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BEYOND BINARY OPPOSITION: DE-GENDERING AND REDEFINING GENDER [1]

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Abstract. *The paper gives a review of the recent linguistic research in the study of gender at the end of 20th century, particularly in the light of studying the performativity of gender (the concept introduced by Judith Butler in Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity), and studying to what extent and how the latest findings change the traditional definition of gender and the binary structure of society.*

1. INTRODUCTION

For traditional feminists gender is a universal, ahistorical, stable and fixed category denoting a set of attributes that define what a person is/has. That set of attributes – exclusively identified with only one gender - is acquired in early childhood through the process of socialization, and all one has to do later in life is exhibit the acquired behavior. Differences between the genders are clear-cut (all women – regardless of the time and country they live in – are/ have *x*; all men - regardless of the time and country they live in – are/ have *y*) and it is absolutely impossible for elements typical of different genders to meet in a person, let alone be combined in new ways.

The pioneers of language and gender research (Lakoff, 1975; Tannen, 1990) accept this concept of gender. Although their initial idea was to shed a new (female) light on the study of female/ male relationships, they (Lakoff with her 'deficiency' approach; Tannen with her 'difference/ culture' model) have contributed to the buttressing of the social structure in which the positions of the two genders are fixed and unchangeable, implying that 'what is done can't be undone' and that women can just comply with the roles imposed by society[2].

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[2] The role of a being physically and intellectually inferior to man; less important than man; dependent on man, invisible in man's presence, possessed by man. For the linguistic aspects of this position, cf. Jespersen, 1922; Ehrlich & King, 1992.

Their ideas have been heavily criticized (Fishman, 1980; O'Barr & Atkins, 1980; Cameron, McAlister & O'Leary, 1989; Uchida, 1992; Troemel-Plotz, 1991), basically from two perspectives:

- that of linguistics, because no scientific method of data collecting has been used, the multifunctionality of linguistic forms and devices has been neglected, devices used by subordinate groups have been identified only as the markers of subordinate groups, etc. and

- that of gender studies, because Lakoff and Tannen accept male as a norm and woman as either deficient in relation to or different from the male norm; overvalue one single variable – that of gender, and study it in isolation from other variables; describe gender and the relationship between two genders in a static way - as if they were not subject to changes; endorse 'cultural imperialism'[3], i.e. accept the model of white, Protestant, heterosexual woman as the epitome of femininity; and most important, they sell the apolitical and ignore POWER as an element which determines all social relationships, including the relationship between females and males.

However, the early 1990's gave a radical change in the way gender is dealt with. Judith Butler's book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) marks a breakthrough in gender studies. Instead of understanding gender as 'being' or 'having' (as traditional feminists did), Butler defines it as 'doing'. Taking over Austin's term 'performativity' from philosophy of language, Butler expands its meaning from speech acts to all social acts performed by men and women: 'Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a rigid regulatory frame which congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance of a "natural" kind of being' (Butler, 1990:33). Understood in this way, gender is to be constructed over and over again at different times in different situations through the subject's acts but never on its own – always in relation with other characteristics of a subject: 'gender is […] always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts, and gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities. As a result, it becomes impossible to separate out "gender" from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained' (ibid. :6).

Indeed, rapid economic, social, political, scientific, communications, and cultural changes in the last decade of the twentieth century created conditions for performing gender in new inconceivable situations and ways. Yet, it must be admitted that gender stereotypes are still very much alive in our minds. The question which is now imposed is: Can we really escape from stereotypes? How free are we in deciding on the way we will perform our gender? Are we on the way of redefining gender as we know it? Are we getting closer to the erasure of the gender dichotomy, being able to understand 'gender' as a continuum rather than a binary opposition?

In this paper I offer a review of research presenting how women and men act in the jobs which used to be traditionally considered women's and men's respectively; then, how gender performance can be interpreted in the light of the 'community of practice' (CofP)

[3] Barbara Smith, Black writer and feminist, used this term to criticize white feminist critics and authors (Elaine Showalter, in particular) for ignoring feminist writing within minority groups; thus, Black feminists feel oppressed both by (white and black) men and white women. A similar criticism came from Adrienne Rich, who reacted against the dominance of 'special women' (teachers, writers, academicians) over 'ordinary women', and also against marginalizing lesbian feminist writers: cf. Eagleton (ed) (1986, 1991).

approach; and finally, how people who do not fit in the heterosexual norm construct and perform their identities in a society organized around binary oppositions.

