

Gendered Rhetoric in Israeli Press

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Abstract

Gendered rhetoric linguistic techniques are analyzed in articles of an Israeli newspaper. Results point to gendered differences in writing. While male journalists adopt an emotional, sensationalist, judgmental approach, female journalists use a more cautious language, anchoring their opinions in fact allegedly unobjectionable, such as academic research and experts' quoting. These findings are partly explained as related to the rise of infotainment styles required by print journalism today. Male journalists make use of rhetorical tactics incorporating traditionally 'female' elements to achieve sensation. Female journalists tend to adopt traditional 'male' language commonly perceived as more rational and better suited to 'important' issues, catching the readers' attention mainly by providing theatrical background to the surveyed issues. Findings point to gendered journalistic micro-politics, reflecting the different starting position of the two genders in a traditionally male professional field, which leads to different rhetoric techniques.

Gendered Rhetoric in Israeli Press

The present study examines the characteristics of gendered journalistic written language by means of articles published in the known Israeli daily newspaper “Ha’aretz”. By adopting a constructivist and contextual approach, we focus on the attempt to unfold the sociological meaning of differences in language techniques between the two genders, within the framework of gender journalistic power relations, and in Israeli social-cultural context.

Socio-linguistic research connected to gender is mostly carried out on grounds hosting face-to-face interactions between members of the same or the opposite sex (e.g.: Tolmach Lakoff 1990; Tannen 1990; Nardy 1991; Chenik 1991; Weller 1995; Woods 1999). Almost all researchers conclude that women’s language is perceived as lacking power and authority, and striving to obtain approval and agreement, while men’s language is perceived as powerful, authoritative, functional and rational. Moreover, women’s talk tends to transmit intimacy by the sharing of thoughts and feelings, while men tend to demonstrate knowledge, control, analysis skills and independence. Women tend to converse in an "emotional language" while men will use a “reporting language”.

Literature concerning gendered aspects of mass media presents a wide range of subjects. It deals with women’s impact in the mass media world (from the points of view of quantity, power and more), the manner in which they are presented on this social ground (for example – commercials) and the historical development of

gendered press (e.g.: Beasley and Gibbons 1993; Carter and others 1998; and for Israeli press: Herzog 1999; Whitman 1988; Rubin 1987). However, there is lack of academic knowledge on the expression of gender by means of language in the written mass media. Herring's studies (Herring 1994, 1996) stand among the few striving to examine a similar aspect, in the field of "computer communication", where no face-to-face interaction takes place. She concludes that men tend to be competitive, present themselves as experts and make use of sarcasm and offensive language, while women ask questions and present ideas in an advisory manner. While Herring's examines interactions conducted by means of a "computer mediator", one cannot overlook the link between gender and power, and its influence in interactions involving the two genders. We, on the other hand, chose to inquire on the existence of characteristics peculiar to "feminine language" as opposed to "masculine language" in the newspaper, while neutralizing the influence of visual, auditory and directly interactive aspects.

Methodology

For the purpose of this study, a content analysis of the Internet electronic version of articles from "Ha'aretz" has been carried out. The articles' section issues on the Internet with the title of the article and the name of the author. Thus, we were able to sort out articles solely on the basis of their authors' gender, and not by any other criteria, as, for example, those related to graphics, location or the conspicuity of the title. Furthermore, in order not to be influenced by the journalists' identity, we erased their names and marked their gender. Thus, for each article, we marked either "female" or "male" journalist, alone. As the title of articles is usually the outcome of editorial decisions, we chose not to analyze them.

"Ha'aretz" is one of the three more read Israeli daily newspapers, is considered the most left wing oriented of them, and often takes an open feminist stand advocating equal job opportunities for both sexes. Hence, we assumed that said ideology would find an expression by the giving of equal opportunity to journalists of both genders to communicate their opinions in subjects considered as pertaining to the "public sphere", such as politics or economy – a ground that would provide better basis for comparison. Indeed, both men and women dedicated their articles to the same subjects in consistency to findings indicating the same trend in the frame of Israeli journalistic report (Lavi 1997). In content analysis, we focused on the stylistic techniques employed by members of different genders and not on content per se. We chose the "articles" section, where journalists comment events relevant to the Israeli reality, since we were interested in examining a writing setting enabling a significant measure of self-expression and not the "news" section, usually limited to dry informative writing.

We collected data from the articles section for a period of over a year, and carried out a comprehensive analysis of articles published for a month, on two points in time (from the middle of June to the middle of July 2000, and from the middle of December 2000 to the middle of January 2001). Articles were analyzed almost daily, in the course of those months, according to the following sampling criteria:

- A) Numerical balance between articles written by men and articles written by women. Thus, on days in which only one article written by a woman was published, we selected the first article written by a man (according to appearance order in the section).

- B) Where two articles written by women were published, we chose the two first articles written by men, posted in the section.
- C) On days when no article written by women was to be found, we did not sample any article written by men.
- D) We also disregarded articles translated from foreign papers (such as the New York Times) in order to safeguard contextual homogeneity.

