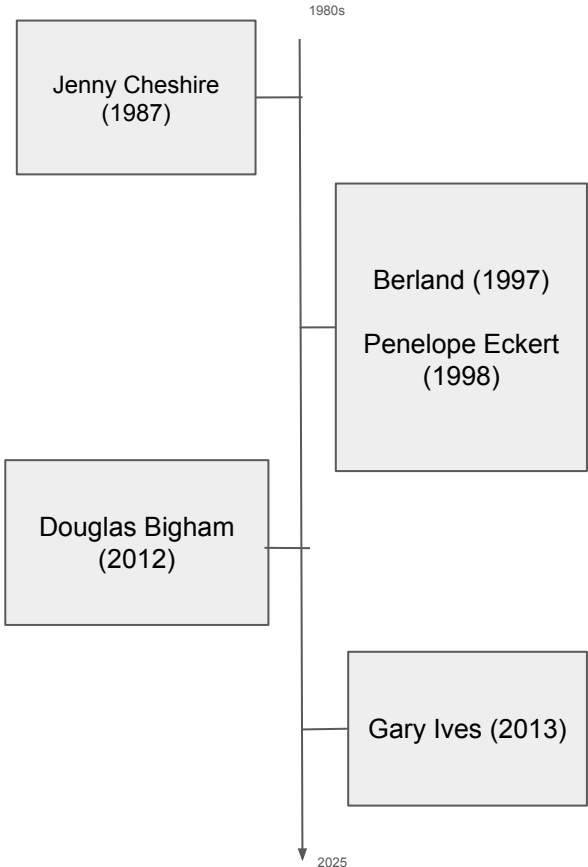


Key term	Definition
Chronological Age	The age of a person measured from birth until a given date.
Social Age	Age in relation to social factors such as marriage and family.
Biological Age	Age in relation to a person's physical and mental maturity and development.
Divergence	A linguistic strategy where a speaker intentionally changes their language to become more different from the person they are interacting with. This can involve accentuating differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar to create distance or express disapproval.
Convergence	A process where a speaker modifies their language to be more similar to the person they are speaking to, often to create a sense of connection or shared identity.
Teenspeak	Language used by teenagers such as slang, colloquialisms, informal language, jargon and text talk.
Societal Norms	Ways in which society perceives what is deemed acceptable through a list of well-acknowledged standards and rules which the majority conform to.
Multiple Negation	A grammatical construction where more than one negative element appears in a sentence or clause, creating an unintentional positive meaning. For example 'I haven't done nothing wrong'.
Taboo Language	Words or expressions that are considered offensive, shocking, or inappropriate for polite conversation due to social, cultural, or religious reasons, and are therefore generally avoided or substituted with euphemisms.

Timeline of Language and Age



**This timeline details just some of the main theorists associated with language and age , there are many more that you will study too!*

Example Questions

Evaluate the idea that someone's age impacts the language they use
(30 Marks)

Evaluate the idea that teenagers are the biggest influence on the development of spoken language
(30 Marks)

Evaluate the extent to which teenagers are a homogenous group when it comes to language use
(30 Marks)

Command Words

Analyse -Break down the content of a topic, or issue, into its constituent elements in order to provide an in-depth account and convey an understanding of it.

Evaluate - Consider several options, ideas or arguments and come to a conclusion about their importance/success/worth.

Assessment Objectives

A01: Use appropriate methods of language analysis including use of linguistic terminology.

A02: Demonstrate a critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use.

Key Theorists - Language and Age

PENELOPE ECKERT

- Argues that age can be defined in various ways including chronological age, biological age and social age.
- Her research concluded that 18-25 year olds did not always share the same social characteristics.
- In 1997, Eckert released some works that discuss a range of social aspects of language use.
- One of her articles, 'Gender and Sociolinguistic Variation', focuses on how gender affects language use.
- Conducted research surrounding 'jocks' and 'burnouts' in an American High School.
- The study found that the two groups had distinct linguistic patterns and that language was closely tied to social identity and status.

