Voice Quality: A Strategy for Gender Stylisation

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Abstract: *This paper is situated in the body of linguistic forms and identity construction which investigates how women and men in Mostaganem Spoken Arabic (MTG henceforth) exploit the multifunctionality of phonetic forms, namely voice styles in their interactive process of negotiating different stances and identities and how these stances and identities are perceived by others. I have tried to analyse the voice styles of a number of women and men in positions of authority and submissiveness with a sole focus on the way that their voice styles are negotiated at their level without considering the way, that particular styles are determined by outside factors as stereotypes and attitudes. These two experiments purposefully aim to look at the way and manner authoritative and submissive identities are enacted or performed in specific contexts.*
The results showed that both women and men have respectively exhibited voice styles that are seemingly masculine or feminine. The data obtained from the experiment makes it possible to say that women and men who have temporarily some interactional power in a specific situation display their authority through the use of the so-called masculine voice styles. Similarly, they use what is stereotypically more feminine voice styles to display care, and sympathy generally described as co-operative strategies or what has been termed 'rapport talk'.
Key words: *Gender, identity construction, gendered identity, authority, submissiveness.*
Résumé : *Cet article se situe dans le domaine des formes linguistiques et de la construction identitaire qui étudie comment les femmes et les hommes dans le parler de Mostaganem(MTG) exploitent la multifonctionnalité des formes phonétiques, à savoir les styles de voix dans leur processus interactif de négociation de différentes postures et identités et comment ces postures et identités sont perçues par les autres. J'ai essayé d'analyser les styles de voix d'un certain nombre de femmes et d'hommes en position d'autorité et de soumission en me concentrant uniquement sur la manière dont leurs styles de voix sont négociés à leur niveau sans considérer la manière dont des styles particuliers sont déterminés par des facteurs extérieurs que les stéréotypes et les attitudes. Ces deux expériences visent délibérément à examiner la manière dont les identités autoritaires et soumises sont mises en œuvre ou exécutées dans des contextes spécifiques.*
Les résultats ont montré que les femmes et les hommes ont respectivement présenté des styles de voix apparemment masculins ou féminins. Les données obtenues à partir de l'expérience permettent de dire que les femmes et les hommes qui ont temporairement un certain pouvoir interactionnel dans une situation spécifique marquent leur autorité à travers l'utilisation des styles de voix dits masculins. De même, ils utilisent des styles de voix stéréotypés plus féminins

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pour attirer de l'attention et de la sympathie généralement décrites comme des stratégies coopératives ou ce que l'on a appelé le « discours de rapport ».
Mots clés : *Genre, construction identitaire, identité de genre, autorité, soumission.*

1. Introduction

The notions of gender, age, sex, status and region alongside their relation to voice quality use and identification evolve in parallel to the process of the production and reproduction of practice. Becoming gendered beings, speaking subjects become able to modulate their voices according to the setting and scene where their gender is enacted. In this respect, one can speak of the modulation of voice quality as a competence for participating in a community of practice as well as the competence to identity the speaker's identity, to evaluate her / him and distinguish her / him from other speakers.

The objective of this paper is the investigation of hearing not as a sensory activity but as a cognitive and a social activity. It is an enquiry into the way our ears have been trained by our own identities, beliefs and stereotypes to identify peculiarities of a given voice quality, to categorize it in a specific social context and to attribute to the wide range of voice qualities a so-called appropriate description.

2. Gendered Females' nut Males' Voice Quality, Gendered Identities

By gendered females' and males' voice quality ,1 particularly refer to this voice qualities / voice styles that say something about women and men, girls and boys, and about their positions, choices and their identities, which are in certain ways gendered.

More specifically, gendered voice quality represents and constitutes consents and contests social practices. For example, a particular feminine voice may reflect or resist the representation of women as sweet, weak and obedient. Such a quality is juxtaposed with an opposite type of voice that represents women as tough and strong beings. Further, I sec inure specific gendered voice qualities pertaining traditionally to one sex overlap to another sex. A thin, soft or submissive voice quality which is subjectively described as woman specific is, in many cases. used b} men in certain contexts. Likewise, a dry. thick or assertive voice style traditionally described as masculine characterises women in many instances reversing in such a way the notions of what is typically feminine and what is typically masculine.

Therefore, among the questions, which require convincing answers are those related to how women and men construct their femininity and their masculinity though voice styles, how voice styles in females and in males are perceived and how to go towards a redefinition of the notions of femininity and masculinity, something being challenged in current gender research. So as to canvass how femininities and masculinities are constructed and perceived though voice styles as

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occurring in discursive interactions, a number of tests have been suggested. among which tests of voices discrimination in a variety of situations as will be made clear in what follow.

3. Methodology

3.1.1 Subjects

3.1.1.1 Speakers

The speakers selected to ser e the purposes of my tests are nineteen adult speakers of MTC. 4 Ten of them have participated in the experiments, which have dealt with the emphatic/non-emphatic cognates. The remaining nine, four males and five females. share similar features with the other ten informants in terms of age. status and language use.

3.1.1.2 Listeners

As the study requires listeners to recognise and assess voice stylistic characteristics, I selected sixteen female and male students of the faculty of letters end Arts. University of Mostaganem. Algeria and who share the same social background with the speakers whose voices served as the sample submitted to the perceptual analysis.

The listeners were considered as naive judges because they almost knew nothing about the perceptual assessment of voices nor did they know anything about the objectives of the experiment over and above the very little time (only about three seconds) allocated to them to evaluate each voice sample.

