

Gendered Social-interactional Contexts in Educational Institutions in Iraq

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Abstract: Social variables have a tremendous impact on the language spoken by the male and female genders, particularly in Eastern cultures. Because men and women in Arabic cultures are typically raised separately, they speak somewhat differently depending on their gender. Arabic is used exclusively in educational institutions in the Arab world. The objective of the present study was to examine certain social and linguistic aspects of the language spoken by females and males in mixed academic organisations from the point of view of female academics. It also examined some noted gender differences in previous gender studies of the interactional styles of the two genders in higher education institutions in Iraq from the perspective of female academics, as well as the results of Holmes and Stubbe's (2003) work. Seventy female lecturers from a variety of disciplines at the University of Baghdad participated in the present research. The data analysis was quantitative in nature. The findings are discussed following a statistical analysis of the collected data using SPSS software. The researchers have reached a number of conclusions, including that female academics should be extremely careful in their choice of vocabulary when speaking to male colleagues because their vocabulary indicates their social status, which was rated as being very high. The female academics were found to use more polite words and compound sentences than did the male academics with regard to the topics of discussion and institutional interactions; none of the female academics disagreed with this point.

Keywords: academic institutions, gender, masculine and feminine, social variables.

The Arabic language has fully gendered grammatical forms to the extent that each noun is either masculine or feminine; therefore, learning Arabic grammar is a complex task (Benmamoun, 1996; Harrell, 2004). In the past, women were not allowed to have a job outside the home or play a role alongside men in society. As a result, most of the names for jobs can only be described using the masculine form. Arabic society later witnessed some political and ideological changes that have contributed either directly or indirectly to certain cultural changes regarding gender since many Arab countries gained independence in the middle of the twentieth century. This political development has enabled Arabic women to claim some of their rights according to the constitution, such as the possibility of having the same opportunities as men to find employment in a society that is described as having a 'masculine culture' and in which male dominance is evident in social situations. Therefore, as women have finally been allowed to have jobs, it has recently become possible to find some jobs that are described using

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'feminine' words. However, society remains stereotypical in that women's jobs still depend on the nature of organizations or the role of men in the institutional context. For example, most families and members of society in the Arab world, particularly in Iraq, believe that there are feminine and masculine workplaces. This traditional view has subsequently affected the language spoken by the genders in mixed-gender workplaces, as well as the roles of the two genders in the same governmental organizations in general, and in higher education institutions in particular. "The symbolic and social power of masculinity has been transferred to the area of grammar via the establishment of various hierarchies of words to reflect the same situation that exists in the society" (Sadiqi, 2006, as cited in Muslah, 2019, p. 10). Thus, the social power of males has resulted in the masculine form being the dominant gender in the language, as well as in society. Some scholars have examined the communicative interactions and language strategies used by the two genders in mixed-gender workplaces in Western societies (see Coates, 1996; Holmes, 1995; Lakoff, 1975; Tannen, 1993). Similarly, some linguistic studies of gender have also been conducted in the Arabic-speaking world (see Abd-el-Jawad, 1989; Hachimi, 2007; Haeri, 1996; Sadiqi, 2003, 2006). However, these studies have mainly addressed the social language variables for both genders in North Africa, Eastern societies in general, or by focusing on urban or rural contexts. Social variables have a significant effect on the language spoken by both genders, particularly in Eastern culture. Since boys and girls are raised separately in Arabic society, their use of language is determined by their gender (Tannen, 1994). Gender is a socially constructed concept rather than a natural one (Cameron, 1998); thus, social norms cause the Arabic that is spoken by young and adult males different from the Arabic that is spoken by young and adult females in various social and institutional contexts. The traditional view still maintains that males belong to the 'public' realm that denotes 'male power', while females belong to the 'private' realm (El-Saadawi, 1980; Mernissi, 1994; Sadiqi & Ennaji, 2006, as cited in Muslah, 2019).

Language inequalities and sexist language are external symptoms of the underlying 'disease' of social inequality between men and women (Thorne & Henley, 1975, as cited in Abd-el-Jawad, 1989). The effects of this social reality even extend to the language used by both genders in the workplace. Over the past three decades, sociolinguistic studies conducted in Western communities have revealed the positive development in the impact of social constructs on the linguistic behaviors of the genders in different organizational contexts (Aries, 1996; Cox et al., 1990; Holmes, 2000; Stubbe, 1998; Tannen et al., 1997). In comparison, gender studies in the Arab-speaking world still require more in-depth, practical investigations. In order to understand language use and the interactional styles of males and females in academic institutions, it is essential to investigate the effects of the phenomenon from social and linguistic perspectives.