We could discern the lesser weight of women, numerically speaking, in the articles section; while this subject is beyond the immediate scope of the present study, it bears relevance in the larger context of gendered press discourse, and hence we will deal with it in the conclusive chapter. Overall, 29 articles written by men and 29 articles written by women, constituting the whole sample, were analyzed. The choice of two points in time for the in-depth content analysis resulted from our wish to widen the context on the dimension of events.

All female journalists (9) and most of the male journalists (12), partaking in the writing of articles, were included. While this is a relatively restricted group, we believe that one may learn from this study on the dynamics of gender existing in the field of Israeli written press, and that the findings herein presented will become more meaningful in light of similar studies carried out on wider target populations, in the future.

While this study focused on the analysis of the written texts, at a later stage we conducted in-depth interviews with ten female journalists to get their opinion on the meanings of our findings, and their possible validity beyond our sample. All ten journalists currently work for one or more of the three main daily newspapers. We concentrated on women, as our results hinted to difficulties met by women in joining

professional fields still dominated by men, similarly to results of feminist studies we discuss in later sections.

The research process

The main research levels constituted of three stages. First, we carried out an impressionistic reading of an even number of articles written by men and women, in the course of about two weeks before beginning to gather the corpus on which this article is based. Impressionistic reading aimed to locate patterns of linguistic techniques, to be applied as criteria for the analysis of the articles later included in the corpus. In this process the writers' gender was purposefully overlooked. This kind of impressionistic analysis is found, for example, in a study of Shapira and Herzog (1984), in which content analysis of "memory books" was carried out, according to criteria and subjects devised in the course of analysis.

Analyzing articles from the "Ha'aretz" we were able to spot a tendency of different journalists to exploit linguistic options in various ways, in a number of dimensions. In this manner, and still ignoring the specific journalists' gender, a general list of criteria was devised, to be used later for gender comparison. Such criteria stemmed from the reading of the articles sampled, and part of them could not be previously found in socio-linguistic literature dealing with gender. For instance, we noticed that some journalists described the specific setting in which an event took place (e.g. location, date, people who were present at the moment), while others expressed their opinion on the same event without providing any contextual background.

In the third step, we related to the writer's gender as to an independent variable and we examined the criteria determined in the previous steps as dependent variables. These criteria, clustered together, show two distinctive stylistic patterns, defined by us

as "gender rhetoric". In other words, we are presented with a gendered expression of the means and strategies employed by journalists in order to convincingly convey, express and describe the Israeli contemporary pattern of reality. The ways to do so are various, and will be discussed in the following sections.

Linguistic attractions

We defined as "linguistic attractions" the stylistic tactics by which journalists try to elicit the readers' attention. In most cases, one may discern stylistic differences between male and female journalists already from the opening paragraph of the article. Male journalists make use of rhetorical tricks designed to catch the reader's attention in a sensational manner. This tendency to "sensationalism" characterizes male journalists' writing, a finding consistent to a study on political speeches (Landau 1998) showing that men speakers elicit attention by sensational statements. The following opening paragraph, extracted from an article dealing with the trial of Arieh Deri, a former minister convicted of bribe, provides the reader with a striking example of the male journalists' tendency to begin articles by sensationally presenting their opinion:

"He is not a martyr. He is neither Nelson Mandela nor Dreyfuss. He is not an Israeli hero and has not died for a sacred cause. He is not a freedom fighter and has done nothing to justify his glorification. Arieh Deri is merely a convicted delinquent guilty of accepting bribery and obtaining money by fraud in aggravating circumstances (Male journalist 18/7/00 - quotation no.1).

However, linguistic attractions in the opening of articles are present also with women, though in a less salient way. Female journalists tend to begin their articles with the

presentation of facts, providing background and context in a “theatrical” manner, in the process of providing information about the “setting” of the “play”. Thus, they supply a dramatic background, based on the presentation of supposedly verifiable facts, to lead the reader toward the definition of the situation that they wish to present. This tendency is apparent in the following opening paragraph, dealing with the same issue as the previous example, and in the same day:

"A comment made by the judges of the Supreme Court while relating to the verdict on Deri's appeal, slightly rips the curtain from of the most successful political trick of the last decade: The attempt to turn Deri into a martyr of the legal system, the public prosecutor and the police." (Female journalist 18/7/00 – quotation no. 2).

In contrast with women's presentation of facts, men present opinions already at the opening of their articles, even previously to the providing of any hint as to their subjects. They often obtain a sensational effect by using figurative language, analogies, and sarcasm. The opening paragraph of an article dealing with the possible return of Benjamin Netanyahu to the political scene provides an example of male journalists' sensationalist style, obtained by use of figurative language and analogies borrowed from other worlds:

"It sometimes happens on women summer fashion tracks. Outfits long donated to charity organizations suddenly return as a new product and none dares to object that rags remain rags. The same phenomenon repeats itself these days on the political fashion track", (Male journalist 20/6/00 – quotation no. 3).