Building on the works of Nieboer, Graaf and Shutte (I 985) and Krieman, Gerratt and Precoda (1990), I favoured naive judges since they can give more reliable judgements than judges who have a degree of expertise in the perceptual analyses of voice quality. For caution in interpreting attitude towards gender- based differences, we had both female and male judges to elicit information front both female and male speakers. The purpose was to see whether female/ male judgements would converge or diverge.

3.1.2 Materials

A number of stimuli separated by about three seconds have been presented to the listeners whose task was to say whether the three stimuli have the same quality or whether they bear some specificity in terms of femininity versus masculinity. authority versus submissiveness or whether they were simply neutral. Femininity: masculinity authority and submissiveness are constructs which closely serve doing gender identity work in terms of practice and social positioning. The different voice characteristics submitted to listeners' evaluation have not been chosen at random. In fact, their nature perfectly tits the nature of the sample thorn which conclusions will be drawn.

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Authoritative voice quality throughout this paper refers to an utterance whereby the speaker requires obedience. As a result, she/ he uses linguistic as well as prosodic elements like tone, pitch. intonation, loudness, harshness. roughness that signals her/ his powerfulness over the hearer. His/her voice has, in one record. a perlocutionary effect.

Submissive voice stands in sharp contrast to authoritative voice. Submissive voice implies a willingness to show obedience and to yield to the authority of others. This is often done through some features like softness of voice, hesitancy, lack of assertiveness added to the use of lexemes and grammatical structures which are associated with submissive behaviours. In other words, submissiveness consists of being subject to the power exerted on the speaker or it may emanate from the speaker himself for the sake of achieving a certain purpose and fulfilling a certain role.

Finally, neutral voice quality has been taken as a point of reference to measure both authority and submissiveness. Neutral voice in our study, though it might seem chimerical as most of the speech events aim at achieving a certain goal. is the act of speaking without any manifestation of the features mentioned above? The speaker displays neither authority nor submissiveness.

One of the aspects of dominance is to impose, to urge others to perform, act or behave in a specific way. Speech at its different linguistic/ nonlinguistic levels is used as an instrument for Setting things done. Similarly, to be dominated is also cued by the manipulation of language in a way that subsumes the use of a grammar. a lexicon and a specific voice quality, the sum of which reveals how a submissive gender identity is enacted.

Context sensitive lexicon, grammar and multiple voice styles are of great interest. They show how differences in authority and submissiveness are reified in actual utterances. The following examples constitute typical wordings and typical grammatical structuring besides a specific voice modulation as advanced previous1y. All of them are expressive in temps of gender, position and relations to others. They include the following sentences.

1 - [læzəmədʒ iː] (You have tt› come
2- [rwaḥ hna] (come here)
3- [gu: lə lḥaq] (say the truth l
4- [əradʒol hua li jahkəm-lmra-mæ? andha-mætdi: r bla bi:h lmra təbqa. deimən mra lukæn ḥta tatla? ləlqmar] (The man is the boss, and without his assistance a woman remains but an impotent creature even if she achieves the highest intellectual success).
5- [alah jxali: k] (maj God protect you. this sentence stands for please, in English).
6- [tond3oni t ‘? awoni1 t cottld you help mc?).
7- [tnod3om trondele servi: s] (could you do me a la ’us?)
8- [rani bai/bœyia nsa.qsi: k] (1 would like to ask you a question).

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The social meaning of sentences 1-2-3-4 is tightly related to power and authority while sentences 5-6-7-8 are polite forms, most of the lime, implying either deference or submissiveness. The wording of 1-2-3 is overloaded with authority and dominance. If sentences 1-2-3 can be produced by both sexes. sentence 4 is male specific. It is a reification of a certain stance shaped in the course of time by certain stereotypes about what being female should be.

It. in fact. draws upon a typical social order that regulate the notions of authority and submissiveness inside a community of practice and whose members as our experiments have shown sometimes consent but contest and subvert some other times. I hypothesise that MTG females and males use of the above sentences is not motivated by the fact they are demographically different but it is motivated by their desire to conform or not to conform to the social order. [lazam] (have to) /jli: q/ (it is necessary). [ra443a1 hua li jahkamj (The man is the boss). [Imra ma? ndha matdi: r blmbi: ha] are linguistic forms / performance of certain identities the value of which lies in social practice in a specific community of practice and which do not necessarily prevail in other communities of practice. They are articulations of particular aspects of stances and identities in terms power and power relations the sum of which is objectified through a myriad of styles.

The lexicalisation and the *grammaticalisation" of gender identity have the power of establishing and governing the relations between the participants. For instance, the use of expressive sexist vocabulary items like [1mra tabqa deiman mra:] derives its value from its sexist representation implying that women are weak, immature, and inferior. But besides this sexist discourse, there is an anti-sexist discourse which might celebrate the above qualifiers considering them as strategies for the achievement of certain purposes (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003) In addition to the lexical items; grammatical organisation also regulates inter gender relations. "Gender identities are constructed in discourse" (Litosseliti, 2006:62) and it is worth reminding that by construction is meant the construction of self and the construction of others as well. (Sunderland, 2004)

The choice of modal auxiliaries like /lazam/ (have to) [jli:(1) (must). the imperative. [gu:1 /mahatma/ are forms which position the one who is speaking together with the spoken to or the spoken about in terms of their interpersonal differences. The use of the imperative requires obedience. Like modality verbs: the forms are loaded with a great deal of expressiveness that suggests the existence of power relations among speakers. Similarly, a different wording and grammar, characterize submissiveness.

