Languages for Specific Purposes in Theory and Practice

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Edited by

Azamat Akbarov

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MARIJANA SIVRIC

Introduction

A rather broad and open-ended definition of identity, given by Buholtz and Hall, would be the social positioning of the self and other. They also suggest that "identity may be in part intentional, in part habitual and less than fully conscious, in part an outcome of interactional negotiation, in part a construct of others' perceptions and representations, and in part an outcome of larger ideological processes and structures" (Buholtz and Hall 2005, 2).

Even a superficial view of this definition shows that identity, especially gender identity research, is multidimensional and interdisciplinary. One of the dimensions important for understanding identity construction is sociological, in which we speak about a person's positioning within a social group and how a social group influences self-gendering. Another dimension is psychological, "where the divergence in perspectives can be characterized in terms whether sex typing is considered adaptive or maladaptive, described as an individual or normative difference, and whether gender identity is regarded as a unidimensional or multidimensional construct" (Ruble, Lurye and Zosuls 2008). The third dimension of particular interest is a discursive dimension of gender identity, i.e. how gender identity is constructed through the construction of discourse or particular discursive events.

Naturally, none of these can be taken separately. Rather, they are intertwined, helping to create an overall picture of identity construction. In their social life, people are positioned within varied structures of institutions and society, are assigned specific social roles, and take on different gender identities in different communities or cultures. In addition, they are actively involved in the construction and performance of their own gender identities.

Belonging to a social group profoundly influences human behaviour, the implications of which can be both positive and negative. Membership

of a social group can promote a positive social identity from which individuals enhance their self-esteem and a sense of belongingness or connectedness to others. On the other hand, it can promote "negative bias toward out-group members, derogation of in-group members who violate group norms, and disengagement from certain areas in which one group has been negatively stereotyped" (Ruble, Lurye and Zosuls 2008, 2)

Being multidimensional, gender identity is reflected in the relationship with social identity, which shows the awareness of group membership, and personal adjustment. Gender identity may be conceptualised as categorical knowledge (the individual confirms they are a member of a certain group), a feeling of importance (being a part of that group is really important), and evaluation (they like being a part of that group).

The degree of masculinity or femininity was earlier considered by developmental psychologists as a direct and optimal result of sex typing—the individual is either a man or a woman. However, cross-sex typing has been seen as deviant and potentially harmful. Bem (1981) argues that the extent to which people have been sex typed was indicative of the extent to which they were gender schematic or had internalised culturally prescribed gender norms. This could result in negative adjustment, meaning that people will not be able to react appropriately in different situations, especially when gender norms are violated. Higgins (2000) suggests that people can be either prevention focused, being concerned with avoiding negative outcomes, or promotion focused, in obtaining positive outcomes.[1]

In feminist theory, a frequently used metaphor is "creation of different faces" in constructing one's own identity. This refers to particular situations through which we, while performing gender, create different gender identities. As Eckert and McConnell (2003) emphasise, "in a world where simply being can count as being bad, identities are often constructed in opposition to dominant cultural ideologies. Identity construction is not an exclusively individual act, social selves are produced in interaction, through processes of contestation and collaboration."

In the 1990s a diversity of research on identities emerged, investigating how it was constructed, displayed and performed in the language used by particular gender groups, e.g. McElhinny (1993) on women police officers in Pittsburgh, or Bergvall (1996) on women engineering students. It was a period in which a shift in thinking about gender occurred in feminist theory and gender studies. Gender identity was no longer conceptualised

[1] Higgins gives an example of a woman wearing a feminine outfit to avoid criticism for being unfeminine or looking unattractive or, in contrast, to be admired for being feminine and perceived as attractive.

as something people just *have* but also as involving what they *do*, how they *react* in particular situations. Gender is undergoing a constant process of production, reproduction and change through performance of gendered acts in which people project their own gendered identities.

