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**PERCEPTIONS OF SEXIST LANGUAGE
AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO
ATTITUDES TOWARD WOMEN AND SOCIAL ROLES.**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

The language about women reflects the attitudes of men toward women and to the extent that women use them, the attitudes of women toward themselves. The relationship between language and the attitudes of those who use it is not one-way. Language reflects the attitudes of those who use it but it can also create and maintain attitudes and stereotypes. Hence the feminists' attack on the English language.

The trend to using non-sexist language is a conscious effort to change our thought by changing our language. The present study investigated the existence of a relationship between attitudes toward women, social attitudes, and people's perceptions of sexist language for 151 participants. The sample included two student groups (internally enrolled students and extramural students) and a non-student sample. The sample completed self-report questionnaires on their judgements of language as sexist, their perceptions of sexist language as a problem, and attitudes toward women and social issues.

The findings demonstrated that there is a relationship between sexist language and the attitudes people espouse. Liberal social attitudes and liberal attitudes toward women and gender roles were found to correlate with easier recognition of linguistic sexism. Traditional attitudes toward gender roles and conservative social attitudes resulted in a failure to perceive gender-biased language as sexist.

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They plainly can their Thoughts disclose
 Whilst ours must burn within:
We have got Tongues, and Eyes, in Vain,
 And Truth from us is Sin.

Then Equal Laws let Custom find,
 And neither Sex oppress;
More Freedom give to Womankind,
 Or give to Mankind less.

Anonymous, 1976.
The Virginia Gazette,
22 October, 1736

(from Miller & Swift, 1976, p96)

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

When George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty Four* was first published in 1949 it created an uproar. That 'Big Brother' could be watching over us, controlling our language, our thoughts and our actions leaving us with no personal control in our lives disturbed many people, especially those people who saw a resemblance to current language practices. Orwell's 'newspeak' in the eyes of the critics closely parallels the feminists' attempt to eliminate sexist vocabulary from the English language. In Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* the government sharply reduced the vocabulary in the belief that subversive thought is impossible when there are no words to express it. Current critics of the feminist movement compare Orwell's 'newspeak' to ongoing attempts to change the English Language by eliminating gender-biased language usage.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis which undoubtedly Orwell would have conceded with, presents the view that language sets the limits of our world, that our access to language determines what we are able to think about and in what capacity (Spender, 1980). By increasing or decreasing the number of words available to us, our ability to express feelings and ideas is altered. Objects and events do not present themselves ready classified. The categories into which they are divided are categories into which we have divided them. It is our capacity to symbolise and the use we make of the symbols

we construct that constitutes the area of language, thought and reality (Langer, 1976). As human beings, we cannot impartially describe the universe because in order to do so we must first have a classification system. But paradoxically, once that classification system is in place and a language exists, humans can see only arbitrary things. This can be illustrated in the terminology different countries and cultures develop for their varying climatic conditions. Given the climatic conditions of most English speaking nations, the English language has only one word for snow. The tropical nature of the Aztec's climate resulted in a single word to cover snow, ice and cold. The Eskimos, on the other hand whose daily functioning is dependent on being able to survive sub-zero climatic conditions, have many different words for snow - snow falling, lying on the ground, drifting, packed for building blocks, and many more words for wind and ice. (Miller & Swift, 1976).

Both Orwell and linguists agree that language sets the boundaries of how we perceive our world. Whorf (1956) argues that when children acquire a language they simultaneously acquire a "world view" because what their language allows them to talk about determines the way in which they perceive the world. Cann and Garnett (1984) found that children as young as two years of age have begun to develop stereotyped ideas and images and by the age of six are even more accurate in identifying the sex linkage of sex stereotyped objects and roles. The sex-stereotype the child develops may simply act as a categorisation scheme, changing as the child experiences the social world. The same process can be said to be operating in adults. When there is a sexist language and sexist theories culturally available, the observation of reality is also likely to be sexist. It is by this means that sexism can be perpetuated and reinforced as new

objects and events, and new data, have sexist interpretation projected upon them.

Males have historically been the dominant group, and as such have produced the language, thought and reality. It is their categories and their meanings which have survived and those categories and meanings have in turn being validated and accepted by other males. Women have tended to be excluded from this process and unlike their male counterparts have had little opportunity to talk to other females. Thus it is the male principles in language, thought and reality which have ensued. It has only really been since the Second World War, when women began to enter the workforce in large numbers and thus were able to talk together as men had been able to do in the past, that the inequalities in the English language really became apparent. In the United States the percentage of women in workforce rose from 31.8 percent after World War to 53.4 percent in 1984. In Sweden, 77 percent of women hold jobs. Sixty-three percent of British women were in paid employment by 1986 (Wolf, 1990). New Zealand figures from the 1986 census indicate that 53.5 percent of women held jobs. As more and more women are entering the workforce the demands they place on dismantling the power structure are also growing in strength. Women are no longer willing to settle for the status quo. They are now demanding that they be given the same opportunities as men, in the workplace and in the home, and now in language usage.

The existence of sexism in the structure and usage of the English language has been well researched and documented. The resulting awareness of sexist language has led to numerous suggestions for change, but these changes have been hindered for a

number of reasons. Alternatives to sexist usage have frequently been made resulting in an overabundance of choice. Many choices are in conflict with each other, or result in confusion. Another source of difficulty in eliminating sexist language has been ridicule by those opposed to change.

Language itself is not neutral. It is a powerful means of conveying ideas and can easily maintain or perpetuate negative stereotypes about a particular race, culture or sex. When language usage inadvertently or intentionally excludes a group of people solely on the grounds of gender that usage is sexist. Sexism in language can take many forms and has serious implications for both males and females. Sexism is a prejudicial attitude or discriminatory behaviour based on the presumed inferiority or difference of a particular sex. It usually implies the discrimination and oppression of women by men but can work in reverse.

The English language currently contains usage which reflects the inequality in position and power of males and females. This usage is varied but in whatever form it appears the result is generally the same. By its very nature sexist language creates an image of what is expected and then through continued usage perpetuates and maintains those images. The sexist assumptions of society are mirrored by language. Thus by implication, if we have sexist language which systematically excludes half the population then problems occur. It becomes not only a means of exclusion but a means of ensuring power remains with a particular group - males. Sexist language makes women invisible, it serves to perpetuate power structures that favour men. The bid to eliminate sexist language is an attempt to make the English language more precise, to

make it say what it means, rather than concealing its meaning. By changing the use of sexist language and sexist structure in language advocates believe that sex-role stereotypes will begin to break down, resulting in a society that gives more equal opportunities and rights to people regardless of their gender.

The following report examines what constitutes sexual structure and usage in the English language and investigates its relationship to gender role ideals and traditional and liberal social views. Firstly, the use of masculine generics and their relationship to perceptions of gender roles and ideals are examined. Secondly, parallel treatment of the sexes with regard to language usage and terminology is discussed. Thirdly, perceptions of sexist language usage are examined. Finally, a summary is presented and the research goals of the present study are specified.

SEXIST LANGUAGE: INTRODUCTION

Sexist language is a form of discriminatory language usage which treats females and males as unequal purely on the basis of their gender. Discrepancy exists as to exactly what constitutes sexist language, what forms it appears in, and who it affects and how. Many argue that sexist language simply does not exist and the attempt to eliminate so-called sexist language is an attempt to restrict freedom of expression. However research has shown that sexist language does exist and has been shown to discriminate unfairly between the sexes. Many forms of sexist language exist; non-parallel treatment of the sexes, stereotyping, ambiguously referring to one sex when meaning both sexes,

and presenting one sex as the norm in situations which could apply to both sexes.

CHAPTER TWO

GENERICIS (or pronoun-envy)

Perhaps the most common form of sexism in language is the use of *man* and *he* as generics. Many of the generics used in the English language are neutral (they, their, everyone) but the generics which cause the most controversy are the masculine generics. Masculine generics such as *man* and *he* are ambiguous and imprecise. Both have dual meanings and as such create problems in their interpretation. Originally *waepman* and *man* encompassed both sexes, with two additional words *wer* and *wif* distinguishing between adult males and females respectively. (Miller & Swift, 1976). Eventually *man* ceased to be used of individual women and replaced *wer* and *waepman* as a specific form to distinguish adult males from adult females, however the generic term remained. *Man* and *he* now have double meanings. In one sense *man* and *he* are exclusive terms used to refer to males only. Taken another way they are said to encompass the entire human race - both genders included. Therefore *man* and *he* are understood to be both gender inclusive and gender exclusive. Current research in the area offers support to the contrary. Several studies have found that the use of masculine generics primes subjects for thinking of males rather than females even when that usage is meant to encompass both sexes (Cole, Hill & Daley, 1983; Moulton, Robinson & Elias, 1978; Ng, 1988;).

The major problem with masculine generics is that these terms are also masculine

specific terms. In the course of language learning, children are exposed first to the masculine specific terms and are only later introduced to the generic meanings. For males this process may be fairly simple - they only need to extend their understanding of the terms to include all groups not obviously female. They have already heard masculine generic terms in reference to themselves, and as such may find "generic" usage more readily acceptable. For females this transition is perhaps more difficult. Initially they are taught that the meanings of the masculine terms exclude them in every occasion. Later they must learn that under certain conditions these terms can also include them. In short they must learn to accept and comprehend that they are both "man" and "not man" at the same time. Perhaps it is this early conditioning of the meanings of such terms that leads both males and females to later interpret the masculine generics as male specific terms (MacKay & Fulkerson, 1979) and to restrict their usage to male related contexts only (Martyna, 1980). This ambiguity has also extended to legal situations. In 1975 the interpretation of "man" was legally challenged by three women law students who were denied financial assistance from a Massachusetts scholarship fund established to assist "worthy and ambitious men to acquire a legal education". The women who had been denied assistance because of their sex successfully challenged the administrators of the fund by arguing that the word "men" in the will is generic and thus includes both sexes. The administrators disagreed with the ruling and appealed. Another case involved a dispute over a United States Kiwanas Club admission of women, despite bylaws specifying "men" as members (Miller & Swift, 1976).

Schneider and Hacker (1973) examined the interpretation of "man" by getting high

school students to choose pictures to correspond to supposed chapter headings for potential sociology textbooks. By using a variety of masculine generic terms (political man, economic man, social man) and a range of comparable non-androcentric terms they found that the use of "man" resulted in the screening out of photos that included both sexes in favour of photos of only men.

Harrison (1975) had similar results. Harrison had 500 junior high school students draw pictures in response to seven statements on human activities. She found that language promotes and favours a masculine imagery set in that both male and female students drew male figures more often than female figures. Harrison also concluded from her results that *man* in the sense of being male overshadows *man* in the sense of being human. She asserted that the students' responses to the statements are probably also a reflection not only of the language used on the survey but of the language in which human evolution is usually discussed, as well as of the traditional sex roles in our culture. These findings are repeated in the research of Forbes, Shaw and Watson (1984).

Moulton, Robinson and Elias (1978) asserted that the generic terms *man* and *he* fail to be gender neutral, and that they may be a cause of sex bias as well as a vestige of past inequality between the sexes. It is not surprising that this ambiguity exists when interpreting generic *man* and *he*. In educational materials, for example, the sex-specific "he" appears five to ten times for every single generic "he" (Martyna, 1980). As such we are more likely to interpret a particular instance of "he" as being sex-specific rather than sex-indefinite. Kramer, Thorne and Henley (1978) also maintain that even when

"he" is used generically, people still tend to perceive the referent as specifically male. *Woman* and *she* are gender-marked terms that always refer to a female person. There is no misunderstanding as to what sex is being referred to - it is always the same. *Man* and *he* may also be gender-marked, referring solely to male persons. Confusion arises as *man* and *he* are also said to be gender neutral words, used to refer to both sexes inclusively. When used in compound words it becomes even more difficult to distinguish whether the marked or the neutral meaning is intended. Miller and Swift (1976) found that *man* in compounds such as salesman, chairman, manpower, and mankind when used as generic terms are accepted by many people but not by all. This is evident in the recent appearance of terms like saleswoman, chairwoman and chairperson. There is a lack of agreement as to when these generic terms include women and when they do not. Compound words such as salesman, manpower and man-made convey an assumption of male involvement. When referring to groups consisting entirely of women these terms are generally avoided. If these terms were truly gender inclusive then statements like "Miss Jones is our mailman"; "My brother married a spaceman who works for NASA"; and "That newsman is in her seventh month of pregnancy" would all be accepted without question. That compound words involving *man* are gender-marked even when neutrality is intended is unmistakable.