Lexical items expressing subordination and excessive politeness are very frequent: [alah jxali: k] latah jarham J (may God bless your parents), are modes of address that are used in submissive situations to exhibit a submissive stance or identity not meaning that the speaker who is using a submissive style is inherently submissive. Submissive style is a strategy to enact affection, sensitivity and co-operation or 'rapport talk' (Coates. l94). The grammatical structures specifying

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submissiveness are marked by an overuse of polite questions (sentences 6-7-8) start with modal auxiliaries like:

- [tand3arn] Can you?
- [ramibayi nsaNsi: k] I would like to ask you a question?
- [mnd3ant nswqsil] Can I ask you a question?

It can he said, therefore, that it is in the manipulation of a context sensitive grammar and vocabulary that authority and submissiveness are rendered. What is then the effect of voice quality on people? Will authoritative/submissive utterances have the same impact if uttered without fluctuations in voice? Do males and females signal authority in the same way? flow would listeners eventually perceive males/ females voice quality and subsequently describe it? Is the same description assigned to authoritative submissive male/female speakers? Do females who use the same features as males have the same effects on listeners? It is in this perspective that we have carried out our perceptual study.

To avoid bias, control and thus the orientation of judges' attitudes towards voice quality, we have selected stimuli, which are likely to be said by either males or females in MTG.

A-Texts said in "neutral" voice quality:
1-Irani bayi/ bayia nru: h mirk jla: /mad3i: if bakri mwkien? Ichtatqalqu:
jImbtj:t nadrablkum tilifu: n nfallah nse: b taksifo: n matt lu: l (1 am going to do the shopping. Don't worry if I am late. I will phone you in any case).
2-Irani xarad3) (I am going out) (male speaker) 3-Irani xard3al (I am going out) (female speaker)

B-Texts said in authoritative voice
1-I Imam ad3 i: I (You have to come).
2. [rwah alma] (Come here)
3- fgu: I altiaq) (Say the truth)
4- [ʃu:f) (Look)

C-Text said in submissive voice
1- [alah jxali: k/ tand3am ty moe Radeli seR vis rani bayia niu: fak darwak si se posibl (Please, could you do me a favour? I want to see you now if you won't mind) f'emale speakers repeated C1. Male speaker repeated C1 somewhat differently
2-[t?aewani] (Can you help me?)
7- [lah jxali: k] (May God protect you, please?)

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It should be worth recalling that the acoustic characteristics of voice quality as manifested in its stylistic richness and multiplicity are the main concern of voice perception experiments.

3.1.3 Recordings

Given that recording natural speech in real situations is very difficult, the selection of voice sample has been based on extemporizations and simulations. Extemporization means to speak or to perform an action without preparation. Simulation is the fact of pretending to have or feel an emotion. It further, means to take the appearance of something or somebody.

In our experiments, our talker informants were sometimes asked to extemporize or simulate a voice quality in a specific situation. I do believe that extemporizations and simulations do not have the value of natural speech. Extemporized and simulated speech has in fact been opted for purely empirical purposes. The part of the speakers' repertoire, that is the sum of sentences selected to be said in different voice qualities has been carefully sampled to serve our hypothesis.

The selection relied on the frequency of occurrence of these sentences in our talkers' speech. What we wish to emphasize, in this respect, is a point about the extent to which voice quality has a role that compels listeners to make inferences about who speaks with which voice quality and how voice style position women and men in certain ways.

The speakers were recorded in three different situations. The first situation required authority, the second submissiveness and in the third situation, voice was "purely" neutral. Neutral is relative since hardly is an act of speaking aimless or devoid of any attitudes or emotions.

The first task of the listeners who served as judges consisted of providing each voice sample the appropriate qualifier. They were told that they would listen to a number of voices (57 in total) and say whether these voices were neutral, authoritative, submissive, masculine or feminine. In a table form, the voices were horizontally labelled V1-V2-V3 as each speaker had to speak the texts in three voice qualities. The adjectives that describe these voice qualities were given vertically. Each voice quality was played once and the judges had to write down their first impressions. To avoid mechanical responses, the order of voice sample was randomised.

3.1.4 Results

The rates of correct identification of the different voice qualities were calculated for each voice quality. Analysis of this step of the experiment revealed that the recognition of all voice qualities was 51.23% of correct answers for male informants and 51.06% for female informants. Responses to each informant's range of voice qualities were analysed.

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Table 1: The average index score for correct responses to voice qualities of 9 adult males and 10 adult females for read, simulated or extemporized passages

Voice quality	Males	Females
Neutral	53.47%	47.5%
Authoritative	65.5%	34.5%
Submissive	35.72µ	65.28%

From the aforementioned results, two outstanding features seemed to be worth analysing. The first one is authority and the second one is submissiveness. For each of the two groups, scores demonstrate that authority is easily identifiable in males in the same way as submissiveness is easily identifiable in females by either male or female listeners. For the 16 judges, 65.5% of the texts uttered in an authoritative voice quality were correctly identified in males. Authority in females, on the other hand, was below average with 34.5% of correct identification.

The score for submissiveness in male speakers is lower than the score of submissiveness in female speakers. While only 34.72% of the submissive voices were correctly identified in males, 65.28% of the submissive voices were correctly identified in females.

