

Gender determined dialect variation

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1 Introduction

On the Telqep tundra of the Russian arctic in the early 20th century, a young man drives his reindeer sled towards a snow-covered *jaranə*, the traditional dome-shaped reindeer hide tent of the Chukchis. The elderly Chukchi herdsman whose home it is cries out *okkaj!* in surprise, and asks *mejın pəkiry?i?* 'Who has arrived?'. His wife comes out to look and echoes his question, *ii, mejın pəkicc?i?* 'Yes, who has arrived?'. The young man, seeing their confusion, shouts out *ətcajqaj, waj raytəl?eyəm!* 'Aunty, it's me, Raytəl?ən!'. They both call out to him in delight, *raytəl?eyət?!* 'It's you, Raytəl?ən?!'. The aunt welcomes him, *qəcecciqwi! jaracyko! qəcajoccən!* 'Come inside, into the house, have tea!'; *ee*, agrees the uncle, *qərecqikwi, qəcajorkən!* This cozy scene of homecoming and tea-drinking is a pastiche of welcoming scenes from folktales, but illustrates some of the typical features of real Chukchi usage. There are small differences in the speech of men and women, such as how the uncle says *ee* for 'yes' while the aunt says *ii*. Mysteriously, many instances of *r* or consonant clusters with *-r-* in the uncle's speech correspond to the affricate *-c-* or *-cc-* in the aunt's speech. But the aunt's speech does include *-r-* too. Longer acquaintance with the old couple would convince you that these correspondences are completely regular: both of them say *jaranə* for 'house'; aunt never says **jacaənə*. But whereas the old man says *mren* 'mosquito' the old woman would only ever say *mcən*.

In 1658 the author¹ of the *Histoire naturelle et morale des Iles Antilles* described a peculiar linguistic situation of the Garifuna people of the Caribbean islands. Men and women had, at least in part, different vocabularies, with the same object named in one way by men, and another by women so that "in much of their conversation, one could say that women speak a different language to men" (Rochefort 1658: 392; Section 3.9).

Since at least the 17th century there have been sporadic reports in the ethnographic record of language communities where men and women speak significantly different forms of their language, so different, in fact, that it would be impossible to speak without signalling gender identity. While gender variation in language is common, perhaps ubiquitous, such obligatory, categorical dialect differences determined by gender are rarer, and tend to be poorly described. The complex correspondences between men's and women's Chukchi (above and Section 3.6) are described as a simple substitution by women of *c* for men's *r* and *č* (Skorik 1961: 33). Gender dialects are often poorly documented with respect to usage too. Many gender dialect systems occur in small, endangered languages, and the gender dialect systems themselves tend to drop

¹ The identity of this author is somewhat mysterious: the preface of the first edition of the book is signed LDP, presumed to be the initials of Philippe de Longvilliers de Poincy, the then Governor General of the French West Indies and by all accounts a very unlikely ethnographer. Later editions are signed C. Rochefort, probably for Charles de Rochefort, a Huguenot pastor travelling and writing in the West Indies at that time, but often confused with César de Rochefort, a prominent French lexicographer. The Dominican missionary and ethnographer/naturalist Jean Baptiste du Tertre further claimed that a considerable portion of the book is plagiarised from his own work.

out of use faster than the language itself does. This means that the rules for using gender dialects are often inferred from the recollections of elderly (e.g. Section 3.1, 3.4, 3.8) or extracted from older written sources (e.g. Sections 3.9, 3.12) rather than taken from direct observations.

The term ‘dialect’ is used in the variationalist tradition to refer to systematic linguistic variation statistically associated with a sociolinguistic parameter, and as such can be difficult to delimit (Labov 1972:192). This paper approaches gender-determined language usage from the ethnographic extreme, examining a small set of instances of *categorical* gender dialects for which we have records. These gender dialects are easily recognized as being the same language: they are spoken by people who form a single speech community and their differences only affect parts of the language: grammar, phonology and perhaps lexicon. They differ from a frequently characterised dialect in that they form complete linguistic systems whose use is determined by the gender affiliation of the speech participants (Section 2.1), and which is characterized by obligatory grammatical differences rather than statistical tendencies (Section 2.2; Sherzer 1987: 96). In languages which have such categorical gender dialects, to use language means to use language like a woman or to use language like a man. This means that each gender dialect must be learned separately (since presumably most individuals in a gender dialect language community will have at least passive command of the other gender dialect). This is interesting from an acquisitional perspective, because the mutual autonomy of gender dialects makes for a considerable cognitive load in acquisition and use. In turn, it is also indicative of the social/cultural importance of signalling gender through language.

In this paper I take a pragmatic, cross-cultural approach to the notion of gender. All known societies classify people at birth as “male” or “female” according to the anatomical distinctions indicating their potential reproductive role. But this is in practice a social classification, relating biological sex to a wider set of social practices, norms, and relations (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992:463, McConnell-Ginet *this volume*). The specifics of the social construction of gender vary from culture to culture, differing both in the manner of expression, and the magnitude of effect. But as a fundamental social category it is highly likely to have significant consequences for ways of being (e.g. acting, speaking) in any society.² They provide a significant example of language-culture interaction, and have an important role in the documentation of human cultural diversity.

Following from the strict categorical definition of gender dialect, I specifically exclude some phenomena called *gender dialect* or *genderlect* in the linguistic literature from this survey. For example, Yokoyama (1999:402) uses the term “genderlect” to describe a gendered speech register in Russian which is a part of colloquial speech, and which comprises “merely ‘typical’, rather than absolute traits”. Likewise Sen ([1928]

² The importance of biological sex in communication systems extends beyond humans too. For example, in many bird species the songs of males and females are distinct. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for birdsong to be transmitted through social learning, leading to vocal repertoires which are differentiated by geographical region – referred to as regional dialects. There is even an analogy to gender dialect amongst the birds: the slate-coloured boubou *Laniarius funebris* is highly unusual in that it combines these two characteristics: songs are learned through imitation of same-sex models, resulting in distinct male and female variants embedded within the geographical variation (Wickler and Lunau 1996).

1979) describes “women’s dialect in Bengali”, but the description here shows a cluster of linguistic choices from within the range of variation of a single language, rather than a pair of related, but structurally different, systems. I will not consider gender-determined variation such as that in Yuchi, which shows morphological differences in possessive prefixes determined by speaker gender, but which only occur with certain kinship terms (Wagner 1934: 339-340). Forty years after Wagner’s study, Ballard (1978: 107) could elicit few of these terms. An example is the pair of terms for ‘my brother’, *dzodane* in men’s speech and *doda?one* in women’s speech. Marking speaker gender in kinship terminology is not the same sort of social signal that it is in a gender dialect system. Kinship systems have an intrinsically egocentric orientation (e.g. Scheffler 1987: 217), and quite naturally form a dyad between ego and relative, where the sex of both participants in the relationship is relevant (see also the ‘same sex sibling’/‘different sex sibling’ oppositions in many languages). The clearest examples of gender dialect have different phonological rules describable in historical linguistic terms as the product of different regular sound changes (e.g. Chukchi, Tangoan), or which have different morphological terms and grammatical categories (e.g. Kūřux, Yanyuwa).

