Effects of Biological and Psychological Gender, Age Cohort, and Interviewer Gender on Attitudes Toward Gender-Inclusive/Exclusive Language

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Proposals for gender-inclusive language reforms have been institutionalized by many organizations, but a number of factors may affect individuals' own language behaviors and attitudes in this domain. Previous resesarch has shown the influence of respondents' gender and social affiliations on their willingness to accept gender-inclusive language reforms. Study 1 builds upon those earlier surveys by adapting their questions for use in face-to-face interviews. Factors explored in Study 1 included interviewees' gender and age cohort and the situational variable of interviewer gender. Results showed that women were more concerned about sexist language than men, more likely to evaluate it negatively, and likely to use more gender-inclusive methods to avoid it. Older subjects were more attentive to gender-exclusive language than current college students. Interviewer gender also exerted effects such that female interviewers elicited more negative attitudes toward gender-exclusive language than did male interviewers. Young men interviewed by males reported using fewest gender-inclusive constructions, while older females interviewed by women used the most. Study 2 demonstrated the effect of psychological gender role types on attitudes toward gender-inclusive language. Androgynous individuals reported using more methods to avoid gender-exclusive reference than did either gender-neutral or instrumental (traditionally masculine) participants. Implications for diffusing gender-inclusive language reform are discussed.

Language reform is never value-free. For every speech community, language variation functions to establish social identity, and to demarcate boundaries

nonsexist language are suggestions for teachers, writers, and contributors to NCTE publications. For the editors of NCTE publications, however, they are a statement of editorial policy."

Although institutional policies increasingly promulgate gender-inclusive language usage, the degree to which individuals are willing to abide by those policies is not at all clear. Bate (1978) was among the first to systematically survey attitudes toward gender-inclusive language. Her sample was limited to college faculty, on the assumption that teachers' language attitudes are reproduced among their students. Bate concluded that speakers' inclination to accept gender-inclusive language reforms depended upon their allegiance to the principle of equal rights for women and men. But even among those who expressed support for gender-inclusive language, individuals were uncertain about alternatives to "he" as a generic third-person singular pronoun. They were unhappy with the clumsiness of "the or she" (e.g., "If a student loses his or her book, he or she must identify himself or herself...."), and similarly unhappy with the violation of number entailed in using "they" (e.g., "If a student loses their book....").

To further explore attitudes toward gender-inclusive language, Henley and Dragun (1983) developed a standardized questionnaire. The instrument inquired about subjects' (1) interest in the issue of sexism in language, (2) the methods they used to avoid sexist language and (3) the effort they expended in doing so, (4) about source that motivated their decision to adopt gender-inclusive language, (5) their preference among proposed innovations for gender-neutral pronouns, and several related matters. Henley and Dragun's sample was described as mainly under 25 years old, nearly all college educated, half currently not enrolled in college, and ethnically diverse. Among the survey's findings, about 25% of the respondents did not consider sexist language to be at all a significant issue, although the majority did report using at least one method to avoid sexist language. For example, slightly over 50% said they used "Ms." instead of "Mrs." or "Miss." Women, nonstudents, and minority group members all reported greater acceptance of language reform proposals of one kind or another than did their male or Anglo or college student counterparts.

Harrigan and Luck (1988) used the Henley and Dragun (1983) instrument to survey attitudes toward sexist language among five groups: members of a local chapter of the National Organization of Women (NOW), university faculty members, medical students, English graduate students, and psychology graduate students. Not surprisingly, NOW members were most concerned about the issue of sexist language, while medical students were least. Graduate students in English joined medical students in their reluctance to adopt alternatives to "he" as generic third person singular. Questions about factors impelling respondents to adopt gender-inclusive language

between the social identities of others (Fishman, 1989). Any externally imposed mandate to alter a language system, therefore, simultaneously calls upon speakers to alter their system of values and social affiliation. Even proposals for language reform that seem to be warranted on purely logical grounds of efficiency or simplicity are not immune to the effects of chauvinism. H. L. Mencken (1936), for example, recounts that Noah Webster encountered resistance to efforts to standardize American spelling a few years after the American revolution. Webster ultimately found it advantageous to bolster his proposal by associating it with nationalistic, anti-British sentiments.

Attitudinal valence is that much more potent a factor when language forms are expressly motivated by campaigns for engineering cultural mores and social affinities. Thus, for example, politics promoting French as an official language in Canada engender the most extreme passions on both sides of the Anglophile/Francophile rift.

The movement to promote gender-inclusive language usage in English, to eliminate so-called "sexist language," is likewise a campaign to reform social values by reforming language (Miller & Swift, 1988). As a consequence, proposals for gender-inclusive language have stimulated partisan support and opposition not entirely in proportion to the purely linguistic scope of proposed changes. Consider the case of man-linked words like "mankind," "chairman" and "mailman." Empirical research does indeed warrant the conclusion that man-linked words tend to evoke masculine images; such terms are not psychologically generic (Bem & Bem, 1973; Schneider & Hacker, 1973; Todd-Mancillas, 1981). Yet a number of critics greet suggestions for gender-inclusive alternatives like "humankind" or "chairperson" or "mail carrier" with derision (e.g., McFadden, 1981).