But, in any case the features authoritative / submissive were present in voices of both females and males. Among the ten female speakers, three (30%) were best identified as authoritative and as masculine at the same time by 50% of the female judges and 62.5% of male judges. Five of them were qualified as both submissive and feminine by 47.5% of the female judges and 50% of the male judges. Only, two females (20%) were said to be authoritative without being attributed the feature masculine. Along these same lines, authority was associated with masculinity for 5 (55.55%) male speakers by 75% (6) of male listeners and 62.5% of the female listeners. Three of the male speakers (33.33%) were called submissive and feminine by 87.5% of male listeners and 50% of female listeners. Only, one speaker was said to be masculine yet not authoritative by 25% of male listeners and 50% of the female listeners. This last rating shows that masculinity does not necessarily imply authority.

3.1.5 Analysis

3.1.5.1 Beyond the gender bifurcation into submissive femininities and authoritative masculinities

Given that the same stimuli were presented to the listeners, I expected that the features authority and submissiveness were to be equally attributed to males as to females on the basis of the stimulus. However, while the sex of the speaker seems to, importantly; orient the listener's judgements, the data obtained also show that elements like authority/ submissiveness which are stereotypically the property of

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one sex rather than the other overlap. And thus viewing gender as a bifurcation into submissive femininities and authoritative masculinities renders gender problematic as some of the results highlight that authority / submissiveness in their relation to femininity and masculinity cross sex boundaries becoming common to both females and males.

It can be inferred that the way the listeners' ear has processed the ranges of voice qualities has gone Ogyoncl wl1at is traditionally known as being masculine and being feminine. Even though I emphasize that authority, submissiveness and femininity/masculinity are a set of practices and stances which emerge in context rather than attributes assigned to women and men, I do not deny the socio-cultural force, which has made many of the judges' associate authority to masculinity and submissiveness to femininity. Granted, the production and the perception of the voices must have been partly influenced by stereotypical attitudes about females and males. Nevertheless, the presence of male features in female voices and female features in male voices should be interpreted in ways which go beyond stereotypes and the gender normative binarism and which view authority/submissiveness and femininity /masculinity as part of the process of the negotiation of identity in a community of practice. West and Fenstermaker point out that: "*the treatment ((gender as poles of masculinity and femininity is problematic. The bitUrcation of gender into femininity and masculinity effectively reduces gender to sex"* (West and Fenstermaker, 1993:159)

West and Fenstermaker statements mark a shift to a conception of gender as flexible, elastic and fluid. Gender is, consequently done in interaction, in that, females and males strategically adopt a variety of styles. among which the modulation of voice quality, to negotiate the meaning of their practice within their community.

3.1.5.2 Authority and submissiveness and the negotiation of identity

How judges interpreted voices heard is an outcome of their mutual engagement with the speakers and symbolises the repertoire they share with the speakers about the identity construction.

The production of one's identity is not an isolate process; it is tightly linked to the construction of others' identities which has come to be named by Buchohz - the tactics of intersuhjectivity that produce identity through linguistic and other symbolic practices" (Bucholtz, 2003:408).

The rating of 20% of the female speakers as authoritative yet not masculine is very significant since it implies that authority in females is not necessarily synonymous to masculinity. Likewise, the rating of one male as masculine yet not authoritative reveals that masculinity does not entail authority.

Authority and submissiveness are tactics available to females and males intended to reflect the idea that identity construction is intimately tailored to fit its context in specific special temporal circumstances.

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The ever-changing way identity is negotiated in the teaching communities of practice under study does not necessarily correspond to the negotiation of identity in other communities of practice; let us say. for instance, a community of pilots, doctors, state-owned companies / private companies and so forth. Bucholtz claim is that: "*identities emerge from temporary and mutable interactional conditions, in negotiation and Olen contestation with other social actors and in relation to larger and (en unyielding structures of power".* (Bucholtz, 21103:4013)

For the sake of reliability and more significant evaluation of other aspects' that may have reinforced our listeners' attitude towards males/females' voice quality, the following study has been undertaken. This study is meant to measure qualitatively the variety of the voice qualities subject to the analysis.

The semantic differential technique (Osgood) is the method that was followed in this experiment. This method is intended to provide a qualitative description to stimuli on the basis of polar opposites as high pitched /low pitched, assertive/non-assertive, continuous/discontinuous, mature/immature, quick/slow harsh/smooth. In this experiment, the notion of polarisation does not rely on the essentialist differential attributes assigned to women and men as separate groups but it relies on what Boyne labels "strategic essentialism" (Cf. Boyne 1990 in Holmes 2006:447) and which is a strategy. a tactic to regain power which is lost when emphasis is put on difference to the detriment of what is shared by women and men. To put this theory into practice, the tapes were played again to the sixteen male and female listeners who had to evaluate the speakers from their voices.

I have, purposefully started by selecting a number of lexical items that would be used to qualify the multiple voice qualities at issue. The selection has not been randomly done since the chosen items imply a concomitance of identities, styles and behaviours. For example, while authoritative/submissive are with congruent identity construction, the lexemes rough and smooth are related to attitudes, though. it has to be noted that these qualifiers are not exclusive since authority, for instance, does not exclude smoothness. Table 2 includes the items from which listeners had to choose the adjectives that would describe the speakers' range of voices.

