

The muted group theory essay



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Women (and members of other subordinate groups) are not as free or as able as men are to say what they wish, because the words and the norms for their use have been formulated by the dominant group, men “ Women’s words are discounted in our society; women thoughts are devalued” Women are thus a muted group Kramarae noted that women were almost non-existent in cartoons. She also claims that the female characters in cartoons had characteristics such as being: emotional, apologetic, and wishy-washy. These characters are also not very prominent in the cartoons. The females are illustrated as being vague and flowery, and the artists used adjectives like “ nice” and “ pretty” to describe them

Edwin Ardener” the strange tendency of many ethnographers to claim to have “ cracked the code” of a culture without ever any making any direct reference to the half of society made up of women Edwin and Shirley: Mutedness is due to the lack of power, which besets any group that occupies the low end of the totem pole Shirley Ardener also included that the muted group theory does not indicate that the muted group is actually mute but that they are instead hushed by society. This idea translates into the thought, does a muted group have the ability to speak the way they wish to speak or must they translate their thoughts and actions into a more understood and accepted form for society. Ardener states, “ muted structures are ‘ there’ but cannot be ‘ realized’ in the language of the dominant structure. ” Muted Group theory attempts to explain why certain groups in society are muted which means they are either silent or not heard. Ardener explained the Muted Group theory from a gendered perspective.

Because females are constructed differently, these differences cause females to act in a different way than males.

These differences, Ardener (Griffin, 1991) explains the reason why women (and minorities) are considered muted groups because they are considered to be lower in status than the dominant groups. Ardener adds that because women as a muted group feel muted, they believe that they have no choice in order to “fit in” other than to change the way they act and talk. There is quite a bit of power play being executed in environments where a specific group because of gender, race, or cultural background cannot be heard for who they are, but rather only by acting in ways they are reflective of who is “listening,” the dominant group Home-Small world-private world Public-Large world -public debate-where men’s words are resonate The masculine power to name experience Women perceive the world differently from men because of women’s and man’s different experience and activities rooted in the division of labor” Kramarae also explains that men’s control over language has produced an abundance of derogatory words for women and their speech patterns. Some of these include names such as sluts, whore, easy lay and speech patterns such as gossiping, whining, and bitching.

Men, however have much fewer names to describe them and most of them seen in a positive sexual light. These include words such as stud, player, and pim She believes that “ words constantly ignored may eventually come to be unspoken and perhaps even unthought. ” This will lead women to doubt themselves and the intentions of their feelings. What women want to say and can say best cannot be said easily because the language template is not of their own making” Kramarae believes that “ males have more difficulty than

females in understanding what members of the other gender mean. " She believes that men do not have a clue about women because they have not made the effort to find out. Dale Spender of Woman's Studies International Quarterly gave insight into Kramarae's statement by adding the idea that many men realize by listening to women they would be revoking some of their power and privilege. "

The crucial issue here is that if women cease to be muted, men cease to be so dominant and to some males this may seem unfair because it represents a loss of rights. I man can easily avoid this issue by simply stating, " I'll never understand women" Men as the gatekeepers of communication-malestream expression The unfulfilled promise of the Internet The Internet still has the potential to facilitate interaction among women across time and space, but it seems to be emerging as men's forum and playground. Feminist dictionary: Men have structured a value system and a language that reflects that value system. Women have had to work through the system organized by men" " bad feelings and imputation of bad motives or bad character can come about when there was no intentions to dominate, to wield power (p. 464). Men and women speak a different language. According to popular belief, at least, the speech of women is weaker and less effective than the speech of men.

Our culture has many jokes about the quality of women's speech

Compared to male speech, the female form is supposed to be emotional, vague, euphemistic, sweetly proper, mindless, endless, high-pitches, and silly" (p. 82). 1. Men and women perceive the world differently because they have different perception shaping experiences. Those different experiences are a result of men and women performing different tasks in society. 2. Men

enact their power politically, perpetuating their power and suppressing women's ideas and meanings from gaining public acceptance. Women must convert their unique ideas, experiences, and meanings into male language in order to be heard (p. 1).

Muted Group Theory sees language as excluding women based on several factors. For example the words used to describe a sexually promiscuous individual are radically different. For men words like, stud, playboy, rake, gigolo, and womanizer among others, all with positive connotations, describe the sexually active male. In a harsh contrast words to describe a female with an active sexual appetite include: slut, hooker, mistress, hussy, easy lay, prostitute, whore, and nymphomaniac. The women-specific words are demoralizing and place a negative value on women's sexuality. The words used to describe men make them seem powerful, controlling, and dominant.