Construction of Identity

Identity construction, as suggested, is multifold. It may occur as the creation of individual identity, the simultaneous creation and challenging of other people's identity, their relationships within group identity, etc. In the reality we experience around us, a specific group identity rarely exists or operates in isolation from other identities. Individual identities are largely determined by the identity of the social groups they belong to. People often identify with and are influenced by group memberships, which does not mean that this identification is directly relevant to their present circumstances. Therefore, the social identity network of an individual has significant implications for a person's perceptions, emotions, and behaviours. An individual creates a network of different identities, not exclusively connected to one group or the last group of which they were a member.

The two key concepts that offer complementary perspectives on identity are whether the individual is "the same" as their group or if they "differ" from it. If they are "the same," they are allowed to see themselves as belonging to a group, while if they are "different" it produces social distance between those who perceive themselves as unlike it.

Apart from the individual and in-group identities, there are also differences between in-group members and those outside the group. This is a well known concept of in-group and out-group relationships, which are, in most cases, ideologically conditioned. Buholtz and Hall (2003) suggest that such ideological ranking enables the most powerful group to constitute itself as a norm from which all others diverge. However, that norm is not usually recognisable as a separate identity.

Within this complex relational network of different identities, it is possible that some in-group members are identified as closer to the members of the out-group. This is especially significant in social groups in which complex gendered identities are at work. Getting closer to the members of the other group leads to identity change, which also challenges because individuals start categorising themselves as members of any new group that they have joined. The process of taking on a new group membership involves an adjustment of one's own identity or, to be more precise, the present identity, in order to accommodate the identity of

the new group. It may take some time before people become accustomed to the new group membership, or before they start perceiving that group's identity as a part of their self-identity.

In contrast, this integration to the new group is not always successful. People may experience rejection and hostility from the members of the group, a very difficult position especially if they want to prove themselves worthy of being a member of a group they highly identify with (Jetten et al. 2004).

Iyer, Jetten and Tsavrikos (2006) suggest that old and new group memberships may be reconciled. One possibility is that both identities independently co-exist without any impact on each other. That is, the idea of network of identities that we all create does not, in fact, depend on the group we belong to but on the situation in which we find ourselves.

Another question that we tackled earlier is that of power relations within the group or between the groups. Previous research on identity is based on the assumption that identities are attributes of individuals or groups rather than of situations. The power of a group is dynamically constructed and exercised in different aspects of a specific interaction; group members manifest power in a variety of ways as they construct their own identities and roles in response to the behaviour of others. When we speak of gendered power, especially in mixed-gender groups with a majority of men, it is significant how women try to construct their identity. Women who attempt to adjust to more masculine styles of behaviour are considered more credible but less feminine, a situation typical in the military or police force, for example. Howes and Stevenson emphasise that "women in groups are less prone to self-assertion and more prone to compromise … If women follow the trend shown by the sociological data and become a large minority of military personnel, their presence can be expected to change the organizational structure in which they participate" (Howes and Stevenson 1993).

If we think of the military as a traditionally male group, with a specific and rather rigid identity, it is true that allowing the access of a larger number of women into the group will require a new strategic vision and leadership which challenges the existing one. Nevertheless, being a minority, women rarely achieve high-level positions, and if they do the reason for selection is their rather counter-stereotypical characteristics, i.e. less feminine and more masculine. Howes and Stevenson describe this situation as females protecting themselves by adopting the attitudes of their male colleagues. They "go native in order to survive" (Howes and Stevenson 2000).

Most research on women in contemporary male-dominated organisations suggests that women develop two major patterns of adaptation: co-option and segregation. The first applies to those structures and occupations where women accept male definitions of the situation and try to blend into the male organisational culture. The second pattern manifests itself in groups of women who become effectively isolated from the organisational mainstream and cultivate female friendship, support, and cooperation in order to cope with the rejection or obstacles put before them by the opposite gender.

