مفهوم القوة والتضامن لدى الذكور والإناث في ميدان الحوار

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الملخص

أحد الاهتمامـات الأساسـية لعلـم اللغـة الاجتمـاعي هـو التفاعـل بـين اللغـة والجنس الاجتماعي. لقد حاولت عدة نظريـات أن تستكشف الاختلافـات فـي الحـديث بـين الرجال والنساء. تركـز الدراسـة الحاليـة علـى الأدوار المختلفـة بـين الذكـور والإنـاث فـي الحـوار فـي ضـوء هـذه النظريـات. إن السـبب الرئيسـي وراء هـذه الدراسـة هـو إلقـاء الضـوء علـى اللغـة والجنس الاجتمـاعي فـي سـوريا، حيث أن هناك شـح فـي هـذا الميـدان، وبالتالي سيكون ذلك إسهاماً هاماً في الأدب المتعلق بالعالم العربي. ادعاء الدراسـة هـو أنـه فـي حقل التفاعـل فإن الـذكور فـي سـوريا معنيـون بـالقوة، بينمـا الإنـاث معنيـات بالتضامن أكثر. يمشي هذا الادعاء في السياق العام للعالم الغربي ولكنه يخالف نتائج حـاج حسن في سوريا. تدور الدراسة الحالية حول موضوع واحد يخص المحـادثة ألا وهـو الأمـر. الأوامـر المباشـرة تعنـي القـوة، بينمـا الأوامـر غيـر المباشـرة تشـير إلـى التضامن.

الكلمــات المفتاحيــة: الجنس الاجتمـاعي، ميـدان الحـوار، القوة والتضـامن، الأوامـر المباشرة

Syrian Males and Females' Concept of Power and Solidarity on the Conversational Floor

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Abstract

A major concern of sociolinguistics is the interrelation between language and gender. Many theories have attempted to explore the differences in speech between men and women. The current research examines the Syrian males' and females' different roles on the conversational floor in the light of these theories. My rationale for the study is to examine language and gender in Syria, on which very little has been done, and thereby to make a valid contribution to the literature produced in the Arab world. The study claim is that in the field of interaction, Syrian males are more concerned with power, while Syrian females seek to build solidarity. This claim runs in favour of the general consensus in the Western world, but counter to Haji-Hassan's in Syria. The current study spins about one main topic that distinctly pertains to the conversational floor, and this topic is command. Unmitigated commands denote power, while mitigated commands indicate solidarity.

1. Introduction

The interrelation between language and gender is one key concern of sociolinguistics. Many world theories have investigated the speech of men and women. This article is an attempt to review the literature on language and gender and then to conduct a fieldwork study on the Arab world in relation to Syrian males' and females conversational interactions.

- Objectives and Method of Investigation

The dominant stereotype in the field of interaction is that men are more concerned with power and women with solidarity[1].

Most studies, for example [2], [3], [4], [5], [6], and [7], among others, in language and gender support the assumption that women interact in ways which tend to establish closeness, cooperation, connection, and intimacy. In contrast, men interact in ways which reflect power, challenge and independence.

On the other hand, a few studies conducted on language and gender in Syria, [8] being of special importance here, run in the opposite direction: Syrian women are more concerned with power, while Syrian men are more concerned with solidarity.

The current research examines the Syrian males' and females' different roles on the conversational floor. My rationale for the study is to examine gender and language use in Syria, with particular focus on commands, and thereby to make a valid contribution to the literature

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[1] Hudson, R. (1996). Sociolinguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[2] Coates, J. (1989). Introduction. In J. Coates and D. Cameron (Eds.), Women in Their Speech Communities (pp. 63- 73). London: Longman.

[3] Lakoff, R. (1975). Language and Women's Place. New York: Harper and Row.

[4] Sattel, W. (1983). Men, Expressiveness, and Power. In B. Thorne, C. Kramarae and N. Henley (Eds.), Language, Gender and Society (pp. 119- 24). Cambridge: Newbury House.

[5] Spender, D. (1982). Invisible Women: The Schooling Scandal. London: Writers and Readers   Publishing Cooperative Society.

[6] Tannen, D. (1990). You Just Don't Understand Women and Men in Conversation. London: Virago Press.
Tannen, D. (1994). Gender and Discourse. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[7] West, C. and Zimmerman. D. (1983). Small Insults: A Study of Interruptions in Cross-Sex Conversations between Unacquainted Persons. In B. Thorne, C. Kramarae and Henley, N. (Eds.), Language, Gender and Society (pp. 102- 24). Cambridge: Newbury House.

