

DIE VORLÄUFER

Lesen Sie den Text aufmerksam durch und versuchen Sie dabei Antworten auf die folgenden Fragen zu finden:

Aus welchem Blickwinkel betrachtet Jespersen die beiden Geschlechter?

Welches Bild zeichnet Jespersen von den beiden Geschlechtern?

Wodurch charakterisieren sich nach Jespersen die beiden Geschlechter?

Auf welchen Daten beruhen seine Aussagen?

1. OTTO JESPERSEN (1922): „THE WOMAN“

Jespersen, Otto: *Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin*. London: Allen and Unwin 237-54.

1.1. Frauen- und Männersprachen

Jespersen geht von der immer wieder aufgestellten Behauptung aus, es gäbe Stämme, bei denen Frauen und Männer ganz unterschiedliche Sprachen oder Dialekte sprechen.

1.1.1. Das klassische Beispiel: die Karibischen Inseln der kleinen Antillen

1.1.1.1. Quellen:

➤ Breton (1664): *Dictionnaire Caraïbe-français*.

Der Dominikaner Breton behauptet darin, daß der karibische Häuptling alle Eingeborenen mit Ausnahme der Frauen umgebracht habe und die Frauen ihre alte Sprache z.T. beibehalten hätten.

➤ Rochefort (1665): *Histoire naturelle et morale des Iles Antilles*. Rotterdam.

Rochfort lebte Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts lange unter den Karibern und Kariberinnen:

The men have a great many expressions peculiar to them, which the women understand but never pronounce themselves. On the other hand, the women have words and phrases which the men never use, or they would be laughed to scorn. Thus it happens that in their conversations it often seems as if the women had another language, than the men. ... The savage natives of Dominica say that the reason for this is that when the Caribs came to occupy the islands these were inhabited by an Arawak tribe which they exterminated completely, with the exception of the women, whom they married in order to populate the country. Now, these women kept their own language and taught it to their daughters. ... But though the boys understand the speech of their mothers and sisters, they nevertheless follow their fathers and brothers and conform to their speech from the age of five or six. ... It is asserted that there is some similarity between the speech of the continental Arawaks and that of the Carib women. But the Carib men and women on the continent speak the same language, as they have never corrupted their natural speech by marriage with strange women. (zit. nach Jespersen 1922/1968: 237-238)

Aufgrund des dem Buch beigegebenen Glossars, in dem die jeweils den Frauen und Männern eigenen Wörter aufgelistet sind, kommt Jespersen aber zu dem Schluß, daß nur etwa 10% der Wörter unterschiedlich sind und vor allem die verschiedenen Verwandtschaftsgrade bezeichnen, z.B.

Männer		Frauen
	'my father'	
<i>youmáa</i>		<i>noukóuchili</i>
	Anrede	
<i>bába</i>		<i>bába</i>
	„grandfather“	
<i>itámoulou</i>		<i>nárgouti</i>

ebenso ist es bei Mutter, Großmutter etc., sowie bei den Bezeichnungen von einigen Körperteilen und wenigen anderen Dingen. Obwohl aber die Wortstämme selbst ganz anders sind, werden sie auf die gleiche Art und Weise flektiert. Nach Jespersen heißt das, daß die beiden Geschlechter die gleiche Grammatik haben und es sich nicht um zwei im eigentlichen Sinne unterschiedliche Sprachen oder Dialekte handelt (cf. Jespersen 1922/1968: 238).

1.1.1.2. Erklärungsversuch

Rochefort: "the women do not eat till their husbands have finished their meal,"

nach Lafitau (1724): women never eat in the company of their husbands and never mention them by name, but must wait upon them as their slaves;

Nach Jespersen handelt es sich hierbei um ein weit verbreitetes sprachliches Tabu:

when they [the Caribs] were on the war-path they had a great number of mysterious words which women were never allowed to learn and which even the young men might not pronounce before passing certain tests of bravery and patriotism ; these war-words are described as extraordinarily difficult ("un baragoin fort difficile," Rochefort, p. 450). It is easy to see that when once a tribe has acquired the habit of using a whole set of terms under certain frequently recurring circumstances, while others are at the same time strictly interdicted, this may naturally lead to so many words being reserved exclusively for one of the sexes that an observer may be tempted to speak of separate 'languages' for the two sexes. There is thus no occasion to believe in the story of a wholesale extermination of all male inhabitants by another tribe, though on the other hand it is easy to understand how such a myth may arise as an explanation of the linguistic difference between men und women, when it has become strong enough to attract attention und therefore has to be accounted for. (Jespersen 1922/1968: 239)