The situation in the military can be more complex. An article in *Minerva: Quarterly Report on Women and the Military* regarding the captivity of Rhonda Cornum during the Gulf War states:

> Women in wartime and in military culture provide a ready test for male dominance and a ready target of anger: women become the object of male violence just for being there. They violate the male terrain of war and fraternity of power. Tailhook is an excellent example of male terrain, where the women "had" to have it happen. Similarly, the female captivity can't be over until there is a rape.
>
> (Grumer 1996, 12)

Victoria Bergvall gives a similar example of female engineering students: on the one hand there is a social need to behave in stereotypically "feminine" ways, if they wish to take part in heterosexual social and sexual relationships. On the other hand, if they are going to succeed in their studies, they must assert themselves and their views, which is liable to put them in competition with fellow students. This involves assertive, competitive behaviour perceived as "masculine." What is important is the way women try to adjust their identities if they want to become members of a male-dominated group. Obviously, it is a very hard job; they have to give up a great deal of their femininity in order to become a part of the male group. Women who find themselves in new groups like the military can partly segregate with other girls and preserve their identity, but they can consequently become "targets of male anger," their positions and identities challenged in both ways (Bergvall 1996).

There is also an opposite example of the identity adjustment requiring discussion here—men who want to become members of a female-dominated group. Do male nurses have to co-opt or segregate, and is their male identity challenged? These are some of the questions we will try to answer in the following section.

Gender Identity in Language and Discourse

The third dimension of identity research noted earlier is the discursive dimension. The question of identity construction is primarily expressed through language and is extremely significant in defining how gender identities are reflected in discourse. Buholtz and Hall (2005, 585) argue that "identity is best viewed as the emergent product rather than the pre-existing source of linguistic and other semiotic practices and therefore as fundamentally a social and cultural phenomenon." As such, identity is an intersection between culturally imposed and personal meanings which may be chosen and imposed through language use.

In particular discursive situations, identity is formed and constructed through different language forms. When constructed in ongoing discourse, identity is not a final product or creation; it is constantly challenged, reproduced, adjusted and changed. The dynamic perspective is in contrast with the traditional view of identities as unitary and constant psychological states or social categories. As each community has its identity, the linguistic reflection of that identity is the language specific for that particular community. Therefore, we can say that language is an authentic expression of group identity.

Some sociolinguistic approaches to language and identity associate rates of use of particular linguistic forms with particular kinds of speakers. Of course, speakers are not always aware of all the language features they are using in particular situations and the nuances of linguistic behaviours which signify their identity. But they are definitely sure of certain aspects of language which they use in certain situations to confirm their identity, e.g. radicals who use some linguistic expressions pejoratively, ascribing completely new meanings to them, or the expressions used pejoratively by male soldiers to identify themselves as a group opposed to female soldiers.

Due to gender subordination, according to Eckert (1989), women in many cultures do not have the same access to possible accomplishments as men, for which they tend to compensate through more symbolic resources, primarily language, personality and physical appearance, in order to present themselves as acceptable or equal members of society. The relationship between speakers' gender and their use of linguistic forms is seen to be a direct one. However, some linguists claim that this relationship is indirect: "linguistic features are associated with gender via their association with something else that itself can be associated with gender, e.g. a professional woman who uses a direct, forceful style of speaking and is described by her colleagues as 'talking like a man'" (Ochs and Taylor 1995).

Does it mean that this woman is using language to signal that she is aware of her masculine behaviour and wants others to accept her as such, or is she using it for professional reasons to index her self-confidence and authority, which is also connected to masculinity? It is especially important how we perceive this situation in male-dominated groups or female-dominated groups in regard to the power the female wants to exert. What she regards as appropriate to her professional status can be interpreted by others as inappropriate for her behaviour as a woman, which does not mean that it is inappropriate for her new identity.

As we can see, the same way of speaking can signify both professional identity and gendered identity, which in practice is difficult to separate, and the usage of language for one or the other identity is to be negotiated for each particular situation or context. For a female soldier, it is not always necessary to index her masculine nature or behaviour; it depends on the situational context and discursive practice.

