strengthened. If, on the other hand, it is found that in most, if not all, situations women use more emotional terms than men, then at least in this one area of "emotional talk" we may infer that the context is not relevant to emotional talk; that is, the observed gender differences do not depend on the context.

Furthermore, the findings could lend support to either the dominance or the difference perspective. Should the findings show that in most situations women employ more emotional terms than do men, the difference theoretical perspective with its emphasis on socialization would be supported. It would be more logical to assume that such uniformity of findings is congruent with the difference perspective, whose theoretical roots lie in socialization, rather than with the dominance perspective, whose emphasis is on the effect of authority on speech and behavior. Thus the context frame of reference and the difference/dominance perspectives on language are linked, for it is the difference perspective that does not consider the context as an important determinant in the speech pattern between men and women since the basic language differences originate in childhood socialization (Johnson 1994).

METHOD

Subjects

This study was part of a larger investigation of the differences between men and women in conversations. Five hundred ninety Israeli subjects (306 women, 284

men) participated in this research. We employed four methods of data collection (observations, "hidden" observations, interviews, and content analysis) to examine not only whether there are gender differences but also whether the differences are stable and consistent during different structures, situations, and times. Each consisted of a number of samples. *Observations* were undertaken and recorded with the knowledge of the participants in a community center, in a kindergarten, among Kurdish families, and among groups of friends (four samples). "*Hidden*" *observations* were undertaken through telephone conversations in which subjects' conversations were recorded without their knowledge (two samples: operator of switchboard and focal beeper). *Interviews* were undertaken with immigrant university students, other university students, people in their workplace, and friends and relatives who were interviewed on different topics (four samples). The *content analysis* consisted of analysis of radio and television advertisements. With the one exception of the kindergarten, all the observers or interviewers (including the two operators) were women. We chose convenience samples because we had access to them.

Data Collection

Observations

In each of the following situations, there were at least fifteen hours of recorded observations.

1. *Community center.* The community center holds social, educational, and cultural activities for Tel Aviv citizens. Adult social games were one of the activities of the community center. We recorded conversations of 53 subjects, 29 males and 24 females, between the ages of twenty and forty-five, most of whom were college educated, during adult social games that were held for three hours on Wednesday nights. The observer recorded the conversations of five meetings. We asked participants to have their conversations recorded, and they agreed. The observer told them that the conversations were part of a research project on language style. All participants could see that the tape recorder was placed on the table.

Participants played a variety of social games. For example, each week they played a version of Twenty Questions. One person used a rubber band to attach a card to his or her head. According to questions that he or she asked and other participants answered, the player attempted to identify whose name was written on the card.

2. *Kindergarten.* The conversations of 36 kindergarten children, 20 boys and 16 girls, aged five and six, were recorded by a male observer during playtime. The observer visited the kindergarten for several days before the observations so that the children would become familiar with him. The kindergarten teacher was not present during these conversations.

3. *Kurdish family gatherings.* The conversations of seventeen family members (6 men, 11 women) were recorded. The family members had immigrated to Israel

from Russia two and a half years previously. Most of these conversations were about Friday night and Saturday dinners and social gatherings. Children were present in this setting. These families are patriarchal. Women are expected only to serve and obey their husbands, take care of the children, and center their activities in the kitchen. They are not supposed to make their own decisions. Our observer (of college age), herself a member of this community, felt ashamed about this situation but explained that this has been their way for generations and that it has worked for her parents and grandparents. The parents and family members surprisingly agreed to have their conversations recorded. Confidentiality was of course promised. One tape recorder was located in the kitchen, two more in the living room.

4. *Gatherings of friends.* The conversations among 42 friends (17 men, 25 women) between the ages of twenty and thirty were recorded. The observer recorded their conversations in diverse settings, such as in the cafeteria, at home, and waiting on line to enter a movie on a double date. Most of these conversations occurred between one man and one woman, although some took place between two men and one woman or between two women and one man. The observer told the friends that this conversation would be recorded for a research project on language style and that no names would be used. The friends agreed to this approach.