These alternatives to gender-exclusive expressions are, however, logical from the perspective of language design, since they do eliminate some referential ambiguity of using "man" generically (e.g., "The Chairman missed the meeting because her husband wrecked his car," see Pincus & Pincus, 1980). Moreover, it appears that speakers who adopt gender-inclusive language suffer no negative evaluations for doing so (Greene & Rubin, in press), and in some cases may actually be judged more favorably (Salter, Weider-Hatfield & Rubin, 1983). It is reasonable to infer, then, that the root of much resistance to these reforms arises because changing gender-linked language means changing gender-linked social orders.

Despite resistance, the movement for gender-inclusive language reform has attained a firm institutional foothold. Literally dozens of publishers and professional organizations have issued guidelines for nonsexist language use (see compilation in Frank & Treichler, 1989). The sanctions available to enforce these guidelines regulate full participation in institutional life. As the National Council of Teachers of English (1985) put it, "These guidelines for

were among the few queries in which men and women differed significantly. Forty percent of women credited the women's movement, while only 11% of men did likewise. Psychology students ranked "requirements of others" especially high as factors inducing them to adopt gender-inclusive language. In general, the findings suggest that the effects of respondents' group membership were greater than the effect of respondents' gender in determining attitudes toward gender-inclusive language.

One possible scenario accords decreasing importance to such group memberships, however. In the previous research, those most firmly associated with feminist causes were most likely to espouse positive attitudes toward gender-inclusive language (Bate, 1978; Harrigan & Lucic, 1988; see also Greene & Rubin, in press; Jacobson & Insko, 1985). As time passes and proposals for language reform become more firmly entrenched-entrenched especially in influential social institutions like mainstream churches and television-gender-inclusive language may become more normative. Group differences may become less pronounced as the entire society shifts in the institutionally prescribed direction.

On the other hand, evidence also abounds indicating that concern for women's issues in general reached its zenith in the 1970's and has subsequently declined. A recent survey conducted by the New York Times (Belkin, 1989), for example, shows that women between the ages of 18 and 29 are far more sanguine about gender equity and gender relations than are their elder sisters. If so, then attitudes toward gender-inclusive language will not have moved in a uniformly positive direction. Instead, these attitudes may have regressed over time.

In 1978, Bate described attitudes toward language and gender as "in transition." Exactly one decade later, Harrigan and Lucic called for a "reassessment" of earlier findings in light of changes over time. Neither of these studies, however, made provision for longitudinal comparisons. In the absence of longitudinal data from otherwise comparable populations, a cross-sectional design, which compares respondents from different age groups, seems well warranted.

In addition to status variables like gender and age cohort, situational variables may also affect language attitudes. Indeed, one of the major criticisms of conventional "matched guise" designs for researching language attitudes hinges on their stripping away of communicative context (Robinson, 1972). One drawback which Harrigan and Lucic (1988) acknowledged in their procedure was their use of a mailed survey. Self-selection sampling biases and lack of care and motivation in responding are more prevalent in a mail survey than in face-to-face interviews. Bate (1978), on the other hand, collected data by means of interviews. (Henley and Dragun (1983) do not specify how they collected their data.)

One consequence of using face-to-face elicitation methods to collect self-report data about attitudinally charged issues, is that interviewees may be especially prone to give answers they believe to be most socially desirable, responses that they believe will bring social approval from their interviewer (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964). For example, when race of the interviewer is a factor, interviewees tend to articulate views that avoid offending members of the interviewer's race (Hatchett & Schuman, 1975). Modeling (Phillips & Clancy, 1972), wherein interviewers subtly and usually unintentionally convey their own responses to questions they are posing to interviewees, is a related phenomenon. Interviewees may obligingly reflect back the responses interviewers are modeling, just for the sake of conversational verisimilitude. Based on social desirability or on modeling explanations, one would hypothesize that female interviewers would elicit more positive attitudes toward gender-inclusive language, while male interviewers would obtain more negative responses.

Distortions due to gender of interviewer may arise from altogether different mechanisms, however. An alternative explanation for the effects of interviewer gender draws upon perspectives on gender and power in dyadic interactions (Kramerae, 1981). The relation between interviewer and interviewee is inherently asymmetrical; the interviewer controls the agenda. Although some recent studies suggest changing conversational dynamics in recent years (Bate, 1988), it is generally accepted that relations between male and female conversational partners are likewise asymmetrical (West & Zimmerman, 1983); men typically control speaking turns and topic shifts. If men tend to dominate conversations in these ways, they likely dominate in others, as well. Males communicating with males constitute the context in which male gender role orientations receive their strongest expression. Predictions based on male conversational dominance therefore suggest an interaction between interviewer and interviewee gender such that cross-sex pairing would result in attitude ratings similar to male-male pairings. Only female-female pairings would diverge.

In this light, the effects of interviewee and interviewer gender become productive factors for deliberate inquiry. Bate (1978), however, does not specify how interviewer gender was taken into account. But in a host of studies regarding other interview outcomes, researchers have systematically considered these factors. Benney, Riesman and Star (1956), for example, reported secondary analyses of several large-scale surveys, and concluded that female interviewers and male interviewers essentially experience interviews in different ways; female interviewers enjoy them more and have higher regard for their respondents. With respect to interviewees' frankness about sensitive gender-related topics, they inferred that same sex interviews are likely to produce more forthcoming responses than cross-sex. Benney et al. adopt

a homophily framework to explain these results. Interviewees respond more openly to people whom they identify as having similar group memberships. This explanation, according to Benney et al., extends to age of interviewer as well as to gender.