Cliches involving "man" also impart a sense of maleness as in the terms "the man in the street" or "the best man for the job". Although intended to be neutral the use of these terms foster an androcentric view of society (Miller & Swift, 1976). Using "man" as a verb also imparts a masculine bias onto our impression of the world. Again when referring to groups consisting solely of women, "man" as a verb is generally avoided,

suggesting that the neutral meaning does not exist.

The use of "he" in a generic sense is also questionable. In a 1988 study Wilson and Ng offer support for the growing body of evidence that masculine generics impart an impression of a male dominated world. Using tachistoscopic images Wilson and Ng predicted and found in a sample of university students that if generics invoked sex specific images, the images would reflect the direction in which the viewer would resolve ambiguous faces. Results indicated a tendency to report more male faces in the masculine than in the feminine generic conditions. They concluded that masculine generic pronouns describe the world as male, rendering women invisible. As a result, individuals may tend to visualise the world as inhabited mainly by males, and react accordingly. Moulton, Robinson and Elias (1978) also demonstrated that male terms used in a neutral context (eg: describing a student in a coeducational institution) induce people to think males. The conclusions offered by Bem and Bem's (1973) study are similar. They found that androcentric generics used in job advertising result in a self-selection bias that renders women less likely to apply for those positions. They compared the response rates of women and men with different forms of job advertisements. When the jobs were advertised in a masculine generic form (e.g. lineman, frameman), no more than 5% of the women were interested. By changing the advertisement to a sex-unbiased format (e.g. lineworker) 25% of the women were interested. Furthermore when the advertisements were specifically rewritten to appeal to women (e.g. framewoman), nearly half (45%) of the women in the Bem and Bem sample expressed interest in applying for the position. The results for men showed a similar but not identical pattern. This is consistent with the work of Briere and

Langtree (1983). They found that the use of generic masculine nouns and pronouns in written texts may selectively proscribe female interest in subjects they might otherwise seek out.

Cole, Hill and Daley (1983) however, found no empirical evidence to support the claim that in and of itself the generic pronoun gives rise to thoughts of men. They did find that when the generic use of "man" was yoked with the generic pronoun "he" both males and females reflected more thoughts of men than when subjects were exposed to the alternative plural pronoun "they" with "man". In conclusion they found "man" combined with *he* resulted in a masculine bias which eliminated females from inclusion in even neutrally intended circumstances.

Thus the problem with the use of masculine generic terms is that unintentional exclusion is difficult to distinguish from intentional exclusion. The use of these supposedly generic terms creates an image of a male world, with male ideas and rules, with males as the species and females merely a subspecies. Alternatives do exist and could easily replace the words and phrases in contention (American Psychological Association, 1983; Else, 1988; Miller & Swift, 1976; Spender, 1980). Generic "man" is perhaps the easiest to change. Possible alternatives abound and include humans, people, everyone, someone - words already in common use. Replacing "he" has proven more difficult although many options exist. Using the plural "they" is one of the most popular choices for eliminating generic *he*, along with the use of *one*, *he or she*, *she or he*. Compound words and cliches involving *man* can also be easily eliminated. Replacing terms like man-made with the more neutral terms of artificial or synthetic

is simple and takes nothing away from the intended meaning. "The best man for the job" becomes "the best person for the job". Alternatives to the use of masculine generics do exist and with consideration and thought the existing androcentric bias in language can be eliminated.

CHAPTER THREE

PARALLEL TREATMENT

The language about women reflects the attitudes of men toward women and to the extent that women accept them, the attitudes of women toward themselves. The relationship between language and the attitudes and values of people is not one-way. Language reflects the attitudes of those who use it but it can also create and maintain attitudes and stereotypes. Hence the feminists' attack on the English language.

Sexist language has been linked conceptually to sexist behaviour (Blaubergs, 1978; Bodine, 1975) but controversy and uncertainty exist as to the direction of that relationship. Many linguists argue that changing the way in which people use language will be ineffective in producing attitude change (Lakoff, 1975). Others such as Miller & Swift (1976) believe that changing the way we speak will bring forth a change in attitudinal stereotypes.

The language used to describe men and women is inequitable. Much of the language used to refer to women is degrading or has sexual connotations. Words referring to women which were once simply parallels to male terms have frequently acquired secondary negative meanings, while the meanings of the male terms have remained the same. This is apparent in terms such as the following:

king - queen

master - mistress

sir - madam

wizard - witch

The terms referring to men have either not changed in meaning or have come down in strength with no taint in their meaning. The female terms have tended to take on a negative sexual association or have become insulting and degrading and usually imply a sense of male superiority.

Terms relating to animals or to food are also not uncommon in the language used about women, with parallel terms for men simply not existing. These terms are demeaning especially when one considers the change of meaning of the following words when used in the context of women:

bitch, cow, vixen, chick, bird

cookie, crumpet, tart, dish.

The degrading nature of the language used to refer to women would be unacceptable when referring to men. There is a gross imbalance of negative terms used to discuss the sexes. In a study of dictionary terms Schulz (1975) noted the disproportionate number of such terms to refer to women as compared to that referring to men. On a similar vein Graham (1975) also noted the disproportionate ratio of male to female characters in children's books and the traditional roles each sex tended to be portrayed

in. In the real world there are about 100 women for every 95 men. Yet in books read by schoolchildren there are over seven times as many men as women and over twice as many boys as girls. Graham (1975) also found that boys and girls are being taught separate sets of values, different expectations and divergent goals. Men and boys in dictionaries and in children's books tend to live active, daring lives, while women and girls are content with just being.

The lack of parallel treatment even stems to comparison with natural disasters. The practice of using only women's names to refer to hurricanes and cyclones has since been changed but the image this practice created (unpredictable, unbridled, destructive) can not go unmentioned.

Degrading and demeaning terms referring to women imply a sense of male rightness and superiority. Briere and Langtree (1983) expressed concern that language implying male superiority is not only insulting to women but may also encourage or support sexist behaviours and perceptions. Sex-role stereotyping can also encourage and support sexist behaviours and perceptions. Most forms of sexist stereotyping can be included under the two categories of designation problems and problems of evaluation. Problems of Designation divide people into categories purely on the basis of sex. It follows the assumption of one sex as the norm and the other as an exception to that rule. With Problems of Designation the choice of nouns, pronouns and adjectives creates confusion as to whether the interpretation of meaning is meant to include one sex or both sexes, resulting in an ambiguity of referent. This is illustrated in terms such as the "man-machine interface" or in phrases like "when a person is lonely he will

often seek out the company of others". Also included are designation stereotypes, where unsupported or biased connotations about sex roles and identity are expressed: "when a schoolteacher enters the classroom, she must be prepared to deal with almost any crisis", and "true scientists often neglect their wives and children" are prime examples. (American Psychological Association, 1983; Murdock & Forsyth, 1985).

Problems of Evaluation can also be divided into ambiguity of referent and stereotyping. This category includes language that contains implied or irrelevant evaluation of the sexes. Familiar expressions or cliches such as "man and wife" convey a message of differences in the roles and freedoms of each person and prompts an inappropriate evaluation of roles. Evaluation stereotypes arrive at conclusions about a person based on their sex. Women are often referred to in terms of their personal attributes when this is irrelevant to the context in which they are being described. Judgements concerning a person's attitudes and qualities are made based on sex - men of ordinary appearance go without mention, but women of ordinary appearance are called plain.

Occupations are yet another area in which sexist stereotypes are created and maintained. Sexist language in occupational terms tends to take on one of three forms. One form of sexism in this area is the assumption of one sex as the norm, with the other sex featuring as a rarity or oddity. Males have traditionally held the positions considered prestigious and powerful by our society, while the less important jobs have been done by females. Occupations traditionally held by one sex are now beginning to employ people of both sexes. Hence there is now a group of occupations which the sex of the job holder is mentioned if it is considered atypical. As women move into jobs

traditionally held by males, and males (to a lesser extent) enter the traditionally female occupations, many people feel the need to make explicit reference to the sex of the person. Hence we have male nurses and women doctors, male secretaries and women police officers.

Another area of occupational titles causing concern is masculine generic terms. Salesman, postman, spokesman and fireman originally evoked no conflict between the generic term and that which referred explicitly to sex. The increasing number of women occupying such roles has highlighted the potential ambiguity of the words. Replacing such words with non-androcentric terms such as salesperson, postie or firefighter decreases the likelihood of an ambiguous conclusion.

The final group of occupations causing anxiety is that which signifies the sex of the job holder using grammatical devices. Occupations like waitress, actress, usherette, and sculptress are marked as female by the use of a suffix. By using special devices to modify a male form, it is argued that this emphasises the male form as the standard, correct form with the female form a diminutive. The use of these same suffixes to alter other words (kitchen, dining) has a diminutive effect implying a smaller, lesser version of a standard article (kitchenette, dinette). This suffix used in relation to occupations is effective in trivialising the occupation and the person holding that occupation.

Trivialising can also be seen in the terms describing the same activities as done by women and as done by men: women gossip while men discuss; men are called easygoing while women are called frivolous; forgetful men are absent-minded while

forgetful women are called scatterbrained. Women of all ages are referred to as girls, while men and boys are two distinct age groups. The terms used to describe women and their activities have negative overtones, while the terms for men and their activities tend to have positive implications.

Blaubergs (1978) asserted that one way of changing the negative connotations of female gender in occupations would be to increase the visibility of females in roles they are or could be found in. Gender marking however, is irrelevant in most circumstances and considering that jobs held by women tend to be held in lower esteem than jobs held by men, gender marking would only serve to perpetuate the negative cycle. Miller and Swift (1972) affirm that achieving true equality in occupational settings is not in the banishment of terms like 'authoress' as a degrading title but its establishment on a level with 'author'. It is apparent that the visibility of women and men in non-traditional roles does need to be highlighted to encourage more freedom of choice in occupational choice. As these jobs become less sex-typed the need to mark gender will diminish, eventually resulting in an impression of equality among the occupations of men and women.

CHAPTER FOUR

PERCEPTIONS OF SEXIST LANGUAGE

As long as society undervalues women, negative attitudes to any behaviour attributed to women will persist regardless of what women actually say and do. At present this conception surfaces in the form of sexist language. As a result of this perception sexist language creates and perpetuates sexist ideas and images and reinforces discrimination on the basis of sex. The use of sexist language has clear implications for how we think about and view men and women and the relationships between them. The trend to using non-sexist language is a conscious effort to change our thought by changing our language. Knowing if people recognise sexist language and the types of sexist language they recognise is an important first step in trying to implement changes in sexist language use. Recognition describes two processes: it includes the perception that a particular language usage is considered problematic by some people, and the acceptance of that pattern of usage as being sexist. Therefore people may not recognise a statement as being sexist because they do not detect it as language usage which some people consider sexist, or while knowing that others may regard a particular statement as sexist, they choose not to consider it so (Stewart, Verstraate & Fanslow, 1990).

The differences in language usage between the sexes and the perception of these differences as being sexist is currently undergoing a surge of interest in research. Research undertaken by Stewart et al. (1990) found no significant differences between

males and females as to the perceived severity of sexist language as a problem or the extent to which some people may be disadvantaged by others' use of sexist language. Differences were found however when participants were asked to rate statements which were defined as sexist by the State Services Commission Guidelines, with females more likely to recognise them as sexist. Stewart et al. concluded that attitudes towards the use of non-sexist language were generally positive but indicated the need for raising the awareness of what language is considered sexist and the negative consequences of it. However, the Stewart et al. study does not convincingly tap into the issue of recognition of sexist language. Their findings in this area are sparse and address only very general factors in the recognition of sexist language. Much of the sexism in language is much more subtle than the Stewart et al. study would have people believe and often affects others around us more than it affects or offends ourselves. Kitto (1989) discusses how it is important to make people aware of how language can subtly influence their perceptions and argues that awareness of sexist language is an important factor. Her research suggests that connotations of gender reference terms strongly influence a person's subjective or personal judgements, and the resulting negative implications and images produced in the listener's mind may prejudice their evaluation of that person.

Differences in sexist language use and recognition between various groups also exist. Males tend to interpret "he" in its specific meaning more often than in its generic sense, whereas females both avoid the use of "he" and react to it with a more generic than specific translation (Martyna, 1980). Sexist language issues may also be less salient for people who work outside of a university setting and are thus not exposed to the

same pressure to eliminate sexist bias from language. Jacobson and Insko (1985) found subjects with high scores on Spence and Helmreich's (1972) Attitudes toward Women Scale (AWS) employed the use of non-sexist pronouns more frequently than those with less feminist and more traditional attitudes.