In contrast with the male tendency to begin by offering opinions, the aforementioned women's tendency to provide facts at the opening of articles, is coupled with clarity about the article's subject, as in the following example:

"Ehud Barak started his election campaign last week in the house of the citizen Benyamin Becher, in Jerusalem...." (Female journalist 28/12/00 – quotation no. 13).

Much less clarity is found in articles written by men, who often "play" with figurative language, sarcastic metaphors, and rhetorical questions, in a way that not always clarifies what the article is about, as in the opening of an article discussing the attempt of the then Prime Minister, Barak, to preserve the "direct election" system:

"As in commercials about the treatment of impotence, the question Barak is asked is: "Do you take care of the most important issue?..." (Male journalist 25/6/00 – quotation no.4).

A given answer may follow a rhetorical question, as in the opening of an article on relations between nations:

"It is about time to turn to the 'last great nation' the Ed Cutch's question: 'How am I doing'? And the answer will be "ok, but not great'..." (Male journalist 25/6/00/ - quotation no. 5).

Differently from male journalists who make frequent use of rhetorical questions, female journalists tend to use authentic questions, later followed by a discussion, as in the opening of the following article:

"The arrest of the media tycoon Vladimir Gusinsky has re-awaken fears about attempts to limit the freedom of speech – whether it was carried out by order of the

president, Vladimir Putin, or not . Are those fears justified, and what does Gusinsky's arrest actually signify?..." (Female journalist 18/6/00- quotation no.14)

One can discern, among male journalists, elaboration on rhetorical questions, while displaying emotional intensity and moral judgment to demonstrate their opinion on an issue; all of that, already at the beginning of the article, by means of a number of short sentences. Metaphors taken from the familial world and the presentation of rhetorical questions, even without question marks, stand out in the next example:

"Our heart reaches out to the children of settlements. Which nightmares may pass in the mind of a toddler hearing from his mother that he is soon to be banished from his home? What may a little six years old kid understand from the "big" words written on the sign her father stuck in her little hand: "brothers are not to be abandoned"? If the peace agreement will indeed oblige Israel to abandon settlements and pass them to the Palestinian ruling, those kids will live in the knowledge that their big brother - their own state – abandoned them to their destiny. Hearing the parents of those kids makes you wish to be an only child...." (Male journalist 28/06/00 – quotation no. 6).

Female journalists provide less flamboyant reports, based on a less openly emotional language, which nonetheless is apt to elicit emotional reactions in the readers, precisely because it conveys the message of a strictly realistic report, as in the following example:

"People – older, youngsters, women, children, healthy and sick – climb on the soil hills, descend down the hill, cross a field, cross road no. 60 (the tunnel road), a highway, with the relative allowed speed, reach safely the edges of the road, pass a jeep of the borders surveillance, even when its soldiers shoot for

unclear reasons, climb a soil hill blocking the entrance to El-Hadar, shake away dirt and stones from their shoes insides and get into a taxi headed to Betlehem" (Female journalist 20/12/00 – quotation no. 7).

Cynicism, sarcasm and the clear taking of stands characterize more male journalists' articles. The following is an example of expression of opinions along with a cynical rhetorical question:

"Times of crises, even if a temporary solution may be found, arise the retro political fashion. When the present is not good, the attraction to what used to be grows, as if the state of affairs in the government is exhausted, why not to give another change to those who have already failed?..." "...but the point now is not Netanyahu's ambition to start with a new slate. Why shouldn't he wish for the return of the comeback? Is the problem national consciousness?..." (Male journalist 18/6/00 – quotation no. 8).

This cynical style is most common among male journalists. For example, in the opening of an article about the connection between peace arrangements proposals to the Palestinians and electoral immunity of eligible party's members, a male journalist writes:

"If Shimon Peres decides to risk a sixth defeat, it won't be because of preoccupation about the destiny of peace. Although he is not a member of the restricted cabinet that shapes the government's positions, one can assume that the minister for local development knows a thing or two about the ongoing drama that is taking place these days in the prime minister's office. He also obviously knows that among his "protégées", Yossi Baylin and Amnon Lipkin-Shahak didn't suddenly fall in love with Ehud Barak". (Male journalist 20/12/00 – quotation no.9).

An additional linguistic attraction used by male journalists is the dramatic addressing to the characters depicted in the article. The next example uses a dialogue typical in epistolary correspondence, while presenting a letter allegedly sent to the prime minister at the time, Ehud Barak, from his American counselor:

"Upon receipt of your telegram, I immediately interrupted my vacation, honestly earned after arranging for Bush's victory, and I came to Israel right away. I examined the situation from all points of view, as per your request, and reached the following conclusions:Ehud, my dear (in English in the original text), I hope my words will not anger you. After all, you hired me to give you a professional evaluation of the situation, of your status and chances...." (Male journalist, 2/1/01. quotation no. 11).