1.1.1.3. Weitere Beispiele:

1.1.1.3.1. Die Bantus in Afrika

Die Frau darf weder den Namen ihres Schwiegervaters noch den seines Bruders aussprechen. Wenn ein Teil daraus, also ein Wort, eine Silbe oder sogar ein Laut in der normalen Sprache vorkommt, muß er irgendwie umgangen werden:

z.B.: *amanzi* > *amandabi*

Werden diese Ersetzungen von anderen übernommen, können sie nach Jespersen Teil einer wirklichen Frauensprache werden.

1.1.1.3.2. Die Chiquitos in Bolivien

Henry, V. (1879): „Sur le parler des hommes et le parler des femmes dans la langue chiquita“, in: *Revue de linguistique* XII: 305.

Nach Henry besitzen die beiden Geschlechter eine unterschiedliche Grammatik. Jespersen faßt seine Aussagen wie folgt zusammen:

men indicate by the addition of -tii that a male person is spoken about, while the women do not use this suffix and thus make no distinction between 'he ' and 'she,' ' his ' and ' her.' Thus in the men's speech the following distinctions would be made :

He went to his house : *yebotii ti n-ipoostii*.

He went to her house : *yebotii ti n-ipoostii*.

She went to his house : *yebo ti n-ipoostii*.

But to express all these different meanings the women would have only one form, **viz.**

yebo ti n-ipoos,

which in the men's speech would mean only 'She went to her house.' (Jespersen 1922/1968: 240).

1.1.1.3.3. Die Yana (Sprache) in Kalifornien

Dixon/Kroeber in: *The American Anthropologist*, n.s. 5: 15.

Bei vielen kalifornischen Stämmen werden bei Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen Unterschiede gemacht, je nachdem ein Mann oder eine Frau spricht „because the relationship itself is to them different, as the sex is different.“ (Jespersen 1922/1968: 240). Im Yana dagegen gibt es angeblich eine grundsätzliche Unterscheidung zwischen den von Männern und Frauen gesprochenen Wörtern. Nur wenige Beispiele werden gegeben, daraus läßt sich nach Jespersen aber erkennen, daß auch hier, wie bei den Chiquitos, die Wörter der Frauen kürzer sind als die der Männer, die an die Form der Frauen ein Suffix *-(n)a* anhängen.

1.1.1.3.4. Suaheli

Nach Ploss, H./Bartes, M (91908): *Das Weib in der Natur und Völkerkunde*. Leipzig, haben die Suaheli für jedes Wort, das sie nicht bei seinem Namen nennen wollen, ein von allen verstandenes symbolisches Wort. Solche Symbole werden vor allem von Frauen bei ihren Riten benutzt, um obszöne Dinge zu bezeichnen. Bei den Wörtern handelt es sich entweder um Bezeichnungen ganz normaler Dinge oder um Wörter aus der früheren Sprache oder aus anderen Bantusprachen, v.a. aus dem Kiziguha.

1.1.1.3.5. *Frauen in der Zeit von Jespersen*

Nach Bartels haben auch Frauen in Europa einen eigenen sexuellen Wortschatz „and he thinks that it is the same feeling of shame that underlies this custom and the interdiction of pronouncing the names of male relatives.“ Nach Jespersen erklärt das aber nicht alles, stattdessen spielt der Aberglaube eine große Rolle. (cf. Jespersen 1922/1968: 241).

1.1.2. *Beispiele aus dem 20. Jahrhundert*

1.1.2.1. Deutsche und skandinavische Einwanderung in Amerika

Die Männer nehmen mehr Kontakt zur Englisch sprechenden Bevölkerung auf als ihre Frauen und lernen deshalb leichter Englisch.