[8] Haji- Hassan, I. (1999). Language, Gender, and Power: Analysis of Theme and Topic Management in Arabic conversational Discourse. Ph. D. Dissertation. Georgetown University, U.S.

produced in Syria. My claim is that in the field of interaction, Syrian males are more concerned with power, while Syrian females seek to build solidarity. This claim runs in favour of the general consensus in the Western world, but counter to [1]'s.

The current study spins around one main topic that distinctly pertains to the conversational floor, and this topic is command. By command the researcher means an utterance that intends someone to do something. The following is an example of command drawn from the five interactions observed:

 min   shan   allah   rouh   ?ala   dkkanak
from   sake   Allah   go   on   shop-your
For Allah's sake go to your shop
In this example, there is a request from one person to another to go to his shop, so it is a command.

2. Exploring Language and Gender: Theoretical Framework
2.1. Gender VS Sex
According to [2], sex is a biological category, whereas gender is the social construction of sex. The distinction between sex and gender is a distinction between nature and society. It is a distinction between what is biological and what is cultural. As [3] put it, "at the risk of oversimplification, sex… is a biological given; gender is a social acquisition" (51).

2.2 Reasons for Linguistic Differences between Males and Females
Different reasons are set forward to explain the differences in speech between males and females. Here is presentation of the most important reasons found in the literature:

2.2.1 Differences in the Language System
According to [4]., "our thinking is influenced, in ways that we are completely unaware of, by our language" (102). To [5], language shapes our perceptions, determining not only how we think about things but also what we conceive. As can be understood from the above statements, languages have direct, and sometimes negative, impact on

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[1] Haji- Hassan, I. (1999). Language, Gender, and Power: Analysis of Theme and Topic Management in Arabic conversational Discourse. Ph. D. Dissertation. Georgetown University, U.S.

[2] Coupland, N and Jaworski, A. (1997). Sociolinguistics. London: Macmillan Press.

[3] Miller, C. and Swift, K.. (1976). Words and Women. New York: Anchor Press.

[4] Hudson, R. (1996). Sociolinguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[5] Whorf, L. (1956). Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings. Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology: Cambridge.

the ways males and females speak, and even conceive the world around them. In other words, some languages impose on their speakers, males and females, distinct forms which they are bound to use. A good example appears in English nouns. In English, *princess* is the marked female term which is grammatically derived from its male counter-form *prince*. Further, a male who is a doctor is named a doctor, whereas a female who is a doctor is called a female doctor.

What is more, some linguistically engendered pairs have different denotations, with the female terms having negative or, perhaps, derisive meanings and the males possessing neutral or, even, likeable meanings. A good English pair is *master* and *mistress,* mentioned in [1]. The word *master* is wholly positive as it, as a title, epitomizes power and leadership, whereas its female counterpart- mistress- has some pejorative meanings, especially for the point that "a mistress but not a master is a partner for extra-marital sex" (102).

Briefly put, language as appears from the above discussion is a main reason for the different avenues to be followed by males and females in their talk.

2.2.2 Socially Reinforced Differences

asserts that variations in the speech of males and females are basically the outcome of society rather than language. Similarly[2], views most instances of gender bias in language as unintentional rudeness arising from people's ignorance and carelessness[3]. It follows, differences in talk between males and females are socially more than linguistically reinforced. Even gender bias in language is the result of people's misuse of language rather than language itself. This can be evidenced, for instance, by people replacing a sentence like 'Every student should write their homework' with 'Every student should write his homework'. In sum, society assumes a crucial role in the linguistic differences between males and females.

2.2.3 Differences in the Ultimate Goal of Using Language

A major reason for the variation in speech between males and females appears clearly in the different ends and priorities aimed at via speech by both sexes. According to [4], "the general consensus appears

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[1] Hudson, R. (1996). Sociolinguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[2] Wardhaugh, R. (1990). An Introduction to Sociolinguistics. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

[3] Cameron, D. (1995). Rethinking Language and Gender Studies. In S. Mills (Ed.), Language and Gender: Interdisciplinary Perspective (pp. 31-44). London: Longman

[4] Hudson, R. (1996). Sociolinguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

to be that men are more concerned with power and women with solidarity" (141). Males in their talk try to impose their superiority and power, whereas women attempt to gain co-participants' agreement and avoid their disagreement. [1] holds the same opinion in her research on the middle-class Americans when she concludes that men view conversations as negotiations in which people try to maintain the upper hand and protect themselves from others' attempts to put them down. By contrast, she sees women's conversations as negotiations for closeness in which people try to seek confirmation and support, and to reach consensus.

