

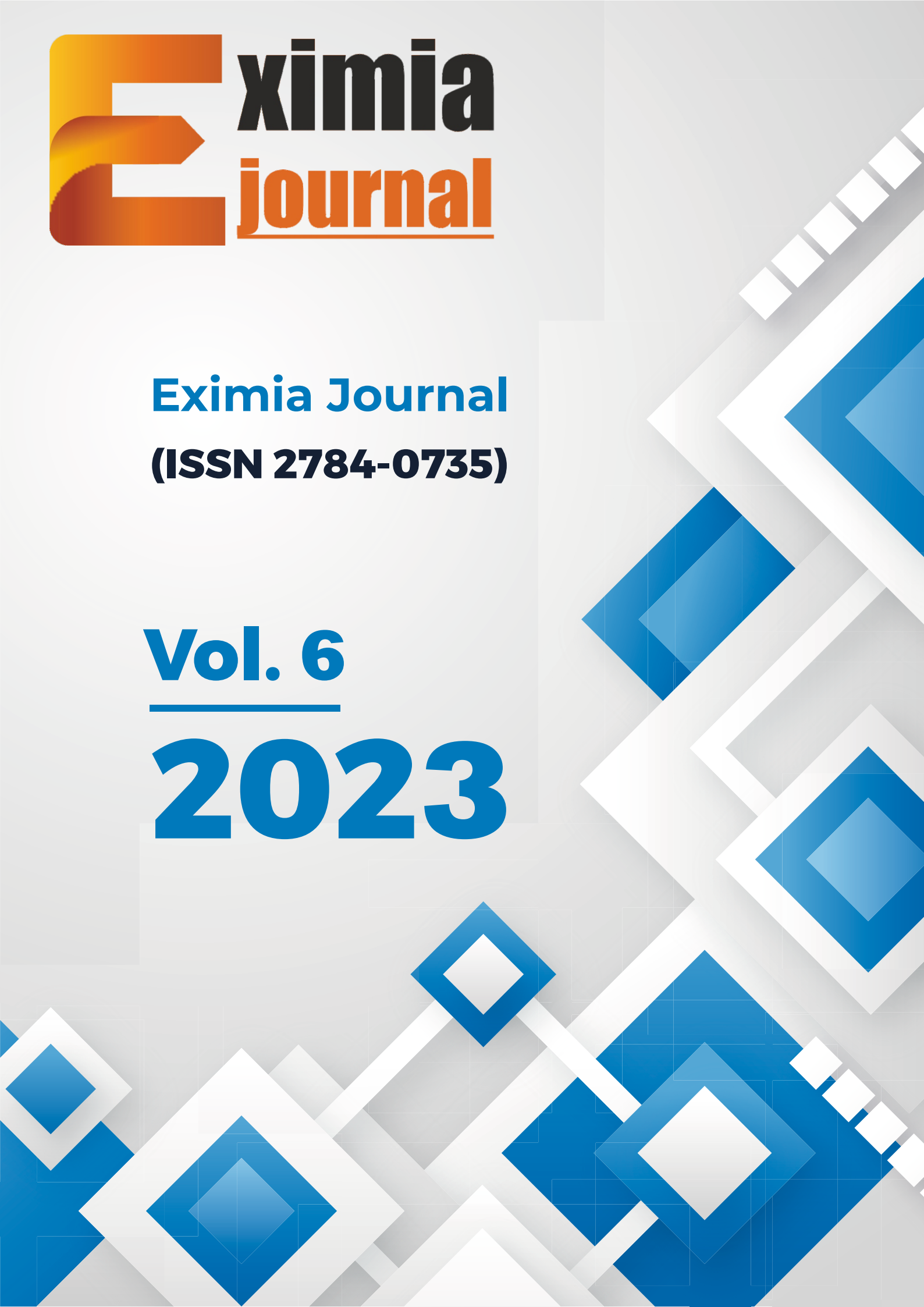


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## **Applying medical truths to qualitative, descriptive and statistical gender spotting analysis of telephone conversations and dialogues of elderly population speech in Muriel Spark's novel *Memento Mori*, revisiting the deficit and genderlect models combined with interdisciplinary trends**