2.1 BREAKING THE STEREOTYPES

Traditionally, jobs were divided into men's and women's: men's jobs entail physical strength, intellectual strain, outdoor activities, decision-making, and the projection of negative emotions (reserve, sternness seriousness…), while women's jobs include indoor activities, light work around 'things which for the most part [demand] no deep thought, which [are] performed in company and [can] well be accompanied with a lively chatter' (Jespersen, 1922:240), and great positive emotional labor (warmth, understanding, love, support…). However, as a consequence of Equal Opportunity legislation and the demands of the world market, a great number of women entered occupations dominated by male employees. A number of researchers have found it interesting to see how these women manage to fit in and construct their gender identity in these new surroundings.

Studying the position of the few female physicians working in a hospital, West (1984) finds that it is very difficult to escape the stereotype incorporated in general beliefs. Although the patient-doctor relationship is an asymmetrical encounter in which, as a rule, the doctor has power and the patient is subordinate, gender seems to be '*master status-determining trait*' (Hughes, 1945 in West, 1984:405) overpowering other variables (social status, class, race ...) when the doctor is a woman. Her research shows that male patients tend to disregard female doctors' superior social position and, by interrupting them and questioning their professional abilities, try to exhibit power over them as men do over women. However, West tries to avoid making hasty generalizations and draws a tentative conclusion that this *can* be attributed to patients' disrespect for *female* doctors as much as to the way we all (female doctors included) build our public persona in the interaction with other people, and negotiate the positions of dominance and control with other participants in the given social relationship – these are not bestowed on us merely by the position we hold. Thus, gender *could be* a master-status trait in this case, or it could be of lesser importance and connected with the way doctors (female doctors?!) communicate with their patients.

West's tentativeness in drawing conclusions proves appropriate when she focuses her study on how doctors formulate directives and how patients respond to them (West, 1990). It is generally believed that women are more polite and issue directives in a mitigated way. In West's sample, women *do* give more mitigated directives (as can be expected from the stereotype about women being more polite), but male doctors prove equally capable of giving mitigated formulations of directives. However, regardless of whether the directives came from a female or a male doctor, the study shows that patients are more likely to obey mitigated than aggravated directives. It might be concluded from this that it is not important *who* (with special emphasis on the person's sex) issues the directive, but *how* the person issues the directive, which brings us to the question of whether our behavior is determined by our 'essential natures' (as traditional feminists would say), or whether linguistic resources are at disposal to all language users and it is up to them to negotiate their position by choosing one.

McElhinny (1992) focuses her study on what she calls 'an economy of affect' - the concept she develops from Bourdieu's *habitus* (1977) - in large, stable, well-established, typically male communities, such as Police Departments. The 'economy of affect' describes police officers' economizing on expressing (especially positive) affect at work saving their emotions for themselves and their closest. It is generally believed that women do great emotional labor by expressing positive emotions, while men exhibit only negative affect. For that reason, men are believed to be ideal for the job of the police officer, unlike women. However, in McElhinny's research, both male and female officers stress that they would not be able to perform their duties unless they economized on emotions. If they sympathized with every victim they encounter, if they spent their emotions on people whom they meet daily, they would soon break down. Therefore, both female and male police officers build a mask in their daily communication with citizens (they are distanced, reserved, unemotional, serious, authoritative, tough – in a word, formal) to save their true person for their private lives, only occasionally allowing themselves to express sympathy with victims, and *that* only in the situations when they expect to be rewarded for being emotional. What McElhinny stresses is that the interactional patterns employed by policewomen and policemen are the same, regardless of what is traditionally considered 'feminine/masculine' style. She concludes that particular attitudes and behavior can be indexical of the profession rather than gender: as the case of female police officers shows, working in a male domain is not incompatible with female gender identities. Judging from this, McElhinny suggests that further integration of females into traditionally male occupations can lead to the abandonment of the tyranny of binary associations (masculine/ objective/ rational/ strong/ cultural vs. feminine/ subjective/ emotional/ weak/ natural) and to the redefinition of masculinity and femininity.

