

**Questioning Behavior and Power - Implications for the Representation
of Men and Women in *True Colors 2***

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Choose an EFL textbook and discuss the ways in which it represents men and women.
Your discussion should focus upon linguistic representations, but it may also include
consideration of non-linguistic features (e.g. visual representations of the sexes).

Questioning Behavior and Power - Implications for the Representation of Men and Women in *True Colors 2*

1.0 Introduction

The search for what defines yin and yang, male and female, is probably as old as history itself. In the field of sociolinguistics there has been decades of research devoted to differences in how men and women speak. In the earliest stages, since the vast majority of linguistic data had been based on men's speech, it was noticed that there were areas in which women's speech seemed to differ. This of course needed to be explained.

The earliest explanation, that women's speech was somehow 'deficient' due to women's supposed inferiority, was replaced by more acceptable ones after the rise of feminism in the 1960's. One explanation was that women "are socialized to adopt powerless forms of speech" while another maintains that the differences are the "outcome of what are, in effect, two different subcultures, with contrasting orientations towards relationships". (Montgomery 1995:167, 168) These two perspectives, referred to respectfully as the dominance and difference perspectives, remain active to this day.

This paper will focus on the differential use of interrogatives by males and females. Specifically, the discussion will focus on tag questions, negative questions, and questions which function as challenges. Part I of this paper will give details of some research focusing on the aforementioned structures. Part II will examine a current EFL textbook, *True Colors 2*, for evidence of gender differences in the questioning behavior of its characters and its implications for the textbook's representation of men and women.

Part I - Background Information

2.0 Studies of Questioning Behavior

Research focusing on gender differences in usage of linguistic structures is rife with studies focusing on interrogative structures and its related functions. . (see Lakoff 1993, Fishman 1993, Maltz & Borker 1982, Sheldon 1990, Haan & van Heuven 1999, Haan 2002 in van Alphen 2004:1; Holmes 2002; Coates and Cameron 1989)

Women's questioning behavior has been examined and explained as evidencing such things as psychological insecurity, conversational housework, cooperation and orientation towards others, as well as submissiveness and dependency towards the hearer

Some studies focusing on questions regardless of type have found that women use more questions than men, especially when addressing men. Montgomery (1995:161) mentions one study by Fishman using data from household conversations between spouses in which women were actually found to ask two and a half times more questions than men. Fishman claimed that this was linguistic evidence that women were doing most of the work in keeping conversations going. Montgomery points out, however, that her claim would have been more persuasive had she sought to differentiate between different types of questions. "For," states Montgomery, "questions are not all of a piece: not all of them necessarily work to support and sustain topical development. Indeed, they can perform a range of interactional work. A questioner, for instance, may claim, confirm, or even challenge a power relation by their use....Other studies have eliminated this problem by focusing quite specifically to a particular question-type."

We will next turn our attention toward some studies which focus on specific question types, namely tag questions and negative questions.

2.1 Tag questions

Robin Lakoff, perhaps the most influential researcher in the area of gender and questioning behavior, suggested that women's language reflected their lack of power in a male dominated society. (Holmes 2001:394) Her research focused on the tendencies of women more so than men to use linguistic devices for hedging and boosting to express uncertainty. She argued that, by doing so, women were "colluding in their own subordination by the way they spoke." (Holmes 2001:284)

The term 'hedging' refers to and includes linguistic devices which "explicitly signal lack of confidence, while boosting devices reflect the speaker's anticipation that the addressee may remain unconvinced and therefore supply extra reassurance" or, in

other words, to “persuade their addressee to take them seriously.” (Holmes 2001:287) Lakoff found that tag questions featured prominently as a hedging device used by women to signal lack of confidence, tentativeness, or insecurity. The reasoning was that question tags functioned “to downgrade the strength of a statement or command into an utterance offered to the recipient for them to answer with ‘yes’ or ‘no’.” (Montgomery 1995:161) In other words, one could say that tag questions are characteristic of less assertive speech.