One study of communication attitudes (although not specifically language attitudes) which deliberately manipulated gender of interviewer was conducted by Pearson (1982). Using telephone interviews, she found that female interviewers were paradoxically more likely than male interviewers to elicit especially high rankings of male message sources. Women elicited these attitudes from both male and female interviewees.

The present research is an extension of work conducted by Henley and Dragun (1983) and Harrigan and Lucic (1988). Both Study 1 and Study 2 employ an adaptation of the questionnaire used in those earlier projects to survey attitudes toward gender-inclusive language. In Study 1, male and female interviewees were randomly assigned to either male or female interviewers. Interviewees were drawn from two cohort groups: students currently enrolled in college and students who attended college a decade ago.

Study 1 explores the effects of certain relevant group differences (gender and age) in conjunction with a situational variable (gender of interviewer). Study 2 (in which subjects were administered the questionnaire in writing rather than in interviews), in contrast, proceeds by exploring the contribution of a psychological trait or individual difference variable to respondents' attitudes toward gender and language. The individual difference investigated in Study 2 is gender role typing as explicated by Bem (1974, 1981).

STUDY 1

Methods

Research Participants. The final sample was comprised of 132 women and 115 men. Of these, 128 were between the ages of 18 and 25 (M = 20.83; s.d. = 1.23) and currently enrolled as undergraduates at a Southeastern university. For the older comparison group, an attempt was made to identify a cohort that attended college approximately a decade earlier. This group, therefore, was comprised of 119 college graduates between the ages of 30 and 45 (M = 37.18; s.d. = 5.15). The average ages of the two groups were significantly different (t = 34.90, df = 245, p < .001).

Interviewees were recruited and interviewed by trained undergraduates majoring in speech communication.¹ These participants were volunteers who

received no compensation. Some interviewees were acquaintances of members of the data collecting group, others were service workers with whom members of the data collecting group came in contact. Interviewees were randomly assigned to either a male or a female interviewer. Sixty-one female interviewees were interviewed by women, 73 women were interviewed by men, 53 male interviewees were interviewed by women, and 62 men were interviewed by male interviewers.

Instrument and Procedures. The interview schedule developed for this study was closely adapted, with permission, from Henley and Dragun (1983). Because pilot testing indicated that 20 minutes was the maximum amount of time these interviews could reasonably last, several items from the original were deleted, especially those concerning preferences among invented gender-neutral pronouns. Phrasing was simplified to facilitate oral administration and to avoid dysfunctions such as negative questions. In addition, some demographic questions were incorporated into the interviews.

The resulting instrument included six major sections: (1) a dichotomous item indicating interviewees' belief that the English language contains elements of sexism; (2) a six-point scale indicating degree of concern about sexism in language-ranging from "I don't believe it's an issue/not aware/don't care" to "I have eliminated all the sexist language I know of/never use sexist language"; (3) a series of semantic differential scales indicating the degree of sexism respondents associated with each of seven gender-exclusive constructions—e.g., phrases like "old wives' tale," terms like "mankind," and "he" used for generic reference; (4) a series of dichotomous items, on which interviewees indicated which of 17 gender-inclusive constructions they typically used—e.g., avoiding feminine prefixes as in "lady doctor," or switching to passive voice to avoid generic "he"; (5) a ranking task to indicate the most important of ten possible influences for adopting nonsexist language—e.g., "speech of those around me" or "female friend's influence"; and (6) a set of five Likert-type items inquiring about willingness to use a sex-neutral personal pronoun in different contexts—e.g., "I would use a sex-neutral pronoun in formal speaking and interviews."²

Face-to-face interviews were conducted individually at participants' homes, work places, or at a variety of gathering places. Interviewers introduced the issue of sexism in language with a script that provided examples of gender exclusive language, but then allowed, "Some people feel that it is big problem, and some people do not. Some people try hard to use non-sexist language, and other people pay no attention to it. We appreciate your honest opinions about the subject of sexism in language." Where pilot testing showed that interviewees would have difficulty recalling the content of cer-

tain complex questions (e.g., choosing among 10 sources of influence for adopting gender-inclusive language), printed stimulus cards were used as aids.

Analysis. Separate Chi-square analyses were conducted for cross tabulations of interviewee gender, interviewer gender and interviewee age cohort with the items regarding belief and degree of concern about sexist language. For the latter variable, which had six levels, cells were collapsed where needed to ensure adequate expected frequencies in each cell.

A composite variable indicating judgments of sexism in language was constructed by summing the seven semantic differential items in which respondents evaluated gender-exclusive constructions. The internal consistency reliability for this judgment scale was .81 (Cronbach's alpha). The reliability analysis showed that internal consistency could be boosted to .84 if the item regarding judgments of "poetess" were deleted. This was therefore done.

Another composite variable was constructed by summing the number of methods (0-17) used by participants to avoid gender-exclusive language. After eliminating the response labeled "other" (which detracted from reliability), the internal consistency of this scale was .67.