In contrast to the histrionic men's style of opening, women tend to begin their articles with a practical tone, reporting indisputable facts, and without openly taking a stand. There is only "dry" information in the following opening:

"The minister Eli Ishai was asked, two weeks ago, in the course of a private meeting, if he requests Ehud Barak to fire Yossi Sarid and to appoint a new minister of education..." (Female journalist 25/6/00 – quotation no.12).

Female journalists' "sticking to facts"

As showed, female journalists do not usually take an open stand in the openings of their articles. Even when they do express opinions, factual arguments are added on top of those, to support any statement. In the next sampled opening, for example, the female journalist uses an analogy to a state of chaos and immediately backs up her description of the situation by presenting facts:

"In the midst of the atmosphere of chaos in the Knesset, last week, while the majority voted in favor of early elections – a display of uncommon unity suddenly occurred. Sylvan Shalom, Limor Livnat, Benny Alon and Avigdor Lieberman joined Benyamin Ben Eliezer and Uzi Baram, while Avshalom Vilen from "Meretz" and Yosef Lapid from "Shinui" voted together with Nissim and Yair Peretz from "Shas"..." (Female journalist 20/6/00 – quotation no.15).

Women journalists tend to base criticism and assessments on available facts. Still, they are sometimes extra careful by presenting, already in their opening, reservation as to information presented, as in the following example:

"10% - that sounds little and a lot at the same time. Little, when the datum relates to the strip area the Palestinians are supposed to renounce, according to Israeli leakage of information, the measure of disinformation of which is still unclear." (Female journalist 28/6/0 – quotation no.16).

Similarly to the opening of the articles, gender linguistic differences are expressed also in their closure. Personal and judgmental tone and less formal language characterize the closure of male journalists' articles. See the closure of the article on Deri's trial:

"For Shas' benefit, for the benefit of us all, it is best if after his release he will be transferred to business – as he does understand money – and most important – let him get out of our face" (Male journalist 18/7/00- quotation no.17).

In contrast, in the closure of the following article by a female journalist on the very same issue, one can notice the attempt to combine personal judgment with a statement about the importance of sticking to facts:

“In the battle to win public opinion – the facts in "Deri's affair" have been of secondary importance right from the start" (Female journalist 18/7/00 – quotation no.18).

The analysis of articles, then, points to interesting stylistic differences between men and women journalists, already in their openings and closures. While we do not claim that the use of the strategies and linguistic devices above described is peculiar to one gender alone, we do wish to point out differences in the tendency to make use of them. The picture drawn by this analysis teaches about an interesting differentiation expressed, in the case of male journalist, by the tendency to use rhetorical tools such as sensational language, analogies, figurative language and metaphors. They tend to express clear-cut opinion in both the opening and closing paragraphs of their articles, and to do so, often, by means of sarcasm and rhetorical questions. Female journalists, as opposed to males, tend to emphasize the factual bases of their opinions and stress the need for reliability.

Looking up at authorities (Hanging on high trees)

Further support to the above finding – namely - that female journalists, differently from male ones, avoid basing their articles on their opinions solely, may be found in their tendency to base their arguments on authoritative sources. Female journalists use to support their arguments on statistic data, scientific data, and professional authorities. This is an apparently trivial requirement of factual press; however, one should keep in mind, that male journalists often openly scorn experts, as in the article about the right of return of Palestinians:

"With respect to experts – one should beware of Israeli "experts" who assure us, in their own name that the "right of return" problem is no problem at all. They base themselves on their own logics and not on that of Palestinians." (Male journalist 3/1/01/ - quotation no.19).

Indeed male journalists show open despise and criticism related to external sources of authority, as in the following example:

"Our experts, whose evaluations and prediction have been so mocked by Rabin and Peres, are alive and kicking and feeling well, thanks..."the article continues: "...for example, Eliakim Rubinstein on whom a new adaptation of a known comedy act by Uri Zohar was centered: "why is he jumping". This legal specialist, about whom Begin used to say "he is superior" chronically suffers of "lack of spine"..." and at the end of the article: "eventually: the only experts worthy of trust are precisely those who are mocked the most: the weather men. Believe them, when they predict an extremely hot electronic summer." (Male journalist, 4/7/00 –quotation no.10).

As opposed to that, the following article, on the selling of state lots to kibbutzim and cooperative settlements, written by a female journalist, is loaded with statements based on experts' opinions.

"It is possible that the reason those questions remain unanswered, for the time being, is the vagueness and the technicality of the subject. In his article in the last issue of "Theory and Criticism", Prof. Yehuda Shenhav calls for a widening of the discussion on lands to the cultural-political field. It is unacceptable, he writes, that the turning of land from mother land to soil for sale will remain only in the hands of interests owners, and no thorough discussion about it will be carried out in depth..." (Quotation no.20a). She continues: "Why isn't the leadership of the kibbutz movement

concerned, first of all, about the welfare of the members of the kibbutz as individuals? Why are members of kibbutzim, in the south and the north, about to receive, according to the oncoming settlement, less than members of kibbutzim from the center?