Along with the recognition that gender is a culturally constructed category, whose relation to biological sex is not straightforward, there are some scholars arguing that genderlect is not a valid category (Glück 1979; Motschenbacher 2007, 2010). Since these authors appeal to evidence from the languages treated in this paper I will discuss the linguistic and ethnographic basis for their arguments (Section 3.6). It is notable that the societies I will discuss are largely non-western, non-technological and, in some cases, only attested historically. This is not by chance: it may be that the stable transmission of gender dialect distinction is only possible in languages which are used primarily as in-group codes, and not as languages of inter-cultural communication.

This paper will treat the range of attested categorial gender dialects from three interrelated perspectives. In Section 2.1 I will discuss the functional typology of gender dialects, addressing how gender dialects are actually used. In Section 2.2 I present a description the typical structural characteristics of gender, and discuss whether any of these characteristics distinguish them from other kinds of dialects. Section 2.3 takes a diachronic perspective: where are the attested gender dialects and how have they come about? After the general characterization of gender dialects in Section 2, Section 3 is devoted to 14 case studies of languages with gender dialect distinctions.

2 Characteristics

2.1 Usage

Haas (1944: 147) provides a typology of gender dialect systems, whereby the speech-act participant’s gender determines which gender dialect is used. She defines three types:

- Type I: Speaker-based systems
- Type II: Addressee-based systems
- Type III: Speaker-and-addressee-based systems

According to the Haas typology, systems based on gender of addressee are qualitatively

different than speaker-based systems. Speaker-based systems comprise, in effect, two language communities cohabiting in space (with passive comprehension), while addressee-based systems constitute two systems coexisting in each speaker (and so are more akin to diglossia/bidialectalism). The Haas typology doesn't, however, seem to pick out the most common or important parameters from the distributional point of view, since almost all attested gender dialects belong to Type I. Type II systems intersect with notions of politeness and taboo: they are contextually sensitive social norms of speech and behaviour and may be difficult to fit in to the notion of "dialect" rather than "register". For this reason I treat Type I and Type III in this paper, although I do give a brief description of Island Carib, a Type II language, since this is by far the best known example of gender variation described as a gender dialect (Section 3.9).

In most language communities where gender dialects are used speakers are bidialectal, at least passively and maybe actively. There is a basic asymmetry here: in all the non-institutional language communities for which we have information, children learn the women's dialect first, then male children have to learn the men's dialect later. In most cases, boys' acquisition of the men's dialect accompanies social and ritual recognition of their entering the men's world. This probably contributes to the historical instability of gender dialects, as the interruption of traditional social practices may also interrupt men's dialect acquisition. A number of descriptions of gender dialects explicitly mention that in quoted speech the gender dialect of the person quoted may be used, even where this is otherwise not the gender dialect used by the speaker. In Chukchi at least this is not completely regular, and is presumably related to vividness of the direct speech. Irish Sign Language seems to offer an exception to this rule of bidialectalism, having developed from two different dialects spoken in gender segregated institutions. In post-institutional life the female speakers have adapted to the male speakers, and not vice versa (Section 3.1).

Japanese has strong social norms about gender-appropriate linguistic behaviour (Inoue 2011). Some form of gender distinct speech has existed in Japanese since at least as early as the Heian period (794-1185AD), although there is no strong evidence that the practice was followed outside of social elites over this entire period (Abe 1995: 654). It is however doubtful that Japanese gender dialect variation forms a categorical system, although amongst many features used differentially by male and female speakers, some scholars do identify some features which are present only in one of the gendered varieties. Examples of supposedly categorical phenomena in gender varieties of Japanese include distinctive sets of personal pronouns and the forms of sentence final particles. However, Abe (1995: 663) demonstrates that "[...] this categorization of sentence-final particles based on gender is nothing but a representation of longstanding stereotypes and fails to accurately represent the current usage by both women and men." The gender differences in Thai mentioned by Haas (1944: 147-148) may be similar.

2.2 Structural typology

Gender variation in language is often expressed phonetically. Biological differences between males and females in vocal tract length determine fundamental frequency: biological males have an average F_0 around 100–120hz, and biological females have an average F_0 around 200–220hz (Simpson 2009: 622). This is a statistical difference only, but is clearly used for social classification (Gelfer and Mikos 2005).

Hillenbrand and Clark (2009) show that f_0 and formant frequencies are major determinants of speaker sex identification. Listeners would fairly reliably change their speaker sex identification from recordings when f_0 and formants were artificially manipulated. This effect was most reliable when both f_0 and formants were changed together, less so when just f_0 was changed, and weaker again when just the formants were changed. Interestingly, sex classification changes of manipulated recordings happened more often with recordings of isolated syllables than with entire sentences, demonstrating that there are other phonological factors contributing to sex identification beyond these two. Hillenbrand and Clark cite sources suggesting that women's speech is breathier, and (controversially) that women's speech has wider prosodic variation (2009: 1191). These features would seem to be under more conscious control, and I would expect them to be subject to considerable cross-cultural variation, and available for 'emicization' as overt socio-cultural gender markers.

While phonetic differences are outside the scope of this survey, many of the languages with gender dialects do have significant phonetic differences between men's and women's speech on top of phonological, morphological and lexical differences. Women's Chukchi has an affricate [ts] where men's Chukchi has (depending on the region) [s] or [t/]; Pirahã women's speech uses a smaller articulatory space than men's speech, with characteristic pharyngeal constriction and more retroflexed articulation (Everett 2004: 7).

In the *Journal of a second voyage for the discovery of a north-west passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific*, Parry (1824: 553) describes differences in the speech of Eskimo men and women,

It is common for the Esquimaux to vary the pronunciation of their words at different times without altering the sense. The women, in particular, seem frequently to make such alterations as conduce to the softness of the words, as, for instance, by dropping the harsh final *k* which occurs so commonly, as *Inniloo* for *Inniatlook* ; by changing it into a vowel, as *Ne-a-ko-a* for *Neakoke*, or by altering *Oo-ce-ga* into *Oo-inga-a* or *Oo-ee-ma*, and *Hee-u-teega* into *Hee-u-ting-a*.