Women and Language Use

Lakoff (2004), one of the pioneers in linguistic studies of gender, identified two directions in the studies of women's language and stated: "[W]e will find that women experience linguistic discrimination in two ways; in the way they are taught to use language, and in the way general language treats them" (p. 39). Women are more likely to make compound requests than men, as shown in the following example:

- 1 (a) Open the door.
- (b) Please open the door.

In the above example, the request in 1(a) appears to reflect a more masculine use than does the request in 1(b). This social norm is still found in Iraqi society, in which young males and females are traditionally taught to ask questions or make requests in accordance with their genders; for example, the society believes that females should be more polite in terms of asking polite questions and making indirect requests to avoid violating social norms because a woman's social status is determined by the linguistic expressions she chooses. Therefore, a woman who speaks in a clear and direct way in front of family or other members of society would be considered to be an impolite woman or even a bad woman in some rural areas (Mohammed & Abbas, 2016). The social inequalities between the two genders are also evident in the choice of vocabulary; for example, most of the words that refer to power, strength, control, or violence are in the masculine form in the Arabic language: *hura* 'free', *waliy* 'a responsible person of family', *zalma*, 'brave', *qady*, 'judge', ...and so on' (Muslah, 2019).

By contrast, words that reflect emotions, cities, flowers and beauty assume a feminine form; for example, words that can only refer to a woman's state include *jamaal* 'beautiful', *latifa* 'nice', *zahra* 'flower', and so on. Furthermore, the social prestige of an Arabic woman in society depends on her choice of vocabulary; thus, she should be careful not to speak in the same way as a man in order to be accepted by her society. This is also true for Jordanian society, in which women are more status-conscious than men, who are supposed to be strong because the social norms restrict the ways in which men and women speak. Men's speech should reflect their masculinity to avoid being accused of being womanish (Al-Harashseh, 2014). This can also be found in all Arabic societies. Furthermore, social role theory explains that sex differences are derived from the traditional division of labor: Men were supposed to be strong, swift, and brave in order to provide for their families, while women were supposed to stay at home and take care of the children (Stroi, 2019). The reason for the lack of strong vocabulary in women's speech is that society gives men more opportunities to use strong expressions than it does women (Lakoff, 2004).

Furthermore, women showing more emotions means that society does not view women as independent individuals. Moreover, it has been pointed out that there is a correlation between gendered language and the context of work. For example, few men desire to work as housekeepers, attendants, secretaries, hairdressers, or receptionists, as they are supposed to behave and speak in a feminine way in these occupations. There appears to be a relationship between the language used by both genders and the type of work they do; in addition, women are increasingly able to apply men's language, while men cannot apply women's language (Lakoff, 2004). For example, widows who work on farms behave and speak in the same way as do men in rural areas in the middle and south of Iraq. Most sociolinguistic studies have claimed that females employ standard sentences more frequently than do males because they are not powerful in society or in the workplace (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Lakoff, 2004, El-Saadawi, 1980; Mernissi, 1994; Sadiqi & Ennaji, 2006). This can also be found in the Arab world; women have no strong voice in social contexts. They attempt to acquire a strong voice by using standard speech forms and by reporting that they use more of these forms than they actually do (Holmes, 2008). As a result, most women have realized that using standard forms in the workplace is important in order to compete and achieve success in their jobs, as well as to avoid contravening social norms. Accordingly, achieving gender equality within institutions is challenging and requires a significant amount of time and work (Kebede, 2017).

In a similar line of research, Bassiouney (2010) investigated the relationship between gender and the use of standard Arabic or the Egyptian vernacular amongst academics, judges, and members of the Egyptian parliament; her conclusions did not show any considerable differences in the use of standard Arabic or the Egyptian vernacular between the male and female participants when the emphasis was on the issue of debate rather than on gender.

Gender and Institutional Interaction

The concept of the ‘gendered workplace’ has spread rapidly in the fields of language and gender studies. Several scholars have considered this notion to be relatively inaccurate when readers tend to focus on the literal meaning of this term rather than on the impact of some hidden variables underlying the classification of an organization (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003, p. 575): “We are not talking about places which are literally ‘women’s’ workplaces and ‘men’s’ workplaces’, but rather about cultural dimensions and perceptions, which are a matter of degree”. Obviously, cultural and social norms differ from one place to another, and they have significant effects on the interactions of opposite genders or of the same genders in the workplace. Thus, it is necessary to discuss the objectives of previous gender studies. There are three directions in the investigation of the relationship between gender and language in the workplace (Tannen, 1997). The first strand of research investigated the interactions between males and females in the workplace, while the second strand conducted studies of male and female leaders in work settings, and the third strand examined the impact of females’ and males’ spoken languages on evaluation and reaction. The majority of the research highlighted the first two directions.

