<1> Research question & Hypothesis

In our society, there are stereotypes relevant to gender. People expect that men should do masculine things and women should do feminine things. Because they are very complex and firmly embedded in our consciousness, people unconsciously make a sexist remark. In this background, we wondered which words express gender discriminative perception and whether these stereotypes would be also revealed in listening activities. Thus, our research question is ‘Do we associate certain words more with certain gender? If so, how does this appear in the listening activity?’

We hypothesized the answer to this question. The Hypothesis is that people would associate certain words more with certain gender and it would be revealed in the process of listening. We thought that the words that people more associate with female are feminine words and the words that people associate with male are masculine words. We speculated that the feminine words spoken by women would be more recognized than when spoken by men and masculine words spoken by men would be more recognized than spoken by women. And we tried to demonstrate this hypothesis by experiment.

<2> Method of Experiment

After defining our direction, we tried to find adequate method to check these hypotheses. When we decide our own method, we could referred a method of other experiment (McGowan, 2015) which is about subjectivity of listening. In this experiment, subjects will hear a sentence 'Elephant is a big animal.' and some noise is added to that file. Subjects can hear it with a picture of Asian or with a picture of White, then they have to make an assessment about the speaker. What we can find is that depending on what picture shows, subjects listened the same file differently. This shows that our judgement about our own listening can be different with the fact and actually, a judgement about the speaking connote a judgement about speaker.

Referring this, we conducted our experiment like this.

1. We made 30 sentences including some words or expressions that we expected to be considered more feminine, masculine, and neutral. Each group member came up with 10 sentences for each qualities of sentences and finally we composed them with 10 items respectively by scoring 1 to 3 in our group. For example, in feminine words, we made a sentence like ‘만나자마자 수다를 떨기 시작했다’ using the expression '수다를 떨다‘ which is easily used to describe women. It got 3 points.

2. We recorded them in both male and female voice and added noise to all files with various range of waves (total 5 varieties). Among them, we selected moderate herz, male with 10hz, female with 8hz.

3. 2 of us conducted with only female voice and other 2 conducted with male voice. We played the recording and asked people to write down what they listened to. We conducted with 44 subjects.

4. After gathering, we analyzed it so that we can check our first expectation was correct. We scored it depending on whether the expected ‘word’ is in the sentence or not. If the sentence is '드센 사람은 피곤하다‘ and the subject listened it '~사람은 피곤하다’, then she/he got 0 points. If the subject listened totally correct, then the score is 2, and one word or two words is left out of but these are not that important words, them the subject will get 1. If the subjects couldn't listen the expected word, it's 0 point.

The result of our experiment

We have tested 30 sentences to overall 43 subjects. Regarding the subjects’ gender there were no significant differences to refer to. The overall average of each group was 1.43 and 1.16, the male and female voice group respectively. In the male voice group, the average of each 10 sentences was 1.18(f), 1.68(m) and 1.43(n), which shows the ideal distribution we expected, because the average of masculine sentences(1.68) was much higher than that of feminine ones(1.18). Obviously, we set the neutral sentences(1.43) as the standard point. As the difference among the groups was clear, we could partly conclude that the gender-biased perception is working in the male voice group.

1) 8 out of 10 sentences from the male voice group had scored higher points than its counterpart.

2) The most salient difference came from the 13rd sentence, ‘세상에 쉬운 밥벌이는 없다.’

3) All of the subjects from the male group had written the answer correctly(2). On the other hand, the subjects from the female group only got 0.57 point.

4) The 16th and 20th sentences were the counterexamples. However, the gap(2-1.87) was quite slight.

In the female voice group, however, the result was less than expected. The average of each 10 sentences was 1.09(f), 1.05(m) and 1.36(n). Although the feminine sentences got slightly higher than the masculine ones, both had lower points than the standard neutral sentences. The problems found here will be explained below.

1) 2 out of 10 sentences from the female voice group had scored higher than its counterpart.

2) The most salient difference came from the 4th sentence, ‘만나자마자 수다를 떨기 시작했다.’

3) Most of the subjects from the female group had caught the intended word(1.81), whereas the Subjects from the male group only got 0.17 point.

4) Among the 8 counter examples, the most significant one was the 8th, ‘그렇게 극성맞은 사람은 처음이야(1.74 vs 0.86).’ The other ones had relatively narrow gap.

