

Book Review: Jule, A. (2018). *Speaking Up: Understanding Language and Gender*. (1 ed.)  
Bristol: Multilingual Matters. 144 pages. ISBN: 9781783099627

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In her book, *Speaking Up: Understanding Language and Gender*, Allyson Jule reviews the basic notions that combine the study of language and those of gender and then reviews the state of the art of gender and language use in different social spheres: media and technology, education, workplace, religion, and relationships.

Therefore, she starts with a brief portrayal of feminism and its historic roots concluding that feminism nowadays is highly diverse. This implies also the danger of post-feminism focusing on the individual rather than on collective struggles for all women, and the implications of essentialist perspectives that reduce the issue to sex and gender as the same thing. Nevertheless, Jules highlights that most feminist groups share some core issues that are unique to all women such as violence against women. She thus highlights that “women and men who care about the lives of women need to work together to create a more just world”. Jules also emphasizes that feminism today is mainly endorsed by younger generations who according to Redfern and Aune define feminisms as “liberating, diverse, challenging, exciting, relevant and inclusive”.

When looking at the use of language, Jules points to the importance of language in constructing and perpetuating social reality and highlights that it can be a tool for transformation but also a tool of oppression. In this regard, the author introduces the social context as a crucial element to understand the use of language and describes the use of Critical Discourse Analysis as a method to stimulate awareness of power in language. While she mentions these approaches and their potential for transformation, the analysis mainly focuses on the construction and perpetuation of social reality rather than on the possibilities to use language to change our social reality. This is striking, especially considering that even the title and introduction to the book point to the current feminist movements of speaking up to challenge power dynamics in society, such as #metoo.

The book serves as an introduction to the correlation of gender and the use of language in the five social spheres. It portrays the different representation that the use of language allows for each gender in these spheres. In this regard, the author draws on research evidencing the influence of media on creating a gendered appearance and consumerism in line with capitalist economic interests. The messages sent out to women are much more destructive for women than those addressing men. Jules then continues to describe the complex relation of gender and the use of language in education. She points out how both the personal ideas on gender of people working in education as well as the very educational system contribute to prescribing gender roles from very early ages on to adulthood. Here she mentions the role of teachers in enforcing gender roles and behaviors by paying more attention to ‘naughty boys’ rather than to those behaving well. A closer look on how language is used to convey desire towards these ‘naughty’ behaviors versus the ‘good’ behaviors allows for further insight on the use of language and its contribution to constructing gender (Puigvert, 2016). The workplace, often defined by male predominance, is another social sphere where gender is key in making progress. But Jules not only looks into the discrimination against women, but also highlights the hostile environment towards women by stating that at least 50% of women have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. When it comes to religion, Jules breaks with the stereotyped idea that religion and feminism are two opposite poles and emphasizes the

work that diverse religious groups or people have done to push feminism forward. However, she also points to the gender representations and the use of language in Christianity, Judaism and Islam that still portray a gender division in the practice of religion rather than in the religious texts. In some cases, these religious practices even go against feminist causes. In the last chapter *Gender and Language Use in Relationships* she focuses on the use of language in a variety of social settings and its impact on personal relationships such as friendships or family life tapping into highly relevant issues such as female friendships. All in all, the book guides the reader through the entanglements of gender and language use in social spheres that we all share and thus provides an overview of this field, especially to readers that are new to it.

Puigvert, L. (2016). "Female university students respond to gender violence through dialogic feminist gatherings". *Int. Multidiscip. J.Soc. Sci.* 5, 183–203. doi: 10.17583/rimcis.2016.2118