This kind of non-systematic phonological difference in men's and women's varieties are attested widely. But categorical distinctions in men's and women's phonology are also attested. There are two different kinds of systematic phonological differences shown in the languages of this sample: Pirahã, Tangoan and (marginally) Gros Ventre show phonological collapses in the women's/common gender dialect, which male speakers have to learn to 'undo' when they acquire the adult male speech style. The phonological differences in Chukchi follow a different pattern: three ancestral phonemes of proto-Chukotian, *s, *r and *ð, are collapsed differentially into two in men's (*r, *ð > /r/) and women's (*s, *ð > /ts/) Chukchi. Unlike the Pirahã and Tangoan, neither Chukchi gender dialect can be structurally derived from the other.

Many gender dialect languages differ morphologically, either through having different morphological forms, as in Kokama-Kokamilla, Koasati and Awetí, or through expressing different morphological categories, as in Yanyuwa. Haas Type III systems, i.e. systems which are determined by gender of speaker and addressee together, are often expressed morphologically. Yanyuwa speakers have different morphological

paradigms depending on the gender of both speaker and addressee; Kūrux has an interaction of speaker gender, addressee, and grammatical subject (the latter applies in the third person, where speech act reference is neither speaker or addressee-oriented).

Some gender dialects possess lexical differences. These may be cryptic variants of the same word, where men's and women's forms of the lexeme are clearly related but have some distinctive mutation. For example, certain nouns in Awetí which are vowel initial in the women's dialect are pronounced with initial *n*- in the men's dialect. There are also cases where men's and women's lexemes have no obvious etymological relationship. This is also found sporadically in Awetí with the word for the parrot species *a. Amazonica*, which is *takänyt* in men's dialect and *takári* in women's dialect. Often lexical differences in gender varieties resemble euphemism, avoidance language, or other forms of word substitution which are unlikely to be categorical (as found in Kalmyk, and yet other Awetí terms).

There are some cases where one gender dialect can be formally derived from the other – women's dialect can be derived from men's in the case of e.g. Pirahã (Section 3.11) and Tangoan (Section 3.5), and men's dialect can be derived from women's in the case of e.g. Yanyuwa (Section 3.4). But other gender dialect distinctions exist where neither men's nor women's systems are structurally derivable from the other, e.g. Irish Sign Language (Section 3.1), Chukchi (Section 3.6) and Kūrux (Section 3.2).

2.3 Origins and distribution

In general, gender dialects are originally statistical phenomena of gender variation in language use which have as some historical point become categorical. Where the origins of gender dialects can be inferred, there seem to be three distinct evolutionary pathways:

- Dialect merger
- Internal change and conservatism
- Isolation and diversification

In some cases discussed below the historical source of the women's and men's dialect distinction is the merger of two different geographical dialects, or the fossilization of other types of language contact. Chukchi (Section 3.6), Kokama (Section 3.7) and Garifuna (Section 3.9) all provide examples of men's and women's dialects incorporating elements for different genealogical sources. In other cases, gender dialects have come about through long-term institutionalization of linguistic conservatism in the speech of one gender. The mapping of conservative or colloquial speech onto gender categories can go either way: men's dialect can be conservative and women's innovative (from the historical linguistic perspective), or vice versa. In Pirahã (Section 3.11) and Tangoan (Section 3.5) there is a learned phonemic distinction used by men, especially when speaking in an elevated register. Comparison with related languages shows that this phonemic distinction was present in the ancestral language, but subsequently lost in colloquial speech. In Yanyuwa (Section 3.4), women's language is more archaic, preserving morpho-syntactic categories which have been collapsed in the men's language. Irish Sign Language (Section 3.1) is the sole example I have of a gender dialect that evolved through neutral drift in isolation. While isolation and drift is

probably the default mechanism for the diversification of geographically-based dialects, gender dialect could only develop this way in the kind of gender-segregated institutional context recorded for this language.

Gender dialect systems do not seem to be diachronically stable. If they were we might expect to see, for instance, entire linguistic subgroups with inherited gender dialect systems. Rather, the gender dialect systems we see seem to be sporadic. There are hints that high levels of gender variation in language may be an areal feature e.g. in Amazonia, and so the relatively frequent instances of gender dialect systems in the Americas may be significant (Map 1; see also Kroskrity 1983: 88).

2.4 Language and other correlates of gender

Ochs (1988: 137-139) describes the effect of *gender* and social *rank* in Samoan society, showing that while gender has significant effects on language, these effects are outweighed by the effect of social rank. This demonstrates that while gender is always an important social category, it is not always the most important one. A similar phenomenon is found in ancient literary traditions. In Sanskrit (Indo-European, 1200-300 BCE) drama, only educated upper-class males speak Sanskrit, whereas women and lower-class males speak colloquial Prākṛit (Hoch and Pandharipande 1978: 14–15). Likewise in Sumerian (language isolate, 2nd millennium BCE), men are portrayed as speaking high register Emeġul and women are portrayed as speaking the colloquial Emesal variety (Whittaker 2002). It is probably no coincidence that the Sanskrit and Sumerian examples pertain to the written language, since literacy in ancient societies is a correlate of high social status, and so writing itself should be oriented towards a higher register.

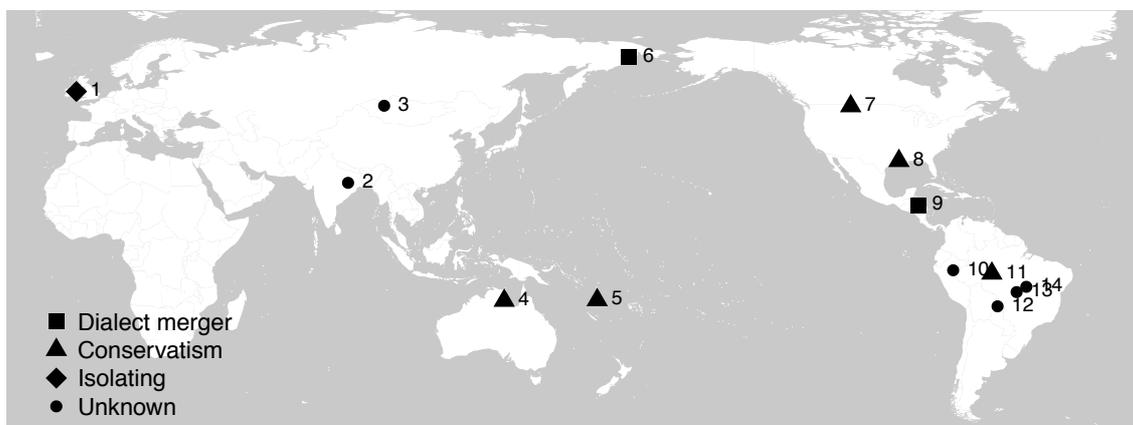
The debate around the description of Koasati men's and women's speech by Haas (1944) illustrates the arbitrariness of 'gender' as the social category determining linguistic variation (Section 3.8; Kimball 1987; Saville-Troike 1988). The distinction between the two varieties of Koasati had all but disappeared at the time that these languages were being studied, and it seems impossible to decide conclusively whether gender or social status was at the root of the system. Luthin (1991; cited Mithun 2001: 278) showed that the Yana gender dialect system described by Sapir (1929: 212) [as a Haas Type III system] was similarly a register marking formality .