Table 2: Characteristics of voice Quality

Loudness	**Loud**	**Soft**	**Normal**	**Moderately loud**	**Very soft**
Pitch	Hight pitched	Low pitched	Normal	Moderately high pitched	Somewhat low
Assertiveness	Assertive	Lacking assertiveness	Normal	Not very assertive/not very	Confident

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				authoritative	
Tempo/speed	Quick/fast	Slow	Normal	Moderately quick	Rather slow
Continuity	Continuous	Discontinuous	Normal	Somewhat continuous	Rather discontinuous
Femininity	Rugged/tough/ determined	Smooth/ pleasant	Rought/ harsh/ unpleasant	Rather feminine	Rather masculine
Others	Young	Immature	Confused ineffective	Old	Hesitant weak

Table 3: adjectives used by 16 judges in describing 19 male/female speakers from their voices.

Used for authoritative males	Used for authoritative females	Used for submissive males	Used for submissive females
Slow tempo Rugged Confident Determined Harsh Assertive Low pitched Masculine Loud Continuous	Assertive Confident Low pitched Harsh Rather masculine Somewhat continuous Not very quick Authoritative Determined Normal tempo Rough for female Tough Loud Old Not feminine	Hesitant Quick High pitched Immature Very soft Confused Feminine Lacking Assertiveness Young Smooth Discontinuous Pleasant	Rather feminine Quick Hesitant Soft Smooth Somewhat high Pitched Not very thick Woman like Non confident

A thorough examination of the speakers' voices on the basis of how they were rated by judges supports the hypothesis that authority is the domain of masculinity and as to be authoritative is to enter a male specific domain, a female has in this case to modulate her voice in a male like direction so as to be taken more seriously.

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Not surprisingly, earlier works dealing with females and males communicative transactions concentrate on normatively masculine strategies such as directness, authoritativeness and dominance.

Thorne and Henley argue that "the virile voice is the prerogative of the dominant, so When a female transcends this prerogative through a forceful speaking voice, she is described as dominant" (Thorne and Henley, 1975:247). Furthermore, the adjectives, the judges selected to qualify authority and submissiveness in males and females suggest that the correlation between authority/masculinity and submissiveness/femininity is a strategic social fabrication allowing females and males to negotiate a number of identities drawing on existing linguistic resources in particular interactional situation.

Put differently, males' voices do not inherently imply authority in the same way as females' voices do not inherently imply submissiveness. However, to be authoritative, women have to strategically adopt a masculine voice style.

The data obtained affirm that women and men learn how to be what they are in the interaction they participate in. So, the construction and formation of gender identities implicate the interaction of individuals engaged in particular linguistic practices in which they are positioned and implicate the positions they have and how they are positioned in their community of practice

Assigning the features authoritative/masculine and submissive/feminine to voice qualities reveals how different gender identities are articulated by both females and males in different ways and different situations. Females are likely to produce through their voice style a `masculinised' femininity which emerges in contexts requiring such features as toughness or roughness in voice. Similarly, a male, stylistically, constructs a `feminised' masculinity in those stances which require lenience by modulating his voice in feminine direction. • Authoritative males were described as rugged, confident, and low pitched and having a normal tempo. Authoritative females were attributed the same description in addition to not feminine, rather masculine, rough for a female. The way the female judges described the voice qualities presented to them was approximately the same as those attributed to males.

To qualify a voice quality as not feminine but rather masculine or rough is very significant; it puts forward the fluidity and the flexibility of both linguistic stylisation of gender added to the multiplicity of membership. Feminine and masculinised and masculine and feminised practices in the female and the male communities of practice, throughout this paper, do not decompose women and men identities into distinct selves / many selves in each community of practice.

Women and men do not have their personality split up in a number of distinct identities. It is rather the construction of what Wenger (1998) labels a nexus of multimembership which makes femininity and masculinity become part of each other, whether they conflict or reinforce each other. "They are, at the same time, one and multiple" (Wenger, 1998:26). The females and the males whose voices

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were analyzed draw on a range of voice strategies, "which have been related to both what is normatively masculine and normatively feminine ways of talking to do masculinity and femininity" (Janet Holmes, 2006:51)

The results obtained can be compared to those found in a research on the voice quality of an authoritative female: Margaret Thatcher carried out by Norman Fairclough in 1989. Fairclough (1989) analysed an interview between Margaret Thatcher and a journalist from BBC Radio 3 on 17 December 1985. He has found out that the political trend Mrs Thatcher devoted herself to, emphasizes toughness, resolution and aggressiveness. For him, these are men referential elements the presence of which in females' behaviour is very slippery since it would prevent gender to be politically efficient. The success of Mrs Thatcher in gaining the position as the woman political leader (Fairclough, 1989) is not solely due to the words she used but also in how she sounded. With great professionalism, Mrs Thatcher used to address the nation in a low-pitched, husky voice quality.

The drives behind such a modulation are that her voice was considered as "shrill". Shrill voice according to stereotypes is "very much a. feminine voice quality associated with being overly emotional" (Fairclough, 1989:183). By switching to a low-pitched, husky voice Mrs Thatcher sounded more "states man like". Every day experience shows that authority cannot be exerted on an audience via a shrill voice. Authority is generally perceived in a stentorian voice. Therefore, it is evident that there exists an intimate link between the position of the speaker and the quality of voice he adopts to translate the subtleties of this position.

To have power over the others and to be submitted to power are two distinct statuses. Not only do they require specific lexicon and grammar but also specific modulation of voice as well since positions of power and positions of submission are two distinct situations, which are different call for styles to build a persona that fits the situatedness of each type of practice.