Research on the interactions between females and males in different organizations that was conducted by Edelsky (1981), Case (1985, 1988), Tannen (1994a) and Drakich and James (1993) has generally summarised some different styles of interaction between males and females regardless of the subject, as well as differences in the degree of achievement; that is, males make more contributions in task-oriented discussions, talk more and take longer turns than do women in work meetings and with regard to teamwork. Thus, by adopting a powerful style, males attempt to maintain the difference between themselves and other participants in the workplace.

By contrast, women tend to use a personal style and language strategies that help to downplay the participants’ differences in rank (Tannen, 1997). This can also be noted in general Arabic societies, in which males’ linguistic choices should reflect their masculinity and control in any interaction, both in the social and institutional context. The second line of research mainly focuses on how gender and acts of authority interact in the workplace and has concluded that the social stereotype of men in positions of authority is still traditionally seen as the best institutional style. The norms of male discourse styles are institutionalized; that is, they are seen not as only as “the best way to talk but as the only way” (Lakoff, 1990, p. 210).

Some scholars, such as Fisher (1993), Tannen (1994), and Nelson (1998), have found that males had more aggressive, competitive, and confrontational attitudes in positions of authority than females. Females were significantly more concerned about the other’s face when they were in the superior role than when they were in the subordinate role (Tracy & Eisenberg, 1990, 1991, as cited in Tannen, 1997). All the previously mentioned studies concluded that males with higher status were less polite and more direct when giving orders to those with lower status, interrupted aggressively, and did not provide supportive feedback in the workplace. By contrast, women in authority tended to be more indirect and polite when speaking and to provide directive, facilitative and supportive feedback.

However, using an indirect style is not a characteristic feature of weaknesses or inability to make serious decisions in positions of authority. When women speak indirectly, this does not necessarily indicate weakness in their character or powerlessness but an attempt to save the faces of others (Tannen, 1997). Similarly, Lakoff (2004, p.15) described women using the form “rising inflection; typical of a yes/no question” to answer questions and not to provide confirmation; this could cause people to think that they are not taking any responsibilities because this linguistic behaviour leads people to make superficial judgments about the character of the speaker. Traditionally, women are viewed as physically, mentally, and spiritually weak

by nature (Abd-el-Jawad, 1989). All the above observations suggest that the social-cultural dominance of one gender in positions of authority causes people to stereotype the ways in which the genders should speak when they are in positions of authority.

Holmes and Stubbe (2003) summarised the results of numerous gender studies and listed the most common gender differences in organizational and home contexts since 1970. These gender differences are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Outline of Gender Differences

Feminine	Masculine
Indirect	Direct
Conciliatory	Confrontational
Facilitative	Competitive
Collaborative	Autonomous
Minor contribution (in public)	Dominates (public)
Supportive feedback	Aggressive interruptions
Person/process-oriented	Task/ outcome-oriented
Affectively oriented	Referentially oriented

Even though gendered workplace differences have been criticized by some scholars because “this takes no account of the many sources of diversity and variation such as age, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation” (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003, p. 574), they are still considered to be the main differences when studying the communication styles of both genders in the workplace. Thus, the present researchers will take these features into consideration when examining the interactional style of the two genders in positions of authority in higher education institutions in Iraq.

Methods

The present paper is intended to examine the language spoken by females and males in mixed academic organizations from the perspective of female academics' points of view regarding certain social and linguistic aspects. It also examines some of the noted gender differences mentioned in previous studies of the interactional style of the two genders in positions of authority in higher education institutions in Iraq, as well as the results that were summarised by Holmes and Stubbe (2003), by revealing the main differences between the two genders in the workplace. Accordingly, the study will be empirical in nature and will implement a quantitative approach (questionnaire), as this approach is appropriate for obtaining a large sample, ensuring the low cost of the data collection and reaching the participants easily. In addition, the findings will be reliable and descriptive due to the application of SSP software since this is the most efficient method of analysing the questionnaire responses, and presenting the findings (Cohen et al., 2000). Furthermore, the findings are presented in tables to enable a discussion of the significant conclusions. The participants were 70 female college lecturers from a variety of fields of study at the University of Baghdad. They were selected based on three criteria: First, they were from different academic departments and social classes. Second, they held a position of authority at the university. Third, they had a good ability to speak the English language. After the objectives of the study were identified and the draft of the questionnaire was designed, it was submitted to two reviewers to ensure that the items were suitable for the study's objectives. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions.