"Hidden" Observations

5. *Switchboard.* The opening telephone conversations of 50 clients, 34 women and 16 men, were recorded by a switchboard operator in a tiles manufacturing plant. Most of the conversations were short, an inquiry as to the whereabouts of a person or a specific question related to work.

6. *Focal beeper.* We analyzed the messages called in to the switchboard operator by 100 men and 100 women whose employer allows employees to receive messages via a beeper. The switchboard operator answers the telephone and writes the message to be delivered and the sender's name.

Out of our concerns for anonymity, in these two samples of "hidden" observations, only the gender of the person calling was recorded.

Interviews

7. *Immigrant university students.* Thirty students, 15 men and 15 women, aged nineteen to twenty-five, who had immigrated to Israel within the last seven years were asked four questions by a woman interviewer: (1) "Why did you immigrate to Israel?" (2) "What were the difficulties you experienced during the immigration process?" (3) "How do you feel about the way you were received into Israeli society?" (4) "What is a successful immigration, in your opinion?" All the conversations were held in private. The interviewer did not respond but only listened and recorded the answers without imposing any time or space limits. These interviews were conducted in Russian and translated into Hebrew, so that the respondents' answers would be natural and flowing.

8. *University students.* Sixty subjects, 30 men and 30 women, aged twenty-one to fifty-three, were asked by an interviewer: "Describe a dangerous situation that you were personally involved in or witnessed on the road. Describe what you felt and thought the moment it occurred and immediately afterward." The interviewer asked the interviewees to pay attention to the complexity of the question (the overall question consisted of several subquestions). The interviewer recorded the answers with the knowledge of the participants. Most of the interviewees were either friends or acquaintances of the interviewer.

9. *People in the workplace.* Sixty subjects, 30 men and 30 women, aged twenty to thirty-five, were interviewed. The interviewer asked the interviewees to answer questions about their age, employment, country of origin, education, religiosity, and army service. They were also asked to describe their relationships with current co-workers. The interviewer recorded the answers with the knowledge of the participants.

10. *Friends and relatives.* Forty subjects, 20 men and 20 women (all friends or relatives of the female interviewer), either married or in a serious relationship, aged nineteen to sixty-seven, were asked: "Please describe the way you met your spouse or current friend of the opposite sex." The interviews were conducted in the interviewee's or the researcher's home, according to the interviewee's preference, and with no other person being present. The interviewer asked participants questions about their age, family status, country of origin, education, and religiosity. The respondents were told that the research was about language styles.

Content Analysis

11. *Media advertisements.* The advertisements, presented on two television and two radio programs, were recorded. A total of approximately twenty hours were recorded. The television programs were on Channel 2 (one of the two official Israel channels) and appeared on Sunday and Wednesday, between 7:00 and 8:00 P.M.; the radio programs were broadcast on Monday and Thursday during the same hours. The advertisements dealt with computers, banks, newspapers, shopping, coffee, deodorants, and so on. One example: "You will hate yourself if you won't buy [at that supermarket]." The radio program presented songs, interspersed with advertisements. The television program, presented one hour before primetime (the 8 o'clock news broadcast) was geared for teenagers and was also interspersed with advertisements.

Coding and Procedure

In all cases we read the protocols (recorded observations, responses to interviews, media advertisements) and tallied the number of emotional terms for each sex. We counted whether the subject used the emotional term about himself/herself (e.g., "I am sad") as well as about another person (e.g., "You are sad"). All the words dealt with primary emotional states. In the following, the words in italics in-

dicating the primary emotional states and the words in parentheses represent either similar or different levels of the same emotion: *love* (liking, attraction, fondness), *joy* (happiness, excitement, delight), *surprise* (astonishment), *anger* (hate, dislike, hostility, jealousy), *sadness* (desperation, depression, disappointment, guilt), *fear* (anxiety, nervousness, shock). We used the same words for all the samples. In most cases, the word *feel* came before the specific emotion (e.g., I feel happy, I feel anxious).