While the studies above are about women entering 'male' professions, Nelson (1988) explores how a few male teachers fit in predominantly female research teams and what benefits the interaction, stereotypically described as female, brings. Nelson concludes that in her study all the patterns of interaction typically associated with female group organization are exhibited (a problem-solving orientation; collaborative decision- making process; laterally organized groups; intuitive, holistic and linear reasoning; emotional support and constructive criticism; tactfully phrased both positive and negative evaluation). What is significant, however, is that both female and the few male participants in the project enjoy the work in such surroundings. A male participant, accustomed only to 'male' organizations, comments, 'I learned that it's not important whether you're a man or woman because the "feminine" / "masculine" aspects of learning are available to anyone. What's "feminine" or "masculine" is the way of interacting and the method of generating and transferring content and information' (Nelson, 1988:366). Judging from the experience of her research team, Nelson states in the conclusion that modern institutions can gain a lot by encouraging cooperative ('female') interaction and discouraging competition and success at the expense of others. Another point she makes is: that this kind of interaction is not indexical of women *only*; that *not* all women can work in groups organized in this way; and that men *are* equally capable of interacting in this way. Nelson concludes, along with the male teacher from her study, that 'people of both genders can choose how they interact once they become aware of the options available' (ibid. :370).

All these authors focus their work on a characteristic of what was traditionally called 'female style' and study it in a mixed sample. However, their findings show that there may not be such clear distinctions between the male and female usages of language, that linguistic devices are at disposal to both genders, and that the choice of devices does not entirely depend on the sex of the person. Their conclusions regarding the influence of gender on the use of language are still rather tentative, but the findings presented certainly make us question the validity of the stereotypes endorsed by early linguists as well as the pioneers in the linguistic branch of gender studies.

2.2 SELLING THE STEREOTYPES

Although the papers quoted above may suggest that changes in modern society lead to a redefinition of gender and of the structure based on binary opposition, there is also evidence that current changes, especially in the field of economy (globalization, 'new work order' (Gee, Hull and Lankshear, 1996), new managerial approaches…) may lead to a further exploitation of the so-called 'female speech' – now serving to new purposes .

Cameron (2000) describes an occupation where what she believes to be 'a gendered–female-style' is imposed by the institution. She focuses on an 'in-person service' area, which is gaining more importance (profit) in the new world market. The call-service companies she studies ask of their employees to use a particular style, prescribed by the company's management, which should present the company as reliable, consistent and professional and which should encourage customers to establish a long-term relationship with (loyalty to) the company. The company style guidelines ask their employees: to smile, develop expressive interaction with the client, ask strong affective questions which indicate concern, mirror the client's emotions, use minimal response, ask open questions and still maintain the naturalness and authenticity of the conversation. They are asked to accomplish a language of feeling and caring by using the resources of their voice and language, in the way women are thought to do when doing 'emotional labor' in their families, schools, jobs… Nowhere in manuals, in corporate guidelines, at interviews is this style called 'women's'; they call it a 'good customer service speech'. However, the description of the style to be achieved by the employees corresponds to a great extent to what Lakoff (1975) describes as 'women's language'. Cameron infers that '[this] style is gendered, produced through a consistent and deliberate preference for ways of speaking that are symbolically coded as "feminine" (and that in some cases are also empirically associated with women speakers)' (Cameron, 2000:333).

Cameron also reminds us that the symbolic meaning of 'women's language' is powerlessness and servility, so by employing the stereotype of 'women's language', service workers express their servility to customers and a need to please them. In Kira Hall's study (1995), the servility and powerlessness of employees is particularly important since the workers in her sample have to address the *man*-liness of their customers.