1.1.2.2. Die Basken in Frankreich

Schule, Militärdienst und tägliche Geschäftsbeziehungen betreffen viel mehr die Männer als die Frauen und begünstigen das Aussterben des Baskischen. Es gibt Familien, wo die Frau Baskisch spricht, der Mann Baskisch aber nicht einmal versteht und seinen Kindern verbietet, es zu lernen.

1.1.2.3. Livonisch in Lettland

Nur die Frauen bleiben dem Livonischen treu und bewahren es so vor dem endgültigen Aussterben. Die Männer treten zum Lettischen über.

1.1.2.4. Albanien

Die Frauen können generell nur das Albanische, die Männer sind zweisprachig.

1.1.3. *Das altindische Drama*

Frauen sprechen Prakrit, die natürliche oder vulgäre Sprache, nur die Männer haben das Recht Sanskrit zu verwenden. Der Unterschied beruht aber auf Rangunterschieden im Drama selbst. Sanskrit ist die Sprache der Götter, Könige, Prinzen, Brahmanen etc. und einiger wenigen Frauen, die eine besonders religiöse Bedeutung haben. Prakrit wird dagegen von Männern der unteren Klasse, wie Ladenbesitzer, Fischern, Polizisten etc. und von fast allen Frauen gesprochen. Bei Prakrit und Sanskrit handelt es sich zudem um zwei Sprachniveaus der gleichen Sprache:

they are two strata of the same language, one higher, more solemn, stiff and archaic, and another lower, more natural and familiar, and this easy, or perhaps we should say slipshod, style is the only one recognized for ordinary women. The difference may not be greater than that between the language of a judge and that of a costermonger in a modern novel, or between Juliet's and her nurse's expressions in Shakespeare, and if all women, even those we should call the 'heroines' of the plays, use only the lower stratum of speech, the reason certainly is that the social position of women was so inferior that they ranked only with men of the lower orders and had no share in the higher culture which, with the refined language, was the privilege of a small class of selected men. (Jespersen 1922/1968: 242).

1.2. **Haltung der beiden Geschlechter zum Sprachwandel**

1.2.1. *Innovativ - konservativ*

What is the general attitude of the two sexes to those changes that are constantly going on in languages? Can they be ascribed exclusively or predominantly to one of the sexes? Or do both equally participate in them. An answer that is very often given is that as a rule women are more conservative than men, and that they do nothing more than keep to the traditional language which they have learnt from their parents and hand on to their children, while innovations are due to the initiative of men. Thus Cicero in an often-quoted passage says that when he hears his mother-in-law Laelia, it is to him as if he heard Plautus or Naevius, for it is more natural for women to keep the old language uncorrupted, as they do not hear many people's way of speaking and thus retain what they have first learnt (De oratore, III. 45). This, however, does not hold good in every respect and in every people. The French engineer, Victor Renault, who lived for a long time among the Botocudos (in South America) and compiled vocabularies for two of their tribes, speaks of the ease with which he could make the savages who accompanied him invent new words for anything. "One of them called out the word in a loud voice, as if seized by a sudden idea, and the others would repeat it amid laughter and excited shouts, and then it was universally adopted. But the curious thing is that it was nearly always the women who busied themselves in inventing new words as well as in composing songs, dirges and rhetorical essays. The word-formations here alluded to are probably names of objects that the Botocudos had not known previously ... as for horse, *krainejoune*, 'head-teeth'; for ox, *po-kekri*, 'foot-cloven'; for donkey, *mgo-jonne-orône*, 'beast with long ears.' But well-known objects which have already got a name have often similar new denominations invented for them, which are then

soon accepted by the family and community and spread more and more " (v Martius, Beitr. zur Ethnogr. u. Sprachkunde Amerikas, 1867, i. 330). (Jespersen 1922/1968: 242-243).

E. R. Edwards: *Étude phonétique de la langue japonaise* (Leipzig, 1903, p. 79):

In France and in England it might be said that women avoid neologisms and are careful not to go too far away from the written forms: [...] In Japan, on the contrary, women are less conservative than men, whether in pronunciation or in the selection of words and expressions. One of the chief reasons is that women have not to the same degree as men undergone the influence of the written language. [...] Another tendency noticed in the language of Japanese women is pretty widely spread among French and English women, namely, the excessive use of intensive words and the exaggeration of stress and tone-accent to mark emphasis. Japanese women also make a much more frequent use than men of the prefixes of politeness *o-*, *go-* and *mi-*. (zitiert nach Jespersen 1922/1968: 242-243).