Next section will discuss previous studies concerning gender and language use.

2.3. Previous Studies

Due to limitations of space, three previous studies only will be reviewed in this paper. Two reflect the general consensus in the world of language and gender, and the third go in the opposite direction. Other previous studies which go in line with the general consensus include [2], [3], [4], [5], [6], among others.

2.3.1. Swann (1989)

attempted to investigate dominance in schooled language in cross-sex classrooms in the south east of England. Many twenty-minute sessions of boys and girls were video-taped in two classrooms[7], with the focus on the allocation of turns and the number of words spoken in the different sessions. The results were a much higher percentage of contributions on the part of the male students - 41 times males to 13 times females - despite the fact that some boys were quieter than some girls, a point that made Swann conclude that

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[1] Tannen, D. (1990). You Just Don't Understand Women and Men in Conversation. London: Virago Press.

[2] Coates, J. (1989). Introduction. In J. Coates and D. Cameron (Eds.), Women in Their Speech Communities (pp. 63- 73). London: Longman.

[3] Lakoff, R. (1975). Language and Women's Place. New York: Harper and Row.

[4] Sattel, W. (1983). Men, Expressiveness, and Power. In B. Thorne, C. Kramarae and N. Henley (Eds.), Language, Gender and Society (pp. 119- 24). Cambridge: Newbury House.

[5] Spender, D. (1982). Invisible Women: The Schooling Scandal. London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative Society.

[6] Tannen, D. (1990). You Just Don't Understand Women and Men in Conversation. Ibid.

[7] Swan, J. and Graddol, D. (1989). Gender Voices. Oxford. Basil Blackwell.

differences between boys and girls are not categorical [1], and that the male students' interactional behaviour dominates rather than merely differs from that of the female students. This dominance starts from childhood and continues in adulthood.

As can be seen above, the study goes in line with the world trend regarding the allocation of roles between males and females. Males are more concerned with power, while females are more concerned with solidarity.

2.3.2. Wahyuningsih (2018)

In his case study, [2] studied the differences of using language between male and female students in Indonesia. These differences were examined from several angles, including vocabulary, attitudes, and non-verbal differences. Typical of a qualitative research, data were collected through transcripts of a video documentation played by the students of Sharia Department at STAIN Kudus. The findings show that males and females exhibit differences in their uses of language. Males tend to be more directive and assertive. They employ vocabulary as a strategy to hold the floor. In contrast, females are more expressive and polite in using language. In addition, they use more gestures and words reflecting their feeling, emotional and psychological states.

The study findings go in line with the general trend in the world of language and gender; 0 men's conversations assert power, while women's conversations reflect solidarity.

2.3.3. Haji Hassan (1999)

on his part, examined how Syrian men and women enact different roles in conversational discourse[3],. Four audio taped conversations were used in the study: two cross- sex conversations, one all-male conversation, and one all-female conversation.
's findings run counter to most studies in language and gender. By examining topic management strategies in men's and women's

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[1] Coates, J. (1986). Women, Men and Language. London: Longman.

[2] Wahyuningsih, S. (2018). Men and Women Differences in Using Language: A Case Study of Students at Stain Kudus. In Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture, 3 (1), retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net

[3] Haji-Hassan, I. (1999). Language, Gender, and Power: Analysis of Theme and Topic Management in Arabic conversational Discourse. Ph. D. Dissertation. Georgetown University, U.S.

conversation[1], he came up with the conclusion that Syrian women exert conversational power over Syrian men by making use of a higher number of topics than do the men: first, by raising more topics in the conversation; second, by having their topics more successfully developed; and third, by using more interruptions. Moreover, his data analysis shows that women use linguistic strategies typical of the competitive interactional style, such as address forms, disagreement and advice to exercise power and dominance, while men use minimal responses, indirect address forms, and laughter, among other strategies, to build solidarity.

It is evident that the above study goes counter to most studies carried out in language and gender in relation to the allocation of roles on the conversational floor. This is a point which I will further debate in my current study.

