

# Limitation of Feminine Language in a Society and its Effect on the Foreigner's Speech during Acquiring Language Aspects (Saudi Arabic Pidgin as a Model)

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**Abstract:-** Tendency to acquire a second second language is a natural process that takes place mostly when people immigrate to another country in which the language is not familiar. Second language acquisition describes people who acquire a language other than their mother tongue as a second language ( Krashin, 1988). Several factors and their influence on the process of acquiring a language were discussed by scholars over long years. Social interaction has been emphasized in second language acquisition theories "Language is learned through social interaction" (Gordon 2004, p. 439). This paper aims at discussing the relation of feminine pronouns limitation in communication and its affect on the acquisition of second language particularly its effect on the Saudi pidgin language. Here the attempt will be devoted to shed light on the effect of the feminine language absence in a conservative community like that in Saudi Arabia. Separation between the two sexes male and female could be a factor that has a great influence on the way of acquiring a language for people who come to contact in a particular community like Saudi one. Absence of one of the two sex's language could cause misunderstanding of different aspect of a language that cause imperfection in the recognition of some aspects acquired language like pronouns that in turn appear in the outcomes represents in the speech of the learners. Since Robin Lakoff's Language and Woman's Place (LWP), published in 1975, which was one of the first publications of its time to address the relationship between language and gender, there has been number of attempts to shed light on this effect. Pidgin and creoles languages are seen in somehow second languages share similar processes of second language acquisition in its stages to creolization which is affected by some factors like male and female's language..

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## Introduction

Social structure and the norms in the community that control the behavior of people

and how they think reflects in the language they use. The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis states that there are certain thoughts of an individual in one language that cannot be understood by those

who live in another language (Sapir 1995). This is to say that, language carries thought and beliefs of the people which consider a part of their culture. Knowledge and beliefs that constitute people's culture are habitually encoded and transmitted into language. Language is the medium of communication through which the members in the community participate in a variety of social activities. Shortage of particular language vocabularies and structures used by people in such community indicates that there are variables that reflect the relation between language and thought and the people who use that language (Solbin 1996). Speakers of different languages and cultures living in such speech community and trying to acquire the language of the community may feel unsatisfied about the level of proficiency they reach because of the shortage of particular kind of words that they don't hear or they may hear it rarely. This may influence and limit the kind of language they acquire and which they use in their speech. Absence of kind of words and some linguistic structures of the language constitute an obstacle in a person's utterances that he/she consciously or unconsciously make up for the shortage by using other words that he/she thinks they are right.

Hearing and communicating with females in the society is the authentic input that supports the recognition of the language that in some of its aspect devoted to females and by which female are addressed. In addition, there are words particularly mostly are used by females more than males, like color words. Women are more proficient in using color words than men who

may not use or not dare to say some of it because traditionally it relates to women's expressions. For example it is not normal to see a male asking about pink or purple clothes or mobiles. Also, females tend to use some adjectives that are mostly not used by men. Women likely tend to use adjectives and diminutive words more than men. They use many adjectives that men do not or rarely use it for the same reason which they related to women. Adjectives such as beautiful and pretty can't be used to describe men. They are normally used to describe women. Women use words that have meaning of small

Such as bookie, hanky, panties, and etc.... in addition to these kinds of words there are, as well, words related to the emotions and some adverbs normally used by females.

#### **Saudi community construction**

Saudi community is a wide community and it is controlled by some social norms' restrictions that are shared by the majority of the people in Saudi Arabia, except some who are, somehow, out of the circle of the social restrictions according to the nature of the area in which they live, such as Jeddah. Saudi community is a conservative community in respect to the separation between the two genders, male and female.

Males are the dominant in the society. They almost run all works and demonstrate most of daily life activities from trade to business which are related to males. At the same time, women carry out businesses that are related to women in which men are not allowed to do it, even in trade

or medical. This restriction applies to all men in the community including the foreigners.