A third composite was the sum of responses to the five Likert-type items indicating willingness to use an invented gender-neutral personal pronoun. Internal consistency was .85.

Each of the three composite variables was subjected to a separate 2 × 2 × 2 factorial ANOVA. Subjects were nested in combinations of interviewee gender, interviewer gender, and interviewee age. Post hoc analyses of significant interactions used the Student-Newman-Keuls procedure for pairwise cell mean comparisons.

Finally, frequency distributions were compiled to show participants' responses to questions about influences leading to language change. These distributions aggregate the three most important factors leading to adoption of gender-inclusive language identified by each participant. The compilation was run separately for the age and interviewee gender subgroups and for gender of interviewer.

Results

For the dichotomous item, "Do you believe our language contains elements of sexism?" 77.2% of the sample answered in the affirmative. Chi-square tests revealed no statistically significant differences between the affirmative responses of older (79.7%) or younger (75%), between female (81.1%) or male (72.8%) interviewees, or between those interviewed by female (78.1%) or male (76.6%) interviewers.

Significant differences between groups did emerge, however, for the proportions of participants indicating different levels of concern. These results are summarized in Table 1. Female and male interviewers revealed different response patterns ($Chi^2 = 1.270$, df = 4, $p < .05$), with a relatively large proportion of males (29.6%) indicating no awareness or concern whatsoever for the issue. Older and younger participants also differed appreciably ($Chi^2 = 22.79$, df = 4, $p < .001$). Inspection of Table 1 shows that about three times as many older participants reported highest levels of concern, relative to their younger counterparts. Sex of the interviewer was likewise associated with level of concern ($Chi^2 = 12.07$, df = 4, $p < .05$). Female interviewers tended to elicit expressions of higher levels of concern.

ANOVAs for the three composite variables are summarized in Table 11. The ANOVA of number of methods used to avoid gender-exclusive language revealed a main effect for gender of the interviewee($F_{1,238}14.057$, $p < .001$, $omega^2 = .048$). Females reported using more methods than did males ($M_{femEE} = 7.02$; $M_{malEE} = 5.64$). Age also exerted a significant effect on this dependent variable ($F_{1,238} = 10.226$, $p < .005$, $omega^2 = .034$). Older participants exceeded younger ones on this measure ($M_{old} = 6.97$; $M_{young} = 5.82$).

These main effects on number of methods used were modified, however, by the significant three-way interaction among age of interviewee, gender of interviewee, and gender of interviewer ($F_{1,238} = 4.61$, $p < .05$, $omega^2 = .013$). The interaction is graphed in figure 1, which also reports the eight cell means. *Post hoc* comparisons between each pair of cell means (Student-Newman-Keuls) indicated that older women who were interviewed by women reported more methods than older men who were interviewed by women and more than younger men interviewed by male interviewers. The latter group, younger men interviewed by men, manifested the lowest cell mean, and was also significantly lower than older women interviewed by men and older men interviewed by men. No other comparisons were significant.

Gender of the interviewee further exerted a main effect on the ANOVA of judgments of sexism in linguistic expressions ($F_{femEE} = 9.164$, $p <$

Table 1. Degree of Concern About Gender-Exclusive Language Cross-Tabulated by Interviewee (EE) Gender and Age and by Interviewer (ER) Age (Percent of Group Members)

	Female EEs	Male EEs	Younger EEs	Older EEs	Female ERs	Male ERs
Not aware/don't care	14.4%	29.6%	26.6	16.0%	13.2%	27.7%
Not too concerned	40.2	36.5	41.4	35.3	36.8	39.7
Concerned but inactive	18.9	7.8	18.0	9.2	18.9	9.9
Failed attempts to change	3.8	5.2	3.1	5.9	6.6	2.8
Successful language change	22.7	20.9	10.9	33.6	24.5	19.9

Fig. 1. Interaction between gender of interviewer (ER), age and gender of interviewer (EE) for number of gender-inclusive methods used.

Legend: ······ MaleEE/YoungerEE
——— MaleEE/OlderEE
——— FemaleEE/YoungerEE
——— FemaleEE/OlderEE

Table III. Percent of Participants Indicating Importance of Factor Broken Down By Age and Gender of Interviewer (EE) and Gender of Interviewer (ER)[a]

	Fem EE	Male EE	Young EE	Older EE	Fem ER	Male ER	Total
Women's movement	12.6%	4.2%	4.5%	12.2%	10.2%	7.5%	8.7%
Men's movement	0.0	1.6	0.0	1.6	0.8	0.7	0.8
Female friend	22.4	43.8	30.9	33.6	30.5	33.3	32.0
Male friend	6.3	9.1	5.3	10.0	8.4	6.8	7.6
Own conclusions	69.3	55.3	56.3	68.7	57.6	66.7	62.6
Ambient speech	42.7	36.3	45.9	32.8	41.6	38.3	39.5
Others' requirements	34.3	29.7	33.1	31.3	41.5	24.5	32.1
Authority	49.7	43.0	50.4	42.8	45.0	47.6	46.3
Articles and books	28.7	26.5	29.4	26.0	36.5	20.4	27.5
Other	9.8	14.8	12.9	12.3	11.0	13.6	12.4

[a]Frequency with which factor was identified among the three most important; columns, therefore, may sum to greater than 100%.