Kira Hall studies fantasy line (hot line) operators. Like service workers, they can use only their voice and linguistic resources to create a persona which is to satisfy their clients' needs. Unlike service workers, they seem to be free to choose the way they are going to build their persona. But are they? The employees point out that to do their job efficiently, 'fantasy […] must somehow parallel reality, and if its intended audience is the culture at large, it must necessarily prey on certain cultural perceptions of what the ideal reality is. To sell to a male market, women's prerecorded messages and live conversational exchange must cater to hegemonic male perceptions of the ideal woman' (Hall, 1995:324). The stereotypical male perceptions of the ideal woman include being: submissive, emotional, sympathetic, supportive, subservient and *powerless*, so to satisfy their clients and earn their living, fantasy-line operators must create a character who is subservient to her man/client. To create this picture of the 'ideal' woman, fantasy lines employees use a variety of language devices, majority of which derive from the Lakoff arsenal: feminine vocabulary, empty adjectives and adverbs, question tags, hedges, a variety of intonation patterns, asking open questions… To season it up, they add a bit of ethnic, racial and age stereotypes (Asian poor girl, East European dominating woman, high-pitched high-school Mexican girl – everything that sounds exotic and fetish) investing their clients with an additional power of belonging to the superior Western civilization.

Hall's interview with some operators proves that they deliberately choose to play on stereotypes and pretend to be powerless in order to satisfy their customers and – more important – earn their living. These operators believe that such a position – the position of the person who is in charge and who makes their customers dependent on them - secures them superiority. However, it is not as simple as that. Namely, some of the interviewees admit that whoever crosses the boundaries of the stereotypes is soon 'punished' by her/his customers, who do not get what they pay for. A large vocabulary, a great command of language, and excellent story-telling abilities are neither the qualities socially perceived as a part of 'women's language' nor the qualities of an ideal woman; that is why customers stop calling creative operators. They only want to hear their fantasy – a weak, powerless, warm woman whose only aim is to please her master. As a result, the operator receives fewer calls and jeopardize their future in the job. So, it seems that despite the operators' feeling of powerfulness, it is still men (almost exclusive users of these services) who dictate the story; thus the question remains: who is actually in power?

3. COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

All the authors reviewed in the previous sections have concentrated on the study of a local community, and investigated the deconstruction of the old concepts of gender and the redefinition of gender in new circumstances. McElhinny (1992) and Hall (1995) in particular emphasize that studying local communities could be extremely helpful in gender studies and that the new approach developed by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) – the community of practice (CofP) approach – will shift researchers' interest from making broad questionable generalizations, which we find in the studies of 'speech community', to doing and constructing identity (including gender identity) locally, as shown in 'community of practice' studies.

The concept of the 'speech community' as central in studying the connection between language and society proved to be inadequate for sociolinguists for a number of reason.. First, speech community researchers regard those communities as homogeneous groups, closed systems existing in isolation from other social and cultural communities and thus static, unable to change. Second, when studying the groups, researchers are more interested in the structure and how language is socially structured, neglecting (if not denying) free agency. Third, they concentrate only on central members (it is acknowledged that there are marginal members but they are rarely studied and when they are, it is only to show how 'deficient' they are in comparison with central members). Fourth, for them, individuals possess *one* stable, unchanging identity. Next, class is the most important variable in this kind of study and gender differences are just presented in the statistics without a deeper investigation of its significance. Then, researchers use traditional 'Labovian' methods to study communities (such as survey studies, controlled experimental studies) which abstract a linguistic phenomenon from social practice as if it were independent. Finally, all the data obtained are interpreted from 'the above' – the analyst's interpretation becomes crucial for the understanding of the phenomenon, whereas members of the speech community are viewed as naïve, unconscious subjects.