JENNY CHESHIRE

- Looked at 11 non-standard forms used by children of varying young ages against their adherence to the law on the playground at a school in Reading.
- These features included: Multiple negation (double negatives – using more than one negative in a sentence). Non-standard use of 'what' (e.g. 'is this the book what we are learning about?') and 'ain't' being used as a copular verb ('you ain't the teacher').
- Her research concluded that: All children that approved of criminal activities within their peer group were more likely to use non-standard forms. More boys than girls approved.
- This means we can deduce that non-standard variations are conscious choices in language.

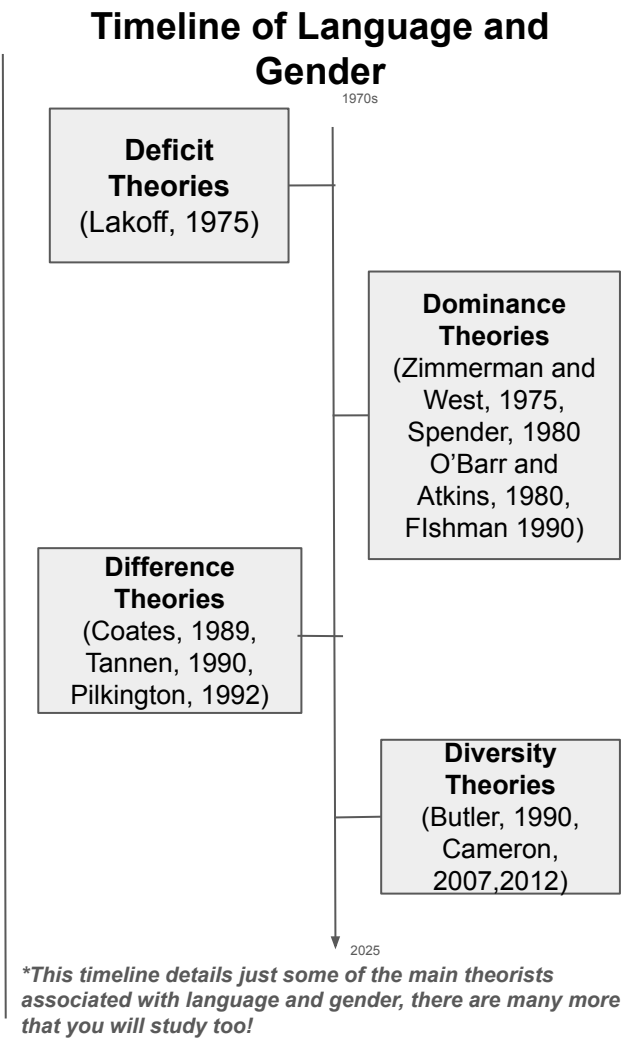
GARY IVES

- Gary Ives' research on language and age highlights that young people perceive distinct age-related variations in speech, with a common assumption that language becomes more standard with age, and that teenagers actively use informal, slang-filled, and sometimes taboo language to establish social identities and peer group belonging.
- A case study conducted by Ives at a West Yorkshire secondary school found that 100% of students believed people speak differently depending on their age.

DOUGLAS BIGHAM

- Bigam argues for the validity of the "emerging adulthood" stage as a distinct life phase, particularly influential in sociolinguistics.
- This stage is defined by psychological characteristics rather than solely by age or traditional markers of adulthood.
- Bigam suggests that the characteristics of emerging adulthood (exploration, instability, and change) align with those of sociolinguistic innovators, making this demographic a crucial group for studying language change and variation.
- The concept of emerging adulthood questions the idea that language variation is primarily maintained by geographical boundaries or fixed social roles, suggesting that individual psychological states and transitional periods are significant factors.