3. Methodology

3.1. Context of the Study

The scope of investigation is a Syrian town called Al-Atareb, situated in the West of Aleppo, a big Syrian city. Al-Atareb is known as a conservative town, with its women wearing scarves and three-quarter-length dresses symbolic of the traditional dress of the typical Syrian countryside. The language of communication used by the people is Atarebian Arabic, one of the Syrian dialects. However, the people are exposed to Classical Arabic since young via studying and memorizing the Holy Quran. Further, via the mass media, Atarebians are in contact with other varieties of Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic in particular, which is a key subject of study in all stages of education.

3.2. Participants

The focus of the research is different males and females from different families in Al-Atareb, the researcher's family being one. Each informant in the study is sixteen years old or over. The participants were chosen randomly. They differed in age, education and the degree of familiarity, as to enable the researcher to obtain clearer results as well as a fairer panoramic view of the town's concept of the male/ female assignment of roles in a typical family.

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[1] Haji- Hassan, I. (1999). Language, Gender, and Power: Analysis of Theme and Topic Management in Arabic conversational Discourse. Ph. D. Dissertation. Georgetown University, U.S.

3.3. Data Collection Phase

The method used in this research was the participant-observation method. This method, as defined by [1], is a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, interactions and events of a group of people as one means of learning explicit and tacit aspects of their routine and culture (1). With Participant-observation method, the researcher moved between two extremes ranging from moments of a high degree of involvement to moments of a low degree of involvement. This alternation between these two types of observation mainly depended on the degree of kinship and closeness between the researcher and the participants: the more closeness they had, the higher involvement there was, and vice versa.

In the observation, field notes as well as audio recordings were used, depending on the degree of intimacy as well as the sensitivity of the situation: the more formal the situation was, the less audio recording the researcher tried to use. The ethics of research were fully observed, as the researcher secured the participant's consent for their voluntary participation in the research.

4. Data Analysis

To be analysed, data was centred on the key sociolinguistic aspect, which is command. Below is a detailed presentation of this pillar with proper analysis.

4.1. Commands

The pivot of the study involved the question of who among the Syrian males and females have the upper hand in using commands. The informants were divided among five conversational groups. Of the five interactions observed, two were tape recorded, while three were observed by taking notes. Analysis of the commands used by the participants in the five interactions will be illustrated later.

As regards coding the commands used by the informants in the five interactions, the researcher used [2]'s coding of the different categories of commands, with some modifications and the researcher's own examples. These categories could be shown as follows:

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[1] DeWalt, M. & DeWalt, R. (2011). Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers. Chicago: Rowman & Littlefield.

[2] Sachs, J. (1987). Preschool Boys' and Girls' Language Use in Pretend Play. In S. Philips, S. Steele and C. Tanz (Eds.), Language, Gender and Sex in Comparative Perspective (pp. 178-88). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Table 1. Coding categories for commands

Coding	Example
Imperative	Give me my watch
Prohibition	Don't raise your voice
Polite Directive	Open the door please!
Question Directive	Will you bring the tea?
Joint Directive	Let's go shopping
Tag question	This is my bag, right?

Having coded the different commands, now I present a detailed analysis of the five interactions with their use of commands.

4.1.1 First Conversation

The first conversation took place in Zuheir's house over a lunch meal and lasted for about two hours. The participants were four females and two males together. The topics discussed were for the most part of female concern - marriage, raising children, daily routine in the past winter- with few typically male topics, like computers and sports.

The following table displays the different categories of command used by both sexes in the conversation:

Table. 2. Number of commands in the first interaction

Category	Males	Females
Imperative	6	20
Prohibition	2	0
Polite Directive	0	2
Question Directive	6	18
Joint Directive	1	2
Tag question	0	2

Following [1], the above categories of commands can be grouped into two larger classes: mitigated commands and unmitigated commands. Imperative and prohibition are, as [2] calls them, "directive forms showing no mitigation" (18), while the other categories are more mitigated in the sense that they are more polite and more cooperative. In this sense, unmitigated commands reflect the speaker's concern with power, whereas mitigated commands promote the speaker's concern with solidarity ([3]). Table 2 shows the number and percentage of the

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[1] Sachs, J. (1987). Preschool Boys' and Girls' Language Use in Pretend Play. In S. Philips, S. Steele and C. Tanz (Eds.), Language, Gender and Sex in Comparative Perspective (pp. 178- 188). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

mitigated as well as the unmitigated commands used by the males and the females in the first interaction. For convenience the numbers have been rounded up to the closest whole numbers:

Table. 3. Number and percentage of commands, mitigated and unmitigated, used by each sex

Category	Males		Females	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Unmitigated	8	53%	20	45%
Mitigated	7	47%	24	55%

From the table above, we see how the percentage of the unmitigated commands used by the males is a little bit higher than the percentage of their mitigated commands. Reversely, the females' mitigated commands are slightly higher in percentage than their unmitigated commands. The results of this interaction, it follows, demonstrate power on the part of the males and solidarity on the part of the females.