2.2 Negative questions

If tag questions are characteristic of less assertive speech, then it could be said that negative questions fall on the other side of the continuum. This is because, as Heritage explains, the function of a negative question is to assert an opinion, position, or point of view. (Heritage 2002:1428)

Heritage explains that placing the negative interrogative frame at the beginning of an utterance strengthens it, making it more assertive by more strongly projecting an answer than its tag question counterpart which, by deferring the negative until the last moment, essentially weakens the assertion. (Heritage 2002:1441, 1442) While Heritage included instances of female to female use of the negative interrogative in a social context, the bulk of his discussion focused on the use of negative interrogatives as a vehicle for assertions in the context of news interview in which both the host and guest were males. Though he does not explicitly focus on gender as a factor, he does compare his research to Lakoff’s, saying that “it is no accident that the tag question has been identified by some as a form of ‘powerless’ language, while the negative interrogative has not.” (Heritage 2002:1444)

3.0 Questioning behavior and power

Questions are a form of social action which, at its basic level is to seek information. (Heritage 2002:1427) There are a few linguists who contend that the questioning behavior of women can be explained as a form of dependence and submission, the reason being that the questioner is dependent on the information given by the hearer. (see Gussenhoven 2002 and Haan 2002 in van Alphen 2004:1) Others,

including this writer, do not agree. Though there may be some questions which indicate dependence, such as those which function as requests, there are others which clearly indicate the opposite.

Heritage, for one, points out, however, that “there are interrogatives that accomplish something other than questioning (seeking information) by virtue of the sequential context in which they are deployed.” (Heritage 2002:1428) For instance, questions may function to raise an objection to or challenge a previous utterance. The person issuing the challenge is clearly dominant insofar the act of challenging is an assertive one. Also, because the interrogative structure of the move obligates listeners to give an answer, the questioner is to a large extent controls the direction of the conversation.

van Alphen also refers to a category of questions known as ‘biased questions’. Tag questions, negative questions, and questions which include certain discourse particles fall within this category. What they have in common is that they are more conducive or leading, and they signal a stronger answer preference than the unbiased versions. For instance, the questions “Didn’t you see that?” or “You did see that, didn’t you?” signal a much stronger expectation of agreement than merely asking “Did you see that?”. (van Alphen 2004:3) Far from signaling dependence or submission, biased questions are characteristic of assertive behavior. When faced with a series of these it may take the respondent several turns before breaking free, such is the power of the questioner over the hearer. (van Alphen 2004:2)

An awareness of the relationship between status, power and language use is important for language teachers. Many aspects of education, including textbooks, tend to be gendered in many respects. Sunderland (2000:151) adds that the language through which such educational phenomena as testing, literary practices, self-esteem, and learning styles and strategies are gendered, and in addition “the language through which they are realized may be gendered in the additional sense that they may play a role in the further gendering of students, that is, in shaping their masculinities and femininities.”

Part II - An Analysis of *True Colors 2*

We will now turn our attention to a current EFL textbook, *True Colors 2: An EFL Course for Real Communication*. We will examine aspects of questioning behavior and its effect on power dimensions in conversations, and the implications of these for its representation of men and women. The discussion will first focus on quantitative data, followed by a qualitative analysis of select conversations.

4.0 *True Colors 2: An EFL Course for Real Communication*

The *True Colors* series, written by Jay Maurer and Irene E. Shoenberg, is published by Addison Wesley Longman, Inc. Released in 1998, it is a general skills course book that is based on American English. The course is said to model the “true voice of the American speaker”, (Mauer & Schoenberg 1998:xii). Far from being authentic, these conversations are an idealized representation of how the authors think that American men and women communicate.

Although the conversations in *True Colors 2* are contrived this should not present a problem since the purpose is to discuss its implications for the representation of men and women in this particular textbook. The writer concedes that how men and women actually use language in the real world may differ.

4.1 Organization of *True Colors 2*

True Colors 2 consists of ten units plus two review units. Each unit begins with an illustrated photo story, the purpose of which is to present language in the receptive mode. The characters in these photo stories are the main characters in the unit and as such appear in other sections as well, particularly the *Social Language and Grammar*” and ‘*Grammar in a Context*’ sections. Both of these are formatted as illustrated conversations with speech bubbles. The visual support of the illustrations serves to reinforce the biological gender of the characters as well as other factors such as race, age, attire, and setting.

4.2 Data chosen for analysis

The quantitative data used in this analysis is extracted from the photo stories, grammar in a context, and review sections where the gender of the participants is made explicit by factors such as name and outward appearance. These are the sections which contain an interaction between at least two characters. The data did not include reading selections or the text's metalanguage since these were not depictions of spoken conversational interaction.