The 'community of practice', on the other hand, is a practice-based approach. For the proponents of the CofP approach, identity is a co-construction of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, social status and the like in which no element dominates. The emphasis is on the localized practice – on what people are doing. Each individual brings their personal history and old identities into a CofP, but in a new community that identity is transformed and negotiated in the interaction with other members and within the existing social structure. What is important in this process is that the individual has a choice as to the ways in which they will express their identity and membership. The CofP approach includes free agency – everyone's freedom to choose both linguistic and non-linguistic means (speech style, hair style, dress, movement, locale, etc.) to construct their new identity (e.g. Asian Wall in Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1999). The study of a CofP also takes into account intragroup differences and intergroup overlapping, since individuals negotiate their participation in multiple communities of practice simultaneously. To study a CofP, researchers use the ethnographic - participant-driven – method, which takes participants' interpretations as central for the research. Besides, when interpreting the results, researchers do not overlook the behavior of 'marginal members': their marginality is studied as their choice and reaction to central group members and their practice is invested with a symbolic capital which constructs an identity ('nerds' in comparison with the central communities of 'jocks' and 'burnouts', Bucholtz, 1999).

When using the concept of CofP, linguists (sociolinguists in particular) refer to the definition given by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet:

> 'A CofP is an aggregate of people who, united by a common enterprise, develop and share ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs and values – in short, practices. […] The development of shared practices emerges as the participants make meaning of their joint enterprise, and of themselves in relation to this enterprise. […] The community as a whole constructs a joint sense of itself through the relation between its practices and those of other communities. Thus a CofP is not isolated and inward-looking, but shapes its participants' relations both among themselves and with the rest of the world' (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1999: 186).

The community of practice (CofP) was introduced in linguistics from sociology. In 1979. Anthony Giddens offered a practice theory in which the key term *practice* is placed between social structure and personal agency, and used as a link between the two. The first ones who approached language as a social phenomenon in interaction with other social practices were sociologists Pierre Bourdieu (1978, 1991) and Micheal de Certeau (1984). Bourdieu's concept *habitus* seems to be particularly important for gender researchers[4]. As Bucholtz (1999) interprets the term, *habitus* is 'a set of dispositions to act (e.g. speak, walk, read, or eat) in particular ways which are incalculated in each individual through implicit and explicit socialization' (ibid. :205). Viewed like this, researchers cannot overlook any social element (class, gender, race, etc.). From this perspective, lan-

[4] McElhinny (1992), Hall (1995), Cameron (2000) refer to the concept and apply it in their interpretations.

guage is viewed as a practice which socially locates the individual. However, as Bucholtz emphasizes, sociolinguists cannot accept Bourdieu's view that all these practices (including language) are unconscious, naturalized acts since such a concept makes an individual more a product of the social structure than a free agent.

In gender studies the CofP approach has proved to have numerous advantages over other approaches (social network, speech community).

First, it enables gender researchers of different backgrounds to work together and study the matter in question from different perspectives since this practice theory is used in sociology, anthropology, ethnography and other related sciences and is compatible with other current theories of identity. In this way, we can obtain a broader interdisciplinary perspective of gender.

Second, this approach not only acknowledges the diversity among women and among men but also studies gender in relation with other characteristics. In addition, gender and language are studied within a social structure with different relations inside a community taken into account. In this way, gender and language can be connected to more general phenomena and not just to the sociolinguistic dynamics of dominant/ subordinate group.

Third, the introduction of *hexis* (a person's individual stances and gestures) as part of the *habitus* introduces the body as an important element of one's identity.

Finally, Bergvall (1999) believes that the CofP approach will give us enough data to create a comprehensive theory of gender based the study of gender on the micro-level (the studies of the biological, i.e. what is innate to genders, and the performative, i.e. how it is socially constructed), and the macro-level (the studies of the ideological, i.e. what is ideologically constructed, what we are expected to perform as members of a gender). She emphasizes that ideology permeates all levels and influences both the way our biological self and our performance of gender are viewed and judged by society. Bergvall believes that in this process the CofP research (done on the performative level) is absolutely crucial: it prepares us for variation, makes us wary of generalization, looks for counterexamples and refutations. Still, Bergvall admits that we do not know how much of this goal can be achieved, since only the first steps on the way have been made.

4. 'Linguistics of Contact' and 'Language and Desire'

Apart from the study of female and male language users, a new line of research was introduced in linguistics and gender study towards 20th century. It is the study of how sexual minorities use language and how they express their identities linguistically.