CHAPTER FIVE

SEXIST LANGUAGE AND OTHER FACTORS

Some would argue that society is rife with sexism and that it pervades every aspect of daily life; in education, in the media, in employment, and in the freedom in social activities awarded to each sex. Furthermore, it may be argued that being continually exposed to this array of sexist imagery must surely have an affect on how the world is perceived, especially how one thinks about and act towards women. Earlier in this thesis, it has been suggested that the effects of this sexism are clearly present in the use of language. However, to say that societal sexism influences linguistic sexism is not enough. Linguistic sexism helps to perpetuate sexist attitudes and ideals, encouraging inequality between the sexes (Jacobson & Insko, 1985; Spender, 1980). Whether linguistic sexism is a cause or a consequence of societal sexism is unclear. However, it seems reasonable to propose that there may be reciprocal feedback loops between the two.

In a letter written in 1974 to the author of a column on language and sexism E. B. White agreed that language has played a role in reinforcing inequality, but asserted that "true inequality does not lie in our tongue, it lies in our hearts and in our habits, and language is remarkably sensitive to both" (Green, 1974, p23).

The sensitivity of the English language to changes in social structure and environment

can not go unnoticed. New words are constantly appearing as technology advances. Nevertheless many old words still remain, often with their meanings changed but with their underlying attitudes still intact. One of the aims of this thesis is to demonstrate that how people use the English language, in particular their perceptions and use of sexist language relates to other factors such as attitudes towards women, demographic variables, and conservatism. Blaubergs (1978) asserted that the presence of sexism in language is a reflection of the position of sexism and sex-role stereotyping in society. If this is true then employing non-sexist language should help foster more egalitarian attitudes between the sexes.

While few research initiatives have focused specifically on the links between sexist language and other factors such as social attitudes and roles, there has been much research directed at exploring the relations between social attitudes, roles and beliefs about gender differences (e.g., Smith & Self, 1981). Nelson (1988) found education level and religious affiliation to be significantly related to feminism. Thorton, Alwin and Camburn (1983) in their analysis of sex role attitudes found that youth, labour force experience and educational attainment contribute to the formation of egalitarian views of women's roles, while church attendance and a fundamentalist Protestant religious identification tend to preserve more traditional outlooks.

Relationships have also been established between feminism and non-conformity. Traditional attitudes according to Deaux (1985) are more likely to be held by older, less educated, those lower in income and higher in church attendance. For women, egalitarian attitudes are positively associated with labour force experience subsequent

to marriage. There is currently a shift towards more egalitarian roles for women and men and a corresponding movement away from beliefs in traditional roles for women and men (Deaux, 1985).

Westbrook and Nordholm (1988) found that female students held significantly more egalitarian attitudes than males regarding social roles, freedom and marital roles. Nelson's (1988) research offers support for these findings. Nelson concluded that sex role attitudes are related to a person's gender, age and social economic status. Nelson also found that females have more liberal sex role attitudes than males, and students generally more liberal attitudes than their parents. Social status was also found to correlate with attitudes, with higher social status positively correlated with a liberal outlook. These results are echoed in the research of Parry (1983).

Dempewolfe (1974a) also found a relationship between feminist ideology and gender role ideals. Women accepting feminist ideology have generally been found to be less authoritarian, more autonomous, more self-accepting and to have a greater sense of personal efficacy than their traditionalist counterparts.

Clearly then, there are significant interrelationships between attitudes to women and sex roles, feminist beliefs, and demographic factors. In addition, it seems likely that feminist ideology, attitudes towards sex-roles, and demographic factors contribute to the manner in which language is used, with sexism in language both reflecting and perpetuating sexism in one's own attitudes. Confirmation of this relationship would provide support for the elimination of sexist language use.

In research undertaken by Schulz, Briere and Sandler (1984) both age and sex differences for language form and content were found. Language content varied according to sex and prevailing sex roles. Briere and Langtree (1983) found that subtle forms of sexist language significantly affected rater's social perceptions concerning sex-role related phenomenon, such as suitability of career choices.

Relationships have also been found between the use of non-sexist pronouns and feminist orientation (Jacobson & Insko, 1985). Most of the research in this area which has attempted to discover a link between gender role attitudes and language has employed the use of gender stereotype assessment techniques and attitude scales. Most are in the form of Likert-type scales, the best known of which is Spence and Helmreich's (1972) Attitudes Towards Women Scale (AWS). The major use of the AWS is in descriptive research, aimed at assessing attitudes of respondents (Rowland, 1977), correlating AWS scores with other variables (Nelson, 1988), or examining change in gender-related evaluations over time (Westbrook & Nordholm, 1988).

The AWS (Spence and Helmreich, 1972) was originally designed as a 55 item scale to measure sex role attitudes towards six areas of social behaviour. Total scores locate the respondent on a continuum, with higher scores indicating more profeminist attitudes and lower scores reflecting more traditional, conservative attitudes.

The short version of the AWS (25 items) developed by Spence, Helmreich, & Strapp (1983) was used in the present study. This has been shown to have almost perfect correlation with the scores on the original set of fifty-five items.

Although a number of conceptual and psychometric criticisms have been levelled at the AWS (e.g., Smith & Walker, 1991), the AWS remains a popular scale for assessing gender-role attitudes. It is easy to administer and provides a basis on which to compare attitudes toward women with other variables such as language use and social attitudes.

In summary, it is the writer's belief that a relationship exists between language defined as sexist, attitudes towards women and gender roles, and social attitudes. The broad question being addressed is, to what extent is it possible to find distinguishing features in the attitudes and beliefs of people that are systematically related to and therefore might explain the differences between different people's reported ratings of sexism in language? If one is able to find reliable and replicable correlates of sexist language ratings, then the elimination of sexist language may assist in the fight for equal rights and privileges between the sexes by removing negative stereotypes and false ideals.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND RESEARCH GOALS

This thesis focuses on some central questions about the nature of sexist language: what are the essential features of this type of language and can it be recognised accurately? How do people feel about sexist language? What are some of the factors that influence perceptions of sexist language and can this influence be demonstrated empirically? Although an integrated account of these issues is perhaps an important goal, it is difficult to achieve with the current level of theoretical and empirical knowledge.

The study reported in this thesis attempts to add to current empirical knowledge and theory and suggest future research directions for the study of sexist language. The goal of developing an understanding of the characteristics of sexist language, and its influences and effects can be seen as requiring:

- 1. Increased knowledge and understanding of the perception of different types of language as sexist.**

As indicated in chapter one, a person's access to language determines how the world is perceived. Language determines what can be thought about and in what capacity. It is a powerful means of conveying ideas and can easily maintain or perpetuate negative stereotypes about a particular group. The English language currently contains

usage which is biased toward males, thus reflecting the inequality in power between the sexes. Sexist language makes women invisible, and perpetuates power structures that favour men. Removing sexist language is an attempt to bridge the gap between the sexes promoting equality between the sexes.

Knowing if people recognise sexist language and the effects that linguistic sexism has is an important step toward implementing change. As indicated in chapter four recognition describes two processes: it includes the perception that a particular language usage is considered problematic by some people, and the acceptance of that pattern of usage as being sexist. Some forms of sexist language are more easily recognised than others (Jacobson & Insko, 1985; Stewart et al., 1990) and as such may influence a person's subjective or personal judgements to varying degrees.

Based on the findings of Stewart et al., (1990) it is hypothesised that different types of statements will be more easily recognised as being sexist. These will be the more obvious forms of linguist sexism, for example, statements which offer unequal treatment of the sexes, promote gender stereotypes, or those which present one sex as the norm in a situation.

In addition, people who are more aware of sexist language as an issue or who feel more offended by its use will perceive more language as being sexist.

2. Increased knowledge of the psychosocial processes that influence perceptions of language as sexist.

As indicated in chapter five the recognition and use of sexist language can be related to a number of other factors. Awareness of how the reciprocal feedback loops between these factors and sexist language works is an important step in explaining the disparity in reported ratings of sexism in language. Knowing why these differences occur will provide valuable information in creating a language free from bias.

Attitudes Toward Women and Sexist Language

The present study focuses on individuals' judgements of sexist language and whether these perceptions relate to their attitudes toward women. Based on previous research (e.g. Jacobson & Insko, 1985) it is hypothesised that a person's attitudes toward and about women would most likely be an accurate predictor of the recognition and use of sexist language, with more liberal scorers on the AWS recognising sexist language more readily than conservative scorers.

As demonstrated in previous research findings (e.g. Nelson, 1988) age and gender are expected to be important factors in participants' attitudes toward women as measured on the AWS. Men will score more conservatively than women in their attitudes toward women and gender roles, and younger participants will have more liberal views than older participants.

Demographics and Sexist Language

The awareness of sexist language as a problem will also vary according to demographic factors. Differences in language ratings are expected between the three sample groups with students acknowledging more of a problem with sexist language than non-students. In addition it is hypothesised that education level will have a major impact on the recognition of sexist language and on the belief of sexist language as a problem. It is expected that there will be a strong positive correlation between high educational attainment and recognition of sexist language. In addition it is predicted that students will recognise more statements as sexist than non-students.

Employment status and type of employment are also predicted to correlate with the judgement of language as sexist. Employment involving higher levels of academic achievement and more contact with people is expected to produce a greater awareness of sexism in language.

Given that age and gender are important factors in the acceptance of feminist issues (Nelson, 1988), and that feminist orientation is important in the recognition of sexist language (Jacobson & Insko, 1985) a relationship is expected between gender and recognition of sexist language. It is predicted that men relative to women will judge language as being less sexist, and that these sex differences would in part be influenced by certain demographic and attitudinal variables. In particular, it is hypothesised that language would be evaluated as less sexist by people with a more liberal attitude toward the role of women in contemporary society as measured by the AWS.

It is also hypothesised that age will be an important predictor of sexist language recognition with younger people recognising more statements as being sexist than older people.

Social Attitudes and Perceptions of Sexist Language

A strong relationship is also expected between social attitudes and the judgement of language as sexist, with liberal scorers on the Social Attitudes Survey rating more statements as sexist than conservative scorers.

In summary, Stewart et al.'s (1990) study looked at the recognition of sexist language among university academics. The present study extends and clarifies the Stewart et al. findings in a number of ways. Firstly, the present study sought to sample a more heterogeneous group of respondents. This was achieved by including three groups of subjects: extramural students, internal students and a non student sample. The number of questions used in the Stewart et al. study was also increased and included a much broader and more diverse range of statements classified as sexist. Sections assessing attitudes to women, social attitudes and impressions of sexist language as a problem were also included in the present study. This was undertaken as the present study was seeking a greater extent of information pertaining to perceptions of sexist language and the relationship between and attitudes toward women and social roles.

The sexist assumptions of society are mirrored by language. Linguistic sexism is a major problem in that it creates an image of what is expected and then through continued usage perpetuates and maintains those images. Problems occur in that sexist

language systematically excludes half the population with its often ambiguous nature. It is an easy means of ensuring that the power structure remains with males. The bid to eliminate sexist language is not an attempt to reverse the power structure but to provide equal opportunities for men and women. Removing linguistic sexism will make the English language more precise, making it say what it means, rather than concealing its meaning. Given the reciprocal loops between language and attitudes, changes in one are an important process in implementing changes in the other. By demonstrating the existence of these relationships the present study hopes to provide support for the elimination of sexism from language.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE PRESENT STUDY

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 152 participants took part in the study which included 41 internally enrolled students at Massey University, and a further 70 extramural students who were enrolled in a second year psychology paper. In order to further enhance the representativeness of the sample 41 people who were not enrolled in any university courses were recruited. The majority of these people were engaged in full-time employment, but it also included part-time workers and unemployed.

The extramural students were all invited to participate by mail with 70 out of an available subject group of 112 returning their questionnaire. Forty-two did not reply. This resulted in a return rate of 62%. Both the internal students and the non-student sample populations were recruited using the snowball technique, relying on volunteers and networking to achieve final numbers.

The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 69 years of age, with an average age of 25-29 years old ($sd=1.49$). Female participants outnumbered male participants two to one with 49 males and 103 females completing surveys.

Table One: Sample description of survey participants. Breakdown of sample group by sex

	INTERNAL	EXTRAMURAL	NONSTUDENT	TOTAL
MALE	12	16	16	49
FEMALE	19	54	25	103
TOTAL	41	70	41	152

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEASUREMENT SCALE.

A questionnaire was developed in order to assess people's attitudes towards sexist language and their recognition of sexist language. The questionnaire included sections on attitudes towards women, and in particular the allocation of gender roles. Opinions on general social issues were also assessed. To control for possible order effects in the measurement instrument, the order in which the scales were presented was randomly varied across participants.

The questionnaire used in the present study was developed in order to determine whether a relationship exists between social attitudes, the allocation of gender roles and sexist language. If validated this research would offer support for the elimination of sexist language.

THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN SCALE (AWS)

Given the high correlation between the original and short versions of the AWS and the ease of administration of the short version, the shorter form was used in the present study. Items were scored between zero and three with zero reflecting a more conservative response. The total score reflects the degree an individual holds traditional or liberal views about women, and permits comparisons of the attitudes of various groups on this dimension, predictions of other behaviours on the basis of the individual's attitude score.

Smith and Walker (1991) found the AWS to be multidimensional rather than unifactorial. They argue that it is therefore 'conceptually hazardous to use the scale to give a single score representing a person's attitude to women.' Smith and Walker also suggested the AWS may be contaminated by response bias. They argued that positive items probably are not strictly reversals of negative ones. Law (1976) concluded the scale cannot be assessed to be unidimensional, and to use it as a single index of "attitudes to women" would be inappropriate. However, given that the AWS is one of the most widely documented scales to date in this area, it was decided to continue using this measurement but to interpret findings according to factorised scores. (Full item wordings for the 21 item AWS scale are given in Appendix One.

Additional exploratory questions concerning gender roles and the rights of women were added to the scale. These were adapted from two scales, the Feminism Scale (Dempewolfe, 1974b) and the Attitudinal Inventory (Smith and Self, 1981). Both

scales were similar in content to the AWS but offered additional items regarding attitudes to women's roles.

LANGUAGE OPINION SURVEY

This section was included to assess the level of awareness of sexist language and the degree to which people found such usage acceptable. The 24 statements used in this section are all examples of different types of language which are described as sexist in the State Services Commission Guidelines (Else, 1988) or by the American Psychological Association Guidelines (American Psychological Association, 1983).

The statements in this section were compiled from a variety of sources. Eight of the statements were taken directly from the Stewart et al. study with the remaining sixteen selected from the APA guidelines and sources such as Miller and Swift (1979). Based on Stewart's design subjects were asked to rate the statements as sexist on a four point likert scale ranging from 'not at all sexist' to 'very sexist'. Participants were also asked to consider the appropriateness of the item such that some items could be considered 'very sexist' yet still be considered appropriate by the participant. The present study also required participants to rate whether or not the items were sexist (ie: "Is this sexist?"). Stewart et al. however asked a more directive question ("How sexist is this?"). This difference is an important one as the Stewart question was leading, giving subjects a stronger signal that the items were supposed to be considered sexist. Thus social desirability factors and demand characteristics may have resulted in artifacts

in the Stewart et al. findings.

The 24 statements can be classified under four headings, as defined in the APA guidelines:

1. Non-parallel treatment of the sexes.

Language which treats in a non-parallel fashion, males and females in a parallel situation.

e.g. The maintenance man waved to the girls in the office.

e.g. The maintenance boy waved to the girls in the office.

e.g. Usher/usherette Kitchen/kitchenette

Females also tend to be discussed in terms of personal attributes (e.g. physical appearance, family situation or temperament) when these are irrelevant to the purpose of the discussion.

e.g. Katherine Mansfield was a small, dark-haired, dark-eyed woman who wrote excellent short stories.

2. Ambiguously referring to one sex when meaning both.

e.g. Man is the only mammal who suckles his young.

e.g. At university a student may study whatever he wants.

e.g. The chairman of the company is pregnant.

3. Language presenting one sex as the norm in a situation which could apply to either sex. Two forms of this are:

(a) The use of qualifiers based on sex for occupational groups.

e.g. Male nurse

e.g. woman doctor

e.g. Female nurse

e.g. man doctor

(b) Statements which represent as the norm one sex, and thereby exclude the other sex

e.g. When a doctor finishes medical school, he usually trains in a specialisation.

4. Reinforcing stereotypes on the basis of sex.

e.g. A housewife is unlikely to be aware of current political issues.

As with the Stewart et al. study controls were included to counteract the possible belief that language is only sexist if it conveys an overtly negative message about one sex. Five of the statements expressed a positive view of women but were worded using sexist language. Three statements were included which expressed stereotypic negative views of women.

IMPRESSIONS OF SEXIST LANGUAGE USAGE

An additional section was incorporated in to the design of the study which allowed the researchers to assess the participants impression of sexist language. It examined the degree to which sexist language was felt to be a problem and any changes occurring

in the awareness of sexist language and any pressure to change.

A number of statements typical of the arguments concerning the elimination of sexist language were also included, with participants asked to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with them according to a five point likert scale. The statements were based on published comments from both the media and in literature, and also on common arguments for and against the elimination of gender-biased language (eg; avoiding sexist language sounds clumsy, sexist language is a subtle means of oppressing women).

SOCIAL ATTITUDES SURVEY

The social attitudes section looked at participants' views on a number of topical social issues. Participants were asked to respond to twelve statements relating to current social issues using a five point likert scale ranging from agree strongly to disagree strongly. Questions five and seven were both based on current contentious social issues. The remaining questions were adapted from Ray's (1983) Conservatism Scale. For each question the most conservatist response was scored zero while the most liberal response scored as five. This allowed for scores ranging from zero to sixty with higher scores indicating a more liberal outlook.

This section was included in the present study in order to classify the sample as being either particularly liberal or particularly conservative. It was hoped that this would

provide another means of assessing probable attitudes towards women's roles. It is believed that the more conservative responders would be less aware of sexist language or be more accepting of it.

PILOT STUDY

A pilot study involving a sample size of six was undertaken to appraise participants' responses to the survey. Three male and three female volunteers ranging in age from 18 to 28 completed questionnaires. In addition to assessing responses to the individual items, the participants' overall impression of the survey was sought. Subsequently minor adjustments were made to the wording of item 12 of the ATW scale. Items 6 and 13 of the original AWS were added and the order of the ATW scale was changed to that of the AWS for easier scoring and later comparison with other studies.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RESULTS

Prior to analysis the data set was thoroughly screened to ensure that the assumptions necessary for multivariate analysis had been met. One case was deleted due to missing data on both the ATW and the Social Conservatism Scale. The individual mean value was substituted for those cases with one or two missing values, and other values were deleted listwise from analysis.

Considering that a large number of statistical tests were performed in the present study, the problem of Type I and II error rates must be considered. When testing the significance of an experimental result in research, one must determine whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis. Most statistical procedures are directed towards avoiding a Type I error (erroneously rejecting the null hypothesis when in fact it is true) rather than a Type II error (the failure to reject a hypothesis that is in fact false) as the former can often lead to a more serious problem. In order to reduce the error risk when testing multiple hypotheses, a revision of the Bonferroni inequality procedure can be used. This procedure allows for families or subsets of hypotheses to be tested using an adjusted alpha level (Grove & Andreasen, 1982) or as in the case of Holm's procedure (Holland & Copenhaver, 1988) a alpha level weighted according to the importance of each hypothesis set. Adjustments in the results however, can lead to a more complicated interpretation of the results. In the case of the present study, the advice

given by Rothman (1986) has been followed, whereby each finding is reported as though it alone has been the focus of study, and as such no adjustments to the p-values have been made.

Demographic data for the age, sex, partnership status, and type of work of the participants in each of the three sample groups are presented in Table Two.

Table Two: Sample description of survey participants (frequency and percentage (in parentheses) of own sex sample

	Internal Students		Extramural Students		Non-students	
SEX						
Male	17	42.5%	16	22.9%	16	39.0
Female	23	57.5%	54	77.1%	25	61.0
AGE						
18-19	15	37.5%	-	-	-	-
20-24	18	45.0%	13	18.6%	18	43.9
25-29	5	12.5%	7	10.3%	10	24.4
30-39	2	5.0%	25	35.7%	5	12.2
40-49	-	-	16	22.9%	4	9.8
50-59	-	-	5	7.1%	4	9.8
60-69	-	-	2	2.9%	-	-
missing	-	-	2	-	-	-
PARTNERSHIP STATUS						
never married	32	80.0%	18	25.7%	19	46.3
married or partnered	6	15.0%	46	65.7%	18	43.9
separated	1	2.5%	-	-	3	7.3
divorced	1	2.5%	6	8.6%	1	2.4
CHURCH OR SPIRITUAL GROUP MEMBER						
yes	10	25.0%	20	28.6%	10	24.4
no	30	75.0%	49	71.4%	31	75.6
EDUCATION LEVEL						
up to 4th form	-	-	-	-	3	17.3
5th form	-	-	-	-	1	2.4
6th form	-	-	2	2.9%	5	12.2
7th form	2	5.0%	-	-	4	9.8
some uni study	24	60.0%	40	57.1%	1	2.4
some polytech	3	7.5%	3	4.3%	3	7.3
completed polytech	11	27.5%	11	15.7%	6	14.6
completed university	-	-	14	20.0%	18	43.9
TYPE OF WORK						
Teaching	3	7.5%	14	20.0%	8	19.5
Health care	1	2.5%	12	17.1%	2	4.9
Clerical/ admin	1	1.5%	6	8.6%	4	9.8
Sales/retail	6	7.5%	3	4.3%	4	9.8
Service industry	5	7.5%	5	7.1%	1	2.4
Technical/ trades	1	2.5%	3	4.3%	4	9.8
Professional	1	2.5%	3	4.3%	7	17.1
Armed forces	1	2.5%	1	1.4%	2	4.9
Other	1	2.5%	4	5.7%	3	7.3
Missing/not working	22	55.0%	19	27.1%	6	14.6

Although every attempt was made to ensure that participants were recruited from a range of occupations and localities, the education level of participants in this study was unusually high with 88.7% of participants having some form of post-secondary school training or education. Even when the two student groups were ignored and the education level of the non-students was assessed on its own, this was still found to be atypically high with 68.3% having some education or training after secondary school compared to less than five percent of the general population (Department of Statistics, 1992). Twenty-four percent of participants were employed in the education sector, with a further 14% involved in nursing or health care, probably contributing to the overall high level of education in the subject sample. As earlier research has suggested that education level affects the recognition of sexist language, the results of the present study may have been directly influenced by the post-school training of the respondents.

Church membership was also examined, with 26.7% of those questioned reported being a member of a religious or spiritual group.

The participants in the present study were younger than the general population with almost 60% under the age of 30. [$M = 3.19$ (25-29 years old), $SD = 1.49$]. This is not surprising considering the large number of students involved in the survey. This could have resulted in bias in the results of the present study as younger people have been shown to be more aware of sexist language and are able to recognise it more readily.

ATTITUDES TO SEXIST LANGUAGE

Perceptions of Own Sexist Language Usage

Males and females both rated their own language usage as usually non-sexist, with 67.3% of males and 74.5% of females answering in this way. This difference was not significant ($t(149) = 0.92, p < .05$).

Recognition of sexist language as a problem.

Both males and females agreed that there is a problem with sexist language. However, there was a significant difference in the perceptions held by each sex as to the severity of the problem ($t(130) = -2.33, p < .05$), with females acknowledging more of a problem ($M = 2.12, SD = 0.65$) than males ($M = 1.83, SD = 0.70$). The modal response for each group was that a moderate problem with sexist language exists.

Sexist language as offensive.

There was also a significant difference between the sexes when asked if they were personally offended by the use of sexist language ($t(149) = -3.28, p < .001$), with females being more offended ($M = 2.88, SD = 1.02$) than males ($M = 2.33, SD = 0.88$). A two-way anova suggested that although both sex $F(1, 150) = 23.10$ ($p < .001$) and group membership $F(2, 150) = 3.38$ ($p < .05$) were important factors in taking personal offence to sexist language, there was no significant interaction effect between these two factors occurring. When asked if other people were disadvantaged by sexist language use a significant difference between the sexes emerged with 79.2% of males surmising that others would be disadvantaged by sexist language use, whereas 91.2% of females believed others would be disadvantaged ($t(148) = 2.08, p < .05$). The modal response

for both males and females was that others would be moderately disadvantaged by sexist language. Most males and females also believed that others would be offended by sexist language.

Internal students considered others would be moderately disadvantaged and married people were more likely to respond that others would be mildly disadvantaged $F(3, 108) = 4.494, p < .005$.

Changes in sexist language use.

Both males and females believed that their own use of sexist language had changed. Sixty-four percent of males and 80% of females conveyed that their language use had changed with the majority of people reporting a decrease in sexist language use. The sex difference in the change in language use was significant ($t(148) = 2.11, p < .05$) with more females than males reporting a change (females $M = 1.2, SD = 0.40$; males ($M = 1.35, SD = 0.48$)). Group differences in reporting a change were also found to be significant $F(2, 149) = 4.127, p < .05$, revealing that extramural students were more likely than either of the two remaining groups to report a change in sexist language use. The way in which language use had changed was also significant between the three groups with both student groups more likely to report a decrease in sexist language, while non-students reported no change in their use of sexist language $F(2, 124) = 5.668, p < .005$. The general consensus between the sexes was that non-sexist language use should be encouraged.

Sources of pressure to change.