Prof. Oren Yafathal from the department of geography in Ben Gurion university believes that the coming year will be crucial to the future of lands, and will influence the aspect of the country in the next decades. Dr. Alexander (sandy) Keidar, from the legal department in Tel Aviv University believes that, if the move of "anchorage of agricultures rights to the land" will succeed, "we may all become slaves of members of the working settlements and of real estate entrepreneurs tightly connected to them". Both Yafathal and Keidar have been researching land administration in Israel , for years. "(Female journalist 20/6/00- quotation no.20b).

A stress has to be put on the use made by the journalist of what we called "moderating expression means", already from the first word "it may be", and by the continuous basing on personalities from the "academic world", to the presentation of bibliographical data. "Moderating expressions" such as "may", "maybe", "it seems that", "apparently", are more common with female journalists, and they usually appear side by side with judgmental expressions. With male journalists, in contrast, "arguments strengthening words", such as "hence" and "clearly" are common.

As we said, female journalists tend to base their arguments also on numerical and statistic data – as in the following example, dealing with water shortage:

"According to the data of "Be'tzelem", from the aquifer system of the mountain – the most obvious common source of water common to Israelis and Palestinians – 79% are assigned to Israeli citizens, 21% - to Palestinians..."
(Female journalist 21/6/00 – quotation no.21).

In another example, one can see the peculiar and stressed presence of the moderating word "maybe" in the structure of the opening sentence, to mellow the emotional opening:

"Unfortunately, maybe there is no other option than to join the opponents to the construction of an observation tower in the Talpiot neighborhood in east Jerusalem, by the governor's palace..." (Female journalist 7/12/00 – quotation no.22).

In conclusion, women prefer to express opinions based on "solid grounds". However, when supported by indisputable data, they sometimes make use of "arguments' strengthening words" such as "definitely", as in the continuation of the above-cited article. After a dense presentation of data and sources of authority, the journalist ends the article by saying: *"...This is definitely Israel's responsibility." (Quotation no.23).*

Rhetorical and authentic questions

Let us stress the use, made both by men and women, of questions as a mean of expression. However, men's rhetorical questions, commonly used, tend to express a clear-cut opinion, while women mostly use authentic or semi-rhetorical questions.

A man's article about the present position of Barak on the enrollment of Yeshiva students provides us with an example of a rhetorical and critical question:

"...what a sophisticated language, what courage, what a terrific leader." And then: "...he was the one to refer to the members of the Knesset who voted against his law proposal for the enrollment of Yeshivot students 'a bunch of cynical manipulators'. What would he have said about himself today? What would the Barak of that time have to say about the cynical betrayal of his voters and of the values of

justice and equality? How would he have defined a law exempting part of the population from military service, hence causing the fatal split of the Israeli society between those who will continue to carry the burden of security, and from whose houses a military funeral may leave, and those who will continue to spend their times in Yeshivot, bursting in laughter at the thought of the bunch of the poor losers risking their lives for them?" (Male journalist 6/7/00 quotation no.24).

Here is the use of a rhetorical question in an even more cynical example:

"Here's a riddle. The lives of how many families out of the 420 thousand residents of the Gaza strip still dwelling in refugees camps - has improved due to substantial amounts of money received by the Palestinian authority donated from foreign countries, since the signing of the Oslo agreement in 1993? Answer: none". (Male journalist 3/1/01 – quotation no.25).

Unlike the above-cited examples, female journalists generally avoid the "question style". However, when they use questions, they tend to make use of real or semi-rhetorical ones. An example of the female journalists' style is found in the following use of semi-rhetorical questions embedding also real questions, whose answers are relatively hard to predict:

"Will Israel leave the settlements, constituting the 10%, with no military protection? Will the Israeli government indeed cynically abandon a group of families in the boundaries of the Palestinian land? This is hard to believe. But let us assume this will be done with small and isolated settlements, for example Ganim, Kadim or Izhar. What with Psagot, adjacent to El-Bira (and built on its lands)? And Beit-El, Ofra and Tecoa? It is hard to believe no constant military surveillance won't be placed around them..." (Female journalist 28/6/00 – quotation no.26).

Similarly, in quotation no.20b, one can see the use of authentic and semi-rhetorical questions, adjacent to answers backed up by academic sources of authority.

Judgments and emotional intensity

While male journalists tend to make extensive use of value judgment and to attribute intention, at times malicious, to those they criticize, female journalists express a more subtle criticism, and present personal motives and/or personal gains of the personalities they criticize with less dogmatism. This difference is apparent in the criticism brought forward in the next two examples, the first by a male journalist and the second by a female journalist, published on the same day and dealing with the same subject:

"Barak is in love with the new system not because it is a good one, but because he gathers it is the only one to guarantee his election. This may be a legitimate attitude, coming from a politician, but it should be presented as it is, and not wrapped in beautiful arguments. The motive is completely selfish. It is as if Barak said: if it is about me – the hell with the country." (Male journalist 25/6/00 – quotation no.27).