Appendix I contains the quantitative data from which the analysis was made. Table 1 lists number of questions spoken by each gender, as well as the gender of the listener. For the purposes of this analysis, an utterance was classified as a question if it either contained explicit interrogative form or if interrogative intonation was indicated by use of a question mark. Table 2 lists all exchanges which contain the negative interrogative structure, along with the gender of the participants. Finally, Table 3 lists all interrogative exchanges which function to challenge or protest a preceding utterance. Tag question data was not included because somewhat surprisingly there were no instances of tag questions to be found in *True Colors 2*.

First the quantitative data will be discussed, followed by a qualitative analysis of selected conversations. The complete transcripts of the selected conversations can be found in Appendix II.

5.0 Quantitative data analysis

5.1 Number of questions spoken by men and women

Table 1 of Appendix 1 shows that in *True Colors 2* the men asked significantly more questions than women. Men asked a total of 62 questions, while women asked 41 questions. In both cases there were about an equal number of questions directed towards the opposite sex. However, in same sex conversations the men asked twice as many questions as did the women. Since questions can have a number of functions, it would be difficult to base any conclusions on this evidence. Consequently, we will turn our

attention toward Table 2 of Appendix 1 which focuses specifically on questions which take the negative interrogative form.

5.2 Gender representation and the use of negative questions

As was previously shown in Section 2.2, the negative interrogative form is characteristic of assertive linguistic behavior. Table 2 of Appendix I shows significant gender differences in use of the negative interrogative form. There were a total of eleven exchanges involving the negative interrogative form. Of these, six originated from male speakers and five from females. Though this may appear equitable on the surface, when the number of characters is taken into consideration the breakdown of negative interrogative use is six male characters to three females. So although the sample is admittedly small, it does show twice as many male characters using the negative interrogative structure as female characters.

Furthermore, among the males using this structure, two were directed towards other males while twice that amount, four, were directed toward females. Again, the sample is small but to the extent that the negative interrogative structure is associated with assertiveness, then it appears that within *True Colors 2* the male characters are more likely to use an assertive linguistic style than are females, especially when addressing female characters. In other words, one could say that the male characters are represented as being more assertive than the females.

5.2.1 Negative interrogatives that challenge

Let's examine some of the exchanges in more detail. If we classify them according to function, we see that three of them serve to challenge a preceding utterance:

- | | | |
|-----|-------------|---|
| (1) | (M) Male 1: | Where were you? |
| | (M) Male2: | Didn't we say we were going to meet at four-thirty? |
| | (M) Male1: | No. We said four o'clock. |
| (2) | (M) Marty: | That's wonderful, but isn't it expensive? |
| | (M) Fred: | Well, we're fond of camping, so it's not that bad. |

- (3) (M) Customer: Couldn't we drive from Centerville to Trent?
(F) Travel Agent: Well, I guess you could drive, but I don't recommend it.

The negative interrogative in exchange (1) definitely falls into the hostile question category. Rather than responding to Male 1's initiating question, Male 2 vies for control by himself countering with a question, in this case using the negative interrogative form. Male 1 responds with a dispreferred negative answer and proceeds to correct Male 2's proposition. The evidence clearly points to a power struggle characteristic of an argument, with neither side willing to cede.

In exchanges (2) and (3), the respondents avoid conflict by giving at least partial agreement. Fred signals a forthcoming disagreement with the marker "Well," but then defers disagreement to the end of the sentence. He first offers the explanation, "we're fond of camping", and then softens the disagreement, saying "so it's not that bad". In exchange (3) the travel agent first responds with a concession that the customer's proposition was not entirely wrong, but then advises against it. In each case, the bias against a negative confirmation is such that the speakers defer it whenever possible. By doing so, although the negative interrogative creates a potential for conflict, the respondents successfully avoid it.

5.2.2 Negative interrogatives that establish common ground

Aside from challenges, another function of negative interrogatives is to establish common ground. The exchanges below reflect this function:

- (1) (M) Male: Haven't we met before?
(F) Female: Maybe we have. You look really familiar.
- (2) (M) Peter: Aren't you Diane's sister-in-law?
(F) Gloria: Yes, I am.
- (3) (F) Lena: Aren't you Dick Morgan's brother-in-law Jack?
(M) Jack: Yes, I am.
- (4) (F) Lena: Didn't you write that book about monkeys?
(M) Male: Mmm-hmm.