Another important feature in constructing gender identity in male-dominated groups is hegemonic masculinity, frequently connected to violence. M. Talbot suggests that "masculinity is not an individual property or attribute; it is formed within institutions and is historically constituted" (Talbot 1998, 191). When women perform a "masculine" job, they have to perform it through the power of the institution. This is expressed symbolically, through the way they are dressed, i.e. special uniforms, to the language they use and the way they behave, i.e. physical ability and exertion of power. On the other hand, the presence of women in typically masculine jobs can lead to a certain shift of identity of a whole group, sometimes through the language forms they use, and sometimes through cool and emotionless efficacy, something which will be argued in the following chapter.

Adjustment of Identity in Discourse—Discussion

In her paper on women police officers in Pittsburgh, Bonnie McElhinny (1995) claims that investigations on gender should not focus exclusively on differences between men and women but also on how hegemonic femininities and masculinities produce subordinate and subversive femininities and masculinities. In this way, the existence of competition between male and female identities is also investigated in different contexts. Similarly, we have investigated the positioning of female identity in male-dominated jobs, as well as the positioning of male identity in typically female occupations. For that purpose we studied gender performances of female soldiers and male nurses based on interviews with

thirty groups of female and male soldiers, and ten female and male nurses, through the analysis of their blogs and forums, i.e. their cyber-communication. It was found that both examined groups, female soldiers and male nurses, must to a certain extent adjust their feminine or masculine identities by positioning in one-gender dominated groups. The work of female police officers and soldiers is considered masculine, and they can be perceived as women, men or simply as police officers or soldiers. Their female identity is challenged by the identity of the group whose members they want to be, which is predominantly a masculine identity. The initial perception and stereotype of women as mothers, housewives, secretaries etc. is transformed into an image of rational and efficient professionals. However, it is not the same image as that of a male soldier, embodying strength, aggressiveness and excessive use of force. For example, the stereotypical attitudes of male soldiers, such as "this is not for women; what is a woman doing here?" or "women should cook and take care of children," are gradually changed into attitudes of recognition of effort, such as "women find the solutions to problems that no man can even think of" or "women contribute to the humanity of the modern military."

This is a situation in which both identities are challenged: the female is getting closer to the male identity form, whereas the typically male is slightly changed in a more rational and professional direction. Some of the male soldiers examined agreed that "the character of the military is changing due to the fact that there are more and more women soldiers." They also readily confirm that "women are better at administrative work, they are more efficient and organized and also better at writing reports,"[2] although it is not quite clear if they perceive certain tasks within the military as male or female only. What is more acceptable than anticipated to the male soldiers is the idea of women's participation in direct combat. Most of them agree that "a soldier is a soldier, and should therefore perform all the duties equally." However, some of them think "it should be voluntary for women." Generally, the stereotypes that those from the outside world seem to have about women in the military are being changed from the heart of that typically male organisation—male soldiers think that "the significance of women in the military should be promoted."

On the other hand, female soldiers themselves, especially the younger ones, show their more "masculine" nature, e.g. "we have passed all the training and should take part in combat, if necessary"; "we want to be more equal to men"; "we are used to military order and discipline"; "there

[2] This was also reported for women police officers in McElhinny's paper (1995).

should be more women in commander positions." Some of them even perceive themselves as "future generals."

None of the informants, men or women, mentioned the physical appearance of tough and strong soldiers as a prerequisite, another stereotype. Obviously, it is not the appearance of female soldiers that define them as masculine but their actions and attitudes expressed in different situations. However, they can be labelled more masculine if they use too much profanity, which is again something that their male colleagues as insiders do not perceive as such. Some female soldiers report increased usage of profane language ("holy shit" and similar expressions) than they used before joining the military, with the tendency to use it in their outside environment, i.e. when surrounded by their families or friends. Usage of profanity can be conscious, making women closer to the male world, or unconscious, because of the majority's influence. Regardless of the reason, the use of profane language is the result of feminine identity adjustment to the identity of the other, masculine group.