Table II. Summary of Interviewer (EE) Gender by Interviewer Age by Interviewer (ER) Gender ANOVAs of Three Measures of Attitudes Toward Gender-Inclusive Language

	df	Methods used	Judgment of sexism	Acceptance of alternative
EE gender	1			
MS		117.17	19.46	0.21
F		14.06[b]	9.16[b]	0.07
Age	1			
MS		85.23	4.87	0.98
F		10.23	2.29	1.24
ER gender	1			
MS		3.66	7.97	0.60
F		0.44	3.76[a]	0.76
EE Gender × Age	1			
MS		6.04	2.42	0.35
F		0.73	1.14	0.44
EE Gender × ER Gender	1			
MS		4.20	2.61	0.00
F		0.50	1.24	0.00
Age × ER Gender	1			
MS		11.09	0.16	0.17
F		1.33	0.07	0.21
EE Gender × Age × ER Gender	1			
MS		38.42	0.85	0.42
F		4.61[a]	0.40	0.53
Error	238			
MS		8.34	2.12	0.79

[a]$p < .05$.
[b]$p < .01$.

.005, omega^2 = .032). Women judged these items to be more sexist than did men (M_{femEE} = 3.65; M_{maleEE} = 3.06). Gender of interviewer similarly affected this dependent variable ($F_{1,238}$ = 3.76, p = .05, omega^2 = .011). Participants expressed higher levels of perceived sexism in language when interviewed by females than when interviewed by males (M_{femER} = 3.59; M_{maleER} = 3.23). No additional main or interaction effects were significant for this variable.

No significant main or interaction effects were detected by the ANOVA for acceptance of alternative pronouns.

Table III reports the frequencies with which participants identified each of ten sources as important factors in their decision to adopt gender-inclusive language. The table compiles the three most significant factors for each participant. Inspection reveals that the most powerful motive for adopting gender-inclusive language reforms was participants' own conclusions based on considerations of social justice. This motive was dominant across all subgroups. Nearly half the participants also attributed importance to the influence of authority figures like bosses, teachers, and parents; and this too was fair-
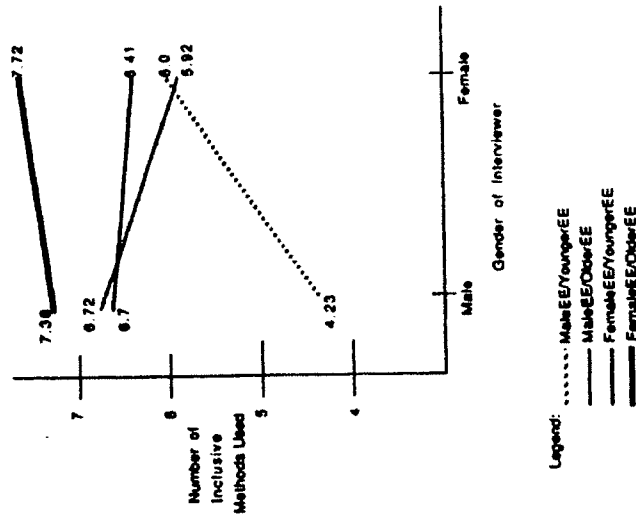
ly uniform across subgroups. Fewer, only about one-third, reported dictated requirements of others, however. This latter source seemed especially sensitive to gender of the interviewer; those interviewed by women cited requirements substantially more than did those interviewed by men.

Nearly 40% of the respondents reported the influence of gender-inclusive speech in the general ambiance. This observation was especially prevalent among younger, rather than older participants. The influence of female friends was especially important for male participants, relative to female participants. More than a quarter of the sample had been affected by reading books or articles about sexism in language, but only 8% attributed any impact to the women's movement. Those who did credit the women's movement with influencing their language habits tended to be among female interviewees and older interviewees.

Discussion

Study 1 confirms the potency of individuals' gender in determining their language attitudes. In other language domains such as nonstandard social dialects and language evolution, women have sometimes acted as linguistically conservative forces (Fisher, 1958; Labov, 1972). In these reported cases of linguistic conservatism, it is true, the language phenomena were largely unconscious and politically nonsignificant stylistic variants (e.g., fully realizing the -ing suffix in present participles like walking and talking). In the realm of gender-inclusive/exclusive language as investigated in the present research, however, women are more attentive to the need for change, and more committed to effecting change in their own language behaviors, than are men. This was reflected in the higher proportion of women who said they have changed at least some of their language habits, as opposed to the higher proportion of men who stated that they were either unaware or unconcerned about sexism in language. Women also expressed strong negative attitudes than did men toward gender-exclusive expressions like "mankind," "old wives' tales," and "he" as a generic pronoun.

Finally, women on the average reported using more methods for avoiding gender-exclusive language. An a posteriori look at the 16 individual items that comprised the composite methods variable showed significantly higher proportions (as indicated by separate Chi-square statistics) of women, compared to men, using the following constructions: alternating the order of re-male and male pronouns (42.4% of women, 19.1% of men); avoiding (female derogatory terms such as "gal" and "chick" (65.9% of women, 43.5% of men); avoiding the salutation "Dear Sir" on letters (47.7% of women; 27.8% of men); and avoiding man-linked job titles like "policeman" (46.2% of women; 33%

of men). The proportions of males and females using techniques like "they" for the generic singular third person reference did not differ significantly.