4.1.2. Second Conversation

The second interaction was observed in Sanaa's house over a lunch meal and lasted for about 1: 30 hours. The participants were four males and four females. The topics discussed in the interaction mainly revolved around topics like electric fans, cooking and sports.

The following table shows the different categories of command used by both sexes in the second conversation:

Table 4. Number of commands in various categories used by males and females

Category	Males	Females
Imperative	6	1
Prohibition	2	1
Polite Directive	4	4
Question Directive	2	1
Joint Directive	0	3
Tag question	0	0

Grouping the categories into mitigated commands and unmitigated commands, we can have the following table:

Table 5. Number and percentage of commands mitigated and unmitigated used by each sex in the second interaction

Category	Males		Females	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Unmitigated	8	57%	2	20%
Mitigated	6	43%	8	80%

As the above table shows, the percentage of the unmitigated commands used by the males is a little bit higher than their mitigated commands: 57% to 43%. On the other hand, the females' mitigated

commands are much higher in percentage than their unmitigated commands: 80 % to 20 %. The results of the interaction as such indicate the males' concern with power and the females concern with solidarity.

4.1.3. Third Conversation

The third observation was made in the researcher's house. It lasted for 3:15 hours. The participants were six females and five males. The topics of the conversation were mainly about commerce, market places, study and exams, good and bad companions, exercising, and so on. The following table shows the different categories of command used by both sexes in the interaction:

Table 6. Number of commands in various categories used by males and females in the third interaction

Category	Males	Females
Imperative	15	11
Prohibition	1	1
Polite Directive	3	10
Question Directive	2	2
Joint Directive	2	1
Tag question	0	2

The number and percentage of the mitigated and unmitigated commands in the above table could be shown as follows:

Table7. Number and percentage of commands mitigated and unmitigated used in the third conversation

Category	Males		Females	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Unmitigated	16	70%	12	44%
Mitigated	7	30%	15	56%

As is clear from the table above, the percentage of the unmitigated commands used by the males in the third interaction is much higher than their mitigated commands: 70 % to 30 %. On the contrary, the females' mitigated commands are slightly higher in percentage than their unmitigated commands: 56% to 44%. The results of this interaction, then, certify the earlier claim that the males are more concerned with power, while the females are more concerned with solidarity.

4.1.4. Fourth Conversation

The fourth interaction took place in the researcher's house and lasted for about 1:55 hours. The participants were four males and four females. The topics of the interaction were mainly about religious matters such as pilgrimage, filial conducts, charity, and so on, and then about joblessness, daily routine, among other topics.

In this interaction pointing to the tape recorder was done twice by participants, but the flow of the interaction showed the participants as quite spontaneous and unaffected by the presence of any recording, so the results could be regarded as ideally representative.

An interesting sentence that drew my attention in this interaction was a sentence which was said by a female speaker-Hannouf - directed to a younger female participant- Hasnaa-, requesting her not to leave, and which involved three mitigated commands:

(7.) *Ma   t?'di   wein   raih.a   ma   tshar.i*
 Not   sit-you   where   go-you   not   stay-you!
 Why don't you sit? Where are you going? Why don't you stay?

The following table shows the different categories of command used by both sexes in the interaction:

Table 8. Number of commands in various categories used by males and females in the fourth interaction

Category	Males	Females
Imperative	11	12
Prohibition	1	1
Polite Directive	3	5
Question Directive	1	6
Joint Directive	1	1
Tag question	0	0

Mitigated and unmitigated commands in this interaction then are as follows:

Table 9. Number and percentage of commands mitigated and unmitigated in the fourth interaction

Category	Males		Females	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Unmitigated	12	78%	13	48%
Mitigated	5	27%	12	52%

From the table above, we see how the percentage of the males' unmitigated commands is much higher than the percentage of their mitigated commands. Surprisingly enough, however, the females' mitigated commands are slightly lower in percentage than their unmitigated commands. This is an indication that both the males and females in this interaction are concerned with power rather than solidarity, with a much stronger tendency for power on the part of the males than the females.