1.2.2. *Phonetik*

1.2.2.1. Aussagen alter Grammatiker zur Aussprache von Frauen

Sir Thomas Smith (1567):

„mulierculae quaedam delicatiores, et nonnulli qui volunt isto modo videri loqui urbanus,“ und an anderer Stelle „foeminae quaedam delicatiores, (zitiert nach Jespersen 1922/1968: 243).

Alexander Gill (1621):

„nostrae Mopsae, quae quidem ita omnia attenuant.“ (zitiert nach Jespersen 1922/1968: 244).

Alemand (1688):

Barnabé: „façon de prononcer mâle " *Bernabé*: „les gens polis et délicats ... les dames surtout“ (zitiert nach Jespersen 1922/1968: 244).

Grimarest (1712):

„ces marchandes du Palais, qui au lieu de *madame, boulevard*, etc., prononcent *medeme, boulevart*“ (Thurot i. 12 and 9; zitiert nach Jespersen 1922/1968: 244).

1.2.2.2. Das gerollte *r*

There is one change characteristic of many languages in which it seems as if women have played an important part even if they are not solely responsible for it: I refer to the weakening of the old fully trilled tongue-point *r*. I have elsewhere (*Fonetik*, p. 417 ff.) tried to show that this weakening, which results in various sounds and sometimes in a complete omission of the sound in some positions, is in the main a consequence of, or at any rate favoured by, a change in social life: the old loud trilled point sound is natural and justified when life is chiefly carried on out-of-doors, but indoor life prefers, on the whole, less noisy speech habits, and the more refined this domestic life is, the more all kinds of noises and even speech sounds will be toned down. One of the results is that this original *r* sound, the rudadub in the orchestra of language, is no longer allowed to bombard the ears, but is softened down in various ways, as we see chiefly in the great cities and among the educated classes, while the rustic population in many countries keeps up the old sound with much greater conservatism. Now we find that women are not unfrequently mentioned in connexion with this reduction of the trilled *r*; thus in the sixteenth century in France there was a tendency to leave off the trilling and even to go further than to the present English untrilled point *r* by pronouncing [z] instead, but some of the old grammarians mention this pronunciation as characteristic of women and a few men who imitate women (Erasmus: *mulierculae Parisinae*; Sylvius: *muliereulae ... Parrhisiae, et earum modo quidam parum viri*; Pillot: *Parisinae mulierculae ... adeo delicatulae sunt, ut pro pere dicant pese*). In the ordinary language there are a few remnants of this tendency; thus, when by the side of the original *chaire* we now have also the form *chaise*, and it is worthy of note that the latter form is reserved for the everyday signification (Engl. chair, seat) as belonging more naturally to the speech of women, while *chaire* has the more special signification of 'pulpit, professorial chair.' (Jespersen 1922/1968: 244).

1.2.2.3. Heutiges Englisch

In present-day English there are said to be a few differences in pronunciation between the two sexes; [...] It may also be that women are more inclined to give to the word *waistcoat* the full long sound in both syllables, while men, who have occasion to use the word more frequently, tend to give it the historical form [weskd̥t] (for the shortening compare *breakfast*). But even if such observations were multiplied – as probably they might easily be by an attentive observer – they would be only more or less isolated instances, without any deeper significance, and on the whole we must say that from the phonetic point of view there is scarcely any difference between the speech of men and that of women: the two sexes speak for all intents and purposes the same language.“ (Jespersen 1922/1968: 244).

1.3. Haltung der beiden Geschlechter zum Sprachgebrauch

1.3.1. Lexik

But when from the field of phonetics we come to that of vocabulary and style, we shall find a much greater number of differences, though they have received very little attention in linguistic works. A few have been mentioned by Greenough and Kittredge: „The use of common in the sense of 'vulgar' is distinctly a feminine peculiarity. It would sound effeminate in the speech of a man. So, in a less degree, with person for 'woman,' in contrast to 'lady.' Nice for 'fine ' must have originated in the same way " (W, p. 54). [...] There is no doubt, however, that women in all countries are shy of mentioning certain parts of the human body and certain natural functions by the direct and often rude denominations which men, and especially young men, prefer when among themselves. Women will therefore invent innocent and euphemistic words and paraphrases, which sometimes may in the long run come to be looked upon as the plain or blunt names, and therefore in their turn have to be avoided and replaced by more decent words. (Jespersen 1922/1968: 245).

