

Good example of gender roles and language essay

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



In this conversation, the three viewpoints expressed by each of the speakers are closely related to the different perception of genders and the acceptable language usage associate with this perception. Josh's argument is inclined towards a belief of ' all men are created equal', wherein there should be no segregation of human beings based on gender. While this tenet forms a critical part of the American constitution, it does not take into consideration the cultural evolution of perceptions related to each gender. As Lakoff noted in the breakthrough 1975 article, women or ' ladies' are expected to use a different set of rules governing language when compared to men. While the basic language used by both genders may be common, there are several intricate lexical patterns that differ between them. For example, women are known to use very specific descriptions of colors such as, in order to describe shades of blue they would use words including aquamarine, turquoise, royal blue, or navy blue. Men, on the other, would at the most describe the color as light or dark blue . Hence, while in Josh's opinion, men and women should be able to use the same words in the same context, the use of profanities by women has been traditionally taboo. Although the society today has adopted a more liberal approach towards the use of profanities by women, a distinction what set of words can spoken within and between genders is still subject to stereotypes.

Andrea's opinion that the word ' bitch' can be used between women, but not with the opposite sex is closely linked to the cultural stereotype discussed by Lakoff. However, her logic is more grounded on the tenets of respect between genders. She considers it inappropriate for a man to call a woman a bitch as it is insulting, even when it is spoken in jest. The profanity ' bitch', in

particular, forms into a set of words known as 'animal abuse' which includes other words such as 'swine' and 'pussy'. The use of profanities between genders is subject to greater interpretation as the reaction of those being addressed may greatly vary based on their comfort levels with hearing these words from the opposite sex. While the use of other, often more severe, profanities such as 'fuck', may today be considered a norm, especially among the youth, animal abuse is a more murky territory. While Andrea's opinion is closer to an understanding on the cultural segregation of genders when compared to Josh, she still has a skewed perception of what constitutes a 'gender'. In her view, gender is a black and white concept consisting of men and women. The fact that homosexuals or gays, such as Jacob, fall into a grey area, is a concept she has not come to grasp as yet. According to her opinion, Jacob should not be using the word 'bitch' to address a woman as he is still, in essence, a man.

Jacob has the broadest understanding of the concept of gender as he is aware that gays often have more of a feminine inclination despite being men in biological terms. Eckert defined gender, not based on biology, but on patterns of relationships that are constructed over time to create norms of what is considered to be masculine or feminine, and which governs the interactions of men and women within a society including behavior in public, at institutions, art, and even clothing and body language. Language also forms a critical part of societal interactions and is hence a crucial part of gender roles as well. The societal interaction of gays and lesbians is different from the traditional concept of gender as their behavior is not in keeping with what is conventionally accepted a behavior appropriate for men or for

women. In fact, the behavior of a homosexual is quite the opposite of what their biological sex ascribes to them. In addition to having sexual inclinations towards the same sex, gay men have been known to have preferences that are considered to be feminine in nature. Not only does this include superficial elements such as preferences in color or clothing, but also their emotional responses to situations. Hence, gays may use language that is traditionally associated with women and would have the same reactions to profanities. As such, Jacob's view that his calling Andrea a bitch should be acceptable is completely justified.

At the same time, Jacob's refusal to accept the use of the profanity ' faggot' from a girl does not stem from the fact that, if his calling Andrea a bitch should be acceptable on the grounds of the true gender of homosexuals, then her calling him a faggot should also be acceptable. The word ' faggot', as a profanity, has been traditionally used to insult those who display homosexual behavior. In a way, it would be equal to a white person calling a black person a ' nigger'. Although men in the African-American community casually address each other as nigger - or nigga - the same word being used by a person of another race would be taken as an offence, even when none was intended. Similarly, for a gay person to be called a faggot would be insulting as it would be considered as a snide remark on their sexual orientation. The fact that girls do not as casually use the word ' faggot' as they use the word ' bitch' changes the context in which such a usage could be interpreted. As such, Jacob's refusal to accept being called a ' faggot' by Andrea is also justified. While Andrea understands that this usage would be unacceptable, she does not comprehend the context behind this

unacceptability.

Among the three viewpoints expressed in the conversation, Jacob's seems to be the most in keeping with current social norms, with an eye on the future developments in what may be considered acceptable use of profanity in the society at large. Josh's 'equal for all' perspective seems moralistic, it is highly impracticable as society will always have evolved stereotypes of what is the proper use of language for men and women. Andrea's perception of gender roles in the use of profanity is more developed than Josh's views, however, as discussed earlier, she lacks the fundamental understanding of what constitutes a gender. Hence, her viewpoint is also skewed. Jacob's opinion, however, reveals a fair understanding of gender in relation to the use of profanities. He is aware of the difference of acceptable language within and between genders. He also has a well developed comprehension of the place of gays in the gender debate and the implications this would have on inter and intra gender communication. As such, Jacob's viewpoint in the conversation seems to be the best reasoned.

Works Cited

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