

PRAGMATIC DESCRIPTION OF INCOMPLETE SENTENCES IN THE SPEECH OF MEN AND WOMEN IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT	KEYWORDS
The article analyses unfinished sentences in the speech of men and women from perspective of gender and pragmatics. As an object of analyze the book “Bridget Jones’s Diaries” by Helen Fielding has been chosen because of its live dialogs. The investigation revealed that unfinished sentences are more typical for men rather than women, even though both genders use them for similar reason such as taking time to think and formulate their thoughts and express the intensity of speaker’s emotions.	Gender linguistics, pragmalinguistics, speech behavior, men, women, unfinished sentences, English language.

Introduction

Currently, the problem of gender has begun to be actively covered in linguistic works by world scientists in connection with the established anthropological approach to the comprehensive study of a person as a representative of society. In this case, gender is considered as one of the parameters by means of which the social affiliation of the speaker is constructed in communication . According to A. Kirilina and M. Toms kaya [2; 2005], in the most general sense, the study of gender in linguistics concerns two groups of problems, such as the linguistic actualization of the gender aspect in language and the communicative behavior of men and women, where gender-specific strategies and tactics are distinguished, determining the choice of the corresponding linguistic units.

Pragmalinguistics is an interdisciplinary field combining pragmatics (the study of how context influences meaning in language) and linguistics (the scientific study of language itself). Essentially, pragmalinguistics explores how language use is shaped by the context in which it occurs, focusing on how speakers convey meaning not just through words themselves but through the situation, their intentions, and the shared knowledge between speakers and listeners.

Gender pragmalinguistics is a subfield of pragmatics that explores how language use reflects, constructs, and influences gender roles and identities in communication. It focuses on the pragmatic aspects of language, such as speech acts, politeness strategies, and discourse structures, as they relate to gendered behaviors and social expectations.

Gendered communication often involves differences in pragmatic strategies, such as indirectness, politeness, or assertiveness. Women, for example, may use more indirect speech acts, whereas men might favor directness. As Deborah Tannen said: "In general, women tend to emphasize connection and intimacy in communication, whereas men focus more on status and independence, which affects how they use language in different social contexts" [1; 60].

Based on the definition of gender as a set of social and cultural norms that society prescribes for people to follow depending on their biological sex [3; 1], we analyzed unfinished statements by men and women presented in the fiction texts of the modern English-language writers Helen Fielding “Bridget Jones's Diary” and Gillian Flynn “Gone Girl”.

An incomplete sentence is when a statement does not formally end (e.g. it breaks off, leaving some part unsaid, without a precise ending or form). This can be:

An incomplete utterance, when the speaker does not finish a thought.

Pauses or intonation pauses that leave room for the speaker to continue.

Rhetorical questions or hints that suggest understanding with the speaker.

An example of an incomplete sentence:

A woman might say, "I think we could... well, I'm not sure."

A man might say, "You know I don't... well, never mind."

It is worth noting that, contrary to the common stereotype, incompleteness is generally more common in male speech than in female speech. Analysis of texts showed that unfinished phrases are more common in men than in women. In our case, the advantage was small but noticeable - 58% of unfinished statements in male speech versus 42% in female speech. Analysis of male and female speech shows that, in most cases (35% for men, 28% for women), both sexes do not complete their speech to show that the speaker is thinking over their thought or cannot decide how to formulate their position accurately. This may indicate doubt or uncertainty.

An omission due to doubt in the speech of male characters, as a rule, accompanies "thinking out loud". Often, an omission of this type is followed by a certain conclusion, generalizing the previous thoughts and clearly expressing the speaker's attitude to the issue raised. From an example given in the below from the book “Bridget Jones’s Diaries”, we can see the confirmation the statement:

“Bridget Jones: 'I suppose you think it’s all right to slag people's boyfriends off to their parents' friends behind their back when they're not even there for no reason just because you're jealous,' I flailed. [4; 89]

Mark Darcy: 'Sorry,' he said. 'I was just trying to figure out what you mean. Have I . . .? Are you suggesting that I am jealous of Daniel Cleaver? Over you?'"[4; 89]

Carl: “Hey, Nicky,” Carl’s watery voice came over. “Sorry to bother you. I just thought you should know ... your door is wide open, and that cat of yours is outside. It isn’t supposed to be, right?” [5; 33] The statistics for women are quite revealing and confirm the observations of researchers who find that women tend to speak in an uncertain tone and avoid being categorical.

Go: “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to paint a picture, I just ... I don’t know, I just keep thinking. About some crazy person.” She splashed some more Scotch into her tumbler. [5; 66]

Jacqueline: “I’m so sorry, Nick, for what you’re going through.” She stared at me a moment. “I’m sorry, I must ... I didn’t picture Amy with such an ... American boy.” She seemed to be speaking neither to me nor to Desi. “Good God, he even has a cleft chin.” [5; 192]

Another pragmatic function of unfinished sentences in the speech of men and women is to emphasize emotional intensity. Statistics obtained during quantitative analysis show that in men's speech, unfinished statements due to an influx of emotion occur more often than in women's speech (21% and 10%, respectively). Unfinished sentences can serve to express emotions, especially in situations where strong feelings are involved, such as anger, joy, or surprise.

Go: “Are those—Is that all the stuff ... from the credit cards?” Go’s voice went high and wild. She put one hand to her mouth and took a step back from me, and I realized that just for a second, she thought I was making a confession to her [5; 255].

In this example, we can see that the heroine of the book "Gone Girl" expresses strong surprise, and because of this, her statement is cut off.

Amy: “I know,” I say. I know exactly what I am supposed to say to Desi. “You’re right. You’re absolutely right. I haven’t felt so safe in so long, Desi, but I am still ... I see him and ... I’m fighting this, but he hurt me ... for years.” [5; 389]

In this passage, the main character of the book "Gone Girl" Amy, intentionally cuts off her statements in order to add drama to her speech and thus manipulate Daisy's feelings.

The implementation of an understatement due to an excess of emotions in male speech is generally similar to the implementation of this type of understatement in female speech. Due to the influx of feelings, the speaker is physically unable to continue the statement. One of the striking examples of an understatement due to an emotional outburst in male speech is found in the novel *Bridget Jones's Diary* in Mark Darcy's speech.

Mark Darcy: 'I heard him talking on his portable phone by the herbaceous border. He didn't know he was being overheard. If I'd had any idea that my parents were involved I'd . . . He shook his head. [4; 139]

Bridget Jones' father's speech, which is having difficulties in his relationship with his wife, also continues with an omission.

Bridget Jones's father: 'She wants me to move out for a while, she says, and . . . and. . . . ' He collapsed in quiet sobs [30; 4].

Bridget Jones's father: 'Oh, nothing, nothing. Just a bit . . . drawn. [5; 58]

Repeated breaks in statements give the narrative the liveliness and emotionality of colloquial speech.

As we can see from statistics and examples, unfinished sentences are used slightly more in the speech of men, however for similar intention, that is to say both men and women sometimes leave their sentences unfinished to signal that they are still processing their thoughts or are unsure how to express their views clearly. This often reflects a sense of doubt or indecision. Apart from that, unfinished sentences can be used by men and women to express emotions, especially in situations involving strong feelings such as anger, joy, or surprise. Often, these phrases are left incomplete to give the listener the opportunity to interpret the speaker's emotions.

References:

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