It is also significant that they are aware of certain changes in their language use, at least on the lexical level. However, they are not completely aware of their style when answering the questions. Some of them are rather "gruff," their sentences truncated, giving precise answers to questions—in other words their style is more masculine than feminine. It was expected that women would give answers with lots of detailed descriptions, which did not happen. For example, to the question on how they joined the army, they just offered answers like "it is secure job"; "the pay is regular"; "the job is competitive and dynamic"; "the job is challenging."

On the question of female soldiers participating in direct combat, answers given were "we had the same training as men and we should take part in direct combat" and "we accepted this job and we should take part in direct combat." Interestingly, similar answers were given by the men, and in sentences of a similar style. The fact is that women are getting closer to the masculine way of speaking in the military, without descriptive details or more elaborate sentences typical of women.[3] The question is whether women see this kind of language use as the influence of masculine identity in the military or the identity of the institution itself, the answer in this case being unclear.

[3] This trait of their new identity can be described with a sentence from McElhinny's paper (1995), when a woman police officer says "I don't smile as much …." They describe a sense of reserve or emotional distance as the only way to survive on the job.

Despite the fact that a military job is associated with masculinity, female soldiers do not perceive themselves as such. In other words, the reasons for their joining the army are not a tough personality or behaviour, or a masculine appearance. In most of their answers the reasons were "job security in these insecure times when many people are jobless or unwaged," and "regular pay." The older ones followed the "sequence of events," i.e. they stayed in the military after the 1992 war in Boznia and Herzegovina, when they first joined. Several younger female soldiers mention their "childhood dreams to become soldiers" or "I had a father or brother in the same job and it was natural for me to follow the family tradition," or "because of competitiveness and physical action."

What is perceived as an adjustment from a feminine to more masculine identity of the institution might be explained by what McElhinny sees as a change in the normative pattern of masculinity—from physical aggressiveness to technical rationality and calculation. "In their interactions, female police officers construct a kind of masculinity that is simultaneously hegemonic, subordinate and subversive" (McElhinny 1995, 238).

However, in any situation men may align against women, or some men against some women, some women against other women, or some men and some women against others, because, as Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994) state, the processes of gendering can produce difference and inequality. This is clear from some of the answers of both men and women. Female soldiers are aware that this is a "male world," that sometimes they are perceived as "hookers or whores" on the one hand, or "fags or dykes" on the other. They occasionally experience treatment such as "you are a woman, you should wash the coffee cups" or "women should be at home and raise children." However, according to reports, such remarks are addressed to them only occasionally and by a few male soldiers whose "advances they rejected." Such comments are more common in their outside environment. Sometimes, there are negative comments from their female colleagues, such as "you are a whore" (if they are too close to male soldiers) or "you are overly ambitious," if they are envious of someone who achieves better results. Gossip and envy are considered more frequent from female colleagues than negative comments from men.

Finally, a few words about the language forms the institution itself uses for gender marking. Although the forms of address used in the military were not a focal point of this research, it is worth mentioning that all of the address forms are marked for the masculine gender. Unlike English, Croatian and other local languages show the distinction for feminine and

masculine ranking forms. However, the military in Bosnia and Herzegovina does not accept these forms which show feminine marking except in informal language. On the other hand, these forms are accepted in the Croatian military, so we have examples such as *bojnica* [major], *narednica* [sergeant] and *brigadirka* [colonel]. Most of the female soldiers included in our research do not see the use of masculine gender forms as a problem; it seems that they have taken them for granted, and what is more significant, they see them as a part of the institutional identity. They do not have a problem with being ranked as *soldiers* (not *female soldiers)* and for them this distinction is unnecessary, which means that they accept these forms as institutionally neutral.[4] This formal mode of address is obviously still most rigid and resistant to changes or adjustment.