In Pinero's *The Gay Lord Quex* (p. 116) a lady discovers some French novels on the table of another lady, and says: „This is a little - h'm - isn't it?“ She does not even dare to say the word 'indecent,' and has to express the idea in inarticulate language. The word 'naked' is paraphrased in the following description by a woman of the work of girls in ammunition works: " They have to take off every stitch from their bodies in one room, and run in their innocence and nothing else to another room where the special clothing is" (Bennett, *The Preity Lady*, 176). (Jespersen 1922/1968: 244-245).

On the other hand, the old-fashioned prudery which prevented ladies from using such words as legs and trousers ("those manly garments which are rarely mentioned by name," says Dickens, *Dombey*, 335) is now rightly looked upon as exaggerated and more or less comical (cf. my GS § 247).

1.3.2. Sprachstil

There can be no doubt that women exercise a great and universal influence on linguistic development through their instinctive shrinking from coarse and gross expressions and their preference for refined and (in certain spheres) veiled and indirect expressions. In most cases that influence will be exercised privately and in the bosom of the family; but there is one historical instance in which a group of women worked in that direction publicly and collectively; I refer to those French ladies who in the seventeenth century gathered in the Hôtel de Rambouillet and are generally known under the name of *Précieuses*. They discussed questions of spelling and of purity of pronunciation and diction, and favoured all kinds of elegant paraphrases by which coarse and vulgar words might be avoided. In many ways this movement was the counterpart of the literary wave which about that time was inundating Europe under various names - Gongorism in Spain, Marinism in Italy, Euphuism in England; but the *Précieuses* went further than their male confrères in desiring to influence everyday language. When, however, they used such expressions as, for 'nose,' 'the door of the brain,' for 'broom' 'the instrument of cleanness,' and for 'shirt' 'the constant companion of the dead and the living' (*la compagne perpétuelle des morts et des vivants*), and many others, their affectation called down on their heads a ripple of laughter, and their endeavours would now have been forgotten but for the immortal satire of Molière in *Les Précieuses ridicules* and *Les Femmes savantes*. But apart from such exaggerations the feminine point of view is unassailable, and there is reason to congratulate those nations, the English among them, in which the social position of women has been high enough to secure greater purity and freedom from coarseness in language than would have been the case if men had been the sole arbiters of speech. (Jespersen 1922/1968: 246).

Among the things women object to in language must be specially mentioned anything that smacks of swearing; [...] It will easily be seen that we have here civilized counterparts of what was above mentioned as sexual tabu; but it is worth noting that the interdiction in these cases is ordained by the women themselves, or perhaps rather by the older among them, while the young do not always willingly comply. (Jespersen 1922/1968: 246-247).

1.3.3. Slang als „human secondary sexual character“

Men will certainly with great justice object that there is a danger of the language becoming languid and insipid if we are always to content ourselves with women's expressions, and that vigour and vividness count for something. Most boys and many men have a dislike to some words merely because they feel that they are used by everybody and on every occasion: they want to avoid what is commonplace and banal and to replace it by new and fresh expressions, whose very newness imparts to them a flavour of their own. Men thus become the chief renovators of language, and to them are due those changes by which we sometimes see one term replace an older one, to give way in turn to a still newer one, and so on. [...] Many such innovations on their first appearance are counted as slang, and some never make their way into received speech; but I am not in this connexion concerned with the distinction between slang and recognized language, except in so far as the inclination or disinclination to invent and to use slang is undoubtedly one of the „human secondary sexual characters." This is not invalidated by the fact that quite recently, with the rise of the feminist

movement, many young ladies have begun to imitate their brothers in that as well as in other respects.). (Jespersen 1922/1968: 247-248).

