



Forms of Address and Politeness Strategies: A Look at Gender Differences

Aleksandra Kubik (Warsaw University)

This presentation reports on an empirical project which aimed at comparing and contrasting politeness and forms of address used by Polish males and females during transactional exchanges. Politeness strategies are part of everyday human interaction, people use them since they realize that the more polite the speaker is, the more he or she will achieve. A shop seems to be a perfect environment for examining the use of politeness, since people on both sides of the counter have specific goals to attain.

The data used in this study was gathered by recording native Polish speakers in a jeweller's shop. Being unaware of the recording taking place, their language behaviour was completely natural. The material was then transcribed and turned into a corpus, which was analyzed both quantitatively, with AntConc, and qualitatively, by hand.

Two different theories of politeness – Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1987) – have been taken into consideration. General observations seem to agree with the general stereotype of women being more polite and talkative than men.

References:

- Brown, P., and Levinson, S.C. *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Grice, P. *Logic and Conversation*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- Leech, G. *Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman, 1983.
- Mills, S. *Gender and Politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Xi, Li. "Gender differences in speech behaviour". *US-China Foreign Language*. 5 (2007)