There was no significant difference between the sexes regarding awareness of any pressure to change ($t(145) = 0.68, p < .05$). Fifty-five females (55%) and 23 males (48.9%) reported that they had been aware of pressure on them personally to use non-sexist language in recent years. Pressure in general to use non-sexist language was more widely felt, with 46 males (95.8%) and 94 females (93.1%) reporting such pressure. Table Three presents the participants' report of the sources of the pressure. The most common sources of pressure were from work associates, friends and family, and society and the media.

Table Three: Sources of pressure to change. Percentages of each sex reporting pressure to change.

	Males (n=49)	Females (n=103)
Government	20.4%	12.7%
University Administration	26.5%	27.5%
Society/Media	65.3%	73.5%
Student Association	16.3%	18.6%
Friends/Family	26.5%	44.1%
Work Associates	30.6%	44.1%
Other **	16.3%	15.7%

(** Other sources of pressure included feminist groups, women's organisations (eg: Rape Crisis), the Catholic Church, and education.

LANGUAGE OPINION SURVEY

The statements in the Language Opinion Survey were classified as per the Stewart et al. study into categories for further examination. From the 24 original statements 11 categories were created including the eight headings from the Stewart study and an additional 3 (see Table four).

Reliability of the Language Opinion Section was acceptable with the 24 items producing an overall alpha of .91.

Ratings of Appropriateness of Sexist and Non-sexist Language

The ratings of the sexist statements in the Language Opinion Survey were analyzed according to sex and group membership. Each statement was examined for differences individually and then a second analysis was undertaken according to the eleven categories. Significant differences were found for all but statements 8, 12, 13, 23 and 24 (see Table Four). Females recognised all but question 20 ("Girls can do anything") as more sexist than males. For the remaining question (20) males rated the statement as more sexist ($M = 2.17, SD = 1.16$) than did their female counterparts ($M = 1.84, SD = 0.99$) although this was not a significant difference. With reference to the ratings of appropriateness of the statements an interesting factor emerged. Statements could be considered very sexist by an individual yet still be considered appropriate. For twelve of the statements there was no significant difference between males and females as to their appropriateness. For the remaining twelve statements a significant difference emerged with males consistently more likely to rate the statements as appropriate than females.

Table Four: Means, standard deviations and t-tests for each sex for the categories of Sexist Language

Reason Considered Sexist	Males (n=49)		Females (n=103)		t-test
	mean	SD	mean	SD	
1. Use of non-parallel terms for males and females.					
(5): Remember the girls in the typing pool.	2.38	1.00	3.23	1.02	-4.78*
(9): The authors acknowledge the assistance of Mrs John Smith.	2.72	1.30	3.42	0.89	-3.80*
(12): She mothered the child.	1.39	0.79	1.51	0.84	-0.82
2. Non-parallel concentration on appearance of females.					
(11): Katherine Mansfield was a small, dark-haired, dark-eyed woman who wrote excellent short stories.	1.26	0.61	1.61	0.99	0.27**
3. Use of non-neutral term for an occupational group.					
(2): The chairman is ultimately responsible for the company's performance.	1.75	0.92	2.53	1.08	-4.32***
(19): A hospital spokeswoman said Does's injuries were critical.	1.56	0.82	1.94	0.93	-2.41**
(23): The chairman of the company is pregnant.	2.29	1.16	2.58	1.14	-1.45
4. Use of non-inclusive term for groups of both genders.					
(4): Prehistoric man frequently endured periods of great famine.	1.52	0.85	2.21	1.10	-3.80***
(8): As for man, he is no different from the rest. His back aches, he ruptures easily, his women have difficulties in childbirth.	2.86	1.06	3.22	1.07	-1.96
(13): Man is the only mammal who suckles his young.	2.32	0.98	2.46	1.19	-0.72
(14): Though Mary Ferrara is already well known in the consumer advocacy movement, she'll need the support of the man in the street if she runs for office.	2.35	1.00	2.98	1.01	-3.55***
(18): They say they don't have enough manpower to finish the job on time.	1.59	0.84	2.06	0.99	-2.84**
(22): It is now thought that a million years ago and more earth was populated with more or less manlike creatures descended not from apes but some forefather of both apes and man.	1.80	1.00	2.29	1.13	-2.60*

Table Four (cont)

Reason Considered Sexist	Males (n=49)		Females (n=103)		t-test
	mean	SD	mean	SD	
5. Use of masculine pronoun to represent both genders.					
(1): At university a student may study whatever course he wants to.	2.75	1.07	3.20	1.02	-2.84**
(17): Will mankind murder Mother Earth or will he redeem her.	1.90	0.93	2.56	1.19	-3.38***
6. Implying one sex as the norm in an occupation.					
(3): True scientists frequently work long hours and may neglect their wives and children.	3.33	1.01	3.61	0.87	-2.41**
(21): As she gains experience the student nurse has increasing opportunities for clinical work.	2.25	1.03	3.00	1.05	-4.16***
7. Use of modifier for one gender in an occupation.					
(16): A woman doctor was first on the scene and performed resuscitation.	2.17	0.98	2.69	1.07	-2.85**
8. Reinforcing stereotypes.					
(7): A housewife is unlikely to be aware of current political issues.	3.18	1.03	3.38	0.79	-3.25***
(10): The boys chose typically male toys.	1.60	0.89	2.46	1.10	-4.84**
9. Man as a verb.					
(6): They had to man the pumps all night.	1.33	0.60	1.87	0.96	-3.65***
(15): The emergency room must be manned at all times.	1.45	0.79	1.80	0.96	-2.18**
10. Campaign slogan.					
(20): "Girls can do anything".	2.17	1.16	1.84	0.99	1.17
11. Use of feminine pronoun to represent both genders.					
(24): The typical american adult of the 1980s is more self-directed, more able to make thoughtful choices and grasp unexpected opportunities, than was her mother in the 1950s.	1.27	0.61	3.02	1.00	-81

*p<0.01 **0.05 ***0.001

Recognition of Language as Sexist

Data in Table Five shows the percentage of respondents who rated each statement as 'not-sexist' in the Language Opinion Survey section of the questionnaire. A one-factor ANOVA with the number of statements rated 'non-sexist' as the dependent variable and the gender of the participant as the independent variable showed that males reported significantly more of the statements as 'non-sexist' than females, $F(1, 150) = 19.32, p < .0001$. Males rated a mean of 9.8 of the statements as 'non-sexist' whereas females rated 6.4 statements as 'non-sexist' on average.

Some statements were easily recognised as being non-sexist by both males and females (as indicated in Table Five). These statements tended to be those which unjustifiably presented one sex as the norm in a situation (e.g. "True scientist frequently work long hours and may neglect their wives and children"), and those which offered unequal treatment of the sexes (e.g. "Remember to consider the needs of the girls in the typing pool when planning the reorganisation of an office"). Significant gender differences in the frequency of rating a statement non-sexist tended to be found in statements which treated the sexes in non-parallel ways, those which used gender-specific terms (masculine generics) to represent both sexes, and statements which reinforced stereotypes on the basis of sex. All the statements which were classified as 'non-sexist' by more than 25% of either gender were in these categories.

Table Five: Frequency of rating a statement as 'non-sexist' (frequency and percentage (in parentheses) of own sex sample.

	Females (n=103)		Males (n=49)	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
Q1. Student may study what he wants to.	9	8.8	8	17.0
Q2. Chairman responsible...	22	21.6	24	51.1
Q3. Scientist neglect their wives...	8	7.8	4	8.2
Q4. Prehistoric man...	34	33.3	32	66.7
Q5. Remember the girls...	9	8.8	11	22.9
Q6. They had to man the pumps all night.	46	45.1	36	73.5
Q7. Housewife unaware of political issues.	5	4.9	5	10.2
Q8. Man no different...his women have difficulties...	11	11.1	8	17.0
Q9. Mrs John Smith.	6	6.0	14	29.8
Q10. The boys chose typically male toys.	25	24.8	31	63.3
Q11. Mansfield was a small, dark-haired woman...	69	67.6	40	81.6
Q12. She mothered the child.	67	67.7	38	77.6
Q13. Man suckles his young.	26	28.3	10	22.7
Q14. She'll need the support of the man in the street.	9	8.9	9	18.8
Q15. The emergency room must be manned at all times.	52	51.0	34	69.4
Q16. Woman doctor...	17	16.7	15	31.3
Q17. Will Mankind murder Mother Earth...	28	28.3	20	41.7
Q18. Not enough manpower...	36	35.3	29	59.2
Q19. Hospital spokeswoman...	41	40.2	30	62.5
Q20. Girls can do anything!	53	52.0	19	39.6
Q21. As she gains experience ...the student nurse...	12	11.9	14	28.6
Q22. Manlike creatures descended from forefathers...	31	31.0	25	51.0
Q23. Chairman is pregnant.	24	24.2	18	36.7
Q24. Typical adult...more self-directed...than her mother was in the 1950s.	10	9.9	6	12.5

When the new categories were assessed with regards to sex differences the first nine categories were all significant again with males less likely to rate the categories of statements as sexist (see Table Six). Category Ten (campaign slogan - "Girls can do anything") and Category Eleven (Use of feminine pronouns to represent both sexes) did not produce any significant differences.

Table 6: Mean Ratings of Items in Language Opinion Survey For each Sex (standard deviations in parentheses)

	Females (n=103)	Males (n=49)	t-value
1 Use of non-parallel terms for males and females	2.71 (0.67)	2.16 (0.62)	-4.72***
2 Non-parallel concentration on appearance of females	1.61 (0.99)	1.27 (0.61)	-2.23*
3 Use of non-neutral term for an occupational group	2.36 (0.81)	1.85 (0.74)	-3.62***
4 Use of non-inclusive term for groups of both genders	2.55 (0.87)	2.12 (0.66)	-2.83**
5 Use of masculine pronoun to represent both genders	2.87 (0.89)	2.30 (0.82)	-3.64***
6 Implying one sex as the norm in an occupation	2.31 (0.75)	2.74 (0.84)	-4.21***
7 Use of modifier for one gender in an occupation	2.70 (1.07)	2.17 (0.96)	-2.85**
8 Reinforcing stereotypes	3.08 (0.69)	2.39 (0.76)	-5.60***
9 Man as a verb	1.84 (0.92)	1.39 (0.66)	-3.07**
10 Campaign Slogan	1.84 (1.04)	2.17 (1.16)	1.71
11 Use of feminine pronoun to represent both genders	3.02 (1.00)	2.88 (1.04)	-0.81

*p<.01, **p<.005, ***p<.001

(1=not at all sexist, 2=slightly sexist, 3=moderately sexist, 4=very sexist)

Suggestion for how to encourage the use of non-sexist language

Table seven presents the suggestions made as to how to encourage the use of non-sexist language. The suggestions can be classified under five headings: awareness, education, media responsibility, legislation issues, and personal action and responsibility. Suggestions for positive action included stronger legislation regarding publications, booklets providing non-sexist equivalents to sexist words, and for those offended by the use of sexist language to explain to others why it offends.

Table 7: Suggestions for How to Encourage the Use of Non-sexist Language

Suggestion
Increase awareness of sexist language as an issue
Provide booklets with non-sexist alternatives
Education especially early education
Re-education regarding myths of sexist language
Publications to use non-sexist language
Elimination of sexist language from television and newspaper
Use of non-sexist language in children's books
Stronger legislation regarding sexist language usage
Role modelling - lead by example
Take personal responsibility
Explain to others why sexist language is offensive
Discussion

Impressions of Sexist Language Issues

The means and standard deviations for the items assessing the Impressions of Sexist Language Section were calculated separately for males and females (see Table Eight). The results of the t-tests of the sex differences in responding are also presented in Table Eight.

Table Eight: Impressions of Sexist Language. Means and standard deviations for each sex.