1.4. Sprachliche Ausstattung der Geschlechter

1.4.1. *Sprachliches Kleingeld*

This trait is indissolubly connected with another: the vocabulary of a woman as a rule is much less extensive than that of a man. Women move preferably in the central field of language, avoiding everything that is out of the way or bizarre, while men will often either coin new words or expressions or take up old-fashioned ones, if by that means they are enabled, or think they are enabled, to find a more adequate or precise expression for their thoughts. Woman as a rule follows the main road of language, where man is often inclined to turn aside into a narrow footpath or even to strike out a new path for himself. Most of those who are in the habit of reading books in foreign languages will have experienced a much greater average difficulty in books written by male than by female authors, because they contain many more rare words, dialect words, technical terms, etc. These who want to learn a foreign language will therefore always do well at the first stage to read many ladies' novels, because they will there continually meet with just those everyday words and combinations which the foreigner is above all in need of, what may be termed the indispensable small-change of a language. (Jespersen 1922/1968: 248).

1.4.2. *Konkret vs. abstrakt*

This may be partly explicable from the education of women, which has up to quite recent times been less comprehensive and technical than that of men. But this does not account for everything, and certain experiments made by the American professor Jastrow would tend to show that we have here a trait that is independent of education. He asked twenty-five university students of each sex, belonging to the same class and thus in possession of the same preliminary training, to write down as rapidly as possible a hundred words, and to record the time. Words in sentences were not allowed. There were thus obtained 5,000 words, and of these many were of course the same. But the community of thought was greater in the women; while the men used 1,375 different words, their female class-mates used only 1,123. Of 1,266 unique words used, 29.8 per cent. were male, only 20.8 per cent. female. The group into which the largest number of the men's words fell was the animal kingdom; the group into which the largest number of the women's words fell was wearing apparel and fabrics; while the men used only 53 words belonging to the class of foods, the women used 179. „In general the feminine traits revealed by this study are an attention to the immediate surroundings, to the finished product, to the ornamental, the individual, and the concrete; while the masculine preference is for the more remote, the constructive, the useful, the general and the abstract.“ (See Havelock Ellis, *Man and Woman*, 4th ed., London, 1904, p. 189.). (Jespersen 1922/1968: 248-249).

1.4.3. *Lust am Laut - Humor - Linguistik*

Another point mentioned by Jastrow is the tendency to select words that rime and alliterative words; both these tendencies were decidedly more marked in men than in women. This shows what we may also notice in other ways, that men take greater interest in words as such and in their acoustic properties, while women pay less attention to that side of words and merely take them as they are, as something given once for all. Thus it comes that some men are confirmed punsters, while women are generally slow to see any point in a pun and scarcely ever perpetrate one themselves. Or, to get to something of greater value: the science of language has very few votaries among women, in spite of the fact that foreign languages, long before the reform of female education, belonged to those things which women learnt best in and out of schools, because, like music and embroidery, they were reckoned among the specially feminine 'accomplishments.'

Woman is linguistically quicker than man: quicker to learn, quicker to hear, and quicker to answer. A man is slower: he hesitates, he chews the cud to make sure of the taste of words, and thereby comes to discover similarities with and differences from other words, both in sound and in sense, thus preparing himself for the appropriate use of the fittest noun or adjective. (Jespersen 1922/1968: 248-249).

1.4.4. *Intensivierung*

While there are a few adjectives, such as *pretty* and *nice*, that might be mentioned as used more extensively by women than by men, there are greater differences with regard to adverbs. Lord Chesterfield wrote (*The World.*, December 5, 1754) : „Not contented with enriching our language by words absolutely new, my fair countrywomen have gone still farther, and improved it by the application and extension of old ones to various and very different significations. They take a word and change it, like a guinea into shillings for pocket-money, to be employed in the several occasional purposes of the day. For instance, the adjective *vast* and its adverb *vastly* mean anything, and are the fashionable words of the most fashionable people. A fine woman ... *is vastly* obliged, or *vastly* offended, *vastly* glad, or *vastly* sorry. Large objects are *vastly* great, small ones are *vastly* little; and I had lately the pleasure to hear a fine woman pronounce, by a