The second part of our research refers to a group of male nurses. This is not a quantitative research; it is based on several interviews with male and female nurses, for the purpose of comparing the data with those on female soldiers. However, some findings could be significant as a general overview of the different perceptions about male nurses, and this could be a good start for more detailed research on the topic.

It has been stated that female soldiers prefer to be called simply "soldiers." The situation is the same with male nurses—they just do not like to be called "male nurses," as one respondent suggests: "I am no more or less a nurse because of my sex than my female colleagues are because of theirs." Does insisting on neutral terminology show their efforts to construct their own identity or to adjust it to the identity of the majority of nurses who are women? First, hospitals and other health institutions are not as "closed" and as typically feminine institution as the military is masculine. Terminology such as "male nurse" is notable in English, whereas in Croatian there are two gender-marked forms (*bolnicar*/*bolnicarka* or *medicinskasestra*/*medicinskitehnicar*).[5] For the purpose of better distinction between the genders, the term "male nurse" will be used here. Most of the male nurses we talked to think that the perception of nursing as a traditionally female occupation is a stereotype. They even think that "it is bad that so many men stay out of this profession at a time when more

[4] Some female soldiers insist on the use of masculine forms when being addressed, which enhances their sense of belonging to the institution. See the response of a female soldier to Lt.Col. E. Disler (2005): "… Today I am proud to say that I am an American Airman, I am a leader, warrior, and wingman as a combat-focused Wing Commander. I am proud to be in the US Air Force, part of something bigger than myself. I just happen to be a woman."

[5] Some people like to say "*medicinski* brat," although it is more informal and not widely accepted.

and more nurses are needed." Their reasons for joining this profession are mostly "job security," "love and altruism for the people in need" and "the reward of helping others." There are a few nursing specialties that are off limits for men, e.g. birth,[6] but they can find a position in all other fields. This can be compared to women in the military, where all fields and branches are accessible except direct combat, as mentioned earlier. Searching for a position in nursing and establishing their status as a nurse is open equally to both men and women. Male nurses in fact believe that they are ideally suited to both the pressures and excitement of nursing. They are trying to find their position as men, not through adjusting to the female identity of the job, but doing jobs that are harder for women, e.g. carrying the patients: "We do the jobs that women can't do," is often heard.

Both male and female nurses consider that the stereotypical image of nursing as a job not suitable for men comes from the outside. One of these stereotypes is that most male nurses are gay. A few of the male nurses we interviewed reported sentences like "you must be gay, otherwise you wouldn't do this job," or "only gays work as male nurses." However, this is something they get from the male patients mostly. They rarely report such qualifications from their female colleagues, and just one of them reported his female colleague's comment on a new male nurse being employed: "is the new one gay too?"[7] Harding (2008) states that in most cases such comments make male nurses "hide" their sexuality. Comments about their sexuality can be compared to the comments female soldiers get on their sexuality, for example "whores."

Men who enter "female" occupations do not conform to the idea of hegemonic masculinity, according to traditional, conservative beliefs. Nordberg (2002) argues that "their choice of workplace can be comprehended in society as unmasculine and associated with effeminateness and homosexuality." As Butler (1990) suggests, masculinity is a "process" which depends on "performance and repetitions" in social settings. Their positions as male nurses are under constant change and transformation; at one time it is more important to be a man, the other, it is more important to be a nurse. The construction of their identity is directly connected to the discourses in which they participate, i.e. their identities are created through discourses. However, men sometimes become aware of their nursing position as more feminine using the style which is more typical for women, for example "sweet-talking" when speaking to patients or female

[6] In the USA, male nurses, in some hospitals, entered these wards as well.
[7] Harding (2008) mentions similar comments.

colleagues, or using too many adjectives when describing things. One of them, for example, mentioned using so many colour nuances he had never even heard of, such as "dusty brown, icy blue" etc., or discourse topics which are more typical for women, e.g. "exchanging cooking recipes." On the other hand, to preserve their "masculinity," they take part in male jargon with their male colleagues, both nurses and doctors. They consider male jargon to be "talking about women and sports." It can be said that men who work in female-dominated occupations are also exposed to reproduction and negotiation of gender relations, or in other words, they try to adjust their identities, but to a lesser extent than women in male-dominated occupations. This demonstrates new masculinities which emphasise the similarities between men and women.