Item	Males (n=49)		Females (n=103)		t value
	mean	SD	mean	SD	
1. Overreaction by feminists	3.21	1.22	3.81	1.20	-2.85**
2. Important issue	2.97	1.21	2.26	1.17	3.48***
3. More important things to worry about	2.14	1.19	2.25	1.01	-0.55
4. Subtle means of oppression	2.87	1.31	2.24	1.17	3.03**
5. Elimination is a waste of time	3.61	1.19	4.03	1.05	2.19**
6. Outdated language use	2.46	1.17	1.83	1.06	3.27***
7. Elimination makes language more effective	2.88	1.40	2.01	1.11	4.12***
8. Avoiding makes language clumsy	3.45	1.27	3.79	1.18	-1.64
9. Language is for the individual	2.54	1.25	3.02	1.24	-2.19**
10. Makes language sound sissy	4.21	1.03	4.31	0.99	-0.60
11. Easily changed	2.71	1.32	2.16	1.16	2.62*
12. Lazy, unthinking way of speaking	3.06	1.31	2.47	1.27	-2.95**
13. Fuss about nothing	3.51	1.14	4.09	1.12	-2.95**
14. Change all with 'man' in it	3.77	1.39	3.53	1.29	1.03
15. Relic of times past	2.60	1.19	1.96	1.06	3.32***
16. Avoiding sexist language sounds ugly	3.55	1.17	4.14	0.99	-3.14**
17. Natural gender differences	3.51	1.36	3.90	1.26	-1.74
18. Reflects attitudes	2.47	1.39	1.85	0.94	3.21**

(*p<.01 **p<.05 ***p<.001)
 1=strongly agree 5=strongly disagree

Group differences were also examined. For internally enrolled students only items 7 and 12 produced any significant differences between the sexes. For extramural students nine items (2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17 and 18) resulted in significant sex differences. No significant sex differences were found for the non-student group. Two-way ANOVAs revealed significant differences between the three sample groups on items 1, 5, 10, 15, and 17. For items 1, 5, 10 and 17 non-students agreed more strongly with the statements than did either student group. For item 15 (sexist language is a relic of times when women had few rights or privileges) non-students disagreed with the statement more strongly than did students.

Scale heterogeneity of the agree/disagree section was assessed using factor analysis. Five initial factors with eigenvalues greater than one emerged, together accounting for 64.1% of the total variance. After varimax rotation the four factor solution proved easiest to interpret (59% of the total variance). All items loaded at least .4 on a factor and six items (3, 6, 10, 11, 12, and 13) loaded at least .3 on more than one factor. Communalities ranged from .504 to .803. The factors were labelled, in order, *overreaction, attitudinal, aesthetic value, and individual preferences*.

SOCIAL ATTITUDES SURVEY

Reliability checks were performed on the Social Attitudes Scale. As a result of this analysis items four, six, seven, and twelve were deleted from the Social Attitudes Scale. These items were related to marijuana laws, being pestered by government and de-gooders, nuclear power bans, and government censure of erotic and obscene material.

The overall scale mean for females was 33.14 ($SD = 6$) and 36.24 ($SD = 5.5$) for males, suggesting females in the present study have a more conservative attitude regarding social issues than males. This difference was significant ($t(146) = 2.92, p < .005$). Significant sex differences were also found for items 5, 8, 9, and 11. In each instance males produced higher scores indicating a more liberal outlook than females. Differences across the three sample groups were only significant for items 9 and 10. For item 9 (people should work harder for money...) internal students tended to agree more strongly and non-students disagreed most strongly $F(2, 146) = 5.03, p < .01$. For item 10 it was again the non-students who tended to disagree most strongly and extramural students were more likely to agree with the notion that the police deserve more praise for the work they do $F(2, 146) = 3.89, p < .05$. When sex differences across the three sample groups were examined significant differences emerged for females for items 3 [$F(2, 99) = 4.31, p < .05$], and for item 9 [$F(2, 101) = 4.68, p < .05$]. There were no significant differences in males' responses across the three groups. The means and standard deviations for the Social Attitudes Scale for the total sample are presented in Table Nine.

Table Nine: Means and standard deviations for the Social Attitudes survey

Item	n	mean	std dev
A free health service should be provided by the government	151	1.89	1.10
Allowed to hold demonstrations without police interference	151	2.54	1.20
Law and order are more important than letting every idiot have their say.	151	2.89	1.27
Government attempts to prevent people using marijuana are just about as stupid as the prohibition of alcohol was.	151	3.18	1.46
The employment contracts act should be repealed.	148	2.28	1.53
People should be free to get on with their own lives without being pestered by governments and do-gooders.	151	3.27	1.13
Nuclear powered ships and nuclear armed vessels should continue to be banned from New Zealand ports.	151	1.66	1.61
The rights of strikers to picket a firm they are striking against should not be interfered with	150	2.40	1.153
People who want more money should work harder for it instead of trying to get it off the government	151	3.91	1.09
The police deserve more praise for the difficult job they do	150	4.21	0.93
Laws against homosexuality are old-fashioned and wrong	150	1.97	1.24
The government should have the right to censure erotic and obscene material	151	3.83	1.26
Total scale	147	34.09	5.99

1=agree strongly 2=agree slightly 3=neither agree or disagree 4=disagree slightly 5=disagree strongly (reverse scoring for items 3, 6, 9, 10 and 12)

THE ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN SCALE

Reliability on both forms of the ATW were acceptable with a standardised alpha of .89 on the original form (items 1 to 21) and .92 on the extended version with exploratory items (items 1 to 34).

After the reverse items were recorded, a total score was found for each case by summing across the 21 items of the original AWS scale. Table Ten presents scale means, standard deviations, and alpha coefficients, for each of the three samples and for the sample as a whole. Means and standard deviations are also presented for women and men in each sample, along with a t-test of the sex difference. Given the previous research in this area which suggests women are likely to score higher than men, a one-tailed t-test was used).

Table Ten: Means, standard deviations, and alpha coefficients from the three samples and from the total sample

	Total Sample	Internal Students	Extramural Students	Non-Student
TOTAL SAMPLE				
n	151	40	70	41
mean	53.25	53.85	54.51	50.51
std dev	7.45	6.38	8.12	6.48
alpha	0.87	0.84	0.92	0.78
WOMEN				
n	102	23	54	25
mean	55.12	56.00	56.09	52.20
std dev	6.68	4.42	7.54	5.67
MEN				
n	49	17	16	16
mean	49.38	50.94	49.19	47.86
std dev	7.54	7.52	8.27	6.95
t-TEST	-4.75	-2.67	-3.15	-2.18
p(one-tailed)	<.001	<.005	<.001	<.05

The alpha coefficients for each of the three sample groups and for the total sample were all reasonably high (ranging from .78 to .92). Significant sex differences were

found in the total subject sample and in each of the three sample groups. A two-way ANOVA of the AWS by sex and group membership suggested that both sex $F(1,150) = 20.71$ ($p < .001$), and group membership $F(2, 150) = 4.57$, $p < .05$ were important factors. However, there was no significant interaction effect of these two factors occurring. The scores from the extramural students were also shown to be significantly different from the non-student group $F(2, 150) = 4.07$, $p < .05$, with extramural students scoring higher than non-students. According to the criteria of Spence and Helmreich (1972), these results would indicate that extramural students tended to have a more liberal attitude than non-students.

A series of factor analyses, using the SPSSx package were run on the total sample and then for the three sub sample groups to assess item heterogeneity of the AWS.

Total Sample

When the data for all 151 participants were analyzed, six initial factors with eigenvalues greater than one emerged, together explaining about 60.6% of the total variance. The three factor oblique solution was the most interpretable (accounting for 44.6% of the total variance). All items loaded at least .3 on a factor, with six items (3, 5, 6, 10, 17, 20 and 21) loading at least .3 on two factors. Communalities ranged from .21 to .68. Factors Two and Three were independent of each other ($r = .003$), while factors One and Two were positively related to each other ($r = .31$). The factors were labelled, in order, as *equality of sex roles*, *equal social roles*, and *equal opportunity for achievement*.

Internal Students

There were seven initial factors with eigenvalues greater than one, accounting for 72.6% of the total variance. Of the various solutions examined that for three factors (46.2% of the total variance) proved easiest to interpret. The three factors were labelled *equal division of labour, equal social roles, and traditional morality*. No items loaded less than .3 on a factor, with six items (3, 5, 9, 11, 16 and 20) loading at least .3 on two factors. Communalities ranged from .243 to .676. Correlations between the factors were positive but low (.041 to .169) with factors One and Two producing the highest correlation.

Extramural Students

Five initial factors with eigenvalues greater than one emerged when the AWS was examined for the 70 extramural participants. This accounted for 68.2% of the variance. Of the solutions examined that for a two factor solution proved to be reasonably clear and interpretable (50.7% of total variance). All items loaded at least .3 on a factor with four items (items 2, 10, 15 and 20) loading at least .3 both factors. Communalities ranged from .20 to .66. The factors were labelled *equal division of labour, and equal social roles*. The correlation between the factors was -.35.

Non-Students

For the non-student population seven initial factors emerged accounting for 68.7% of the total variance. Of the solutions examined the four factor oblique solution proved to be reasonable clear and interpretable (50.8% of total variance). Most items loaded at least .3 on at least one factor with eight items loading on two factors. Item seven

did not load at least .3 on any factor. Communalities ranged from .17 to .77. The factors were labelled *traditional sex roles*, *equal social roles*, *equal division of labour*, and *equal opportunity for achievement*. There was a small positive correlation between factors one and four (.004), while all other factors produced small negative correlations.

AWS vs ATW

A significant high correlation was found between the 21 items on the AWS and the remaining 13 exploratory items on the ATW scale ($r = .8$, $p < .001$).

Two or three factors consistently emerged from the factor analyses of the AWS with the present sample. These were that of *equal social roles*, *equal division of labour*, and an *equal opportunity for achievement*. These results support Smith and Walker's (1991) findings that the AWS is indeed not unifactorial as cited from the findings of Spence and Helmreich (1972). The factors which emerged for the total sample in the present study were tested for any correlations between the sexist language recognition section and the eleven categories of sexist language as described in Table Four.

The AWS was also found to be correlated with the categories of sexist language. Correlations ranged from .14 to .42. Only categories ten (campaign slogan) and category eleven (use of feminine pronoun to represent both genders) were not found to be significantly correlated with any factors on the AWS. The remaining categories all produced significant correlations.

The correlational data between the AWS, and the Impressions of Sexist Language section and the types of sexist language are presented in Table Eleven. The *equal opportunity for achievement* component which emerged for the total sample was found to negatively correlated with the *attitudinal* component of the Impressions of Sexist Language section ($r = -.26, p < .01$). This achievement component was not significantly related to any factors.

The *equal social roles* component of the AWS was also significantly related to the attitudinal component of the Impressions of Sexist Language section ($r = -.39, p < .001$), and also to both *individual preferences* ($r = .37, p < .001$), and the *aesthetic value* component ($r = .31, p < .001$). Correlations between this factor and the eleven categories of sexist language ranged from .18 to .43.

Table Eleven: Correlational Data Between the AWS, Impressions of Sexist Language, and Categories of Sexist Language.

	Equality of Sex Roles	Equal Social Roles	Equal Opportunity For Achievement	Social Attitudes
Non-parallel Terms	.34**	.43**	-.03	-.41**
Non-parallel Concentration On Appearance	.23*	.23*	.03	-.34**
Non-neutral Occupational Terms	.29**	.19	-.12	-.29**
Non-inclusive Terms For Groups	.31**	.43**	-.09	-.35**
Use of Masculine Pronouns	.36**	.40**	-.06	-.32**
Implying One Sex as Norm	.37**	.30**	.07	-.22*
Use of Modifier	.23*	.18	-.05	-.25*
Reinforcing Stereotypes	.40**	.34**	.17	-.37**
Man as a Verb	.27*	.34**	.02	-.40**
Campaign Slogan	-.17	-.19	-.15	-.26*
Use of Feminine Pronouns	.11	.07	-.09	-.06

*p<0.01 **p<0.001

The *equality of sex roles* component of the AWS was found to be significantly related to all four factors of the Impressions of Sexist Language section. Significant correlations also emerged for this component and all but two of the sexist language categories. Correlations ranged from .12 to -.47.

A relationship was also found between the Attitudes to Sexist Language section and the eleven types of sexist language. The *aesthetic value* factor which emerged was found to be negatively correlated with the campaign slogan - "girls can do anything" ($r = -.28$, $p < .001$). Small correlations ranging from -.42 to .19) were found for the other ten categories, although these were not significant.

The *overreaction* to sexist language factor was significantly correlated with all but the last two types of sexist language (campaign slogan and the use of feminine pronoun to represent both genders). Correlations with the remaining nine categories ranged from .21 to .46. All were significant to at least .01.

A significant relationship was found between the *attitudinal* factor of sexist language and eight of the eleven categories. Small correlations ranging from .09 to .20 were found between three categories (non-parallel concentration on the appearance of females, the use of a modifier for one gender in an occupation, and the use of feminine pronoun to represent both genders), although these relationships were not significant. A negative correlation was found for the campaign slogan ($r = -.22$, $p < .001$). Significant positive correlations ranging from .25 to .39 were found for the eight remaining categories.

Individual preferences regarding language use were also significantly related to eight of the categories. Correlations were small, ranging from .06 to .35. Category one (use of non-parallel terms for males and females) produced the largest correlation ($r = .36$, $p < .001$). The smallest significant relationship ($r = .22$, $p < .01$) was found for category nine (man as a verb).