happy metonymy, a very small gold snuff-box, that was produced in company, to be *vastly* pretty, because it was so *vastly* little." Even if that particular adverb to which Lord Chesterfield objected has now to a great extent gone out of fashion, there is no doubt that he has here touched on a distinctive trait: the fondness of women for hyperbole will very often lead the fashion with regard to adverbs of intensity, and these are very often used with disregard of their proper meaning, as in German *riesig klein*, English *awfully pretty*, *terribly nice*, French *rudement joli*, *affreusement délicieux*, [...] *Quite*, also, in the sense of 'very,' as in 'she was quite charming; it makes me quite angry,' is, according to Fitzedward Hall, due to the ladies. And I suspect that *just sweet* (as in Barrie: "Grizel thought it was just sweet of him") is equally characteristic of the usage of the fair sex. (Jespersen 1922/1968: 249-250).

There is another intensive which has also something of the eternally feminine about it, namely *so*. I am indebted to Stoffel (Int. 101) for the following quotation from *Punch* (January 4, 1896): "This little adverb is a great favourite with ladies, in conjunction with an adjective. For instance, they are very fond of using such expressions as 'He is so charming!' 'It is *so* lovely!' etc." Stoffel adds the following instances of strongly intensive *so* as highly characteristic of ladies' usage: 'Thank you *so* much!' 'It was *so* kind of you to think of it!' 'That's *so* like you!' 'I'm *so* glad you've come!' 'The bonnet is *so* lovely!' (Jespersen 1922/1968: 250).

1.4.5. *Halbe Sätze*

The explanation of this characteristic feminine usage is, I think, that women much more often than men break off without finishing their sentences, because they start talking without having thought out what they are going to say; the sentence 'I'm so glad you've come' really requires some complement in the shape of a clause with *that*, 'so glad that I really must kiss you,' or, 'so glad that I must treat you to something extra,' or whatever the consequence may be. But very often it is difficult in a hurry to hit upon something adequate to say, and 'so glad that I cannot express it' frequently results in the inexpressible remaining unexpressed, and when that experiment has been repeated time after time, the linguistic consequence is that a strongly stressed *so* acquires the force of 'very much indeed.' [...] (Jespersen 1922/1968: 250).

The frequency with which women thus leave their exclamatory sentences half-finished might be exemplified from many passages in our novelists and dramatists. I select a few quotations. The first is from the beginning of *Vanity Fair*: "This almost caused Jemima to faint with terror. 'Well, I never,' said she. 'What an audacious '- emotion prevented her from completing either sentence. [...]' (Jespersen 1922/1968: 251).

1.4.6. *Denken in Lücken*

These sentences are the linguistic symptoms of a peculiarity of feminine psychology which has not escaped observation. Meredith says of one of his heroines: "She thought in blanks, as girls do, and some women," and Hardy singularizes one of his by calling her "that novelty among women - one who finished a thought before beginning the sentence which was to convey it. [...]" (Jespersen 1922/1968: 251).

1.4.7. *Hypotaxe und Parataxe*

The same point is seen in the typical way in which the two sexes build up their sentences and periods; but here, as so often in this chapter, we cannot establish absolute differences, but only preferences that may be broken in a great many instances and yet are characteristic of the sexes as such. If we compare long periods as constructed by men and by women, we shall in the former find many more instances of intricate or involute structures with clause within clause, a relative clause in the middle of a conditional clause or vice versa, with subordination and sub-subordination, while the typical form of long, feminine periods is that of co-ordination, one sentence or clause being added to another on the same plane and the gradation between the respective ideas being marked not grammatically, but emotionally, by stress and intonation, and in writing by underlining. In learned terminology we may say that men are fond of hypotaxis and women of parataxis. (Jespersen 1922/1968: 251).

Or we may use the simile that a male period is often like a set of Chinese boxes, one within another, while a feminine period is like a set of pearls joined together on a string of *ands* and similar words. (Jespersen 1922/1968: 251-252).