"The roots of this missed opportunity are in the Barak's suspicious and rigid attitude which caused him not to read the political map in Israel as a system of codes stemming from complex social constructions, and preferred to view it as a display of forces in a war game..." (Female journalist 25/6/00 – quotation no.28).

The tendency to be dogmatic and to make harsh value judgment turns men's articles into more emotionally intense in comparison to women's articles. While professional

literature usually grasps emotional display as one of the main characteristic of feminine language, our research brings about a surprising finding. Male language openly strives to awake emotions in the reader, while female language, although displaying some emotions can be viewed as relatively colder and dryer compared to that of men.

This can be seen in quotation no.6, cited before, in which the male journalist uses emotionally affecting techniques, aiding himself with expressions such as "our heart reaches out ...", "...nightmares..", and by stressing the impotence of little children "...the sign her father stuck in her little hand....", "...toddler..." Use is made of symbolism emotionally connected to roles in the frame of the family: mother, father, kid, and brothers. The emotional tone of male journalists is accompanied, at times, by the introduction of personal elements, as follows:

"My late father left in his will his wish not to be buried along with his ancestors in the Spanish "El-Burak" on the mountain of olives, but to be buried on the Rest Mountain." I do not believe you will have the strength to hold on to Olive Mountain and ensure free access to it" he said. (Male journalist, 28/12/00 – quotation no.29.

The more moderate motional style of a female journalist is apparent in quotation no.23, where emotional expressions are accompanied by a supply of data and the pointing put of possible consequences. Such data turn mostly to logics, as a moderating emotional element, as in the following example from a female journalist's article about water crisis in Israel:

"..the Israeli principle of assignment of water in this county is that each Palestinian should do with a third to a quarter of the amount allotted to an Israeli. Enforcing water regime in Israel means that people will not wash their cars and will give up

green lawns. Additional shortage of water means, to Palestinians, that additional thousands of people will not drink enough water, will reduce the use of toilets and douches and will suffer from infections and diseases...." (Female journalist 21/6/00 – quotation no.30).

Emotional intensity is obtained by male journalists also by the employing of every-day's language (as opposed to literary language), as shown in quotation no.17, which ends by saying "get out of our face", and in which the writer made use of a language expressing "real street dialogue". This strategy allows for the expression of feelings, with no apparent thought-through judgment, and where the value and meaning of each word is not measured in a rational manner. It is a dialogue between the writer and the reader, creating an atmosphere of emotional closeness. This is apparent also in quotation no.24 where the use of every-day's language creates and enhances apocalyptic scenery providing it with a sense of delusional reality by the use of words like "...burst with laughter..." "a bunch of losers..."

Unlike the use of "informal" language among male journalists, female journalists prefer the use of more literary language, as in the following criticisms about Deri's trial:

"After nine years in which he was granted a series of concessions and a forgiving attitude in the media, one may sum up and say that Deri is a wasted actor. He fooled everybody, and he may still continue to do so. He has been loved and hated by the left wing, has been the hope and the enemy of the right wing, and has been the media's favorite until he lost his charm, and then regained it..." (Female journalist 18/7/00 – quotation no.31).

According to Goffman's concept of "role distance" (Goffman 1961), we argue that the use made by men of every-day's language is one of "embracing and closeness language", by which means feelings and opinions can be expressed in an apparently direct and uncontrolled manner. Women language, in contrast, is professional and "high", a "distancing language". One should stress that this tendency is opposed to that found by researchers in the wide contexts of every day's life, in which women adopt a more intimate and emotional language than men, who employ a colder and more instrumental language.

Did female language turn into male and male language turned into female?

An integrative examination of the findings presented up to now about linguistic gender differences in the language of journalists, indicate a surprising discovery. It appears that female journalists tend to write their articles in a language considered, in socio-linguistic research (Tolmach Lakoff 1990) to be 'masculine' (that is, more accurate, rational, dry, less emotional, more thought through), while men tend to write in a language considered "feminine" (emotional, personal, stressing the human side, empathetic). A partial explanation is not to be found, as it seems, in a shift in gender perception, but in the role of the contemporary written press.

For example, Holland (1998) points out that popular news today strive to entertain no less than to inform, and turn to emotions no less than to intellect. The use of attractive and accessible language, a personal conversation style – those are means by which entertainment and involvement on the reader's part may be obtained. She observes that historically, women journalists were considered as writers of an inferior press (emotional, subjective) while men journalists were seen as more logic and rational.