Labov ([2001] 2010: 266) shows that for stable sociolinguistic variables, women show a lower rate of stigmatized variants and a higher rate of prestige variants than men. Evidence for this principle was drawn from a wide range of studies of common variables and a wide range of speech communities, rural and urban, western and non-western. The evidence from gender dialects contradicts this tendency however. In all the ethnographically attested cases of possible gender dialects with overtones of formality, it is the male (or male-to-male) variety which is the elevated one (cf. Koasati, and Yana, as well as Tangoan).

3 Case studies

Gender dialect is distributed sporadically around the world. I know of no gender dialects recorded in Africa, but the distribution in other parts of the world is so thin that there is no reason to think that this absence – even if true – is significant. The following

case studies are ordered geographically, from west to east according to the Pacific-centred view of Map 1.



Map 1. Distribution of attested gender dialects with evolutionary type where it can be inferred (from internal evidence or from comparison with related languages).

Languages: 1. Irish Sign Language, 2. Kūrux, 3. Kalmyk, 4. Yanyuwa, 5. Tangoan, 6. Chukchi, 7. Gros Ventre, 8. Koasati, 9. Island Carib, 10. Kokama, 11. Pirahã, 12. Chiquitano, 13. Awetí, 14. Karajá

3.1 Irish Sign Language

Irish Sign Language originated in a girls' school for the deaf founded in Dublin by a Dominican order of nuns in 1846. The nuns running the school were all hearing, adult learners of a sign language, trained at a school for the deaf run by the order in France. After the foundation of the girls' school, there was little or no further contact with sign languages from outside, so the language used at the school rapidly developed unique characteristics. A second link to this chain was added when a boys' school for the deaf was founded a decade later, in 1857. The language used at this school was based on a dictionary of signs produced by the nuns from the girls' school, but despite the physical proximity of the two schools there was very little interaction between them, and the language at the boys school likewise developed its own unique characteristics. From these divergent varieties a consensus variety was formed when these children grew up and began to socialize together. The consensus variety was based on the male dialect, but female speakers maintained female sign alternants for use as an in-group, women-only code. The linguistic differences that are documented are lexical: some meanings are indicated by entirely different signs, and some signs have different meanings in the two dialects (see LeMaster 1999: 69-70 for illustrations). In terms of usage, Irish Sign Language was a Haas Type III system: a woman talking to women would use the women's sign language; talking to men or a group containing men she would use the so-called 'men's language', the latter always being used by male speakers.

The two Irish Sign Language dialects were the sole medium of language socialization for many deaf Irish children for a century. In 1946 the girls' school abandoned sign language in favour of oralism, with the boys' school following suit in 1957 (although sign language continued to be used outside the classroom at the boys' school at least until 1987). LeMaster (1997, 1999) gives a description of the lexical

characteristics of the Irish Sign Language gender dialects, based on dissertation research in 1990. At the time this research was carried out, the native speakers of Irish Sign Language were primarily women over 70 years and men over 55 years.

3.2 Kūṛux

Ekka (1972) describes a complex morphological interaction between speech act participants within the verbal paradigms in the Dravidian language Kūṛux. A sample is given in Table 1. This is a good example of a Haas Type III “speaker-addressee determined” gender dialect (Section 2.1). When this system is considered from the speaker’s perspective, you can see that men and women have to make different morphological choices from each other. A male speaker must select different forms of the 2sg or 3sg.m agreement according to gender of the addressee (the 2sg form is coreferential with the addressee, but the 3sg.m form—presumably—is not). A female speaker uses distinct person-number agreement forms according to gender of addressee in all person-number combinations except for 1pl.in, and two of the 3rd person forms. Men’s and women’s forms only differ from each other when the addressee is a women; for a male addressee the agreement form is identical irrespective of the gender of the speaker.

Table 1. Present tense of ‘come’ in Kūṛux, showing interaction of speaker and addressee gender with specification of gender, number and person of grammatical subject. MM = Man speaking to man, WM = Woman speaking to man, etc. (adapted from Ekka 1972: 26).

	MM, WM	MW	WW
1sg	barc-k-an		barc-ʔ-an
1pl.ex	barc-k-am		barc-ʔ-am
1pl.in	barc-k-at		
2sg	barc-k-ay	barc-k-i	barc-k-in
2pl	barc-k-ar		barc-k-ay
3sg.m	barc-Ø-a	barc-Ø-as	
3sg.nm	barc-Ø-a(d)		
3pl	barc-Ø-ar		

It is unclear how this system developed. According to Ekka (1972: 31), there is no evidence of similar phenomena in any of the neighbouring Dravidian or Munda languages.

3.3 Kalmyk

The Kalmyk (Mongolic) women’s language is an example of an avoidance language (Aalto 1959: 3-4; Birtalan 2003: 227). The precise circumstances of its use are unclear, but it seems that is consciously and overtly derived from general Kalmyk.

Many common terms are taboo, and replaced by near synonyms: for terms meaning ‘girl, daughter’ the word *nojəxən* ‘princess, lady’ is used; *köwün* ‘boy, son’ is replaced by a word derived from the adjective *ajte* meaning ‘good, proper’. If no suitable or sufficiently unambiguous synonym is available, a word can be transformed phonologically, by replacing the initial consonant with /j/: *shaghä* :: *yaghä* ‘ankle bone’, *tend* :: *yend* ‘there’ and *shaar*:: *yaar* ‘tea’. Certain words are referred to euphemistically or with cryptic paraphrases: *bū* “taxation” is called *ägaryəɔɔɔ* “the roisterer, rabble-rouser”.

3.4 Yanyuwa

The Yanyuwa language (Pama-Nyungan) of northern Australia has a complex and well-described gender dialect distinction (Kirton 1988; Bradley 1988; Kirton and Charlie 1996). The main difference between the dialects is in syntactic categories and their morphological marking: The female dialect distinguishes two noun classes, ‘male’ and ‘masculine’, where the male dialect only has one.³ There is one exception in the male dialect, an archaic form suggesting to Kirton and Charlie (1996: 3) that the ancestor of the male dialect also distinguished two classes. Yanyuwa makes use of noun class prefixes, which differ according to case. In the female dialect “male” and “masculine” noun classes are indicated by different prefixes (see Table 2).