Problems & limitations

There were some limitations in the experiment. First of all, we couldn't consider the overall technical and phonetic factors when constructing our experiment. In terms of our experiment method using the noise, the speaker's voice could interact with the noise more in some environments, therefore it could be harder to hear the feminine or masculine sentence regardless of the speaker’s gender for certain recordings. And some kinds of vowels, e.g. /ㅡ/ are much harder to hear than others, e.g. /ㅏ/. We couldn't predict that the scores can be affected a lot by which kinds of vowels and consonants are used in the word when selecting the feminine or masculine words and constructing sentences. In addition, many test subjects generally had a difficulty in writing down the first word of each sentence no matter what kinds of vowels were used in the first part, while they easily wrote down a verb which located in the last part of a sentence. We thought that is because it’s hard to catch the beginning word in noise and to guess the first word from the context as it is the start point of hearing.

Second, the overall feminine sentences' scores showed less clear gap between both genders' voice compared to the masculine sentences' case. According to this result, we thought that we made some faults for constructing feminine sentences in the experiment.

Third, we lack of the validity in the process of selecting the feminine or masculine words which mean 'certain words more associated with certain gender' as we choose them on our own terms. We should have conducted a survey above all to answer the question "Which words are people associate more with certain gender?"

+ 추가 실험 부분

We didn’t conduct the experiment apart to find an answer of our first question. In other words, we didn’t mention credibly about how we set what is feminine words and what is masculine words. Therefore we conducted this survey as supplementary experiment. (In fact, the best choice was that we conducted this at the step of setting sentences.)

This additional survey asked for respondents to evaluate 20 feminine and masculine sentences that we made with the 7 stepped extent under the title ‘Group project of Korean&Korean literature major course Untitled Lecture(국어국문학과 ‘무제강좌’ 수업 프로젝트). The instruction is ‘Thinking about the use of the words or sentences below, please mark the degree depending on which gender is more associated with that expressions. If it can be used regardless of gender, then please check number 4. (제시된 단어 혹은 문장이 일반적으로 사용될 때 어떤 성별과 더 어울려 쓰이는지 표시해주세요. 어떤 성별에도 상관없이 쓰일 수 있다면 가운데 4번에 체크해주세요.) The more the expression is considered ‘feminine’, the closer the score will be to 1, and the more the expression is regarded as ‘masculine’, the nearer the score will be to 7. The order of sentences is shuffled. Total 86 people participated.

<2> Final result

In the case of feminine sentence, people tend to think that these words are feminine - scores’ average is 2.631. This survey result supported the view that our selection of feminine words is appropriate.

In the case of masculine sentence, we could find the other point. Masculine words’ scores showed that people tend to think these words are neutral – scores’ average is 4.641. And it is different from first experiment’s result that people more recognized the masculine words spoken by male. When we analyzed the first experiment and second survey together, we could conclude that there are difference between the perception of words and the real using of words. For example. in the case of the sentence ‘세상에 쉬운 밥벌이는 없다.’(masculine word), listening scores’ average of male voice is 2 and listening scores’ average of female voice is only 0.57. However, at the second survey, many people thought that ‘밥벌이’ is neutral word. Other examples can be confirmed at the below table.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Masculine sentence | Second survey’s score | M.V vs F.V |
| 1. 상사님께 지시를 받았습니다. | 4.92 | 1.04 vs 0.05 |
| 2. 우리는 노동의 대가를 받아야 해. | 4.33 | 1.48 vs 1.24 |
| 3. 세상에 쉬운 밥벌이는 없다. | 4.46 | 2 vs 0.57 |
| 4. 그 사람은 능력 있는 직원이다. | 4.32 | 1.83 vs 0.43 |
| 5. 담배는 건강에 이롭지 않다. | 4.95 | 1.74 vs 1.05 |
| 6. 내 조카는 장난기가 많다. | 4.8 | 1.83 vs 2 |
| 7. 그건 논리적으로 맞지 않아. | 4.16 | 2 vs 1.05 |
| 8. 운전사의 부주의로 교통사고가 일어났다. | 4.69 | 1.22 vs 1.1 |
| 9. 그 선배는 추진력이 강하다. | 4.76 | 1.83 vs 1.05 |
| 10. 그 사람은 매우 가정적이다. | 5.02 | 1.83 vs 2 |

We thought that the most of the results showed the covert bias related with gender because people said these words are unrelated to certain gender but in real listening activity, they associated these words more with certain gender. Therefore, we could confirm that people associate certain words more with certain gender.