Traditionally, at the end of the 19th century, there was a tendency to walk two parallel paths, separating the “informational tendency”, considered more masculine, from the “entertaining tendency”, perceived as feminine. The stress was on a clear separation between men's task – the presentation of precise and reliable facts -and women's task – the providing of colorful opinions and human touch. In the middle of the 20th century, with the rise of the 'infotainment' tendency, male journalists began to adopt a more colorful style, providing a synthesis of information and entertainment (Holland, 1998). According to Curran (1991) the contemporary entertaining media is an inseparable part of informative press, a way by which people carry out a public dialogue on society, on the intuitional and expressional level, blurring the boundaries between fact and opinion. He believes that today's exaggerations and irony, humor and expressions of contempt, take their token on accuracy.

This combination of information and entertainment (infotainment) is apparent in the articles herein analyzed. However, male journalists seem to put more stress on their emotional role, while female journalists tend to stress their informative role.

How is it then possible to account for the differentiated rhetorical styles? As already stated, female journalist were traditionally in charge of local sections (gossips, aesthetics, and women magazines). Their entrance into the public sphere brought to light the necessity to prove their skills as good reporters (sticking to facts, distance) in spite of their belonging to the female gender (Van Zoonen, 1998). On the other hand, they must take into account the infotainment requirement to preserve the human view. While both genders have to satisfy said demands, men journalists, whose reporting skills are less questioned, may give more space to the human side, while women journalist have to stress factual writing, basing their opinions on more accurate

information. Indeed, our interviews with female journalists indicate that the search for answers should take into account the obstacles and conflicts experienced by women wishing to fit into a "male world". "Ha'aretz's editorial staff is the manliest one you can imagine," said one of them. "We have to make sure we don't give them any reason to request major changes in our articles". According to women journalists, they enjoy significant freedom as long as they deal with issues concerning the private sphere, or write for women's journals. However, when dealing with issues traditionally dominated by men journalists and male editors (mainly politics and economy) they often meet with disregard for their opinions. Thus, female journalists avoid presenting their issues in an openly emotional or/and dogmatic manner. They allegedly turn more to the reader's logics than to his/her emotions, and adopt an impersonal and literary language. The need to minimize personal stands, to provide back up and solid basis, as already noticed, flows in the same direction of the critical-feminist stream, presented by Tolmach Lakoff (1990) relating to "feminine language" as to the "language of the weak", similarly to other repressed groups. In order to survive in a world dominated by masculine values and norms, women need to achieve male agreement and support. It is interesting to note that female journalists, when quoting experts on issues pertaining to the traditionally male expertise – politics and economy - chose in every case we checked to quote male experts. In Zelizer's view (Zelizer 1995), journalistic quoting practices create an interface between written and oral modes of communication, or between text and talk, rendering distinction between text and talk invalid in contemporary news presentation. Thus is possible to argue that women journalists succeed to convey an authoritative "male" message, which adds to their legitimation in writing about issues concerning the "public sphere".

Feminization of press - Indeed?

The analysis of the articles we examined indicates that “male” language conveys a more openly emotional message than “female” language, a characteristic viewed, in socio-linguistic literature, as being central to the “feminine language”. Among the rest, male journalists stress the human dimension to concretize feelings of suffering and family relations. This is the soil from which Van Zoonen's question stems (Van Zoonen 1998): are we witnessing an ongoing feminization of press? The rationale behind this question is based on the trade logics of contemporary press, relying on the personal human factor, the needs and wishes of the public, emotional investment and the striving to obtain sensational effects. The first three variables are usually connected, by journalists of both sexes, to the stereotype of feminine press. An examination in depth of the articles shows that the concept of “feminization” does not fit the description of the linguistic dynamic taking place in the frame of written press as herein reviewed.

What we claim is that “masculine” language makes use of rhetorical strategies that constitute merely isolated segments of traditionally feminine rhetoric, such as the appeal to empathy. But those segments are not conceived as feminine rhetoric: quite the contrary. They serve the purpose of fulfilling the need for directness and sensation, which are characteristic of masculine rhetoric. In addition, according to Tolmach Lakoff (1990), men are those to determine the standards of the language considered preferable, regardless of its characteristics. As it seems, this is one of the reasons why male journalists, whose articles we herein reviewed, allow themselves to express opinions and emotions in a direct manner, and do not feel the need to moderate their statements, hence fulfilling the demand for sensationalism in contemporary press.

Our conclusion is that one can hardly assume a shift in expressional style is taking place between men and women. Men still convey control by means of journalistic language, even when disguising it as semi-feminine, since underneath emotionality and personal dialogue there is a fairly clear message, in which they allegedly state: "I am in control, I have independent opinions, I possess authoritative knowledge and I have no need for external support, I say what I think".

Women, however, behind the presentation of "male" control on emotions and rationality might seem at first sight to convey the message: "I do not have independent opinions; I need the support of external authorities". In other words, the wish to base oneself upon authoritative sources and on data may be interpreted as lack of confidence. However, this does not seem to be the case, as in the following woman journalist's explanation: "This is a little country, everybody knows everybody, and we have a list of experts on every issue. We can choose which experts we ask, knowing in advance that their opinions fit ours".