The linguistic study of groups other than those of heterosexual orientation was almost non-existent until after World War Two. The first data on the language of gays, lesbians and other non-heterosexual groups appeared shyly in the appendices of the books which studied sexual orientation from medical and psychological points of view. Those first works were glossaries of words, because it was believed that specialized vocabulary (together with sexual practices) was what differentiated these groups from heterosexuals. Later the interest of researchers switched to the studies of intonation pitch, interactional features and the like in order to define characteristics (other than vocabulary) of gay and lesbian languages. However, as contemporary and subsequent critics emphasize, all these attempts were doomed to failure since they were looking for features which were exclusively used *only by* gays/ lesbians and *by all* gays/ lesbians. Kulick (2000) adds that much of the early work offered a circular argument going: gay language is the language spoken by self-identified gays; and gay persons are those who speak gay language.

In the mid 1990s a new generation of researchers versed in post-structuralist theories of language and identity appeared, on one hand asking if there was only one gay community, only one lesbian community, etc.; and on the other hand, strongly criticizing formal linguistics and 'linguistics of communities' for reproducing the ideology of the heterosexual society.

Barrett (1997) rejects formal linguistics because it studies only the ideal speaker of standard languages (English, for example) presupposing that that is the language of a homogeneous linguistic community. Chomsky and his followers completely neglect the fact, as Pratt (1987) notes, that 'abstract ideal speakers cannot be constructed in a socially neutral fashion' (ibid. :182). Referring to the studies in the political economy of language, Pratt reminds that 'the concept of a "Standard" language has a crucial role in upholding and enforcing the power structure in a given society [and that formal] linguistics have equated the "grammar" of society at large with an abstract conception of language that is a means by which the ruling class maintains power' (ibid. :183). Furthermore, by applying this model of formal analysis to other languages, linguistics takes part in the 'white colonization' of the world imposing a view of language to a range of languages, many of which are completely different from English.

Barrett also rejects the 'linguistics of community', which *does* introduce variation in its study, but *does not* give up the idea of a norm. Through the analysis of statistical data, researchers obtain average findings which are taken to be a norm and all those who deviate from the average used by the majority are 'lames' (Labov, 1972). Besides, speech communities are defined through dichotomies which do not allow for multiple overlapping identities. In this kind of presentation, queers (the term used to cover a whole range of non-heterosexual groups: lesbians, gay, transsexuals, bisexuals…) are usually assigned to their ethnic, race, or class groups and thus made invisible.

Both Barrett and Queen (1997) opt for what Pratt calls a 'linguistics of contact'. It is a linguistics of a decentered community, which studies the zones where the dominating and dominated groups meet, where persons have multiple identities and where persons enact differences through relationships with each other. This approach takes queerness as its center and can answer the questions of how non-heterosexuals use linguistic resources to negotiate their identity. Unlike the concept of the homogeneous community, 'linguistics of contact' acknowledges the uncertainty of the membership and allows for the construction of gay and lesbian language through the contact of various styles. Barrett and Queen then enumerate styles which gay and lesbian communities respectively combine to express their identity.

On the other hand, there is a post-structuralist strand in the field which 'bring[s] performativity back to linguistics', as Livia and Hall (1997a) say in the subtitle. Livia and Hall draw on Derrida's concepts of difference, iterability and ventiloquism; Foucault's understanding of sexuality - not as a conceptual, timeless category but as a category dependent on the historical and geographic contexts; and Butler's concept of 'performativity' as used in gender studies. They describe how gender is constructed through discourse: from the moment a baby is born and identified as a girl or a boy, the baby/ person is drawn into conventions of quoted speech acts. Their performance in those speech acts is characteristic of their gender and ventriloquize previous utterances, which enables others to reiterate the actions to a particular discourse. However, to be able to reiterate the performance, we must study one's performance of gender both on the level of 'communities of practice' and on the level of dominant ideals of linguistic gender, conclude Livia and Hall, which is quite close to what Bergvall concludes.