4.1.5. Fifth Conversation

The fifth and last interaction took place in Abdul's house. The conversation lasted for about 1: 33 minutes. The participants were five males and four females. The major topics discussed were sports, Abdul' experience in England, pollution, everyday activities, and so on.

The following table shows the different categories of command used by both sexes in the interaction:

Table 10. Number of commands in various categories used by males and females

Category	Males	Females
Imperative	12	7
Prohibition	1	0
Polite Directive	5	3
Question Directive	2	2
Joint Directive	1	2
Tag question	0	1

The following table shows the number and percentage of the mitigated and unmitigated commands used by each sex in the interaction:

Table 11. Number and percentage of commands mitigated and unmitigated used by each sex

Category	Males		Females	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Unmitigated	23	74%	7	47%
Mitigated	8	26%	8	53%

From the table above, we see how the percentage of the unmitigated commands used by the males is superbly higher than the percentage of their mitigated commands: 74 % to 26 %. Reversely, the females' mitigated commands are slightly higher in percentage than their unmitigated commands: 53 % to 47 %. This strongly confirms the earlier claim that on the conversational floor, Syrian males seek power, while Syrian females seek solidarity.

4.1.6. Discussion

Taking into consideration the commands used in the five interactions combined, the number of the unmitigated commands to the mitigated commands used by men is on average far higher in percentage than that scored by women. Of the whole number of commands scored by the males in the five interactions sixty seven were unmitigated, while thirty three were mitigated. As regards the percentage, unmitigated commands have the percentage of 67 % of the overall number of the commands used by men, whereas mitigated

commands have the percentage of 33 % only. As for the females, their use of the mitigated commands is higher than their use of the unmitigated commands. Of the total number of the commands the females used in the five interactions sixty seven were mitigated, while fifty four were unmitigated. In terms of percentage, mitigated commands occupy 55 % of the total number of the females' commands, while the unmitigated commands occupy only 45 %. The following two tables summarise what we have already mentioned:

Table 12. The number and percentage of the unmitigated commands used in the five interactions

Unmitigated	Males		Females	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
	67	67%	54	45%

Table 13. The number and percentage of the mitigated commands used in the five interactions

Mitigated	Males		Females	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
	33	33%	67	55%

Taking into account the early assumption that unmitigated commands are an expression of the speaker's power, whereas mitigated commands are a reflection of his or her solidarity ([1] ; [2]), the above table is a clear indication that the male participants in general are more concerned with power, while the female participants are more concerned   with   solidarity.

5. Conclusion

Grounded in the data analysed in this study, the overall conclusion betrays the general trend that Syrian males interact in ways which reflect power, while Syrian females' interactional style demonstrates a clearer tendency to build solidarity. This was clearly shown in the general tendencies for both of the two sexes: the males are more inclined to exert power over the females and control the thread of the conversation via the frequent use of unmitigated command. The females, on the other hand, seek to promote solidarity via the clear and repeated use of mitigated commands. This conclusion goes in line with most studies in language and gender conducted in the

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[1] Hudson, R. (1996). Sociolinguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[2] Sachs, J. (1987). Preschool Boys' and Girls' Language Use in Pretend Play, In S. Philips, S. Steele and C. Tanz (Eds.), Language, Gender and Sex in Comparative Perspective (pp. 178- 188). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

linguistic literature: [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], and [6], among others, despite the fact that the context of the study is totally different.

More importantly, the finding runs counter to [7]'s finding that Syrian men are more concerned with solidarity, while Syrian women are more concerned with power. This discrepancy between the current findings on the one hand and [8]'s on the other may be attributed to the different research settings examined in both studies. Haji-Hassan's setting was Aleppo, a big Syrian city with more liberated life, while the researcher's setting was Al-Atareb, a town smaller in size and population with more conservative residents.

6. Recommendations for Further Studies

The discrepancy already mentioned in the findings of the two Syrian studies calls to mind the necessity for further studies in Syria to come up with more stable illustrations of language and gender roles. Further studies could take the research further and investigate other parameters of the concepts of power and solidarity, for example interruptions and topic initiation and development.

This study examined gender and language use in Syria, with particular focus on commands. This angle has not been researched amply. This, the researcher hopes, will make a valid contribution to the linguistic literature produced in Syria.

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