Conclusion

As previously mentioned, this paper is not a quantitative study, but is based on a very limited corpus of interview samples, with small groups of informants. However, the results can be very indicative and can be used for more detailed future research on the topic. The initial assumption was that both women in male-dominated occupations and men in female-dominated occupations have to adjust their identity to the identity of the groups they have joined. The findings of the analysis of interviews with women in the military have proved that they try to adjust their identity to the masculine identity of the military. They start through the obvious signs of wearing uniforms, and usage of masculine gender forms of address, taken as a part of the institution's identity. However, they adjust to it even more, adapting their identity to the typically "masculine language," such as profanity and truncated sentences lacking detailed descriptions. On the other hand, they show their feminine side in the jobs within the military which need more organisation and efficiency. Consequently, they are sometimes perceived as "real soldiers" (readiness to take part in direct combat), and sometimes as "real women" (in the organisational tasks). Furthermore, mostly negative attitudes to women in the military are stereotypical ones and come from their surroundings, rarely from their male colleagues. Their male colleagues admit the necessity of an increase in the female population in the military, which they do not see as "feminisation" of the institution.

As for "male nurses," their position is more one of searching for the right place within a traditionally feminine organisation through performing tasks which are difficult for women, such as those needing physical effort, already a part of their masculine identity. What can be viewed as a change

in the identity is a somewhat unconscious adaptation to female talk when they are with their female colleagues, such as "sweet talk," detailed descriptions etc. On the other hand, the perception of their environment is that they are more "feminine" than they really are and they are somehow in the constant negotiation of identity with the outside world. However, the perception of their female colleagues is not stereotypical.

What both examples (female soldiers and male nurses) have in common are the stereotyped views of the environment, especially expressed through negative attitudes, such as all female soldiers are whores or all male nurses are gay. Returning to the initial assumption of identity adjustment, it could be said that it is an ongoing process.

Based on the results of our research, female soldiers adjust their identity to male soldiers more than male nurses do to their female colleagues. The reason is most probably in the fact that the military is a more closed and masculine institution than hospitals and health institutions are feminine. Compared to earlier investigations on the subject, this demonstrates a gradual change in the masculine identity of the military. If the change in attitudes is taking over the institution as a whole, the adjustment of its masculine identity is inevitable.

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A POSTMODERN STUDY OF DORIS LESSING'S *THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK* IN LIGHT OF JEAN-FRANCOIS LYOTARD'S IDEAS

SHAHRAM KIAEI, ENSIYEHSADAT AZIZI AND FATEMEH AZIZMOHAMMADI

> In the first two-thirds of The Golden Notebook, the theme of the crack up or breakdown is elaborated in the novels representation of national and global politics. Soviet-inspired Communism, European colonialism and emperialism, Britain society, and national liberation struggles in the Third World are disintegrating, collapsing, crumbling, and fragmenting, under the pressures both internal and external. The last third of the novel relocates the crack-up in the person … of Anna herself.
>
> (Yelin 1998)

Introduction

The Enlightenment was a Europe-wide phenomenon in philosophy, literature, language, art, religion and political theory which existed from around 1680 until the end of the eighteenth century. Conventionally, the Enlightenment has been called the "age of reason." For the Enlightenment thinker, truth was available and human reason was the tool by which this knowledge had been achieved, and by further application of human reason, the whole truth would one day be available to the human mind. Traditional theory desires a unitary and totalising truth. During this time, philosophers believed in the world's own story, something which Jean-Francois Lyotard, one of the leading proponents of postmodernism, denies when he urges a rejection of Enlightenment "metanarratives" in favour of arguing that "there is no such thing as the world's own story, and the only accounts that we can give of the world are local human accounts. There are only varied and conflicting human stories about the world." The credibility of grand narratives collapsed for Lyotard:

> In contemporary society and culture-postindustrial society, postmodern culture-the question of the legitimation of knowledge is formulated in different terms. The grand narrative has lost its credibility, regardless of what mode of unification it uses, regardless of whether it is a speculative narrative or a narrative of emancipation.
>
> (Lyotard 1984, 37)

Postmodern philosophers say that the idea of the world's own story, the unified picture of reality, is an illusion. Most of postmodernism's core characteristics are: "a skepticism or rejection of grand narratives to explain reality; no objective reality, but many subjective interpretations; no 'one correct' concept of ultimate reality; no 'one correct' interpretation of a text" (Bressler 2007).

Moreover, postmodernist thought rejects universals, the whole truth, unitary and totalisation. This is the fragmentation of truth. Postmodernist art, architecture and literature emphasises the lack of any unifying form or method. Postmodernist art revels in the fragmentation of artistic standards (Luntley 1995), and the postmodern literature world is a representation of chaos and fragmentation. In postmodern novels, chaos, fragmentation, and breakdown inform both content and structure, and Lyotard also sees society as fragmented. The postmodern novelist wants the reader to explore fragmented society and human beings, rejecting any conventional story-telling and emphasises that there are no pre-established ways for writing. The process of story-telling is different for postmodern novelists. They are interested in discovering new ways of writing, a liberating manner of story-telling:

> A postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by pre-established rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgment, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. Those rules and categories are what the work of art itself is looking for. The artist and the writer then are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done.
>
> (Lyotard 1984, 81)

One of the outstanding examples of postmodern novels demonstrating the above-mentioned features is Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*. In this novel, Lessing avoids committing to conventional story-telling, and tends to favour unconventional and new methods. This chapter discusses the character Anna's scepticism about the Communist Party, as illustrated primarily in the Red Notebook part of the novel.

Doris Lessing, the Noble Prize for literature winner in 2007, and greatest English novelist of the postwar period, was born in Persia (now Iran) to British parents in 1919. She has written many plays, short stories and novels. *The Grass is Singing* (1950) is her first novel. As she has stated in interviews, it was not her first attempt at the novel; she destroyed the manuscripts of two earlier works. During the 1950s and 60s, *The Grass is Singing* was followed by the five volumes of her *Children of Violence* series: *Martha Quest* (1952) *A Proper Marriage* (1954) *A Ripple from the Storm* (1958) *Landlocked* (1956) and *The Four-Gated City* (1969). She has also written a series of short stories, *To Room Nineteen* (1978) and *Through the Tunnel* (1990) being the best-known, and plays such as *Play with a Tiger* (1962). The main focus of the present essay, as mentioned, is on *The Golden Notebook* (1962) which will be closely analysed.

Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*

The Golden Notebook opens with a *Free Women* section: *Free Women* is a conventional short novel that is divided into five sections and separated by stages of the four notebooks; Black, Red, Yellow And Blue, with the Golden Notebook appearing near the book's end. In these notebooks, Anna writes of the events in her life. The Black Notebook is a record of various aspects of Anna's bestselling first novel, *Frontiers of War*; Red is about her experiences and dissatisfation with the British Communist Party; Yellow is about her romantic novel *The Shadow of the Third*, and in this notebook she writes about Ella, the mirror of her life; and Blue is Anna's diary.

The Golden Notebook and interrogation of the Communist Party

The Golden Notebook is one of the best-loved and most influential of Lessing's novels, one that invites her readers to discover the postmodern fragmented society. When Anna Wulf, the writer and the protagonist, says at the beginning of the novel that "everything is cracking up," it implies that the hope of unity has almost disappeared and chaos has an opportunity to emerge. Lessing mentions in the preface of *The Golden Notebook*: "its theme is breakdown and fragmentation." Chaos and fragmentation are in accord with the novel. Anna expresses that writing four notebooks instead