Findings and Discussion

The process of developing and constructing the questionnaire and distributing it to the participants was done during May 2021. The data were processed using the SPSS programme and are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Responses of the Female Participants

Q.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	40%	17%	26%	17%
2.	43%	10%	33%	14%
3.	47%	7%	36%	10%
4.	53%	13%	31%	3%
5.	53%	28%	19%	0%
6.	41%	16%	39%	4%
7.	39%	16%	36%	9%
8.	46%	23%	22%	9%
9.	40%	17%	29%	14%
10.	43%	13%	35%	9%
11.	42%	21%	34%	3%
12.	30%	21%	37%	12%
13.	61%	17%	19%	3%
14.	44%	23%	27%	6%
15.	46%	24%	23%	7%

Seventy female Iraqi academics participated in the research; the responses to the questions were distributed as follows. The female academics' responses to Q.1 showed that 17% of the female academics strongly agreed that the female instructors at Iraqi universities were more careful when using the syntax and morphology of Arabic than were male academics. This low value may have been due to the fact that the interactions between the two genders are still limited in the academic context. Female instructors are accustomed to using the Arabic vernacular when speaking to colleagues of the same gender. The social status of Arabic-speaking women has changed or is in the process of changing, which has an impact on language use and variation (Vicente, 2009).

However, the two genders still need to pay more attention to language use, particularly females' use of syntactic and morphological aspects of Arabic when discussing academic topics. Bassiouney (2010) considered social factors, such as honor and modesty, essential elements when studying females' linguistic practices in the Arabic-speaking world. However, some of the other participants thought that the use of Arabic was more dependent on the topic of the discussion than it was on gender, as indicated by the increase in the agree responses to 40% for Q.1.

The responses to Q.2 revealed two clearly different points of view, as 43% and 10% of female academics believed that they were more frequent users of standard Arabic than their male colleagues in the same academic field, while 33% and 14% of the respondents had the opposite attitude. According to the first group, this satisfaction may have been because females' use of standard Arabic is necessary in order to avoid flouting the social norms, which are an important determiner of women's status in Arabic society. Women's social prestige plays an important role in language practice (Dendane, 1998; Lakoff, 1975). However, the second group considered the use of standard Arabic to be related to the nature and the type of topic under

discussion or to the age, social class, and the closeness or distance of the relationship between the two genders in specific interactional contexts. The gendering of a job can affect the language used within it, and participants need to learn the appropriate linguistic repertoire to gain acceptance professionally and socially in a particular community (McDowell, 2018).

It was observed that 47% of the respondents to Q.3 'strongly agreed' that Arab women generally used more polite forms and compound sentences than did men regarding the topic of discussion or in institutional interactions, while 7% of the respondents 'agreed'. This suggests that parents may have taught their children a particular form of language based on gender; this has a tremendous psychological impact on females in later life, even after they complete higher education because they have been brought up to use polite requests and/or compound sentences when they want to address or ask any male family member or male stranger anything simply to avoid any unpleasant verbal reaction or physical violence. If a female makes direct requests or uses less polite words in the way that males do, they are traditionally viewed as not being a respectable character. Women may even face sexual harassment due to the type of language they use. Furthermore, male domination in society leads to the transfer of social power to language use (Sadiqi, 2007). Although males are considered to use short or simple sentences and sometimes to make direct and less polite requests than females in Arabic society, 10% of the female academics did not support this idea completely because they thought that polite discourse strategies in any interaction, regardless of whether they took place in the family or in the workplace, depended on certain social variables such as the topic under discussion, economic changes, the social backgrounds of the interactants and the education level of the speakers of either gender, as well as their ages and the interactional contexts (Abu-Haidar, 1991; Bassiouney, 2010; Sadiqi, 2007).