The fact that for each context, the voice style shifts from shrill to husky, from harsh to sweet, from thick to thin and vice versa shows that such variability is not arbitrary but is a way of coping with the context's requirements. It is to be added that shifts in voice are pragmatic strategies an individual uses to give meaning to reach his purposes and make his identity accountable to others. One interesting issue, I might raise here is the idea that what is to be accounted for is how variations in voice quality combine to produce meanings. For Eckert,

> The meaning of variation lies in its role in the construction of styles, and studying the role of variation in stylistic practices involves not simply placing variables in styles, hut in understanding this placement as an integral part of the construction of meaning. (Eckert, 2005)
> The process whereby variations combine to produce a range of styles has come to be called a process of bricolage by which people combine

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> a range of existing resource to construct new meanings or new twists on old meanings. (Eckert, 2005)

The process of bricolage that people manage is built on already existing resources. In such a case as voice styles, the females and the males under study adapt the wide-ranging voice qualities available in the larger world to the construction of social meaning at the level of their own community of practice. Hence shrill, authoritative, submissive, husky or stentorian voice qualities already exist at a very larger scale and have some conventional meaning; it is the way they are combined and used to construct a type of meaning which emerges as a particular style.

This style, in turn, becomes constructive of an identity or a sum of identities. In as much as voice in practice is concerned, it involves the continuous making and remaking of the convention to construct a myriad of femininities and masculinities.

4. Voice quality and the collective gender space

The collective gender-space contains, or means how a woman or a man would behave like when they are in a given zone be that a feminine zone or a masculine zone. I have posited previously that gender is socially constructed. Added, there are those stereotypical representations about femininity and masculinity.

Nonetheless, there is not a one to one mapping between those stereotypical representations and gender identity flexibly constructed during people's life span due to the fact that those are sketchy if not caricatures of women's and men's set of social behaviours. Speaking subjects are aware of the gender representations that circulate about them in their community of practice through norms transmitted tacitly in action and explicitly through prescriptions that they are given for instance "be nice, be sweet, don't speak harshly" to a girl, "be tough, be a man " to a boy and so forth. However, real human beings are far more complex than the stereotypes that circulate to represent gendered women and men. According to Amy Sheldon, gender space is defined by:

> The features and values of those features that are relevant to gender in a given community. As the axes of features intersect and interact, zones of identity within the space are created. The masculine zone would he the part of the space that contains those features and values that the social group collectively view as "masculine' (i.e., associated with the label 'masculine '). Between social groups, the specific features and value that form the masculine zone of the gender-space could wily. The feminine zone would he a similar part of the gender-space characterized by those features and values that are viewed by the social group as meriting the label feminine. (Sheldon, 1997:230)

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Other zones of identity could also exist. In some social groups, `macho', might be a distinct zone from "masculine" or 'femme' might be distinct from 'feminine'. By drawing up the boundaries of this gender-space, I assume that I can arrive at a more accurate picture of gender identities in the light of the results obtained from the perceptual tests in this dissertation.

4.1 The evaluation of voice and gender

The females who were judged as submissive were said to have high pitched, pleasant, confused, feminine quick and young...voice qualities. On the one hand, to be submissive is not a downgrading feature; submissiveness, pleasantness, softness, smoothness, hesitancy are not mutually exclusive. They are the chief ingredients, which make up the socially desired personality of a woman. The general attitude of the judges elicits that lacking assertiveness, immaturity, and hesitancy is a manifestation of femininity.

On the other hand, when related to a female, to be authoritative means sounding manlike. Despite the damage it might cause to women, sounding authoritative enables them to gain higher social position. Correspondingly. a male, who acoustically resembles a female, is subject to damage.

The adjectives used to describe the men who sounded submissive were: rather feminine, hesitant quick, woman-like, non-confident, tender ... Males who are woman like, feminine, non-confident are downgraded. No one of the judges rated the voices of submissive males as pleasant. The reason is that to be submissive is a feminine gender space / zone of femininity while being authoritative is a masculine gender space/ zone of masculinity To look at the extent to which, the judgements match with the social stereotypes about males and females, the judges were asked, to complete a nine-question questionnaire The first question was an inquest about the basic elements that allowed the judges to label a given voice quality as authoritative/masculine, submissive/ feminine the purpose of which was to see whether the judges' descriptions of voice was based on their previous experiential knowledge of the specificity of each voice quality or on the acoustic signal they had been presented. Questions 2-3-4 dealt with the way the listeners who served as judges denied/ identified authoritative voice.

The objective was to gauge the idiosyncratic attitudes towards voice, how authoritative voice is generally perceived in females and whether authority and determination are characteristic features of male language. In this case males would make any endeavour to reinforce the use of these features to maintain the lines that set them distant from females. Questions 5-6 are related to whether smoothness and softness are perceived as bearing no stigma or, on the contrary, as a signal of effeminacy in males while they represent a normal state in females.

The last three questions were designed to see whether the judges in this experiment are aware of the strategic effect of voice on hearers, that is to say whether voice quality is indicative of persona and family whether it should alter

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according to the context of situation and the role being fulfilled. The questionnaires were anonymous because their final objective was to measure the criteria upon which the judgements were built and see whether the male and female judges had similar trends in the description of voice quality.

A deep insight in the judges' responses reveal that most of the descriptions given to the different voice qualities under study are not in every respect based on the stimuli, but on the prior knowledge the listeners have about voice. 62.5 % of the listeners recognized having based their judgements on how they have socially learnt to perceive and classify voice qualities.