Whereas the negative interrogatives which functioned as challenges were all spoken by males, the exchanges above which serve to establish common ground are spoken by both males and females. The context of the above exchanges is that of one person approaching a somewhat unfamiliar person and attempting to initiate a conversation. In this case, the person using the negative interrogative approaches from a position of power in that they disclose that they know something about the hearer in a form that is strongly biased toward an agreeing response. In exchange (1) the male may or may not have actually met the female before, however by encasing his approach in the negative interrogative he creates just enough doubt for the female to admit that his proposition has at least the potential for truth.

5.2.3 Negative interrogatives that reinforce shared opinions or observations

Finally, the three exchanges shown below function to reinforce shared opinions or observations:

- (1) (F) Female1: Isn't that Ron Stram?
(F) Female2: I don't know. But it sure looks like him
- (2) (F) Female1: Isn't her baby gorgeous?
(F) Female2: Absolutely beautiful!
- (3) (F) Lena: Boy, hasn't this weather been awful?
(M) Male: It sure has. Four rainy days in a row.
- (4) (M) Male: Weren't you wearing a yellow blouse a few minutes ago?
(F) Female: No, I wasn't. That was my twin sister, Robin.

In the above exchanges the potential for conflict is lowest since the proposition behind the negative interrogative is based on a visual observation, as is the case with exchanges (1) and (4), rather than an opinion or belief, or the proposition is one for which, like exchanges (2) and (3), the responses are socially constrained for agreement.

Based on degree of potential conflict, there seems to be within *True Colors 2* differential use by males and females of the three functions represented by the negative interrogative structure. Challenges, which carry the most potential for conflict, are spoken only by male speakers, whereas the exchanges which are most socially constrained for agreement are spoken only by females. This seem to support the assertion that within *True Colors 2* the male speakers are represented as more assertive than are female speakers.

5.3 Gender representation and questions that function to challenge or protest

An analysis of the data shown in Appendix I Table 3 found that there were significant gender differences in the use of interrogatives which function to challenge or protest a preceding utterance. The data reveals that male speakers issued twice as many interrogative challenges than females, the ratio being 13:6. Of the 13 challenges, 9 were addressed to females and 4 to males, reflecting that the male speakers challenged twice as many utterances from females than from other males.

Although it cannot be said with any certainty that the pattern above would hold true for authentic speech, it does appear that among the characters in *True Colors 2* the men are more likely to exercise conversational dominance by means of interrogative challenges, and especially so when conversing with women. This again supports the conclusion that men are represented as having more social power than women, seeing that they are more likely to engage in assertive linguistic behavior which carries the most potential for conflict.

The use of interrogative challenges by women does occur in the textbook, but all such instances are limited to one conversation between two female co-workers. There are in fact no instances of interrogative challenges by women to men. This seems to support the suggestion that the women in *True Colors 2* are represented as less powerful than men at least in this type of linguistic behavior.

6.0 Qualitative conversation analysis

We will now take a closer look at two conversations in which interrogative challenges are made. The first is a three-party conversation between a professor and two students, one male and one female, in which the types of linguistic contributions made will be compared. The second is a conversation between two female co-workers. The dynamics of power, as well as gendered communication styles, will be discussed.

6.1 Unit 2, Page 22: “Obedience”

This conversation features an informal discussion between a male professor, Dr. Vance, and two of his students, Mike and Barbara. Both Barbara’s and Mike’s contributions consist of three questions and one statement each. But while Barbara projects a very cooperative image, Mike projects quite the opposite. This is the result of the types of questions and statements that each makes. Barbara seems to be anticipating the professor’s next move, and as a result the type of questions she asks facilitate the structure of the discourse and advance the professor’s agenda. Her contributions are shown below:

- (1) Vance: OK. We want to know if people will do what a leader tells them to do.
- (2) Barbara: *How will we do that?*
- (3) Vance: Do you all see this button?
- (4) Barbara: *Yes. What does it do?*

- (12) Barbara: *What actually happened in the original experiment?*
- (13) Vance: Most subjects obeyed and gave the shocks.
What do you think this tells us about people?
- (14) Barbara: *It sounds like people are too willing to obey leaders*