The Social Attitude Scale was also significantly correlated with all the sexist language categories except the category regarding the use of feminine pronouns. Correlations ranged from $-.06$ to $-.41$ and suggest that in the sample population those with conservative scores on the Social Attitude Scale tended to rate the statements as more sexist.

The results from the present study suggest that there is a relationship between attitudes towards women and sex roles, social attitudes, and perceptions of sexist language. Positive relationships were found to exist between the factorised scores on the AWS and the categories of sexist language. In addition, positive correlations were also found between the social attitudes section and the sexist language statements. This would suggest that the recognition of sexist language and thus its use and abuse, is directly related to a person's social attitudes and their attitudes towards women.

CHAPTER NINE

DISCUSSION

In communicating with others, people's style of language can often be an indication of the attitudes and beliefs they hold. Many linguists claim that using gender-biased language can impart an underlying meaning that reflects the individual's attitudes towards and about women, and the position women should hold in society. Gender biased language includes the use of masculine generic words and phrases, gender stereotypes, and a lack of parallel treatment of language terms between the sexes. The use of gender biased language creates images that favour one sex over another and suggests certain abilities and behaviours are gender specific.

A growing awareness of the problem of sexism in language has led to the formulation of guidelines for the elimination of sexist language (APA, 1983; Miller & Swift, 1979; Murdock & Forsyth, 1985; Spender, 1980). Many people are still not convinced that the sex bias in language use is important, concluding that gender biased language does not create and reinforce stereotypes. They acknowledge that gender biased language may be inaccurate, but that it is not sexist.

The purpose of the present study was to examine the existence of a relationship between attitudes and people's perceptions of sexist language, in particular between attitudes towards women and sexist language use, and social attitudes and language.

The confirmation that a definite relationship exists between attitudes and perceptions and the use of sexist language would offer support for the elimination of sexism and sex bias from language use.

Taken as a whole, the results from present study suggest that recognition and perceptions of sexist language are indeed related to the attitudes people espouse, and as such may contribute to the perpetuation of sexist beliefs and ideals. The findings offer support for the research hypotheses, thus endorsing the need for the elimination of sexist language.

In considering the present findings it is important to be aware of the methodological limitations of the present study.

METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Sample:

Although steps were taken to assess the reactions of a cross-section of those who may be exposed to sexist language, the "convenience" sampling techniques used in the present study were not sufficient to ensure a representative depiction of individuals' perceptions of sexist language.

The education level of the present sample was unusually high with 88.7% of the sample having had some form of training or tertiary education since leaving high school. The sample was also very young in comparison to the general population with 60% under the age of thirty. Given the research findings of Nelson (1988) and Deaux (1985), the

high level of education and the younger overall age range of the sample would possibly have produced a more liberal sample than could be expected from the general population. Considering that more liberal attitudes have been demonstrated to relate to sexist language recognition the present sample may have been unusually aware of the constraints and problems that sexism in language can produce.

Instruments:

A number of methodological problems were found to exist with the instrument used in the present study. Self-report measures are subject to response bias and social desirability and although many of the items in the questionnaire were adapted from established instruments, the topic area of the present study may have biased many participants' reactions to the questionnaire, especially those participants familiar with the author. The questionnaire was lengthy and could also have influenced participants' desire to respond, with those who consider the elimination of sexist language as a waste of time choosing not to participate.

More non-sexist control statements could have been included in the Language Opinion Section of the questionnaire, in addition to a larger range of sexist statements with varying degrees of sexism implicit in them as with Murdock and Forsyth's (1985) study of sexism in language. This would have allowed for greater discrimination regarding the extent that certain types of language are sexist.

The directness of the present study with explicit questions concerning sexism in language and the presentation of numerous examples of sexist statements may also have

influenced the findings of this investigation. Social bias was evident in the comments by many participants, who noted the bias towards women's views (as in the AWS) and in the opinions on sexist language. Many participants may have responded in the manner they thought was expected of them, that is, more favourable towards women. Considering the nature of self-report measures more neutral control questions may have reduced any response bias.

A number of conceptual and psychometric criticisms can also be levelled at the AWS. Many of the items are ambiguous in that they are vaguely worded and contain multiple clauses, making it difficult to determine exactly what an "agree" or "disagree" response means. The bipolar nature of the AWS also disallows the possibility that there are other positions from which to view and speak of women other than "liberal" or "conservative (Smith & Walker, 1991).

The AWS in its final form includes six categories of interest confined to areas where men and women are "in principle capable of being granted equal rights". Areas seen as not relevant to men (eg: reproductive rights and the legal status of women) were omitted. These areas are of direct concern to women and by excluding them from the final scale undermines the content validity of a scale concerned with attitudes towards women's rights and roles. The AWS is also subject to the problems of social desirability and response bias common among Likert scales (Smith & Walker, 1991).

EXTENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE HYPOTHESES, AND COMPARISON OF RESULTS WITH THOSE FROM PREVIOUS RESEARCH

1. Attitudes toward women and perceptions of sexist language

The hypothesis that a relationship exists between attitudes towards women and women's roles, and the recognition of sexism in language was supported. Consistent with the research findings of Jacobson and Insko (1985), a strong relationship was found to exist between scores on the AWS and ratings of language as sexist. Attitudes towards women and attitudes towards sexism in language were also found to be correlated. The present findings suggest that those with more liberal attitudes towards women tended to recognise sexist language more readily than those with traditional attitudes towards women. Men tended not to recognise linguistic sexism. The sexism deeply ingrained in Western culture is still largely unconscious. People remain unaware of the pervasive ideology that sees females as inferior beings because alternative beliefs and attitudes about women go unimagined. The beliefs and attitudes about women are closely related to the language used to express thoughts (Miller & Swift, 1976; Spender, 1980). Changing the way language is used may help accentuate the deleterious attitudes people embrace.

Sex differences were apparent when attitudes towards women were assessed, with males advocating more traditional roles for women. In addition, both student groups tended to favour more liberal roles for women than did the non-student sample. Both student groups also perceived the gender-biased language to be more sexist than did the non-students, suggesting that a relationship exists between judgements of language as sexist,

demographic variables and attitudes toward women.

2. Demographics and judgements of sexist language

A relationship was also found to exist between demographic variables and the recognition of language as sexist. Consistent with the findings of Nelson (1988) and Deaux (1985) both education level and type of occupation were found to relate to scores on the AWS and to perceptions of sexist language. Gender of participant was highly significant in the perception of language as sexist with males rating more statements as non-sexist than females. Given that a large percentage of sexist language is gender-biased towards males, and excludes females rather than males, it is not surprising that females are more likely to recognise this bias in language (Jacobson & Insko, 1985). Both males and females were aware of sexist language as a problem, however a significant difference was found between the sexes concerning the perception of sexist language as offensive with females being more offended. More females than males felt that other people would be disadvantaged by the use of sexist language. Both males and females believed there was a problem with sexist language, but females considered the use of sexist language more of a issue. The androcentrism of the English language and the resulting bias it has towards women, attributes to the awareness women have relative to men regarding the use and effects of sexist language.

3. Sexist language recognition and social attitudes

Social attitudes was also found to correlate with people's judgements of sexist language, with those with liberal social attitudes rating the gender-bias in language as sexist. This finding supports the claim that social attitudes and sexist language

recognition are correlated.

The "rules" that govern the "correct" use of language have much in common with other social rules (Spender, 1980). They are not invariable, ordained to last forever. They developed to meet social needs, and they are sensitive to social change. Some serve a useful purpose, others are oppressive or have become outdated. When the usage of certain words and phrases clouds the intended meaning rather than contributing to its clarity and accuracy, these words should be abandoned even though they still may be grammatically correct.

4. Impressions of sexist language

Significant differences were found in the perceptions of sexist language as an problem, with females voicing their objections to the use of gender-biased language more frequently than males. Females felt they were disadvantaged to a greater extent when sexist language was used which would account for their ability to recognise it more readily. Attitudes towards the issues identified with sexist language were also more readily acknowledged by females than by males.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Although the relationship between hypotheses and data is always a tenuous one even a conservative interpretation of the current findings suggests that males and females differ in their recognition of sexist language and their perceptions of its severity. Males

in the present sample were found to be more conservative than females regarding women's roles and also more likely to rate gender biased language as non-sexist.

The present study set out to explore the existence of a relationship between attitudes toward women and to social roles, and perceptions of sexist language. The findings of the present study have substantially clarified and expanded the preliminary findings of Stewart et al. (1990) and demonstrate that a relationship does exist. The present findings also suggest that the recognition of sexism in language is dependent in part, on the nature of the attitudes held. Traditional attitudes regarding women, and conservative social attitudes resulted in a failure to recognise gender-biased language as sexist.

Males more often than females suggested that the elimination of sexist language was a trivial matter. Males also tended to believe that avoiding sexist language would make language sound clumsy and awkward. This finding would suggest that the controversy over the use of non-sexist language forms may be made more difficult by some males' assumption that alternatives to gender biased language forms are unnecessary and ungainly, and their belief that the English language is perfectly adequate for their requirements. Removing sexism from language is not an attempt to make language sound clumsy, nor is it an attempt to remove all forms of sex specific terms. The elimination of linguistic sexism is an attempt to make language more precise, by removing the ambiguity in language so the intended meaning is clear to all concerned.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The evidence for the relationship between sexism and language has largely been conjectural: there is sexism in the language (Bolinger, 1980; Jacobson & Insko, 1985), it does enhance the position of males who have had substantial control over the development of our culture and social forms (Wolf, 1990). It therefore seems credible to assume that males have encoded sexism into the language to consolidate their claims of male supremacy. Changing the English language may help to change the male dominated power structure present in society.

The quest for a language free from sexism is hindered by those opposed to change. The English language in its current androcentric state serves to enhance the position of men in power and as such, many men are unwilling to assist in the fight to remove linguistic sexism. Many people argue that there are no alternatives, however, by simply rephrasing a sentence or replacing a masculine generic with a neutral term the meaning of an otherwise ambiguous statement can be easily clarified. From the current research findings and others (e.g. Jacobson & Insko, 1985; Miller & Swift, 1976; Murdock & Forsyth, 1985; Spender, 1980) it seems apparent that males and those with conservative attitudes toward women and the allocation of gender roles are most likely to oppose, or at least hinder the elimination of sexist language. This group of people appear to be least likely to acknowledge the existence of a problem with sexist language and as such experience no desire to change their use of language. By highlighting the problems of sexism in language and the negative effects it has in different sectors of the community (e.g. employment, education) the reasons behind the elimination of

sexist language will become more obvious.

The judgements of the group that can, in a sense, be considered the ultimate judges on the issue - women with forward looking attitudes about their role in society - are the group most likely to be aware of the discriminatory consequences of using language defined as sexist. They are most likely to employ the use of non-sexist language and voice their objections to its use by others. Considering that one of the aims of this group is equal opportunity for women and men, and that their recognition of sexist language closely parallels that of Else (1988) and the APA guidelines (1983), others who wish to appear non discriminatory and forward thinking should monitor their use of language and avoid any form of linguistic sexism.

The direction of the relationship between language and attitudes is still hazy but research shows that changes in one do affect the other (Miller & Swift, 1976). By eliminating sexist language from use it is hoped that the English language will become more accurate in its intended meaning. Given recent research findings in this area, communication will not only be clearer but negative attitudes toward half of the world's population will diminish as positive attitudes toward women increase.

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APPENDIX ONE

QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN THE PRESENT STUDY

Department of Psychology
Massey University

16 June 1992



**MASSEY
UNIVERSITY**

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**FACULTY OF
SOCIAL SCIENCES**

DEPARTMENT OF
PSYCHOLOGY

Dear Participant,

Language and Social Attitudes Survey

This survey is concerned with people's general views on the sorts of language that might be defined as sexist and how they feel about the use of sexist language. We are also interested in your more general views on appropriate roles for men and women and how you feel about some current social issues. We are interested in whether people in different situations or from different backgrounds vary in their impressions and as such there are no right or wrong answers. The questionnaire takes around 20 minutes to complete.

We would be grateful if you would agree to participate in this survey by completing the attached questionnaire. Your voluntary participation will help achieve a balanced and representative view. This questionnaire is the basis of my Masters thesis in Psychology.

As governed by the New Zealand Psychological Society strict ethical standards must be adhered to. This means that the questionnaire is entirely **ANONYMOUS**. All questionnaires have a code number and no names are required. No one who knows you will ever see your questionnaire or be able to identify your answers in any way. The results for this survey will be reported on the group of subjects as a whole. If you have any further questions concerning the procedure for maintaining confidentiality then please feel free to ask.

You are under no obligation to answer any of the questions that follow and you may skip any question that you wish to. You may withdraw from participating in this survey at any time.