1.4.8. *Sprunghaftigkeit, Schnelligkeit und Intelligenz*

The greater rapidity of female thought is shown linguistically, among other things, by the frequency with which a woman will use a pronoun like *he* or *she*, not of the person last mentioned, but of somebody else to whom her thoughts have already wandered, while a man with his slower intellect will think that she is still moving on the same path. The difference in rapidity of perception has been tested experimentally by Romanes: the same paragraph was presented to various well-educated persons, who were asked to read it as rapidly as they could, ten seconds being allowed for twenty lines. As soon as the time was up the paragraph was removed, and the reader immediately wrote down all that he or she could remember of it. It was found that women were usually more successful than men in this test. Not only were they able to read more quickly than the men, but they were able to give a better account of the paragraph as a whole. One

lady, for instance, could read exactly four times as fast as her husband, and even then give a better account than he of that small portion of the paragraph he had alone been able to read. But it was found that this rapidity was no proof of intellectual power, and some of the slowest readers were highly distinguished men. Ellis (*Man and W.* 195) explains this in this way: with the quick reader it is as though every statement were admitted immediately and without inspection to fill the vacant chambers of the mind, while with the slow reader every statement undergoes an instinctive process of cross-examination; every new fact seems to stir up the accumulated stores of facts among which it intrudes, and so impedes rapidity of mental action. (Jespersen 1922/1968: 252). [...]

1.4.9. Geschwätzigkeit

The volubility of women has been the subject of innumerable jests: it has given rise to popular proverbs in many countries,¹ as well as to Aurora Leigh's resigned "A woman's function plainly is to talk" and Oscar Wilde's sneer, "Women are a decorative sex. They never have anything to say, but they say it charmingly." A woman's thought is no sooner formed than uttered. Says Rosalind, "Do you not know I am a woman? when I think, I must speak (*As You Like It*, III. 2. 264). And in a modern novel a young girl says: "I talk so as to find out what I think. Don't you? Some things one can't judge of till one hears them spoken (Housman, *John of Jingalo*, 346).

The superior readiness of speech of women is a concomitant of the fact that their vocabulary is smaller and more central than that of men. But this again is connected with another indubitable fact, that women do not reach the same extreme points as men, but are nearer the average in most respects. Havelock Ellis, who establishes this in various fields, rightly remarks that the statement that genius is undeniably of more frequent occurrence among men than among women has sometimes been regarded by women as a slur upon their sex, but that it does not appear that women have been equally anxious to find fallacies in the statement that idiocy is more common among men. Yet the two statements must be taken together. Genius is more common among men by virtue of the same general tendency by which idiocy is more common among men. The two facts are but two aspects of a larger zoological fact - the greater variability of the male (*Man and W.* 420).

In language we see this very clearly: the highest linguistic genius and the lowest degree of linguistic imbecility are very rarely found among women. The greatest orators, the most famous literary artists, have been men; but it may serve as a sort of consolation to the other sex that there are a much greater number of men than of women who cannot put two words together intelligibly, who stutter and stammer and hesitate, and are unable to find suitable expressions for the simplest thought. Between these two extremes the woman moves with a sure and supple tongue which is ever ready to find words and to pronounce them in a clear and intelligible manner. (Jespersen 1922/1968: 253).

1.4.10. Begründung und Ausblick

Nor are the reasons far to seek why such differences should have developed. They are mainly dependent on the division of labour enjoined in primitive tribes and to a great extent also among more civilized peoples. For thousands of years the work that especially fell to men was such as demanded an intense display of energy for a comparatively short period, mainly in war and in hunting. Here, however, there was not much occasion to talk, nay, in many circumstances talk might even be fraught with danger. And when that rough work was over, the man would either sleep or idle his time away, inert and torpid, more or less in silence. Woman on the other hand, had a number of domestic occupations which did not claim such an enormous output of spasmodic energy. To her was at first left not only agriculture, and a great deal of other work which in more peaceful times was taken over by men; but also much that has been till quite recently her almost exclusive concern - the care of the children, cooking, brewing, baking, sewing, washing, etc., - things which for the most part demanded no deep thought, which were performed in company and could well be accompanied with a lively chatter. Lingering effects of this state of things are seen still, though great social changes are going on in our times which may eventually modify even the linguistic relations of the two sexes. (Jespersen 1922/1968: 254).

¹ "Où femme y a, silence n'y a." "Deux femmen font un plaïd, trois un grand caquet, quatre un plein marché." „Due donne e un'oca fanno una fiera" (Venice). "The tongue is the sword of a woman, and she never lete it become rusty" (China). "The North Sea will sooner be found wanting in water than a woman at a loss for a word" (Jutland).