With regard to Q.4, only 34% of the respondents expressed disagreement (3% of them 'strongly disagreed') that long speeches and high tones were used more frequently by female academics than they were by male academics. This low value suggests that many educated women in Iraq are affected by the stereotypical view that Arabic women make long speeches because this is part of their characters, in addition to remaining in private spaces to engage in domestic chores and take care of children instead of having a job (Abd-el-Jawad, 1989; Sadiqi, 2007). This motivates Arabic women psychologically to engage in long speeches with family and relatives to while away their time, thus revealing their daily activities and characters, as well as ways of expressing their rights or needs in an indirect way. Moreover, as most males spend most of their time in the workplace or in public places, they would be tired and unable to engage in long talks with their families at home. This traditional view also applies to the working and educated women in society, as the respondents truly believed that working women or instructors also engaged in longer conversations or speeches than men in meetings or when discussing topics. This can clearly be seen based on the percentage of 'strongly agree' responses to the question. Moreover, the respondents suggested that females' use of a higher tone was due to their physiological nature. However, although Arabic women are assumed to make longer speeches than males, it is expected that listeners normally have a greater desire to listen to males than to females in the same interactional context in the workplace. With regard to Q.5, 81% of the respondents (the total of 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses) said that women's status was very important in Arabic society and could be indicated by their use of vocabulary.

According to Haeri (1996), language use is influenced by a wide range of social circumstances, including one's employment; thus, the author argued that educated women should be careful when choosing their words, terms, and types of vocabulary, particularly when discussing any topics with male colleagues in educational interactions and work teams because Iraqi society is highly conservative. Abu-Haidar (1988) concluded that Iraqi women were more descriptive in the semantic field than men. Overall, 41% and 39% of the positive responses to Q.6 and Q.7, respectively, showed that the respondents believed that there were more

employment opportunities for male academics at Iraqi universities and in departments of the Ministry of Higher Education than there were for female academics in the same field. The result is in line with Al-Ali's study (2013) that has shown some occupations, such as IT and engineering (and their corresponding workplaces), are still dominated by males, while occupations such as education, caregiving, and nursing tend to employ more women; this has consequences for the discursive norms constructed in these environments, as well as for the challenges experienced by males in such professions (Holmes et al., 2020; McDowell, 2018). This may be due to the idea that most members of society believe that males are more qualified than females due to their strong mental abilities.

From a religious perspective, some families have not allowed their daughters to continue their postgraduate studies until very recently in the belief that it is better for their daughters to marry than it is to continue their postgraduate studies. In addition, some of the natural sciences require students to work or undertake internships outside of universities, which Iraqi society considers to be unsuitable conditions for females. Furthermore, the policy of 'high authority' posits that it is preferable to have males in positions of authority as opposed to females because males can bear the heavy work responsibilities in a more appropriate style. In addition, females have the right to take family or maternity leave, which is an economic cost for the government. In summary, these social factors contribute to increasing the opportunities for male academics to find employment at higher educational institutions, as well as positions of authority within the Ministry of Higher Education.

An unexpected finding was that the traditional style of males in superior roles was still seen as being superior to the female styles, even amongst female academics. This can be concluded based on the high number of positive responses (69%, including 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses) to Q.8. This may have been due to some social factors. Firstly, the working women had been more accustomed to working with males in positions of authority than they had been with females in superior positions and considered males to be more practical and decisive than females. As Johnson (1993) argued, "[I]t is possible that more social tension may be present in mixed-sex than in same-sex groups, at least in the initial stages of interaction" (p. 208). Secondly, hesitation and emotional factors have major impacts on females' administrative styles at work. In addition, more than half of the responses to Q.9 (57%) indicated that their female colleagues in positions of authority were more flexible and cooperative when interacting with their colleagues in institutions due to their socially constructed (Riger & Gallian, 1980). Females have a desire to strengthen their relationships with their colleagues because they focus mainly on others' attitudes towards them, while males in superior positions attempt to separate themselves from their colleagues and have a direct relationship with them because they see themselves as independent and are not concerned about others' attitudes towards them. This result is in line with the results of previous studies that were conducted in Western communities, which showed that women in superior positions were more flexible when interacting with their colleagues in the workplace (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003).

However, the respondents still considered the 'male style' superior to that of females, as the analysis of Q.8 revealed. Therefore, we expect that males' control over superior positions may continue in different institutions in the future. It was noted that very few (9%) of the respondents who answered Q.10 disagreed with the view that male academics were more aggressive than females when solving the problems they encountered in positions of authority, even within academic institutions. The reason for this result may have been that most families still treat their sons and daughters differently from childhood; they believe that there are different roles for the two genders in society, and males are viewed as being physically stronger than females, particularly in Eastern communities. Based on this view, males can join the army to fight wars or can freely use guns and fight if they encounter some problems in society. This social-psychological view is also transferred to the organizational context. Therefore, males can

be aggressive and can easily become angry when they experience problems with clients or with their colleagues in the workplace (Nelson, 1998).