We present examples of interview responses or respondents' talk (all taken from the various samples) that we coded as emotional talk: "I have a guilty conscience"; "This time I was really desperate"; "I'm very afraid. Maybe he will come back"; "I love to be pretty"; "I feel so ashamed"; "I'm afraid that he will find out"; "Say thanks that we are jealous, it means we love you"; "I'm quite disappointed about not getting the job"; "I had a frightening feeling"; "We got out [of the car]. Me and my boyfriend were happy to be alive"; "I'm terribly anxious to get married to him now"; "I feel so depressed"; "From the very beginning I liked him"; "You see, we were just twelve-year-old kids and since then we've been together. Already then I knew I was in love with him, and he knew it before. Funny, huh?"; "Boy, did I get angry"; "Oh, I really hate that Keren"; "I'm so excited to be pregnant"; "My husband hates tiles in our home, but I love them"; "I'm delighted because I got a great deal."

In this study, we did not avail ourselves of the benefit of the insider perspective—which takes into account nuances of expression, context of the behavior, depth of relationships, and particularly the individuals' own definitions of the words they use. Had the study been limited to one sample, we might very well have employed the insider perspective. However, because of the serious methodological problem of analyzing data across eleven samples and because we only had insider perspectives for a minority of the samples, we thought it best to use a standard criteria to ensure higher reliability. Thus, by using standard criteria of emotion terms and by not employing the "insider perspective," we solved the potential problem of framing observations, that is, the comparison of observations that cut across several kinds of relationships, settings, and forms of interaction.

We adapted criteria for identification of emotions as well as the specific emotional words from standard textbooks on emotion (Clark 1992; Davitz 1969; Izard 1991) as well as from studies of emotion concepts (Shaver et al. 1987; Storm and Storm 1987) and from previous research (Adams et al. 1995; Fivush 1989; Kuebli, Butler, and Fivush 1995). In addition, before we undertook this research, ten university students were asked to identify words depicting emotional states. There was more than 90 percent agreement among the judges on the words employed in previous studies. In each sample, either two or three judges read all the conversations and independently tallied the emotional words appearing in all the recorded data. Intercoder agreement in the counting of the number of emotional words was almost 100 percent. We used the differences of proportions test, in which for each sample the total number of emotional words expressed by the women was compared with the total number of emotional words expressed by the men.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the number of subjects and the number of emotional words used by men and women in each of the eleven samples. The first two columns present the number of men and women subjects. The next two columns present the number of emotional words, for the men and women respectively. The *z* and *p* columns indicate whether significant differences by means of the differences of proportions test were found in the number of emotional words between the sexes, for each of the samples. Thus, for the first sample, "community center," there were 29 men who during their conversation used emotional words 15 times. The 24 women in the same sample used emotional words 21 times. This difference is significant at *p* = .06. As shown in Table 1, a significant difference (*p* < .05, one-tailed) was found in each of the eleven samples (we consider the two samples with *p* = .058 and *p* = .067 as significant). In each sample, women used more emotional words than men. We note that in very few instances—10 times—the respondents used an emotional word while talking about someone else ("You are sad"). In all other instances the respondent was referring to himself or herself ("I am sad").

As there are many emotions (one study counts 162 emotions: Scherer, Wallbott, and Summerfield 1986), there are a number of classifications of emotions. These classifications usually reflect an etiology of the emotion—instinctive (biological), cultural, humanist (see Scheff 1985). Some of the major classifications are (1) social emotions (Shott 1979), such as guilt, shame, love, and jealousy, that involve and

TABLE 1. Gender Differences in "Talking Emotions"

Methods	Number of Subjects		Number of Emotional Words		<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
	Men <i>N</i>	Women <i>N</i>	Men <i>N</i>	Women <i>N</i>		
Fields						
Observations						
1. Community center	29	24	15	21	-1.57	.06
2. Kindergarten	20	16	2	9	-2.45	.007
3. Kurdish families	6	11	12	41	-1.93	.03
4. Friends	17	25	8	30	-2.44	.007
"Hidden" observations						
5. Switchboard	16	34	3	27	-2.58	.005
6. Focal beeper	101	101	2	19	-3.71	<.001
Reply to interviews						
7. Immigrant university students	15	15	5	11	-1.5	.07
8. University students	30	30	15	29	-2.11	.01
9. People in the workplace	30	30	5	15	-2.24	.01
10. Friends and relatives	20	20	22	48	-3.11	.001
Content analysis						
11. Media advertisements	60%	40%	10	20	-2.98	.001