If you would like feedback of the results of this survey fill out the 'request for feedback' section of the consent form that follows this introduction. Please remove this form from the questionnaire and hand it in separately in order to maintain confidentiality. If you are an extramural student you can hand it in in the separate envelope provided.

Should you require any further information concerning this study please feel free to contact the undersigned by leaving a message at the Psychology Department, Massey University or by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Your time and cooperation in this matter are greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Scott

Consent Form

I _____(full name) agree to take part in the study described in the introduction to this questionnaire.

The nature and purpose of this study have been explained to my satisfaction.

I understand that the questions are concerned with my views on sexist language, my feelings about roles of men and women, and my views on a number of current social issues.

I understand that my responses are anonymous and confidential.

I understand that I can skip any question that I wish to.

I understand that I can obtain feedback of the results of this study by filling in my name and address below.

I understand that the researchers conducting this study unequivocally guarantee that this sheet with my name on it will be kept in a secure place and that my name will not be linked with my questionnaire answers by any person at any time

_____ (signature) _____ date

"I would like some feedback about the results of this study."

_____yes _____no (please tick one)

If 'yes' then please fill in your name and address below.

name: _____

address: _____

PLEASE HAND THIS SHEET IN SEPARATELY FROM YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY

7. Which ethnic group do you identify with?: _____

8. Do you belong to a church or other religious or spiritual group?: ____ yes
____ no

9. What level of schooling have you completed? (Tick highest level)

___ 4th form or less

___ 5th form

___ 6th form

___ 7th form

___ Some University study

___ Some Polytechnic study

___ Completed Polytechnic qualification

___ completed University degree or diploma

LANGUAGE OPINION SURVEY

Below are a number of statements that people might use in their everyday speech. Different people vary in the extent to which they think these statements are sexist. People also vary in their reactions to language being used in this way with some people not being bothered by it and others thinking it is a major problem.

For each of the following statements please indicate if you think it is sexist by placing a circle around the response you most agree with. Please also indicate whether you feel such a statement is appropriate or inappropriate.

1. At university a student may study whatever course he wants to.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

2. The chairman of the company is ultimately responsible for the company's performance.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

3. True scientists frequently work long hours and may neglect their wives and children.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

4. Prehistoric man frequently endured periods of great famine.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

5. Remember to consider the needs of the girls in the typing pool when planning the reorganisation of an office.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

6. They had to man the pumps all night.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

7. A housewife is unlikely to be aware of current political issues.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

8. As for man, he is no different from the rest. His back aches, he ruptures easily, his women have difficulties in childbirth.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

9. The authors acknowledge the assistance of Mrs John Smith.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

10. The boys chose typically male toys.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

11. Katherine Mansfield was a small, dark-haired, dark-eyed woman who wrote excellent short stories.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

12. She mothered the child.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

13. Man is the only mammal who suckles his young.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

14. Though Mary Ferrara is already well-known in the consumer advocacy movement, she'll need the support of the man in the street if she runs for office.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

15. The emergency room must be manned at all times.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

16. A woman doctor was the first on the scene and performed resuscitation.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

17. Will mankind murder mother earth or will he redeem her.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

18. They say they don't have enough manpower to finish the job on time.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

19. A hospital spokeswoman said Doe's injuries were critical.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

20. Girls can do anything!

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

21. As she gains experience and knowledge the student nurse has increasing opportunities for clinical work.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

22. It is now thought that a million years ago and more earth was populated with more or less manlike creatures, descended not from apes but from some forefather of both apes and man.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

23. The chairman of the company is pregnant.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

24. The typical american adult of the 1980s is more self-directed, more able to make thoughtful choices and grasp unexpected opportunities, than was her mother in the 1950s.

Is this sexist? (circle one): not at all slightly moderately very

Is this: appropriate/not appropriate (circle one)

ATW SCALE

In this section we are interested in the different attitudes people have toward the role of women and men in society. We are interested in your honest opinion. For each statement please indicate how much you agree or disagree with it by circling the answer which best describes your feelings.

1. It sounds worse when a woman swears than when a man does.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

2. There should be more women in important jobs in public life, such as politics.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

3. It's alright for men to tell dirty jokes, but I don't think women should tell them.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

4. It is worse to see a drunken woman than a drunken man.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

5. If a women has paid work outside the home her husband should share the housework: such as washing dishes, cleaning and cooking.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

6. It is an insult for a woman to have to promise to "love, honour and obey" her husband in the marriage ceremony when he only promises to "love and honour" her and does not promise to obey her.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

7. There should be a strict merit system in job appointment and promotion without regard to sex.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

8. A women should be as free as a man to propose marriage.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

9. Women should worry less about being equal with men and more about becoming good wives and mothers.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

10. Women earning as much as their partners should pay for themselves when going out with them.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

11. Women should not be bosses in important jobs in business and industry.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

12. Women should not expect to go exactly the same places or to have quite the same freedom of action as a man does.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

13. Daughters in a family should be encouraged to stay on at school and go to university as much as sons in a family.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

14. It is ridiculous for a woman to drive a train and for a man to sew on shirt buttons.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

15. In general, the father should have more authority than the mother in bringing up children.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

16. Women have more ability and are more efficient at tasks around the home and as a result their rightful place is in the home and not in the business world.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

17. Women are better off having their own jobs and freedom to do as they please rather than being treated like a lady in the old fashioned way.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

18. Women have less to offer than men in the world of business and industry.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

19. There are many jobs that men can do better than women.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

20. Women should be given equal opportunity with men for apprenticeships in the various trades.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

21. Girls nowadays should be allowed the same freedom as boys such as being allowed to stay out late.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

22. Women are by nature more emotional than men.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

23. Unless it is absolutely necessary, women with young children should restrict their activities and interests to the home.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

24. In general men tend to have more common sense than women do.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

25. Many women in the workforce are taking jobs away from men who need the jobs more.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

26. In general, working women are just as fulfilled as housewives.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

27. Women have just as strong a biological drive for sex as men do.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

28. It is just as important for a woman to be well educated as it is for a man.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

29. No woman's life is complete until she marries.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

30. Women who choose not to have children are denying their true roles in life.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

31. In the past women have been underpaid for the work they performed.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

32. Sex is no indication of fitness or lack of fitness to enter any type of occupation.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

33. For her own safety, parents should keep a daughter under closer supervision than a son.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

34. Parental responsibility for care of young children should usually be in the hands of the mother.

agree strongly agree mildly disagree mildly disagree strongly

SOCIAL ATTITUDES SURVEY

In this section we are interested in your views on some topical social issues. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements? Remember we are interested in your honest opinion.

1. A free health service should be provided by the government.

agree strongly	agree slightly	neither agree or disagree	disagree slightly	disagree strongly
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2. People should be allowed to hold demonstrations in the streets without police interference.

agree strongly	agree slightly	neither agree or disagree	disagree slightly	disagree strongly
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3. Law and order are more important than letting every idiot have their say.

agree strongly	agree slightly	neither agree or disagree	disagree slightly	disagree strongly
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4. Government attempts to prevent people using marijuana are just about as stupid as prohibition of alcohol was.

agree strongly	agree slightly	neither agree or disagree	disagree slightly	disagree strongly
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5. The employment contract act should be repealed.

agree strongly	agree slightly	neither agree or disagree	disagree slightly	disagree strongly
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6. People should be free to get on with their own lives without being pestered by governments and do-gooders.

agree strongly	agree slightly	neither agree or disagree	disagree slightly	disagree strongly
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7. Nuclear powered and nuclear armed vessels should continue to be banned from New Zealand ports.

agree strongly	agree slightly	neither agree or disagree	disagree slightly	disagree strongly
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8. The rights of strikers to picket a firm they are striking against should not be interfered with.

agree strongly	agree slightly	neither agree or disagree	disagree slightly	disagree strongly
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9. People who want more money should work harder for it instead of trying to get it off the government in one way or another.

agree strongly	agree slightly	neither agree or disagree	disagree slightly	disagree strongly
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10. The police deserve more praise for the difficult job they do.

agree strongly	agree slightly	neither agree or disagree	disagree slightly	disagree strongly
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11. Laws against homosexuality are old-fashioned and wrong.

agree strongly	agree slightly	neither agree or disagree	disagree slightly	disagree strongly
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12. The government should have the right to censure erotic and obscene material.

agree strongly	agree slightly	neither agree or disagree	disagree slightly	disagree strongly
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In the section that follows we are interested in your impression of sexist language. Please answer the following questions. Your honest answer is appreciated.

Do you think there is a problem with sexist language? ___yes___no (tick one)

If 'yes' how much of a problem do you consider sexist language to be?

small moderate large problem

Are you personally offended by the use of sexist language? (please tick one)

___ not at all

___ occasionally

___ some of the time

___ often

___ all the time

Do you think others may be offended by the use of sexist language?
(please tick one)

___ not at all

___ occasionally

___ some of the time

___ often

___ all the time

Do you feel others may be disadvantaged by the use of sexist language?

___yes___no (tick one)

If 'yes' how much do you think they are disadvantaged by sexist language?

mildly moderately greatly

How would you rate your own use of sexist language?

usually non-sexist moderately sexist sexist

In recent years has your use of language changed? ___yes___no

If 'yes' has it become:

less sexist the same more sexist

Have you been aware of pressure to change the use of sexist language:

- on you personally? ___yes___no

- on people in general? ___yes___no

If 'yes' where has this pressure come from? (tick as appropriate)

government ___

university administration ___

society/media ___

students' association ___

friends/family ___

work associates ___

other (please state) _____

Do you think the use of non-sexist language should be encouraged?

___yes___no (tick one)

If 'yes' what do you think can be done to encourage the use of non-sexist language?

How would you describe sexist language in your own words?

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. Sexist language is an overreaction by feminists.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree (circle one)

2. Sexist language is an important issue.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree (circle one)

3. There are other more important things to worry about than sexist language.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree (circle one)

4. Sexist language is a subtle means of oppressing women.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree (circle one)

5. Trying to eliminate sexist language is a waste of time and energy.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree (circle one)

6. Sexist language is language use that is outdated and therefore should be changed.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree (circle one)

7. The elimination of sexist language is an attempt to make communication more efficient and effective.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree (circle one)

8. Avoiding so called sexist language only makes the conversation sound clumsy and awkward.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree (circle one)

9. Language is a matter for the individual.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree (circle one)

10. The fuss about sexist language is just an attempt by feminists to make a perfectly reasonable language sound sissy.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree (circle one)

11. Language use can easily be changed to become non-sexist.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree (circle one)

12. Sexist language is just a lazy, unthinking way of talking.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree (circle one)

13. Sexist language is a lot of fuss about nothing.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree (circle one)

14. If we want to remove sexist language completely we'll have to change everything with 'man' in it.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree (circle one)

15. Sexist language is a relic of times when women had few rights or privileges.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree (circle one)

16. Avoiding sexist language sounds ugly.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree (circle one)

17. Its only natural that men and women speak differently.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree (circle one)

18. Sexist language reflects the attitudes and stereotypes of those who use it.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree (circle one)

APPENDIX TWO

STUDY REVIEW SENT TO SUBJECTS

Dear Participant

This letter is firstly to thank you again for your participation in the survey on sexism in language and attitudes toward gender roles in which you participated in September of last year.

The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between perceptions of sexist language and attitudes toward the roles of men and women, and attitudes about contentious social issues.

Language is an important means of communication. Through language we are able to express ideas and information, and the language we choose to convey our messages can bias the way our messages are received. Language sets the limits of our world and our access to language determines what we are able to think about and in what capacity.

The research findings indicated that a relationship does exist between people's judgements on language and the attitudes they espouse. Gender differences were apparent with females recognising more language as sexist and also more readily than did males. Females considered sexist language to be an issue more frequently than males, noting that females are more disadvantaged by its use.

Differences were also found in the judgements of language as sexist by students and non-students, with students recognising sexist language more readily. Education level was an important factor in the ratings of sexism with higher education positively correlated to rating a statement as "very sexist".

Social attitudes and attitudes toward gender roles were also important variables in judgements of language as sexist and in the importance of the need to eliminate sexist language. Liberal social attitudes and liberal attitudes toward the role of women were found to be a good indication of how readily a language would be rated as non-sexist. Both factors were also important in how a participant would see the issue of sexist language with those with liberal attitudes more likely to recognise the linguistic sexism and more likely to favour the use of more egalitarian non-sexist language.

Overall, the use and recognition of non-sexist language appeared to be aligned with more contemporary attitudes concerning social attitudes and gender roles. Further research is needed to determine the direction of this relationship, that is, do attitudes shape the language we use, or does language shape our views.

Feel free to contact me for any further information.

Thanks again.

Rachel Scott.