An age cohort effect also emerged clearly from these results. People between the ages of 30 and 45 supported gender-inclusive reform more strongly than did the 18-25 year-old group. Very likely this finding reflects a broader social current away from sensitivity to considerations of gender equity and toward greater complacency on this front. As Belkin (1989) observes with respect to attitude differences between older and younger women, "women 18 to 29 — those least likely to have faced all the concerns of marriage, child care and the work force and more likely to have mothers who worked — have the fewest complaints.... Women 30 to 44 — who are now at an age that includes marriage, work and children and who are the first generation raised to expect to have all of those — are most confused and frustrated" (p. 26).

An a posteriori look at the 16 individual items that comprised the composite methods variable showed significantly higher proportions (as indicated by separate Chi-square statistics) of older participants, compared to younger, using the following constructions: avoiding "lady" or "girl" to refer to women (21.9% of younger group, 35.3% of older group); using "Ms." instead of "Miss" or "Mrs." (39.1% of younger group, 55.5% of older group); and avoiding labels that identify women in terms of their relationships to men — e.g., "John's wife" (44.4% of younger group, 59.7% of older group). Proportions of younger and older participants did not significantly differ in use of other gender-inclusive constructions such as avoiding generic use of "man" and "mankind."

Overlaid upon group differences attribute to participants' age and gender was the contextual factor of interviewer gender. Respondents who were interviewed by women tended to express higher levels of concern about gender-exclusive language, and they reported using marginally more methods of avoiding gender-exclusive constructions as sexist.

It appears that respondents were influenced by the social desirability motive (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964), adopting a posture that would optimize a female interviewer's status, or that would preserve a male's. These results are also compatible with an interviewer modeling explanation (Phillips & Clancy, 1972). That is, it may be that male and female interviewers were subtly signaling their desired responses to complaint interviewers — male-oriented gender-exclusive responses for male interviewers and female-oriented inclusive responses for female interviewers.

It was beyond the scope of the present study to examine further the mechanisms by which interviewers of different gender signalled their "desired" responses. But research investigating that very question is strongly warranted, given the apparent susceptibility of attitudinal data to distortion wrought

by interviewer gender. Investigators might proceed by naturalistically observing male and female data collectors' subtle nonverbal signals. Or they might proceed by assessing the gender-related attitudes of male and female data collectors. In both these scenarios both interviewers and interviewees are seen equally as participants responding to social context.

The alternative account, that male interviewers were exerting conversational dominance (Kramarae, 1981), seems less plausible. Were the male interviewers uniformly dominant in cross-gender interviews in this study, the results would have manifested two-way interactions between interviewer and interviewee gender, i.e., the responses of female interviewees would have been contingent on interviewer gender, whereas the responses of male interviewees would have been relatively unaffected by gender of the interviewer. Instead, the only interactive affect was a three-way interaction between interviewee age and gender and interviewer gender for the number of methods used to avoid gender-exclusive language. Examining this interaction revealed no uniform pattern of male interviewer dominance. Rather, older women who were interviewed by women reported an especially large repertoire of inclusive language adaptation. Conversely, younger men who were interviewed by men displayed little effort to adopt gender-inclusive language. The cross-gender interview conditions generally occupied the less extreme middle ground.

Respondents felt free (or constrained, depending on point of view) to express gender-typical views when speaking with a same-gender interviewer, and they tempered those views when speaking with a cross-gender interviewer. In fact, the pattern of this particular interaction conforms quite closely to the homophily principle articulated by Benney and colleagues (1956). According to this view, women and men were most frank (i.e., least inhibited) when speaking with same-gender interviewers.

STUDY 2

Not surprisingly, Study 1 revealed that respondents' gender exerted powerful effects on their attitudes toward gender-inclusive language. In general, women have most to gain by language-inclusive reforms, and their attitudes appear to be correspondingly more positive than men's. But while it is true that women are most oppressed by the linguistic status quo, it is erroneous to suppose that men are not also victimized by gender-exclusiveness. Terms like "male nurse," or use of "she" as generic pronoun to describe elementary school teachers are exclusionary to men who aspire to those professions.

More generally, gender-exclusive language subjugates all people-female and male alike-who seek latitude to construct for themselves identities that are free of traditional gender roles. Such individuals, many of whom fall under the rubric of "androgynous" (Bem, 1975), are likely to favor an inclusive communication style (Bate, 1988). Conversely women who embrace traditional gender roles should be no more enthusiastic about gender-inclusive language reforms than are men who espouse similar social conservatism.

Although a strong argument can be made that even biological differences between men and women are culturally constructed (Kessler & McKenna, 1978), androgyny theory refers particularly to gender roles role types that are specifically cognitive and affective rather than biological (Bem, 1981). Indeed, it is held that the amount of gender role variation within each biological gender is at least of the same magnitude as the amount of variation that separates biological males and females. Gender role types are arrayed along two presumably orthogonal dimensions (Bem, 1974): expressiveness (originally labelled "femininity") and instrumentality (originally labeled "masculinity"). People who have many expressive traits and few instrumental hold traditionally feminine gender roles. The opposite pattern describes traditionally masculine gender roles. Those who subscribe to both expressive and instrumental values are androgynous, while those who rate themselves low on both dimensions are gender-neutral.