connect two or more social actors; (2) coarse emotions (Scheff 1985), such as grief, fear, anger, shame, joy, and love attachment, that seem to have strong biological resonance; (3) introjected-extrojected emotions (Kemper 1978), distinguishing whether the self or the other is viewed as the agent for the emotion; (4) primary physiologically grounded emotions (fear, anger, depression, satisfaction) and secondary sociologically acquired emotions (guilt, shame, pride, gratitude, love, nostalgia, ennui, etc.; Kemper 1987). We examined each of these classifications to determine whether they fit the expressions of emotions most frequently elicited in the present study. The emotional terms did not fit into any specific classification, although some of the words were found in each of the classifications.

We further examined each word to determine whether certain emotional words were used more often by men than by women. We had thought that perhaps certain terms, particularly the more "masculine" ones, for example, "anger," might be expressed more by men than by women. However, we only found one word "excited" (which does not seem to be particularly masculine)—that the men used considerably more than the women.

DISCUSSION

The finding that all eleven samples showed significant differences convincingly confirms the hypothesis that women use verbal expressions of emotion more than men do. The occurrence of these emotional expressions in a variety of settings (e.g., children playing in a kindergarten, people talking by telephone to an anonymous switchboard operator, people playing a social game in a community center) clearly indicates the pervasiveness of this phenomenon. That they were found by a variety of research methods (observations, "hidden" observations, interviews, and content analysis) attests to their high reliability. Crawford (1995), a leading researcher in the area of gender and language, has criticized the field as all too often generalizing from a specific setting to all encounters between men and women. Similarly, Brody (1985) in a major review article on emotions, has criticized the field for improperly generalizing the findings of a specific emotion evidenced in a particular setting to other emotions or to other settings. The current research would seem to meet both these criticisms.

The findings do not accord with the contextual position. Its basic argument has been succinctly stated by Garcia (1998:36): "Observed differences may depend in part on context." And certainly our findings do not fit with the argument "that the analysis must take into account the entire episode of interaction, not simply the immediate sequential context of the phenomena of interest" (Garcia 1998:53). On the contrary, our findings support the position that men and women may have different speech styles, *regardless* of the context, although at this point our conclusion is limited to this one dimension of emotionality—emotional talk.

However, these findings accord with the difference perspective, which emphasizes socialization and the position that the relationship between speech and gender

is not related to context. Johnson (1994) derived from the difference perspective that men and women would exhibit different speech patterns, regardless of the context, for example, "in informal committees, work groups, and intimate relationships" (p. 124). Indeed, we found what Johnson predicted: gender differences in emotional talk in informal committees (community center: adult social games); in work groups (people in their workplace, switchboard); and in intimate relationships (Kurdish family gatherings, talk between friends and relatives). We found it among young children, among kindergarten children, and in late adulthood.

For symbolic interactionists who regard the context as a critical element in interactions, our finding of its unimportance may be perturbing. These findings, we suggest, may contribute to a better understanding of behavior and relationships. Perhaps there are other areas in which one would expect that the context has no or little influence (although we admit that we are hard pressed to suggest any). Therefore, in future research one might study situations in which the contexts are hypothesized to be of no or little influence, of moderate importance, and of major importance.

It is not yet known which of the two perspectives—difference or dominance—better accounts for the gender differences in language (Cameron 1992). The difference perspective, which locates the gender differences in paths of language socialization, would predict gender differences to be found in all the samples. But the dominance perspective, which locates gender differences in hierarchical power structures, would predict gender differences to be found mostly where power is an element in the interaction. Specifically, then, the dominance perspective would *not* expect gender differences in the kindergarten sample and most likely not in the four samples based on interviews. The other samples, with the exception of the samples of Kurdish families and media advertisements, probably lean to the equality dimension, and hence the dominance perspective would not anticipate gender differences in these samples. On the other hand, the dominance perspective would definitely predict gender differences among the Kurdish families, since theirs is a patriarchal society, and among the media advertisements, which would tend to characterize men as dominant, particularly in Israeli society. Since gender differences were found in each of the samples—and not only in the Kurdish and media advertisement samples, as predicted by the dominance perspective—we may infer that support is offered for the difference perspective.