Key term	Definition
Deficit	The idea that women's language is weak and insufficient compared to men's.
Dominance	The idea that men's language is naturally more powerful than women's due to features they use and their societal roles.
Difference	The idea that neither male nor female language is better or more powerful but they just have differing aspects.
Diversity	The range of differences among individuals language use, particularly in terms of their backgrounds, characteristics, and perspectives.
Hedging	Using cautious,indirect language to avoid certainty, for example 'maybe', 'possibly' or 'perhaps'. Associated with women's language use.
Tag Questions	Questions added onto the end of declarative statements to make them into questions. Such as 'the weather is nice today, isn't it?' Associated with women's language use and their tendency to appreciate conversation more.
Non-Fluency Features	Elements in spoken language that interrupt the smooth flow of speech, such as fillers, hesitations, false starts, and repetitions.
Genderlect	Describes the features that men and women use within their language that make them different and opposing.
Gender	Refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, expressions, and identities of individuals, which can vary across cultures and time.



Example Questions

Evaluate the idea that women's talk is naturally cooperative whereas men's talk is naturally competitive **(30 marks)**

Evaluate the idea that women and men speak different varieties of English. **(30 marks)**

Analyse how language is used in text A and text B to present views about occupational jargon **(40 marks)**

Evaluate the idea that an individual's language largely contributes towards their personality **(30 marks)**

Write an opinion article in which you discuss issues surrounding language and gender **(30 marks)**

Command Words

Analyse -Break down the content of a topic, or issue, into its constituent elements in order to provide an in-depth account and convey an understanding of it.

Evaluate - Consider several options, ideas or arguments and come to a conclusion about their importance/success/worth.

Assessment Objectives

AO1: Apply appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and identifying patterns and complexities.

A02: Demonstrate a critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use.

Key Theorists - Language and Gender

DEBORAH TANNEN

- Particularly known for her **difference model**.
- Argues that men and women often have **different conversational styles** due to differing socialisation and communication goals, rather than one being superior.
- Contrasts '**report talk**' with '**rapport talk**'.
- Claimed that **men** tend to use language to **assert dominance and independence**, while **women** use it to **build connections and intimacy**.
- This can lead to **misunderstandings** when men and women interact, as they may **interpret the same language differently**.

DALE SPENDER

- Argues that language often **views men as the default or "norm,"** with **women being seen as an add-on or deviation**, evident in examples like "mankind" and the **convention of introducing men before women** (e.g., "Lord and Lady" or "Mr and Mrs"). The only exception for this being when women are in a **maternal role**, such as "**Mother and Father**".
- Suggests that **men are more likely to interrupt, dominate conversations, and have their voices heard**, while **women are expected to be more passive and less assertive**.

ROBIN LAKOFF

- Introduced the **deficit model**, claiming that **women's language carried less power, presence and authority** due to linguistic features that they use.
- These include:
 - High use of '**empty**' adjectives such as '**lovely**' and '**brilliant**'.
 - High volume of **tag questions** in exchanges.
 - Overusing **intensifiers** such as '**so**'.
 - Specific **lexicon** for shades of colours.
 - Less swearing**.
 - Less joking/**lack of humour**.

JUDITH BUTLER

- Challenged the idea that gender is determined by **biological sex** or an inherent identity.
- Stated that gender is **performative**, constructed and maintained through repeated acts, gestures and behaviours that are interpreted as either masculine or feminine within a given **social context**.
- Performativity** is not a performance but subconscious role-playing where a person solidifies their gender through social interaction and cultural norms.
- Suggested that **communities of practice** (different groups a person belongs to and associates with) determine their 'performed' gender.

DEBORAH CAMERON

- Believes that **difference is a myth**.
- Claims **communication is more important to women**.
- States that **men talk more about facts** and getting things done, whereas **women talk more about people and feelings**.
- Believes that **men use language as an opportunity to gain power or status**.
- Coined the term '**verbal hygiene**' referring to ways in which people regulate their language and communication to conform to social expectations and norms.

ZIMMERMAN AND WEST

- Their study was based on **31 recorded conversations** including people who were all Caucasian, middle-class and 35 years old or less.
- The study found that in same-sex conversations, **interruptions** were distributed fairly evenly among the speakers.
- In mixed-sex conversations, however, men were responsible for **96% of interruptions**.
- This concluded that **men dominate and manoeuvre conversation** for their own purposes by interrupting more and talking longer in mixed-sex communications.
- This research **supports/ adds to Lakoff's claims** surrounding language and gender.