Table 2: Noun class prefixes in the female dialect of Yanyuwa

noun class	nominative	non-nominative
male	<i>nya-</i>	<i>nyu-</i>
masculine	∅	<i>ji-</i>

In the male dialect these correspond to a single noun class, marked by different prefixes in non-nominative cases and by zero in the nominative (see Table 3), like the women’s masculine-class.

Table 3: Noun class prefixed in the male dialect of Yanyuwa

noun class	nominative	non-nominative
male/masculine	∅	<i>ki-</i>

The women’s dialect also makes more distinctions in third-person pronouns than than the men’s dialect. These distinctions are highlighted in Table 4.

³ See Mithun, *this volume*, for discussion of the culturally specific properties of gender as a grammatical category.

Table 4: Third-person pronouns in male and female Yanyuwa dialects

	women's dialect	men's dialect
he	<i>yiwa</i>	<i>yiwa</i>
she	<i>anda</i>	<i>anda</i>
it	<i>alhi</i>	<i>anda</i>

Bradley (1988:127) gives a good example of how far-reaching the differences between the two dialects are, contrasting the women's dialect (1) with that of the men (2):

- (1) *Nja-ja nya-wukuthu nya-rduwarra niya-wini nya-Wungkurli kiwa-wingka*
 this-M M-short M-initiated_man his-name M-personal_name he-go
wayka-liya ji-wamarra-lu niwa-yirdi na-ridiridi ji-walya-wu
 down-wards MSC-sea-ALL he-bring ARB-harpoon MSC-dugong/turtle-DAT
- (2) *Jinangu ø-wukuthu ø-rduwarra na-wini ø-Wungkurli ka-wingka*
 this short initiated man his-name personal name he-go
wayka-liya ki-wamarra-lu na-yirdi na-ridiridi ki-walya-wu
 down-wards MSC-sea-ALL he-bring ARB-harpoon MSC-dugong/turtle-DAT

“The short initiated man whose name is Wungkurli went down to the sea, taking a harpoon with him for dugong or sea turtle”

The Yanyuwa language was no longer being transmitted at the time that the gender dialects were documented, so we only have speakers' reminiscences of how language acculturation happened rather than direct observations. But the situation seems to have been similar to that reported for Pirahã and Tangoan, where all children acquire the women's dialect first from their caretakers. In Yanyuwa society, boys underwent formal initiation at the age of ten, after which they were expected to speak men's dialect, and rebuked if they spoke the women's dialect by mistake. Older speakers could use the inappropriate gender dialect for various kinds of humorous or rhetorical effect.

3.5 Tangoan

Many of the languages of Santo and Malekula islands in Vanuatu have, or have had, distinctive apico-labial phonemes, a cross-linguistically rare type articulated with the tip of the tongue against the middle of the upper lip (described for the neighbouring language Araki in François 2002: 15). This areal feature is evidently unstable, as a number of the other languages of the region show apico-alveolar stops and nasals corresponding to proto-Oceanic bilabials, a change which can be explained by an intermediate apico-labial stage: $*p > *t̚ > t$ and $*m > *n̚ > n$ (Tryon 1976: 52). There is also evidence from the Tutuba language that the apico-labial consonants can revert back to bilabials, e.g. $*p > *t̚ > p$ (Naito 2006: 224). This sound change would normally leave no trace, and was only detected because Naito (2006) was able to observe the phonological change in progress between generations.

The Tangoan language had a gender dialect distinction acquired by males during a protracted initiation period, during which boys lived in seclusion in all-male company

(Baker 1928: 289-290). This distinction held only for phonological features: boys had to learn to produce apico-labials in the appropriate contexts, in effect undoing the historical collapse of the reflexes of e.g. **m* and **m^w*, as in Table 5.

Table 5: Phonological distinctions in Proto-Oceanic and Tangoan

	‘eye’	‘snake’
Proto-Oceanic	<i>*mata</i>	<i>*m^wata</i>
Male Tangoan	<i>ɬata</i>	<i>mata</i>
General Tangoan	<i>mata</i>	<i>mata</i>

To the phonologist, this is actually quite remarkable, since the irreversibility of phonological mergers is the basic diagnostic of directionality in phonological change. In the Tangoan case the knowledge of pre-merger phonological distinctions may have been supported by awareness of other languages in the vicinity in which the distinction is also preserved, as demonstrated in Table 6.

Table 6: Phonological correspondences in Proto-Oceanic and several Oceanic languages

		‘eye’		‘snake’
Proto-Oceanic	<i>*m</i>	<i>*mata</i>	<i>*m^w</i>	<i>*m^wata</i>
Tolomako	<i>n</i>	<i>nata-</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>mata</i>
Araki	<i>ɬ</i>	<i>ɬari-ku</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>maʀa</i>
Tangoa (male)	<i>ɬ</i>	<i>ɬata-</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>mata</i>
Tangoa (general)	<i>m</i>	<i>mata-</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>mata</i>
North Malo	<i>m</i>	<i>mata</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>mata</i>

Camden described the male dialect as a prestige variety, used regularly for “oratory, serious discussion, traditional storytelling, etc., and with less consistency in ordinary speech.” (1979: 113). He noted that women and children are not expected to use the phonological distinction, but implied that they occasionally did without sanction. Inconsistency in the use of the male dialect is attested in early sources. In his 19th century description of Tangoan, Annand (1891: 1-2) described the phonological characteristics of the apico-labials quite well, at least for the stop consonant. He went on to note, however, that [*m*] and [*n*] are often used interchangeably, even by the same speaker. His examples – *lima/lina* ‘hand’, *mae/nae* ‘come’ and *magi/nagi* ‘animal’ – are all reflexes of **m*, so provide the expected environment for the apico-labial nasals.

3.6 Chukchi

The Chukchi gender dialects (Dunn 2000) were introduced at the beginning of this chapter. They provide interesting evidence of pre-contact social dynamics. Chukchi is a Chukotko-Kamchatkan language, spoken in the tundras of the extreme north east of the Eurasian continent. Until the mid twentieth century most Chukchis lived as nomadic reindeer herders in family units of perhaps 20 people. On the northern coasts there was intermixture with sedentary Yupik Eskimo hunter-gatherers, the source of considerable Chukchi influence in the Siberian Yupik languages, and in the south a Chukchi

expansion over recent centuries put pressure on culturally similar nomadic pastoralists speaking closely related Koryak languages. There are also contacts with other coastal and riverine groups speaking Chukotka-Kamchatkan languages: Kerek, Alutor, and further varieties of Koryak.