By contrast, members of society expect females' behavior to be less aggressive because women are naturally weak; women are required to be polite in order to maintain the social norms and their prestige at home and in public places. Moreover, females are expected to demonstrate more flexible and indirect behavior when solving the problems, they encounter in order to avoid any physical violence or harassment in public places or in the workplace. With regard to Q.11, 63% of the respondents believed that male academics were more productive and competitive in the workplace than were their female colleagues because they thought that males were more intelligent than females and could work for longer periods. Moreover, in reality, males are not responsible for domestic chores, unlike working women, who need to juggle their time for domestic chores, taking care of children, and their jobs (Abd-el-Jawad, 1989). Thus, while women will generally be more focused on completing the given tasks in the workplace, males will be more focused on the quality of their work and will develop professional skills to increase their production and be promoted both inside and outside of institutions. Of note, we observed that 50% of the respondents (divided between 'strongly agree' and 'agree') in Q.12 still had the negative view that women in superior positions adopted an indirect style to meet the challenges they encountered in the workplace. This may have been because women lack the element of direct confrontation that their male colleagues in superior positions in the workplace have at present.

Psychologically, females only attempt to focus on strengthening relationships with their team members in higher administrative roles to address the challenges they encounter due to social tension and fear of failure (Johnson, 1993). However, with regard to Q.13, 78% of the participants 'strongly agreed' with the greater frequency of male academics in superior roles and leadership positions in the Ministry of Higher Education Ministry and at universities compared to female academics. This may have been the result of most families not having allowed their daughters to have any jobs in the past. Most of the government's strategies in the recent history of Iraq and at present consider males to be more suited to positions of authority than women, and even the members of society adhere to this old ideology. Moreover, women are seen as being unable to make important or critical decisions because they are less qualified than males (Al-Ali, 2013). About 67% of the Iraqi females supported the idea that male academics made long contributions and interrupted more frequently in meetings and discussions in response to Q.14. This may indicate that the domination of Arabic males remains strong, both in society and the workplace. Thus, males cannot easily accept any ideas contributed by their female colleagues in the work team. Similarly, males may believe that they are more practical and make better contributions by giving suggestions or developing work strategies in comparison to women, both in general organizations and academic institutions. By comparison, a total of 70% of the respondents ('agree' and 'strongly agree' responses) thought that females had less mental ability and a more socioemotional perspective, which may largely be attributed to religious and social views. Accordingly, the government expects males to be more qualified for positions of authority than females (see the responses to Q.15 in Table 1). Johnson (1993) suggested that the genders' behaviors in positions of authority may also be affected by other variables, such as the type of task and leader behavior, rather than solely by gender itself.

Conclusion

Both genders are highly affected by the language spoken as a social variable, particularly in Eastern cultures. Moreover, due to being raised separately, Arabic males and females in Iraq, in which Arabic is used exclusively used in institutions, speak differently

depending on their gender to some extent. Accordingly, this study provides an insightful guide for the investigation of the types of job norms and the identification of gendered workplaces in relation to culture and linguistic behavior. In the Arab world, including Iraqi society, there is still a gendered view of the workplace, and educational institutions are not exempt. This is evident based on the greater number of male lecturers compared to female lecturers. The findings make it clear that the traditional view has affected the language spoken in mixed-gender workplaces and the roles of the two genders in the same governmental institutions in general and higher education institutions in particular. The researchers have reached the conclusion that the highest percentage, which constituted 81% of the respondents with regard to Q.5, emphasized that females' status was extremely important in Arabic society, and could be indicated by their use of vocabulary because Iraqi society is highly conservative. This is in line with the findings of Abd-el-Jawad (1989) and Al-Harashseh (2014). A high score was also observed for Q.13 (78%), which suggested the proposition that most of the important positions and upper echelons in the Ministry of Higher Education and universities needed to enable and support female academics with more influential leadership positions. In turn, this may have been due to the idea that the government expects males to be more qualified for positions of authority in comparison to females. In this regard, only a low percentage (7%) of respondents strongly disagreed with this impression. The results also revealed that the linguistic behavior of female academics in Iraqi educational institutions could also be related to the type of topic under discussion and workplace interactions (Bassiouney, 2010).

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