For instance, a female's voice should be soft, smooth, and pleasant and so forth. Such findings explain a great deal that the stereotypes concerning the classification of voice according to who the speaker is and how he should sound had an impact on the way the voices were rated. In other words, to rate authoritative females as masculine, harsh, rough and unfeminine is socially motivated. Similar responses were obtained when judges were asked about the way they would define authority and about who is likely to be authoritative or submissive. 75% of the male listeners and 50%of the female listeners associate authority with males and according to them, to be authoritative is to be simultaneously harsh. Along these same lines, smoothness and softness were considered by 87.5% of the sixteen judges as [+ feminine] if they are present in males' voices.

The drives behind such ratings are that smoothness and softness are factors that determine females' voices. 66.25% of the listeners agree that voice does have an impact on the hearers, that it is indicative of speakers' persona and that it fluctuates according to the context of situation where communication takes place. Nevertheless, they still perceive a female shift, though strategically, to an authoritative voice as a mark of masculinity, most of the time coupled with aggressiveness, and a male shift to a smooth, soft voice as a mark of femininity.

The responses given in the questionnaires are analogous to the ratings of voices. Such findings mean that the judges were partly subjective in their description of voice quality because the point of departure was not based on voice as an acoustic signal but mainly on the prior knowledge about the way males and females should sound. That the stereotypes have given a certain direction to the evaluation of the stimuli depicts the alignment of the female and the male judges with "the internalised understanding they have of gender appropriate behaviours and conventions which are created and recreated through time» (Sheldon, 1997: 235).

What is of interest would be to look at the way and manner women and men strategically adopt respectively masculine and feminine voice styles and purposefully transgress the frontiers of the femininity and masculinity zones to perform specific identities. A pertinent question would be: which label could be used to qualify such women and men? Are they feminine or are they masculine or are they both feminine and masculine at the same time?

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Through the use of different voice styles, women and men respectively present themselves as both 'masculine' and feminine'. This postulates that the women and the men under study, strategically. make use of a wide array of voice styles so as to negotiate a range of femininities and masculinities in interaction, and align themselves with their social order to cope with the features and values of the masculine and feminine zone of their community's gender-space.

A deeper analysis behind the use of certain voice styles, let us say a dry, stentorian, hash voice quality by females and swift, soft, tender voice quality by males is that people. if they are conscious, are resisting alignment with stereotypical representations of femininity and masculinity and which states that normative women's voice should be soft, sweet and smooth while normative men's voice should be dry, harsh and stentorian. That women sound tough and that men sound smooth is rather an alignment with the role being enacted and, which requires women and men to sound smooth or tough (through their voice quality).

In other words, and in line with the previous arguments gendered voice styles are accomplished in a situation. In this respect West and Fenstermaker note that:

> gender identities are a situated accomplishment the local management of conduct in relation to normative conceptions of appropriate attitudes and activities for particular sex categories. Doing gender, then, is not necessarily striving to fit your identity to a particular normative ideal, but it is holding behaviour accountable in relation to these ideals. In short, persons engaged in any activity can hold themselves accountable as women or as men. Their membership in one or the other community of practice can he invoked to legitimate or discredit their performance. (West and Fenstermaker, 1993: 162)

To reiterate, doing gender does not always mean living according to normative notions of femininity or masculinity; what it means is to render action accountable in these terms. The presence of masculinity features in women's voice and of femininity features in men's voice is a form of what Eckert and McConnell —Ginet (1992) call "intra group variations" and which are worth reflection and scrutiny. It leads to emphasis on the creative, agentive and flexible process of doing gender. However, I do believe that, people are sometimes conscious that by stepping out of the stereotype of what they are expected to do or how to sound and therefore what kind of women and men they should be, they run the risk to, probably, be sanctioned. This is what will be discussed as "the double bind".

4.2 Women and the double bind

Despite the fluidity and the elasticity so far noticed in the voice styles of the females and the males, who participated in the spectrographic analyses, it should be reminded that there are constraints on the way these females and males are allowed

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to sound; this depends on their social position and on the structure of their stance. Importantly, in the community of practice under study, submissive females' performances were considered as 'weak'; it is a way of being normatively feminine so as not to arouse derision or stigmatization. Janet Holmes and Stephanie Schnurr (2005) stated that:

> Doing feminine gender using the kinds of strategies and linguistic devices described as normatively feminine is typically perceived as inellective and weak, simply one component of performing feminine identity in particular interaction in a very wide community of practice. (Holmes and Schnurr, 2005:10)

However, and in general terms, feminine behaviour in cases as interactions requiring authority is stigmatised rather than positively classified as strategic. Stereotypes as stated before have a strong influence on practices and that gendered stereotypical evaluations have for a long time caused damage in limiting the linguistic options women may use. If being normatively feminine is 'unmarked', women in an authoritative position, stereotypically seen as a masculine zone, face a double bind. The notion of the double bind has been introduced to gender and language research by feminist scholars namely Kendall and Tannen (1997). Litosseliti defines the concept of the double bind as:

> A term used to describe the dual constraints that women Ace when they interact in public arenas. If women adopt a more assertive speech style typically associated with masculine speech, then they will be subject to negative evaluation, being viewed as overly aggressive and wafeminine. (Litosseliti, 2006:137)