In contrast to Barbara’s cooperative, facilitating questions, Mike’s questions function to challenge Dr. Vance, and in line 15 he does not hesitate to assert his own negative opinion regarding the experiment:

- (5) Vance: I’m going to tell them that if they press the button, you’ll get an electric shock. We want to see if the subjects will do what a leader tells them.
- (6) Mike: *Give us a shock? No way! That’ll hurt!*

- (7) Vance: No. You weren't paying attention. Remember: The button doesn't do anything. I'll just tell the subjects it'll give you a shock. It won't be the truth.
- (8) Mike: *So what's the point?*
- (9) Vance: We want to know two things. First, will the subjects actually obey and give you a shock? Second, will they continue to give you a shock if they think the shock causes a lot of pain?
- (10) Mike: *But it won't hurt because there won't be a shock, right?*
- (11) Vance: Right. You'll have to pretend.
- (15) Mike: *I think this experiment is terrible*

At the beginning of the discussion, Dr. Vance is clearly in control. This is, after all, an institutional discourse where the teacher is normally in control. An illustration of the turn-taking sequence shows the following pattern:

V-B-V-B-V-M-V-M-V-M-V-B-V-B-M-V

The middle of the discourse is where Mike engages Dr. Vance. Because of Mike's strategy of protesting and challenging with a series of questions, it becomes difficult for Dr. Vance to break away and continue on with his discussion. One could say that Mike is competing with Dr. Vance for control. Finally it is Barbara who rescues Dr. Vance in line 12 by asking a facilitating rather than a challenging question, allowing Dr. Vance to break away and regain control. Mike though still manages to insert one last statement expressing his disagreement with the experiment.

6.2 Gendered communication styles and sub-cultures

The belief that men and women have contrasting communication styles, as is reflected in Barbara's cooperative, facilitative questioning and Mike's assertive, challenging questioning, does have some support among researchers. Montgomery (1995:168) explains that this is commonly believed to be "the outcome of what is in effect two differing subcultures, with contrasting orientations to relationships." He goes on to say that:

"In effect, women and men, it is claimed, grow up within different social worlds, as a result of which women are inclined to see relationships in terms of

intimacy, connection and disclosure whereas men are inclined to see them in terms of hierarchy, status and independence. These subcultural differences are enacted in contrasting communication styles.” (Montgomery 1995:168)

Since gender is now viewed as a construction rather than a fixed trait, one must not lose sight of the fact that there is still room for considerable variation among individuals within the concept of gendered communication styles. Nor must one ignore the tendency for individuals to move from one style to another depending on the circumstances of the interaction. (Holmes 2001:303) We will next examine a conversation between two female co-workers, Melanie and Kathryn, in which Melanie uses a series of questions to challenge Kathryn’s aspiration to become a pilot.

6.3 Unit 9 - “I can’t stand filing!”

This photo story takes place in an office between two co-workers, Kathryn and Melanie, and revolves around Kathryn’s dissatisfaction with her clerical job and her dream of becoming a pilot. The conversation begins as follows:

- (1) *Melanie:* *Hi. Want to have lunch?*
- (2) *Kathryn:* I sure do! I’m sick and tired of these files.
- (3) *Melanie:* *What’s wrong? You seem down in the dumps.*
- (4) *Kathryn:* Oh, I don’t know. I guess I’m just bored.
- (5) *Melanie:* *Bored? With what?*
- (6) *Kathryn:* With this job! There’s no challenge. I can’t stand filing. Using the copy machine isn’t my idea of excitement. And word processing is the most boring of all. I just have to find something better.
- (7) *Melanie:* *Like what?*
- (8) *Kathryn:* Well....Don’t laugh. Like...flying.
- (9) *Melanie:* *Flying? Oh, you mean you’d like to be a flight attendant?*
- (10) *Kathryn:* A flight attendant? No way! I’m talking about being a pilot. It’s my dream.
- (11) *Melanie:* *You? A pilot? But you don’t even drive a car!*
- (12) *Kathryn:* What difference does that make?

It is clear that Melanie is in control of the conversation. She uses a series of interrogatives to relegate Kathryn to a reactive discourse role where she is limited to

making responses. Kathryn manages to extricate herself from the reactive mode by herself countering Melanie's interrogative with her own in order to take the offensive. This bid for control begins to reverse the power dynamics.