Language used in Saudi community daily life activities is mostly gender based. This language is used to communicate between the speech community members and with the foreigners who work in different aspects of life. Some of the foreigners who work in some places such as restaurants and malls that require the two genders, males and females, to come in such places mostly deal with men, but in some cases, shyly, they deal with females using some words they repeat them frequently nearly with all cases. Arabic language is a medium of communication uses for communication whether among the foreigners themselves or with Arab native speakers. This takes place because most of the foreigners are of different linguistic backgrounds. It is obviously clear to hear broken simplified Arabic language spoken by people. This phenomenon linguistically called pidgin language. One of its major characteristics is the shortage of linguistic features in all aspects of the language including morphosyntactic, phonological, and semantic aspects. Feminine language plays an important role and enriches the communicative language in the society. Restriction between the genders in the community obviously somehow causes such equilibrium. In the following, I'm going to shed light on the relation between the feminine language absence and the foreigner's speech represents in the Arabic pidgin language that called by some scholars Saudi Arabic pidgin (SAP).

## **Gender and language**

### **1- The effect of women's language invisibility**

In a community like that of Saudi, men are seen as the heart of the society, while women are peripheral or mostly invisible from daily life activities in the community. According to Robin Lakoff, in a male-dominated society women are pressured to show the feminine qualities of weakness and subordination toward men. Thus, "it is entirely predictable, and given the pressure towards social conformity rational, that women should demonstrate these qualities in their speech as well as in other aspects of their behavior." (White, Andrew; 2003). Linguistic behavior of the woman may reflect her subordinate position that the women occupy in the society. This linguistic behavior reflects in the style of speech and the language they use. Language used by females has specific linguistic features that make it different of masculine language (Robin Lakoff, 1975). Holmes (2001) divides feminine language into two groups. Firstly, those 'linguistic devices which may be used for hedging or reducing the force of an utterance,' such as fillers, tag questions, and rising intonation on declaratives, and secondly, 'features which may boost or intensify a proposition's force such as emphatic stress and intensifiers.

The effect of the absence of this kind of language in communication on the foreigners who are learning the language in the community is not small. The feminine language and addressing the females in communication support the process of cognition of the difference between the words that are used for each gender, female pronouns and masculine pronouns.

Concerning the nouns in Arabic spoken in Saudi Arabia, pronouns are mostly inflectional which can

be distinguished in the case of feminine and masculine by the suffixes that normally add to the noun. Pronouns in Arabic language are more specific than many other foreign languages that in some cases cause confusion for the learners who

do not have such case in their languages. For example, Arabic native speakers discriminate both feminine and masculine pronouns as we can see in the following chart:

Arabic Subject Pronouns		
Singular	Dual	Plural
I أنا ana	you (dual male or female) أَنْتُمَا antuma	We نحن Nahn
you (singular masculine.) أَنْتَ anta	they (dual male or female) هُمَا humaa	you (plural masculine) أَنْتُمْ antum
you (singular feminine) أَنْتِ anti		you (plural feminine) أَنْتُنَّ antun
he هو howa		they (plural masculine) هُمْ hum
she هي hiya		they (plural feminine) هُنَّ hun

Chart No (1) Arabic subject pronoun.

Regardless the syntactic structure of the sentence in Saudi Arabic pidgin, the speakers of Saudi Arabic pidgin cannot discriminate the pronouns correctly, so that Pronouns will not be distinguished in the case of feminine or masculine. In Saudi Arabic, as can be seen in the chart above, gender pronouns are different for both sex male and female. Consider the following examples:

1-ana ashtaghl.....SA the personal pronoun is “ana” used to express the first person,

I work.....ENG

2-anta teshtaghl.....SA the personal pronoun is “anta” used to express masculine third person .

you work.....ENG

3-anti teshtaghili.....SA the personal masculine pronoun “anta” is used to address a feminine addressee

you work .....ENG

Foreigner Arabic pidgin speaker may use statement number 2 to address the feminine addressee regardless that the pronoun is a masculine one. To the speaker, there is no

difference in addressing the male and female using the same pronoun. He/she may say:

-anta fi shughul.....SPA, addressing male.

anta teshtaghil.....SA

You work.....ENG

-anta fi shughul.....SPA, addressing female.

anti teshtaghili.....SA

You work.....ENG

The same may takes place when using the third person pronoun to state something. Here the pronoun huwa “he” is used for masculine and hiya “she” for feminine in Arabic language. For example:

4-huwa yeshtaghil.....SA

he works.....ENG

5-hiya teshtaghil.....SA

She works.....ENG

To state the previous statement about a male or a female person, the Arabic pidgin language speaker may uses statement number 4 for both sex male and female using the same pronoun “huwa”, so he/she may says:

huwa fi shughul..... SAP, female addressee

hiya teshteghil.....ARB

She works.....ENG

huwa fi shughul..... SAP, male addressee

huwa yeshteghil.....ARB

He works.....ENG

Lack of communication with feminine apparently appears in the speech of pidgin Arabic speakers when using the possessive pronoun. The speaker mostly cannot use or distinguish between possessive pronoun and which suffix he/she has to use with a particular gender, male or female. In Arabic, possessive pronouns are suffixes add to the noun. In the following chart possessive pronoun are shown:

Arabic Determinative Possessive Pronouns		
Singular	Dual	Plural
Me: noun+i ي	You (dual male or female): noun+kumaa كُما	We: noun+naa نا
You (masculine): noun+k ك	Them (dual male or female): noun+humaa هُما	You (plural masculine): noun+kum كُم
You (feminine): noun+ki كِ		You (plural feminine): noun+kun كُن

Him: noun+h ه ه		Them (plural masculine): noun+hum هُم
Her: noun+ha ها		Them (plural feminine): noun+hun هُن

Chart No (2) Arabic Determinative Possessive Pronouns

The following examples may clarify how these pronouns use with the gender in Arabic language, as well in Saudi Arabic dialects.

Book = kitab كتاب

My book = kitabi كتابي

Your book = kitabuk كتابك

Your book (singular female) = kitabuki كتابكِ

His book = Kitabuh كتابه

Her book = Kitabuha كتابها

Your book (dual male or female) = kitabukumaa كتابكما

Their book (dual male or female) = kitabuhumaa كتابهما

Our book = Kitabuna كتابنا

Your book (plural masculine) = kitabukum كتابكم

Your book (plural feminine) = kitabukun كتابكن

Their book (plural masculine) = kitabuhum كتابهم

Their book (plural feminine) = kitabuhun كتابهن

As can be seen from the above chart, suffixes that attach to the noun signify the gender the speaker addresses. If the speaker uses the suffix “ ki ” attached to the noun, this means that he/ she is talking about a female person, but if the speaker uses the suffix “ k ” the addressee should be a male, for example:

ana shuf sayara inta .....ASP, male addressee

ana shufit sayarataki .....SA,

I have seen your car.....ENG

ana shuf sayara inta.....ASP, female addressee

ana shufit sayaratik.....SA

I have seen your car.....EN

Variation in using different suffixes in addition to the absence of the feminine communication with men in general and with the foreigners in particular causes a confusion to the speaker which leads to use an alternative which is not properly fit the use for the intended addressee such as what appears in the following examples:

-kitab inta mu nazif.....male addressee

kitabak mu nadhif .....SA

Your book is not clean.....ENG

-kitab inta mu nazif”..... SAP, female addressee

kitabiki mu nadhif .....ARB

Your book is not clean.....ENG

In the previous example it can be seen that the speaker tends to use an alternative pronoun to address a male or a female person due to a confusion caused by the absence of knowledge on how to address a female person.

### Conclusion

Considering the variation of the pronouns and how they are used in the speech of the foreigners or what we can call Arabic pidgin speakers, we manifest that the variation in using the nouns imperfectly could be related to different factors. Lack of communication with feminine is one of these factors that cause a confusion when the foreigner speaker addresses a person. The nature of the construction of the community also could be another reason that limits the contact between the two sex as we can see in a community like that in Saudi one. Using masculine pronouns to address males and females as we saw in the previous examples above assure the imbalance in using proper language by the learner the matter that affect his performance during speech. Female language is not that much different of that of male one, but normally there are some vocabularies which are known to be devoted to females. Absence of the female's language causes improper recognition by those who try to acquire the language in an informal situation like mostly what happen in the Saudi community. Immigrant spends several years in the community without any contact or expose to the language of other sex except in few cases. With regard to the foreigner pidgin Arabic speakers, they tend to use what they heard as input that they finally express and produce in their speech. Using the pronouns in the speech for communication and the noun agreement within the structure is an indicator whether the person knows the language well or not. It is true that some confusion is caused by the nature of the nouns in Arabic language due to the pronouns

are inflectional. But regardless the inflectional case of the nouns, the learner of a language can manage and use the pronouns well like that when using the masculine one. Exposure to the feminine communication is vital in order to using the proper words and pronouns. Limitation of using any structure in a language or misusing of that structure could lead the learner to mistakes. In communication the Arabic pidgin speaker tends to use an alternative word or structure that he thinks it will fulfill the shortage in his language.

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