Male and female Chukchi are distinguished by differences in the phonological system. Two phonemes (men's /r/ and /s/, women's /r/ and /ts/) can be sorted in to three correspondence sets, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Male and female phonological correspondences in Chukchi

	Male Chukchi	Female Chukchi	Correspondence
mosquito	<i>mren</i>	<i>mtsen</i>	/r/ :: /ts/
polar fox	<i>rekokalyən</i>	<i>tsekokalyən</i>	/r/ :: /ts/
reindeer	<i>qoraŋə</i>	<i>qoraŋə</i>	/r/ :: /r/
s/he went home	<i>raytəyʔe</i>	<i>raytəyʔe</i>	/r/ :: /r/
trap	<i>utkusʔən</i>	<i>utkutsʔən</i>	/s/ :: /ts/
sister	<i>sakəyet</i>	<i>tsakəyet</i>	/s/ :: /ts/

Historical linguistic reconstruction of this family shows that the correspondences between male and female Chukchi phoneme variation are the product of regular sound change, albeit different sound changes in each dialect. In female Chukchi *r is realized as /r/, while *ð and *s are realized as /ts/. In male Chukchi the three-to-two phonological collapse has gone another way: *r and *ð are realized as /r/, while *s is realized as /s/. This means that there is a phonological contrast between male and female Chukchi in any word containing a reflex of *ð, as well as the phonetic contrast between the affricate /ts/ of the female dialect and the sibilant /s/ of the male.

Table 8: Sound changes in Chukchi and related languages

	Alutor	Palana Koryak	Female Chukchi	Male Chukchi	Chavchuv Koryak	Kerek
*t	t/tʃ	t/tʃ	t	t	t	t/tʃ
*ð	t/tʃ	t/tʃ	ts	r	j/tʃ	j
*r	r	r	r	r	j/tʃ	j
*s	s	ts	ts	s	tʃ	tʃ
*j	j	j	j	j	j/tʃ	Ø/j

There is also a form class of adverbs and particles which is distinctive in having a final r ~ t alternation. This includes forms such as *qənur/qənut*, *ewər/ewət*, *qənwər/qənwət*, *iyər/iyət*, *luur/luut*, *janor/janot* and *weler/welet*. These are not diagnostic of male/female speech, but there are statistical preferences, with men using the –r final forms and women using the –t final forms, in each case by a ratio of about four to one. Historically, the final –r/–t in these forms is *ð, the proto-phoneme which is otherwise realized as /ts/ in female Chukchi. However, the word-final allophone of *ð is /t/ in Palana Koryak and Alutor, so the /t/ pronunciation is expected. What is surprising is that these forms are not recognized as categorically male or female dialect forms, despite being high enough frequency for the variants and the statistical associations with gender to be preserved. It seems that the salient feature of the gender dialects of

Chukchi is the /r/ :: /ts/ contrast. The low-frequency /r/ :: /t/ contrast seems to be treated as a stylistic choice.

Using gender dialect correctly is part of being manly or womanly according to Chukchi construction of gender, but there is no taboo against using the other gender dialect in appropriate occasions. Chukchis freely quote speech in either gender dialect during vivid story-telling. In traditional society, and well into living memory, individual Chukchis sometimes change their gender affiliation as part of shamanic inspiration. The individual “doomed to being a shaman” adopts the distinctive characteristics of the other gender: clothing, work, social behaviour, and not least language (Bogoras 1901: 98-99).

Glück (1979) argues against the existence of gender dialects with some dubious data from Chukchi. He claims that Russian loanwords into Chukchi all enter in the form of the men’s language, rather than the women’s, on the basis that where these loanwords can contain *r* in Russian they always have *r* in Chukchi too (1979: 191). While it’s true that loanwords from Russian never have the /r/ :: /ts/ correspondence, the most salient characteristic of the gender dialect distinction, Glück was unaware that Chukchi men’s and women’s languages also have a systematic /r/ :: /r/ correspondence. Naturally Russian loanwords with /r/ enter into the /r/ :: /r/ correspondence set, since the only words in the /r/ :: /ts/ correspondence set are words descending from proto-Chukotko-Kamchatkan /*ð/. Likewise, Motschenbacher’s (2010: 45) argument that women and men can both use the other gender dialect in certain contexts (such as quotation) is true, but to argue that a gender dialect distinction doesn’t exist because men can quote women and women can quote men could equally be used as an argument that the distinction between French and English doesn’t exist.

3.7 Gros Ventre

The description of men’s and women’s speech in Gros Ventre (Algonquian) provides an example of a marginal gender dialect from both phonological and functional perspectives (Flannery 1946; Taylor 1982). Phonologically, where women have *k* or *ky* men have *č* or (for elderly speakers who preserve the phoneme distinction) *ty*. The women’s form is completely predictable from the men’s, conditioned by the following vowel, as demonstrated in Table 9.

Table 9: Phonological correspondences in men's and women's speech in Gros Ventre

mens’ <i>č</i> , (<i>ty</i>) corresponds to	women’s <i>k</i> / <u> </u> <i>e, i</i>
	women’s <i>ky</i> / <u> </u> <i>a, æ, ʌ</i>

This shift was perfectly reversible for most speakers during the 1960s to 1980s, since the phonological distinction between *č* and *ty* was only preserved by a few elderly men. While the *č* ~ *ty* distinction was preserved, this would seem to provide the same kind of acquisitional puzzle as in, e.g., Tongoan, where boys acculturated in the women’s language would have to learn to reverse a phonological merger as they matured.

The contexts of use of the so-called “men’s” and “women’s” varieties of Gros

Ventre are also not clear. While Flannery (1946: 133) describes them unproblematically as speaker-determined gender varieties, Taylor's (1982: 304) observations, in an admittedly highly endangered language situation, suggest that men might have used the so-called "women's" variety in certain sociolinguistic contexts too, including as "foreigner talk".

3.8 Koasati

Haas (1944) describes a morphological difference in the men's and women's speech of Koasata (Muskogean), comprising a set of correspondences between the respective forms for certain endings in the indicative and imperative. These rules produce pairs (women's form ~ men's form) like *ka-hâl* ~ *ka-hás* 'I am saying', *í-sk* ~ *í-sks* 'you are saying', and *ka* ~ *ká-s* 'he is saying'. Haas (1944: 145) gives internal comparative evidence from other verbal paradigms that the women's speech preserves more archaic features of the language than the men's. Haas notes that at the time of observation (up to 1939 according to Kimball 1987: 30) the women's system was only used by the middle-aged and elderly women.

This entire description was challenged by Kimball (1987). In fieldwork starting in 1977 Kimball found that the 'male' speech described by Haas was very nearly extinct, only used by people quoting the speech of deceased elders. He also concluded that rather than being a phonological transformation of certain positions in the verbal paradigm, the male speech forms were actually produced by a suffix serving as a phrase terminal marker. Two other phrase terminal markers — deletion or nasalization of the final verb — were in use at the time of Kimball's fieldwork, although neither was functionally connected to speaker gender. Kimball also established that this so-called 'male' marker was (i) not used by all men, (ii) also used by some women, and (iii) that usage was probably related to high social status.