In communication research, it has been fruitful to consider gender role typing as well as biological gender (e.g., Weider-Hartfield, 1987). In one of the few studies that examined psychological gender in conjunction with language attitudes, Warfel (1984) did not find strong effects for gender role types, however. One explanation for Warfel's lack of strong findings for gender (as compared with language style) is that she considered only the intensity of role typing (strong as opposed to neutral); she did not utilize information about the direction of that role typing (i.e., expressive, instrumental, androgynous, or neutral). Also, it should be noted that Warfel's stimuli manipulated gender-typical language styles, the language typically produced by either men or women. Her study was not designed to examine attitudes toward gender-exclusive language, the language that is typically used to talk about women or men.

Schwartz and Banikiotes (1982), did, in fact, consider gender-exclusive language in conjunction with psychological gender role orientations. Their findings, however, were equivocal. Participants in their study evaluated professors and counselors based on writing samples that used either gender-exclusive or gender-inclusive language. Language style had no effect on ratings of professors. Counselors who used gender-exclusive language were, rather surprisingly, given higher ratings than those who used gender-inclusive

style. However, this finding held true only for male judges and stereotypically gender typed individuals. Women and androgynous individuals did not differentiate at all between the authors of gender-inclusive and gender-exclusive writing samples.

It may be that gender-inclusive language reform makes as well as females of high androgyny. Conversely, those holding traditional gender role types—expressive as well as instrumental—should manifest the most negative attitudes toward gender-inclusive language. Study 2 tests just this hypothesis.

Methods

Research Participants. Forty-five undergraduate students enrolled in basic communication courses at a Southeastern university were recruited for this project. Participants were volunteers who received class credit for their participation. Thirty-one (69%) were females and 14 (31%) were males. Their average age was 20.56 (s.d. = 2.31).

Instruments and Procedures. Data were collected in conjunction with a separate study of gender and written language production. Research instruments included the identical adaptation of the Henley and Dragun (1983) questionnaire about gender-inclusive/exclusive language that was used in Study 1. Rather than responding to the questionnaire as a face-to-face interview as in Study 1, participants in Study 2 responded individually in writing. They also completed Wheeless and Dierk-Stewart's (1981) adaptation of the Bem (1974) sex-role inventory. This version of the well-known Bem instrument consists of 20 items, 10 comprising the expressive subscale and 10 the instrumental. In addition to being considerably shorter than the original, the Wheeless and Dierk-Stewart version is apparently more reliable as well.

Analysis. To categorize participants into gender role types, the median sample scores for the expressive and instrumental gender role subscales were located. These were 57 and 49, respectively. Participants scoring in the bottom 50th percentile on both subscales were classified as gender-neutral (n = 8). Those scoring above the median on both subscales were classified as androgynous (n = 14). Those who were above the median on the expressive scale and in the lower 50th percentile on the instrumental subscale were labeled expressives (n = 10). Those with the opposite pattern were labeled instrumentals (n = 13).

As in Study 1, the major dependent variables were the composite measures indicating (1) the number of different methods participants used to avoid gender-exclusive language, (2) judgments of sexism in the gender-exclusive constructions, and (3) willingness to accept an alternative gender-neutral

Table IV. Summary of ANOVAs of Effects of Gender Role Type on Three Measures of Attitudes Toward Gender Inclusive Language

	df	Methods used	Judgment of sexism	Acceptance alternatives
Gender role	3			
MS		26.20	1.72	1.02
F		3.61*	0.93	1.14
Error	44			
MS		7.23	1.85	0.89

*p < .05.

pronoun. Each of these was subjected to separate one-way ANOVAs with the independent variable, gender role type, at four levels. Pairwise *post hoc* comparisons between cell means employed the Student-Newman-Keuls procedure.

Results

The ANOVAs for the three dependent variables are summarized in Table IV. It reveals that gender role type exerted a significant effect on number of gender-inclusive methods ($F_{3,41}$ = 3.61, $p < .05$, omega^2 = .148). Pairwise comparisons between cell means indicated that androgynous respondents reported significantly more methods than both gender-neutral and instrumental participants (M_{andro} = 7.5, M_{expr} = 6.00, M_{neur} = 4.00). Significant F-tests did not emerge in the ANOVAs of judged sexism or acceptance of alternative pronouns.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Study 2 supplemented the findings of Study 1 by demonstrating the impact of individuals' psychological gender role types on their attitudes toward gender-inclusive language. In particular, androgynous individuals—those registering high in both expressive and instrumental dimensions—reported using the widest variety of devices for avoiding gender-exclusive references. Gender-neutral and high instrumental types reported significantly lower use of gender-inclusive alternatives.

These conclusions are not wholly independent of biological gender of the respondents, of course. The androgynous group included 14.3% of the male participants, but 38.7% of the females. The instrumental group was mainly male: 16.1% of the female participants in contrast to 57.1% of the

males. As Bate (1988) opines, women seem to be making more progress toward androgynous communication style than are men. A future study conducted on a large scale might sample sufficient number of expressive males and instrumental females to be able to directly test for interactions between biological and psychological gender in research on language attitudes.