(12) Kathryn: What difference does that make?

(13) Melanie: *Hey, you're serious about this. I'm sorry. I didn't realize you felt that way. Let's talk about this some more after work. OK?*

(14) Kathryn: OK. Thanks, Melanie. But we'd better get back to that filing now!

It is possible that Melanie interprets Kathryn's challenging move as a signal that the conversation is turning argumentative. Therefore, rather than answering Kathryn's question and prolonging the confrontation, Melanie offers an apology to Kathryn and reinforces her desire to switch to a cooperative mode by her lexical choice of "*let's*" with its inclusive implications. Kathryn accepts and then mirrors Melanie's cooperative speech by her use of the inclusive pronoun "*we*" in "*We'd better get back to that filing now.*"

6.3.1 Melanie: the voice of society

Tannen (1991), perhaps one of the best known advocates of the differing subcultures rationale for the contrasting communication styles of men and women, argues that women's language emphasizes connection and intimacy, whereas men's language emphasizes status and independence. When women talk about problems with other women, it is often with the expectation that they will receive support and understanding. (in Montgomery 1995:168) Melanie's communication style at first seems to contradict this. Her communication style is male in that she remains distant, initially withholding support and understanding. As is the only female character in the textbook who uses a series of questions to probe and challenge, this sets her apart. There are several possible explanations for this.

One is that Melanie does not share the same level of job dissatisfaction as Kathryn. As Kathryn disparages her job and shares her aspirations to become a pilot, Melanie may be feeling somewhat put down that she herself is satisfied with what

Kathryn describes as a boring job with no challenge. As a result, she cannot offer support and understanding and therefore takes a more adversarial stance associated with male speech. She does not, however, wish to lose Kathryn's friendship and consequently switches to a cooperative, supportive stance by the end of the conversation.

Another is that Melanie's voice is meant by the authors to represent society's voice in challenging Kathryn's desire to make a career move into a traditionally male oriented profession. As society's voice is predominately male, so is Melanie's. However, since Kathryn's gender is clearly a relevant factor in this exchange, had Melanie's character been male, it is more likely that the assumptions put forth would have more explicitly been interpreted as sexist. Let's look at some of the statements made by Melanie which show that gender is clearly an issue and which also reflect some of society's gendered stereotypes.

The most obvious is Melanie's assumption that Kathryn would like to be a flight attendant. Since most flight attendants are female, and most pilots are male, it almost seems natural that Melanie would make that assumption. Another is Melanie's discounting of Kathryn's aspiration when she replies "But you don't even drive a car!" She in effect evokes the gendered stereotype of women being mechanically deficient while implying that by comparison Kathryn lacks the underlying competence for flying an aircraft.

6.3.2 Kathryn: the voice of the repressed female

If Melanie's voice is the male voice of society, then Kathryn's voice is that of the repressed female. This is evident in her use of linguistic devices which indicate that she herself seems to have accepted the 'deficit model' of females that society often inflicts on girls and women. The resulting feelings of inferiority are often reflected in women's use of language to put themselves down and display a lack confidence in their own abilities.

Instances of hedging can be seen in Kathryn's speech, as well as indications that she anticipates not being taken seriously. When asked why she seemed 'down in the

dumps' she hedges her reply with "*Oh, I don't know...I guess I'm just bored.*" (The italics indicate areas of hedging). Her use of the modifier *just* serves as an indicator that she is attempting to downplay her feelings. However, when pressed by Melanie for details, her true feelings explode outward as she replies by listing quite specifically the aspects of her job which she finds most boring.

The strongest indication that she anticipates not being taken seriously appears in the phrase "*Well....Don't laugh. Like...flying.*" Here she includes an imperative structure in her hedge which clearly signals her anticipation of being judged negatively. Her hesitation shows that she is somewhat uncomfortable sharing her ambitions, with gender a largely implicit yet major factor in her fear of being laughed at.

7.0 Summary

Thus far we have examined the differential use of interrogatives by male and female characters in *True Colors 2*. The types of interrogatives examined are those which, apart from form, function to challenge all or part of a preceding proposition as well as those which specifically take the syntactic form of the negative interrogative. It was established that these types of interrogatives are to varying degrees characteristic of assertive speech. Male voices within *True Colors 2* were more likely to use these type of assertive structures.