In addition, the women writing style, characterized by more literary language, attention to details, presentation of facts, and real questions to be discussed, should be examined in light of a further interpretative dimension. Danowski and Lind (2000), basing their research on gender-encoded language in newspaper accounts of 1996 U.S. presidential electoral campaign, suggest that women's verbal and linguistic development, widely thought higher than that of men, might allow them to process texts beyond the mere interpretation of surface-level signs, and provide them better access to the latent content of texts. Women's language is more sophisticated, less explicit and more attentive to deeper layers of significance. According to the above

researchers, it might be of value to conduct studies that explore in more ways women's processing of texts compared to men's. Although Danowski and Lind didn't relate to the writers' language but to the readers', said interpretation may apply to the present study, as writing text – like reading a text - requires a similar complex processing strategy. Indeed, we found that women journalists write in a way that is richer, more correct, clearer, and give information that is more reliable. Moreover, the female journalists' less demagogic and more rational style might be appealing especially to female readers, who use similar processing strategies, and to the more sophisticated readers. For instance, the "dry" language, used by women in the description of dramatic events, as in quotation no.7, might still convey a strong message through eliciting emotions on a less explicit but deeper level. It may be interesting to conduct further studies on the ways in which different readers process and remember articles written by women versus those written by men. For instance, it may be the case that in the end, many readers tend to remember the more documented articles written by women. By adopting Danowski and Lind's approach, we argue that women deserve a much more central place in matters concerning the public sphere, as they can provide the readers with a deep and critical approach to crucial issues.

Gender micro-politics

In conclusion, the analysis of "Ha'aretz" articles discloses a world of journalistic gender micro-politics, reflecting gender rhetoric on the gender scenery in the specific frame of public media. Such rhetoric is the outcome of the existential experience of the female and male writers of the articles, as in their every day's existential experiences in other spheres; an experience of disguised ongoing conflicts and struggles for power, influenced by gender. Bourdieu (1988) claims that journalistic

power is connected to claims to competence, which is achieved through "mediated knowledge". Women in the present study mediate their knowledge - and therefore their journalistic power - through experts, mostly academic authorities. Thus, even when they deal exactly in the same fields as the men (and especially when they deal in politics – a field considered as tantamount to the public sphere) they have to recur to openly mediated knowledge. It is true that according to Bourdieu (there, 1988), male journalists too must mediate their power, albeit in a different ways – e.g. based on close contacts in the political realm, including access to insider information. However, this way might be less apparent to the reader, which in turn might reinforce men's symbolic journalistic power.

Developments in the position of women in the press, parallel those of other professional fields. Consciousness about the situation of women in Israeli labor market is rising; claim is made loudly that women must be given access into the public sphere. And indeed, they are rapidly getting access to it, though in lesser numbers than men. However, the way they enter the labor market (for instance, the specific tasks given to them within the same organizations) still reflects the rooted perception that women belong to the private sphere and are less fit than men are for the public one. One must keep in mind that Israeli public sphere is dominated by men, one issue to which Israeli feminist research deals currently and with great emphasis (Herzog 1996; Herzog 1999; Izraeli 1997; Sered, 2000).

Thus, while it might be the case that women created themselves a niche in specific newspapers, they have to be more careful when dealing with the public sphere. They may try to lower their profile not to create a too open competition with their male

colleagues. This is true especially since both men and women write not only on the same issues and on the same days, but they also express similar ideas, albeit in different style, as can be seen from the examples we cited above. Thus, a concealed negotiation takes place, in the course of which women give up a measure of symbolic power and claim for direct competence when dealing with public sphere issues. While this specific kind of negotiation is carried out in the context of journalistic micro-politics, it is possible that similar ones are conducted everyday in other fields pertaining to the public sphere.

As already noted, both men and women express similar opinions about events, though in different styles. This finding is consistent with Bourdieu's claim (Bourdieu, 1980), according to which journalists do not considerably deviate from the editorial policy of the medium for which they work (newspaper in our case). However, similar opinions may be expressed in two distinctive gendered voices. Such claim is consistent with Zelizer's concept of "interpretive communities" which journalists form through discourse that proliferates in different formal and informal settings, creating shared interpretations and interpretative strategies (Zelizer, 1993a, 1993b).

If we keep in mind that the number of women is lesser than the number of men writing in daily newspapers and dealing with political and economic issues, the female point of view is still under-represented, thus keeping the imbalance between the genders, as far as symbolic power – the power to influence public opinion - goes. It seems that this condition parallels the condition of Israeli women in general, as reported earlier in this section: while beginning to enter the public sphere in large

numbers, they are still a minority. Furthermore, the way they enter the professional market still reflects significant gender discrimination.

In conclusion, it is reasonable to assume that positive changes in the professional position of women journalists will largely depend on success in promoting parallel changes in women's position in the Israeli public sphere in general. Whether such changes will lead to a feminization of the press, or to a proliferation of individual writing styles, will hopefully become clear in a few decades.

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