While we expected to support our hypothesis, we did not anticipate such a high degree of confirmation. We do not believe that these findings are specific to Israeli society. We are currently analyzing other aspects of a larger study on gender and language using the same samples. None of the findings of the other analyses approach the consistency of the findings of the present analysis, seeming to resemble the overall pattern of findings reported in the literature. For example, in about one-fourth of our samples we found that men are more competitive than women (no significant gender differences on the remaining samples); in about half of our samples more women than men used tag questions and spoke more about personal and intimate topics (no significant gender differences on remaining samples); and in three-

fourths of the samples the women spoke more politely than the men (no significant gender differences in remaining samples). Furthermore, although relatively little research has been conducted in Israel on gender and language, what is available is consistent with American findings (Friedman 1996). We note also that we are unaware of any reported sociological or psychological findings that markedly differed in Israeli society.

Because these other findings of our larger study on gender and language seem to parallel the American findings in their inconsistent pattern in the effects of gender on language, we conclude that our findings of “ubiquitous” gender differences in the use of emotional terms is confined to this one specific language area. Above we cited studies demonstrating that women consistently report experiencing, expressing, and valuing emotions more than do men and that these differences are evident at early ages. These studies, which demonstrated that women are more emotional than men, usually asked both sexes to report which emotional feelings they experience. Could the men and women in some of these studies have reported the emotions expected of them? Instead, we recorded conversations in relatively “natural settings” and, by using an objective criteria, determined which gender used more emotional terms in conversations. One obvious advantage of our approach is that the subjects in our samples were unaware that we were studying emotions. On the basis of our findings we can conclude that women actually use more verbal expressions of emotions than men do.

We wish to be careful in our conclusions. The study did not demonstrate that women are more emotional than men, for we studied only one dimension of emotionality—the use of emotional terms. Emotional expressions include much more than the use of certain words. Voice volume, intensity, and rate of speech and the rhythm of the conversation were not recorded (e.g., gestures, smiles, and frowns). Neither was the body language of the participants recorded. Furthermore, the finding that women use more emotional words does not necessarily mean that they are more emotional than men; they may talk more emotionally but not necessarily feel more emotional than men. Hochschild (1975), a pioneer in the sociology of emotions, observed that social organizations specify what feelings should be expressed and the techniques for enforcing them. Thoits (1996) described some strategies of interpersonal emotion management, such as acts that are intended to manipulate group members’ feelings. People do “emotional work” on themselves to create the suitable feelings. The same process may exist in the minds of both sexes; men work on themselves to avoid expressing emotions, while women work on themselves to express emotions. But the women’s emotional expressions are limited to talking about themselves—not about others. It seems, then, that while women are more likely to express how they themselves may feel, they do not project this to others; that is, they do not necessarily perceive others as being more emotional.

A limitation of the study, besides the obvious one of nonrandom samples, is that in only one sample was the observer or the interviewer male. However, in the sample of content analysis of media advertisements the sex of the data collector was

not relevant. And among the samples of Kurdish families and friends, while it was a woman who was responsible for arranging the research, the conversations were tape recorded without the presence of the researcher. However, we note that either no or very small differences have been found between male and female interviewers (Groves 1989; Rossi, Wright, and Anderson 1983). Therefore, it is likely that we would have obtained similar findings had male interviewers been employed to collect the data.

In general, variables such as the age of the speaker, the ethnicity of the speaker, the relationship between the participants, and the context of the interaction all influence language choices and would be expected to have an impact on gender differences in emotional speech. Yet whatever the importance of these variables may be, the major finding is the overriding importance of the "main effect"—gender—on verbal emotional expression.

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