In the characters of Barbara and Mike, their contrasting communicative styles serve to further promote the image men as being assertive and vying for power, whereas women are presented as cooperative keepers of the peace.

In the character of Kathryn, women are also presented as aspiring to fulfill more powerful occupational roles which were once reserved exclusively and still strongly associated with males. However society (Melanie) still questions their right to do so, forcing women to continually defend their choices. Sadly, women are caught between

defending their right to traditionally male roles while at the same time struggling with their own perceived deficiencies.

8.0 Conclusion

Textbook writers, like all of us, have beliefs about how men and women use language. These beliefs influence the speech styles of the characters they have create. In this case, the models may not have fallen far from the reality they were meant to depict. In the real world it is typically the men who dominate, and their language behavior reflects this. Regarding males Wardhaugh writes that “it is they who try to take control, to specify topics, to interrupt, and so on. They do it with each other and they do it with women, who, feeling powerless, let them get away with it.” (Wardhaugh 2002:324)

Teachers should likewise be aware of the potential for their own gendered beliefs to influence their treatment of textbooks in class. And in those cases where there is disagreement with a textbook’s representation of gender, teachers need to find ways to address the bias and develop ways of dealing with it that is appropriate to their own teaching situations. (Sunderland 2000:159) Suggestions include such things as drawing explicit attention to the biased text or representation, presenting a more acceptable version and having students compare the two, or reversing the speakers’ genders and having students discuss the impact on the image of the speakers. Rather than playing the role of “predictable, willing, and unquestioning” textbook users (Sunderland 2000:150) teachers should exercise their own judgement and engage in a critical pedagogy whereby their willingness to question and challenge will serve as an example of self-empowerment to their students, both male and female.

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Appendix I

Table 1: Number of questions by gender

Gender of Speaker	Gender of Hearer	Number of questions
Male	Male	26
Male	Female	36
		Total = 62
Female	Female	11
Female	Male	30
		Total = 41

Table 2: Exchanges which contain the negative interrogative structure

Page no.	Exchange
1. Male to Male exchanges	
77	(M) Male1: Where were you? (M) Male2: Didn't we say we were going to meet at four-thirty? (M) Male1: No. We said four o'clock.
134	(M) Marty: That's wonderful, but isn't it expensive? (M) Fred: Well, we're fond of camping, so it's not that bad.
2. Male to Female exchanges	
55	(M) Customer: Couldn't we drive from Centerville to Trent? (F) Travel Agent: Well, I guess you could drive, but I don't recommend it.
77	(M) Male: Weren't you wearing a yellow blouse a few minutes ago? (F) Female: No, I wasn't. That was my twin sister, Robin.
77	(M) Male: Haven't we met before? (F) Female: Maybe we have. You look really familiar.
79	(M) Peter: Aren't you Diane's sister-in-law? (F) Gloria: Yes, I am.
3. Female to Female exchanges	
77	(F) Female1: Isn't that Ron Stram? (F) Female2: I don't know. But it sure looks like him.
77	(F) Female1: Isn't her baby gorgeous? (F) Female2: Absolutely beautiful!
4. Female to Male exchanges	
74	(F) Lena: Boy, hasn't this weather been awful? (M) Male: It sure has. Four rainy days in a row.
74	(F) Lena: Aren't you Dick Morgan's brother-in-law Jack? (M) Jack: Yes, I am.
74	(F) Lena: Didn't you write that book about monkeys? (M) Male: Mmm-hmm.

Table 3 - Interrogative exchanges which protest or challenge a previous utterance.