Still, the gender neutral group in the present study included approximately equal proportions of males and females: 14.3% of the male participants along with 19.4% of the females. And the high expressive group also contained both males and females. In terms of explanatory power, then, gender role typing seems to constitute an important individual difference factor that helps explain language attitudes in ways that are not merely redundant with biological gender. It is those females and males who seek the widest range of gender role expression who are most supportive of gender inclusive language. In this regard, these findings are consistent with Jacobson and Insko (1985; see also Greene & Rubin, in press), who found a direct relationship between peoples' use of gender-inclusive language and the degree to which they subscribed to the political and social goal of the movement for equal rights for women and men.

It is curious that in both Study 1 and Study 2, the most sensitive dependent variable was the number of linguistic methods participants reported using to avoid gender-exclusive reference. In both studies, even the highest group means represented fewer than half of the sixteen methods about which the survey queried. Moreover, this scale achieved rather unremarkable internal consistency reliability. It seems that choice of gender-inclusive linguistic strategies are relatively individualistic. Some speakers may prefer to use passive constructions in order to avoid gender-exclusive references (e.g., "Each student may locate books that were lost..." instead of "Each student may locate books that he lost..."), while others find that locution too stuffy. Some speakers might eschew using "they" in place of a third person singular generic pronoun (e.g., "Each student may locate their books..."), but for others, "they" is a perfectly natural construction in singular contexts.

Along with varying aesthetic values, each of these linguistic construction no doubt carries different salience for different individuals. For some, the use of "Ms." may be of high value in signaling gender-inclusive sentiments, whereas pronominal references lie below their threshold of conscious awareness, despite (or because of) their high frequency (Lakoff, 1973). It remains for future research studies to scale and explain the relative salience of these methods for achieving gender-inclusive speech. But while the particular components favored to comprise one's gender-inclusive style may be highly individualistic, both of the present studies suggest that the amount of gender-inclusive constructions adopted varies consistently between groups.

The most discouraging finding from the point of view of an egalitarian agenda is the apparent regression in language attitudes revealed by the cross-sectional comparison. Current college students are simply not as concerned about gender-exclusiveness as are the cohort that preceded them by a decade or two. One explanation may be that sensitivity to gender-exclusion is born of experience in the worlds of career and family building. If so, then a group of non-college educated workers should should show positive attitudes toward gender-inclusive language regardless of age cohort. Henley and Dragun (1983) provide limited support for this account. In their study, an off-campus sample reported greater ease in adopting gender-inclusive reforms than did currently enrolled college students. On the other hand, this off-campus group included many with some college education. Also, the off-campus group was of comparable age to the on-campus group, both fairly young, and therefore would have limited career and family building experience.

Another factor that may contribute to the apparent regression in language attitudes is related to the political and social milieu in which speakers formed their sensitivity to language style as a value-expressive instrument. Sensitivity to gender issues in language evolves very early in childhood (Edelsky, 1977). People who were thus formatively educated and acculturated in households and schools during the conservative 1980s may have been exposed to relatively few messages and models encouraging the ideal of gender-inclusion.

On the other hand, this younger age cohort, educated subsequent to publishers' adoptions of nonsexist guidelines, should have been exposed to a great many models of gender-inclusive language. These models appeared in their school textbooks and in the speech of at least some authority figures. Perhaps sampling actual language production — rather than language attitudes as in the present study — would show that these models have had an effect on the patent speech and writing of current college students. It is possible that gender-inclusive language has become so normative to young men and women that they are no longer sensitive to the value implications of it. Why is it, for example, that younger participants in the present study reported little propensity, relative to the older group, to use the term "Ms." instead of "Miss" or "Mrs"? Their exposure to "Ms." is surely extensive, but it may be that this exposure was less evaluatively marked than it was for the older cohort.

Adamsky (1980) has shown that relatively short-term modeling can indeed bring about change in gender-inclusive language behavior. But it appears that the mechanism of this change did involve raising students' consciousness about the issue; the model's consistent use of "she" in third-person contexts was remarked upon. Richmond and Dyba (1982) likewise

reported a positive effect on gender-inclusive language engendered by a brief consciousness-raising unit on the subject. Flanagan and Todd-Mancillas (1982) found that, although some 30% of their sample was immune to change, individualized feedback from an instructor promoted gender-inclusive language change among most students. Authoritatively mandated change was more effective than giving students greater latitude of choice about change-ing. In each of these studies, however, language change was measured in terms of writing, which is under more self-conscious control than spontaneous speech. Despite Flanagan and Todd-Mancillas' (1982) finding of some transfer of learning to other writing contexts, no studies have examined the long-term persistence of such treatment effects.

In the two studies reported here, attitudes toward gender-inclusive language were indeed malleable. The situational variable of interviewer gender affected participants' reports of their attitudes toward gender-inclusive language. But this situational variation is not authentic attitude change; it is more akin to observational distortion.

Instead, attitudes toward gender-inclusive language appeared to be de-pendent upon relatively stable factors of biological gender and profoundly socialized gender role traits. Results attributed to the age factor suggested the impact on language attitudes of life experiences with the socio-political realities of gender inequity. Lakoff (1973) asserted that gender-related lan-guage behaviors cannot be changed by a frontal assault on speech patterns themselves. Instead, change agents interested in long-term language reform will need to confront the more profound issues of changing social and political inequities. When that happens, of course, language reform will be moot.

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