At the end of his review paper, Kulick (2000) goes back to Livia and Hall's introduction 'It's a girl' and finds two main faults with their approach. First, Livia and Hall consider only felicitous performative acts believing that the intention of the performer will always be recognized by the hearer; and second and more important, they do not define the key term 'sexuality' but replace it with 'gender'. Thus they leave out everything that makes sexuality: fantasy, desire, repression, fear, pleasure and the unconscious. The relationship between language and sexuality (to avoid any confusion, Kulick shifts to the term 'desire' instead of 'sexuality') seems crucial to Kulick for further research of gay and lesbian languages. The focus in future should be: on the definition of desire; on the way it is structured, communicated, and coded; being discursive, on the semiotic practices in which it can be recognized/ iterated as desire and answered to either felicitously and infelicitously; finally, on repression as a linguistic resource - in terms of what is said, left unsaid and unsayable, as defined by discursive psychologists Billig and Scheghoff (1999).

5. Conclusion

After all the changes in modern society and new developments in the research of gender and language, our old conceptions of femininity and masculinity seem to be outdated. Although the old stereotypes are not only very much alive (Hall, 1995) but also advocated by certain groups, we might be witnessing the 'de-gendering' of old linguistic styles solely associated with a particular gender ('women's language', for example). Latest work on the study of linguistic stereotypes has shown that a style could be less connected with a gender of the speaker and more with a profession (Cameron, 2000). However, as Cameron points out, this does not necessarily mean that we will abolish the stereotypical linguistic constructions of gender. Rather, it is more likely that the concepts of femininity and masculinity are prone to change in accord with the age.

McElhinny (1992) and Nelson (1988) also point out that after the changes in the world market and blurring the distinction between strictly female and strictly male professions and language styles, we need to create more flexible definitions of gender. McElhinny stresses that female police officers prove that 'masculine is not referentially (or directly) marked by behaviors and attitudes but is indexically linked to them' (McElhinny, 1992:322). Nelson agrees with Pearson (1985) that 'communication will improve when women and men achieve interactive flexibility by developing less stereotyped repertoires of communicative strategies' (Nelson, 1988:369). Nelson stresses (quoting Ferguson, 1984), that 'constellations of instrumental and expressive traits allocated […] by gender [must be viewed] as complementary dimensions of all individuals, male and female. […] [These] tensions would be more effectively expressed, as tensions within individuals rather than tensions between groups' (ibid. :370). Both of them believe that the existing stereotypes will play a smaller role in the interpretation of one's behavior and attitudes in the future and that new definitions of gender will accord greater agency to speakers.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992, 1999) also emphasize the important role of the speaker's agency in the process of constructing identity in local communities of practice. They also point out that studying actions, strategies and values of particular women and particular men in a particular community at a particular time will necessarily initiate the re-examination and redefinition of the current concepts of femininity and masculinity and contribute to making 'new generalizations and explanations in language and gender studies' (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1999). However, they also agree with Bergvall (1999) that the picture of what gender is and how it is constructed will not be complete unless we start studying gender on the macro-level in view of how the governing ideology influence performing gender, since '[s]pecific features of the overarching gender structures in a culture may well be connected with specific ways that gender and language interact in different communities of practice situated in that culture' (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1999:199).

Finally, new approaches to studying sexuality and its relation of language will also shed a new light on the study of gender. Whether the focus will be on the specific usage of linguistic resources to index queer identity (as Barrett, 1997 and Queen, 1997 propose); or whether gender performativity will be extended to include all sexual groups, making the heterosexuals just one subset in the category of gender (as Livia and Hall, 1997a hope); or whether the relationship between sexuality and language will be explored 'without folding sexuality into gender' (as Kulick, 2000: 276 believes) is uncertain at this moment. What *is* certain, nonetheless, is that the world of binary opposition is behind us and that the new concepts of femininity and masculinity will have to include much more than they have so far.

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PREVAZILAŽENJE BINARNE OPOZICIJE: DEKONSTRUKCIJA I DEFINISANJE RODA

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Ovaj rad daje pregled najnovijih lingvistickih radova na polju proučavanja roda na kraju XX veka, naročito u svetlu najnovijih istraživanja performativnosti roda (koncept koji je uvela Judit Batler u svojoj knjizi Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity), odnosno, i u kojoj meri i kako najnovija otkrića menjaju tradicionalnu definiciju roda i binarnu strukturu društva.