

Essay Question 1

(Units 1, 2, 3, 4)

The notion of 'gender differences', strong in the pre-feminist work of Jespersen, Trudgill and Labov, was maintained and indeed perpetuated by feminist analyses of mixed-sex talk in the 1970s. Consider and make notes on how Deborah Cameron, Mary Bucholtz and Cynthia Nelson have each challenged the notion of 'gender differences'. (Read Extension Units B1-4 as preparation for this topic.)

Essay Question 2

Critiques of *Language and Woman's Place* (Unit 2)

Three aspects of Lakoff's (1975) work which have been questioned are her acceptance of the 'generic' *he*, her use of introspection as a methodology, and her apparent use of a 'deficit model' of women's talk. What (different) objections have been levelled at these? How does Lakoff address the critiques in the new edition (2004) of *Language and Woman's Place*?

Essay Question 3

The '(Cultural) difference' and 'Dominance' approaches to studies of gender and talk (Units 2, 3)

Read and note down your thoughts about the following claim, formulated by the author:

"It is unproductive to set the '(cultural) difference' and 'dominance' approaches against each other when analysing mixed-sex talk, or even when comparing these two approaches, since, despite what they have in common (i.e. they are both about 'gender differences' across women and men rather than, say, similarities) they are essentially *about* different things. 'Difference' is largely about *origin*; 'dominance' is about *effect*. Neither is really about conscious 'intent' (though 'difference' is about *lack of* intent to dominate). A finding that, say, in a mixed-sex group, men tend to interrupt women more than the reverse, may have its *origin* in same-sex childhood socialisation practices ('(cultural) difference'), but may have the *effect* of silencing women ('(male) dominance')."

Essay Question 4

Speech Communities, Discourse Communities and Communities of Practice (Units 2, 6)

Compare the notions of 'speech community', 'discourse community' and 'Community of practices'. What are the commonalities and what distinguishes them?

References

Gumperz, John (1982) *Discourse Strategies*. Cambridge: CUP.

Swales, John (1990) *Genre Analysis*. Cambridge: CUP. (see also new edition, *Research Genres*, 2004)

Swales, John (1988) 'Discourse communities, genres, and English as an international language'. *World Englishes* 4: 211-220.

Essay Question 5

Relativism, post-structuralism and feminism (Units 2, 3 and 7)

In what ways is a feminist approach to language analysis compatible with (a) discourse analysis, (b) post-structuralist approaches to gender and language study?

Start by reading the chapter below, and follow up some of the references in Rosalind Gill's Bibliography.

Reference

Gill, Ros (1995) 'Relativism, reflexivity and politics: interrogating discourse analysis from a feminist perspective'. In Wilkinson, Sue and Kitzinger, Celia (eds) 1995. *Feminism and Discourse: Psychological Perspectives*. London: Sage. pp. 165 – 186.

Essay Question 6

(Units 2, 3, 7, 8)

Quantitative approaches associated with dichotomous approaches to gender and language study (men do this, women do that) have given way to an extent to more qualitative, often smaller-scale approaches. To what extent do you think the earlier quantitative studies made possible (laid the ground for) the later, qualitative ones?