Alternatively, Litosseliti (ibid) adds that if women adopt normative speech style typically associated with femininity, then they run the risk of being negatively evaluated and stigmatised as weak and inefficient. For Freed (1996). when the linguistic behaviour of individuals does not confirm to society's expectations, a set of judgements is firmed about them. Their language is seen as marked and they themselves are often seen as deviant. (Freed! 996:70)

Females seem to be caught in a dilemma, a difficult choice. If they aim at achieving positions of power, they have to behave like men, to speak like men. Yet, a masculine behaviour opens women to social stigmatisation and curse, that of being unfeminine. Similarly, a woman who has a prominent role but who behaves in a very feminine way is not accepted since such roles, according to the traditional belief, require being firm and sounding manlike.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) argue that ideas about gender stress that the same speech style is interpreted differently when it is used by a woman rather

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than by a man. The findings of this paper added to the arguments of Eckert and McConnell-Ginet accord with what Bern (1993) calls the 'lens gender' and which works to maintain the female/ male linguistic differences and those speakers who deviate from the linguistic norm are subject to a negative evaluation.

Toughness and roughness att., from a gender lens, features, which belong to the masculinity and females need be feminine and care about how they sound aid how they appear. The meaning of the word feminine, as provided by Oxford dictionary, is the state of being like a woman, having the qualities or appearance considered characteristic of women and thus we have a feminine voice, appearance, figure and so forth.

None of the judges qualified the voices of the authoritative females of the sample as pleasant. When asked, our listeners said that authority and pleasantness do not collocate. Authority is stereotypically the domain of males and males' value does not lie in how much pleasant they sound; but rather in what they achieve. he existence of the double bind in positions where authority is required is well illustrated in the responses of the listeners who served as judges in the perceptual analysis.

The use of masculine, assertive, tough voice styles by women seem to have provoked hostile comments. However, and even though the double bind continues to exist, it is shown in the experiments throughout this thesis, that women as well as men use effectively a range of both masculine and feminine voice styles and strategies. Whether, for example, women use a soft, tender, soft or smooth voice styles or not, every body knows they are expected to do; yet these same women are negatively evaluated if they do not.

In situations where authority and assertiveness are required, women continually subvert and negotiate the assumptions about femininity by `masculinizing' their linguistic styles and leaving off the typical feminine style (Holmes, and Schnurr, 2005; Stubbe et al, 2000). In this context, McElhinny (2003), states that through the subversion - and the negotiation of traditional femininity and masculinity, "assertive women are disrupting established notions of feminine appearance and are providing new role models" (McElhinny, 2003: 25).

What ought to be looked at then, is how certain triodes of behaviours construct people in women and men to realise under the pressure of stereotypes certain ideas about what they shohld be like.

5. Concluding Discuision

In this paper, I have tried to analyse the voice styles of a number of women and men in positions of authority and submissiveness with a sole focus on the way that their voice styles are negotiated at their level without considering the way, that particular styles are determined by outside factors as stereotypes and attitudes. These two experiments purposefully aim to look at the way and manner

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authoritative and submissive identities are enacted or performed in specific contexts.

The results being revealed that even though authority, stereotypically presumes being tough, or man-like, females aiming at higher social ranks behElve accordingly. Aligning with Foucault's view that "power is a net or a web of relations not a possession, which is thus enacted and contested in every interaction "(Foucault ,1978:63), the data obtained from the experiment highlights. that women and men are concerned with how, at their level, they •manage authority and powerful stances and relations. They negotiate their identity in accord with their status as authoritative or submissive and which within particular contexts they can challenge or assert through their use of specific voice styles, as the experiment throughout this paper has demonstrated.

In line with the above arguments, the notion of status has lengthily been debated by many gender scholars (Holmes, 1995; Coates; 1998; Mills, 2003). Those theorists draw a line of demarcation between institutional status that individual speakers are assigned through their position within an institution and a local status, which has been relevant to the above-mentioned experiments and which refers to that position that a member of a community of practice succeeds to negotiate due to his verbal skills to construct the identity or the set of identities he views as the fittest in a specific context within a specific community of practice.

Such a view of status challenges /subverts the specification of women as powerless and men as powerful (Holmes, 2006: 25) and has led one to query about gender identity and voice styles starting not from how females and males are institutionally ranked but on the way a given stance be it authoritative or submissive, masculine or feminine is negotiated. Therefore, through the experiments, I have looked at how the voice quality of females and males in position of authority or submissiveness focus on the way their set of voice styles are negotiated at the level of their community of practice without considering how particular set of linguistic styles are described a priori as typically pertaining to females or to males. Sara Mills (2003) argues that:

> If we consider the dispersion of power, that is the spread elf power throughout a society, rather than the holding and withholding of power by individuals, we will he able to move towards an analysis which will see language as an arena whereby power may be appropriated and enacted rather than power relation being seen as frozen societal roles, which are clearly mapped out fin• participants before interaction takes place. (Sara Mills, 2003: 96)

This view challenges the conception of authority and power as inherent components of masculinity and by analogy the conception of submissiveness and weakness as inherent components of femininity. Indeed, Women are stereotypically

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ranked as powerless and submissive whereas males are stereotypically ranked as powerful and authoritative.

Nonetheless, my experiment has shown that both women and men have respectively exhibited voice styles which are seemingly masculine or feminine. The data obtained from the experiment makes it possible to say that women and men who have a temporarily some interactional power in a specific situation display their authority through the use of the so-called masculine voice styles. Similarly, they use what is stereotypically more feminine voice styles to display care, sympathy generally described as co-operative strategies or what has been termed 'rapport talk'.

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