Page no.	Question
1. Male to male challenges or protests	
22	(M) Vance: I'm going to tell them that if they press the button, you'll get an electric shock. We want to see if the subjects will do what a leader tells them. (M)Mike: Give us a shock? No way!
22	(M) Vance: I'll just tell the subjects it'll give you a shock. It won't be the truth. (M) Mike: So what's the point?
62	(M) Rick: Hey, where have you been? I haven't seen you all day! (M) Tim: In the lab....Why?
77	(M) Male 1: Where were you? (M) Male 2: Didn't we say we were going to meet at four-thirty?
2. Male to Female challenges or protests	
38	(F) Lynn: Well, have you tried a ginger ale and rice diet? (M) Tom: What?...you're kidding.
51	(F) Rhoda: Why don't you just sit down and level with your dad? (M) Jeff: Level with him?
55	(F) Travel agent: [previous statement not shown but implied] (M) Customer: Couldn't we drive from Centerville to Trent?
58	(F) Karen: Some days you're a little luckier, that's all. (M) Renfro: But you've worked very hard, haven't you? Don't you think you should win some kind of medal?
64	(F) Helen: I'd recommend this suitcase here. It's a lot cheaper.. (M) Stan: What? Who do you think I am? Do you think I look like someone who can't afford to buy any suitcase I want?
70	(F) Karen: Venezuela. If I go. (M) Tim: If you go?
70	(F) Karen: Yeah. I as going to be in a diving competition. But I don't know if I should go. (M) Tim: You're a diver?
70	(F) Karen: My parents died when I was really young, and I've lived with my grandparents ever since. (M) Tim: So what's the problem?
98	(F) Julia: Sounds great. But I'd rather go to San Francisco. (M) Larry: OK. But do you think we can?
3. Female to Female challenges or protests	
110	(F) Kathryn: I guess I'm just bored. (F) Melanie: Bored? With what?
110	(F) Kathryn: I just have to find something better. (F) Melanie: Like what?
111	(F) Kathryn: Well...don't laugh. Like...flying. (F) Melanie: Flying?
111	(F) Melanie: Oh, you mean you'd like to be a flight attendant? (F) Melanie: A flight attendant? No way!
111	(F) Kathryn: I'm talking about being a pilot. It's my dream. (F) Melanie: You? A pilot?
111	(F) Melanie: But you don't even drive a car! (F) Kathryn: What difference does that make?

Appendix II

Transcripts of conversations

From *True Colors 2* Unit 2, page 22

Obedience

Dr. Vance and his students continue their study of obedience. Dr. Vance wants his students to repeat a famous scientific experiment about obeying orders. The students will pretend to be subjects in the experiment. Here is a transcript of their classroom discussion.

(1) Vance:	OK. We want to know if people will do what a leader tells them to do.
(2) Barbara:	How will we do that?
(3) Vance:	Do you all see this button?
(4) Barbara:	Yes. What does it do?
(5) Vance:	Well, actually nothing. But the subjects won't know. I'm going to tell them that if they press the button, you'll get an electric shock. We want to see if the subjects will do what a leader tells them.
(6) Mike:	Give us a shock? No way! That'll hurt!
(7) Vance:	No. You weren't paying attention. Remember: The button doesn't do anything. I'll just tell the subjects it'll give you a shock. It won't be the truth.
(8) Mike:	So what's the point?
(9) Vance:	We want to know two things. First, will the subjects actually obey and give you a shock? Second, will they continue to give you a shock if they think the shock causes a lot of pain?
(10) Mike:	But it won't hurt because there won't be a shock, right?
(11) Vance:	Right. You'll have to pretend.
(12) Barbara:	What actually happened in the original experiment?
(13) Vance:	Most subjects obeyed and gave the shocks. What do you think this tells us about people?
(14) Barbara:	It sounds like people are too willing to obey leaders.
(15) Mike:	I think this experiment is terrible.
(16) Vance:	Hmm. A lot of people thought the original experiment was wrong, too.

I can't stand filing! - (Unit 9 Photo Story)

Melanie:	Hi. Want to have lunch?
Kathryn:	I sure do! I'm sick and tired of these files.
Melanie:	What's wrong? You seem down in the dumps.
Kathryn:	Oh, I don't know. I guess I'm just bored.
Melanie:	Bored? With what?
Kathryn:	With this job! There's no challenge. I can't stand filing. Using the copy machine isn't my idea of excitement. And word processing is the most boring of all. I just have to find something better.
Melanie:	Like what?
Kathryn:	Well....Don't laugh. Like...flying.
Melanie:	Flying? Oh, you mean you'd like to be a flight attendant?
Kathryn:	A flight attendant? No way! I'm talking about being a pilot. It's my dream.
Melanie:	You? A pilot? But you don't even drive a car!
Kathryn:	What difference does that make?
Melanie:	Hey, you're serious about this. I'm sorry. I didn't realize you felt that way. Let's talk about this some more after work. OK?
Kathryn:	OK. Thanks, Melanie. But we'd better get back to that filing now!