Saville-Troike (1988: 242) contributed to this debate with observations from fieldwork in 1968-1969. At that time her consultants explicitly described the varieties as male and female terms, regretting:

that Koasati boys were no longer learning to speak like males, and had not done so for about twenty years. He said that before then boys had learned the male forms when they accompanied their fathers and other men for hunting and daily activities. (The female forms were acquired first by both boys and girls in early childhood while with female caretakers in the home.)

Saville-Troike (1988: 242) suggests that Kimball's social status marking function might be a reanalysis of the markers by non-users as the markers themselves were dropping out of common speech.

3.9 Island Carib

Perhaps the most well-known example of a gender dialect is Island Carib (more properly known as Garifuna, Arawakan). The documentation of the gender dialect difference comes entirely from the 17th century (Rocheport 1658; Breton [1667] 1877). The early sources related that the gender dialect was said to have come about as the result of Carib conquest of the Arawakan Iñeri speaking communities, with eradication of the male Arawaks and capture of the female. Later anthropological analysis has

questioned this (Whitehead 2002).

Taylor (1954) and Hoff (1994) have reanalyzed the 17th century sources with a better understanding of comparative Carib and Arawakan linguistics, which gives us a reasonable picture of how the gender varieties were structured and used. They demonstrate that Island Carib is structurally an Arawakan language with a lexical stratum of Carib (where the etymologically Carib items correspond to the men's language, as would be expected). There are only a few morphological differences between men's and women's Island Carib in Breton's data (Taylor 1954: 29), and many of these may have been unwittingly recorded examples of code-switching to mainland Carib, rather than authentic men's style Island Carib (Hoff 1994: 163). There are only a few regularly incorporated Cariban morphological elements in Island Carib, and these are used in the same way as they are used in Carib pidgins, rather than as in Carib proper. Hoff concludes that Island Carib was a mixed language with gender determined diglossia that grew out of society wide bilingualism in Iñeri (Arawakan) and Pidgin Carib. Finally, Hoff (1994: 164) also interprets the sources to say that the gender variety choice is determined by addressee gender rather than speaker gender, making Island Carib a rare example of a Haas Type II language.

3.10 Kokama-Kokamilla

The Kokama-Kokamilla language is spoken in the Peruvian Amazon. It has been classified as a member of the Tupi-Guarani family (Campbell 1997: 200), although Cabral (1995: 2-3) has argued for a mixed origin, a conclusion only partially supported by Vallejos on the basis of a comprehensive description of the language carried out in a more vital language community (Vallejos 2010: 38). The men's and women's dialects of Kokama-Kokamilla differ in number particles, personal pronouns, demonstratives and connectors. Some of these forms seem to result from a semi-regular process where women's *y* corresponds to men's *r*, but other forms lack any obvious etymological connection, such as *penu* ~ *tana* '1 plural exclusive'.

Table 10: Particles used in the men's and women's dialects (Vallejos 2010:42)

Gloss	F	M	Gloss	F	M
1 sg.	<i>ta</i>	<i>tsa, etse</i>	distal dem.	<i>yukun</i>	<i>yukan</i>
1 pl. excl.	<i>penu</i>	<i>tana</i>	indef. dem.	<i>yama/yamua</i>	<i>rama/ramua</i>
3sg. short form	<i>ya [ja ~ za]</i>	<i>ra</i>	'like this'	<i>ajaya</i>	<i>ikiara</i>
3sg. long form	<i>ay</i>	<i>uri</i>	'like that'	<i>ya [ja]</i>	<i>ria</i>
3sg. object	<i>(=)ay</i>	<i>(=)ura</i>	'also'	<i>yay</i>	<i>riay</i>
3pl.	<i>inu</i>	<i>rana</i>	'but'	<i>iyán</i>	<i>urian</i>
plural clitic	<i>=kana</i>	<i>=nu</i>	'there, then'	<i>yaepe</i>	<i>raepe</i>
proximal dem.	<i>ajan</i>	<i>ikian</i>	'after that'	<i>yaepetsui</i>	<i>raepetsui</i>

These grammatical function words are very common in speech, making for highly salient differences between men's and women's speech:

- (3) a. **uri** *tsenu ikian yawara=kara=uy tana ku=kuara* (male speaker)
 b. **ay** *tsenu ajan yawara=nu=uy penu ku=kuara* (female speaker)
 3SG.L hear DEM dogs=PL=PAS1 1PL farm=INE
 'She heard the dogs on our farm.' (Vallejos 2010: 41-42)

There are also minor phonological differences. In the Kokamilla dialect, women have a tendency to produce the phoneme /r/ as a lateral rather than as a tap. Vallejos speculates that this might be a residue of an earlier difference between the Kokamilla dialect and the Kokama dialect (2010: 102), which if true would add support for the hypothetical role of dialect mixing in the origins of the Kokama-Kokamilla gender dialects.

3.11 Pirahã

The Pirahã language has gender differences on phonetic and phonological levels (Everett 1979, 1986, 2004). On the phonetic level, Everett (2004: 7) reports that women use more retroflexed points of articulation in comparison to men, and they have a characteristic ‘guttural’ articulation caused by pharyngeal constriction. Phonologically, where men have two phonemes /s/ and /h/ women have a single phoneme /h/.

In a personal communication (22 April 2011), Everett filled in some more of the background to this. He confirms that early in language acquisition, Pirahã boys speak using the women’s variety. Their later shift to the men’s variety seems to be motivated by the desire to affiliate more with adult men’s society; there are no formal social structures reinforcing this, however, but Everett gives anecdotal evidence of an individual male who, along with other unconventional (for Pirahã) social preferences, uses the women’s dialect.

The simplest historical scenario to produce /h, s/ :: /h/ correspondence between male and female dialects of Pirahã is a simple phonological collapse, which is consciously resisted and reversed by adult men. The source of the phonological collapse is likely to be language-internal change, rather than contact with another language or dialect, since the pharyngeal constriction characteristic of womanly speech would act to reduce the distinctiveness of *s* and *h* in female pronunciation, from which the full collapse of /s/ and /h/ phonemes would be a small step.

3.12 Chiquitano

Chiquitano is an endangered language isolate spoken in south-eastern Bolivia (Adelaar and Muysken 2004: 477; Sans 2009). Nineteenth century forms of the language are documented as having morphologically and lexically distinguished gender variants (Adam and Henry 1880). It is not however clear that the system ever included obligatory variation rather than a just register choice, and the examples by Adam and Henry (1880: 67) show variation between the notional men’s and women’s varieties even in a single utterance.

Adelaar and Muysken interpret this as a men’s variety and a general variety, rather than a women’s variety (Adelaar and Muysken 2004: 479). The men’s variety had morphological class and number markers which were used only in elevated speech, when talking of men or of divine entities. The general dialect is used by men in other contexts, as well as by women in all contexts. The gender varieties also had other differences. These include: nouns never used by men; pronouns and adverbs only used by men; nouns that women use inflected and men uninflected, and vice versa (Adelaar and Muysken 2004: 478–479, excepted from Adam and Henry 1880: 67–68). It is not clear whether these differences are also limited to elevated speech style, or whether they

were ubiquitous gender-determined dialects.

New data will most likely never be available, since if this system still exists at all, it is most likely in a reduced form (Adelaar and Muysken 2004: 478). Sans (2009: 19–20) makes no mention of gender varieties in a sociolinguistic survey of register variation in the contemporary language.

3.13 Awetí

Drude (2002) describes another Amazonian gender dialect in the Awetí language. This dialect difference, determined by speaker gender, manifests itself both morphologically, with differences in the pronoun, verbal prefix and, deictic paradigms, and lexically. The differences in the personal pronouns are illustrated in Table 11.

Table 11: Personal pronoun differences by gender in Awetí

	M		F
1sg	<i>atit</i>		<i>ito</i>
2sg		<i>en</i>	
3sg	<i>nã</i>		<i>i</i>
1pl.ex		<i>kajã</i>	
1pl.in		<i>ozoza</i>	
2pl		<i>e'ipe</i>	
3pl	<i>tsã</i>		<i>ta'i</i>

Unlike the morphological distinctions between men's and women's Awetí, the lexical distinctions are variational tendencies rather than categorical differences. There are two types of lexical alternatives. The first type comprises pairs consisting of entirely different words in the male and female dialects. In some cases, the alternatives have transparent morphological structure. The men's dialect tends to form these morphologically complex, metaphorical terms by reference to function, whereas the women's dialect refers to source material/species, as exemplified in Table 12.

Table 12: Lexical differences by gender in Awetí

Gloss	Male dialect form	Female dialect form
drinking gourd	<i>y'a'jýt</i> = 'little round thing for water'	<i>mopo'j ýt</i> = 'small gourd'
thatch	<i>tawypepo'apy</i> (< <i>tawypé</i> , 'roof, large mat')	<i>tapaj'jypo'apy</i> (< <i>tapaj'jyp</i> , plant species used for thatching)
curica (parrot species)	<i>takänyt</i>	<i>takári</i>

The second type of lexical difference relates to form class: vowel-initial words in the women's dialect correspond to *n*-initial words in the men's dialect. The words entering this class are mostly species' names and tools, three examples of which can be found in Table 13.

Table 13: Phonological differences in lexical items by gender in Awetí

Gloss	Male dialect form	Female dialect form
duck	<i>nypék</i>	<i>ypék</i>
parrot	<i>napúryt</i>	<i>apúryt</i>
bow	<i>nyzapát</i>	<i>yzapát</i>

Drude (2002: 189) suggests that the vowel-initial forms are ancestral, and that the *n*-initial forms are innovated by analogy to the third person singular inalienable noun prefix.

3.14 Karajá

The Karaja language of central Brazil has a well documented gender dialect system (Fortune and Fortune 1975; Fortune 1998). The differences are highly salient, with the gender dialect differences showing up in every second or third word of running speech (Fortune and Fortune 1975: 112). The most frequently occurring difference is a simple correspondence between *k* in the women's dialect and \emptyset in the men's dialect. There is one exception to this, a small set of interjections and grammatical words where the men's form has the same *k* as the women's form. There is also an irregular correspondence between women's *č* and men's \emptyset , *č* or *ǰ*; a conditioned rule for dropping *n* in the men's dialect; and a few words which are etymologically unrelated in the two dialects (Table 14).

Table 14. Phonological and lexical comparison of men's and women's Karajá (Fortune and Fortune 1975: 116-118)

correspondence	women's Karajá	men's Karajá	gloss
<i>k</i> :: \emptyset	<i>kətorá</i>	<i>ətorá</i>	'fish'
<i>k</i> :: <i>k</i>	<i>kohe</i>	<i>kohe</i>	'yes'
	<i>kai</i>	<i>kai</i>	'you'
<i>č</i> :: \emptyset	<i>ričəre</i>	<i>riəre</i>	'child'
<i>č</i> :: <i>č</i>	<i>ričoko</i>	<i>ričoko</i>	'doll'
<i>č</i> :: <i>ǰ</i>	<i>ičorəθa</i>	<i>iǰorəθa</i>	'dog'
<i>n</i> :: \emptyset / <i>a__o</i>	<i>anobo</i>	<i>aobo</i>	'what'
lexical	<i>-bu-</i>	<i>-hi-</i>	'cry'
	<i>-sira-</i>	<i>-bu-</i>	'to be angry'
	<i>bebe!</i>	<i>mi!</i>	surprise
	<i>wu</i>	<i>ku</i>	calling form

These phonological correspondences (at least those involving dropping women's *k* in the men's dialect) are the product of synchronically active phonological rules, and act equally on Portuguese loanwords, e.g. women's *kararu* :: men's *araru* (< *cabalo* 'horse'); women's *nobiku* :: men's *nobiu* (< *domingo* 'Sunday').

As is usual, young children initially acquire the women's dialect, and boys later learn the men's dialect. Socialization begins early, from the age of three, but it is implied that there is some variation during later childhood, and Fortune and Fortune note that boys use the male dialect exclusively from the time they enter the men's house

at maturity. Like in Chukchi, women and men can use the other gender dialect in quoted speech.

4 Conclusion

Women's and men's dialects are a poorly documented phenomenon in language, which, while rare, is nevertheless important to an understanding the range of possible culture and language interactions in an broad ethnographic perspective. In many of the cases described above, language dialect distinction is clearly a reflex of wider social gender segregation. Physical separation of the genders, e.g. with the "men's houses", found in traditional Tangoan society as well as in Karajá, contribute to mutual reinforcement of gendered practices in culture and language. The Irish Sign Language situation was different: the gender varieties developed under isolation from each other, so didn't have the distance-creating function present in their origins. I know of no other languages like this, but they might be expected to show up in places with e.g. gender-segregated monastic traditions, Cossack-style military societies, etc.

Gender dialects are only attested in relatively small communities. Most likely gender dialects are only stable in small scale societies, what Trudgill refers to as "societies of intimates" (2011: 185). Maintaining a gender dialect distinction in a language is evidently costly: a community must preserve society-wide bidialectalism, and growing children must relearn basic linguistic principles of their native language. As a result of this gender dialect systems are diachronically unstable, and rarely survive major social upheavals within a speech community. Nevertheless, it is clear that gender dialect is a possible outcome of gendered sociolinguistic variation, which demonstrates the relative importance of the social signaling function of language compared to acquisitional ease and communicative efficiency.

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