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**Abstract.** The mixed-method approach, combined with the deficit model language assumptions indicators analysis, will be presented. The discourse analysis scheme (condensed from "You Just Don't Understand" by Deborah Tannen), fulfilled with a discussion which is, in fact, a descriptive analysis on semantic, syntactic and pragmatic levels, mentioning the distribution and frequency of word classes, as well as the selected "female speech inclined speech act" (asking questions) analysis, are going to be used to confirm the directional hypothesis that female language dominates in the novel "Memento Mori" by Muriel Spark. Due to the current gender-oriented linguists' suggestions that the language of minorities, transgender persons, and homosexuals should be researched today (not, by the gender studies, overexploited language of a 30-year-old white woman) the elderly population vernacular, used in the novel "Memento Mori", is going to be shown, revisiting the deficit and genderlect models and comparing the discourse with the contemporary human communication practices.

**Keywords.** human communication, content analysis, mixed-method approach, discourse analysis, comparative analysis

### **A. Introduction**

[W]e can define (human) communication as a process by which we share ideas or information with other people. (Wrench et al., 2020: 6-7)

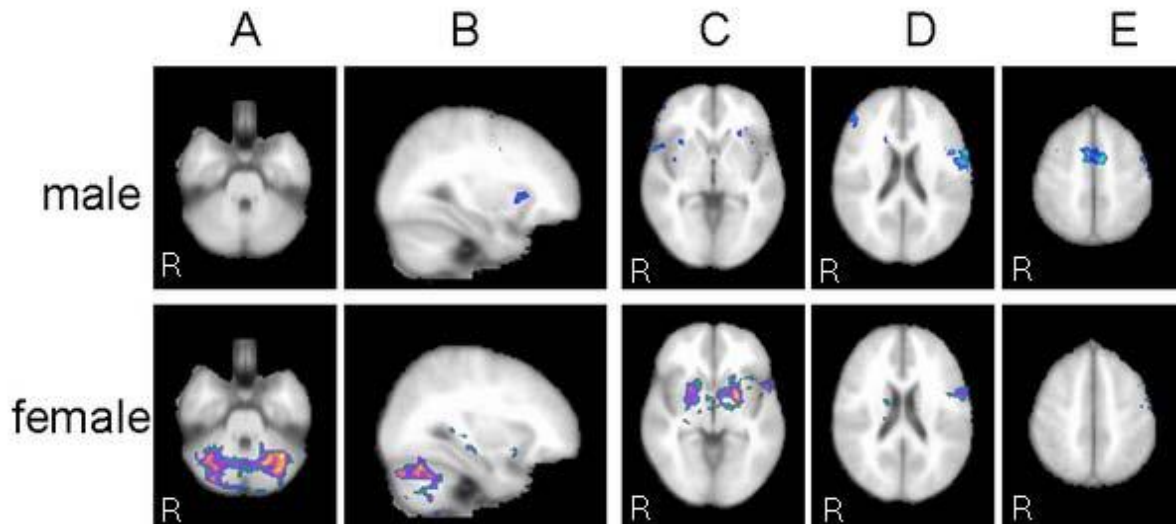
According to Versalle et al. (2004-2005):

Each of the gender types will communicate differently. Feminine females will perceive interpersonal relationships as possibilities to nurture, to articulate their emotions and feelings. Whereas, masculine males will view interpersonal relationships as competition and the potential for gaining something. Androgynous male and androgynous females do not differ much in terms of their perceptions of interpersonal relationships. However, androgynous males and females, as well as feminine females are likely to sympathize with others more than masculine males. (Versalle et al. 2004-2005 in Wrench et al., 2020: 280)

Gender differences are frequently represented as complementarities, that is, whatever men's language is, women's language is not (Cameron, 2003: 452). The stratification of male/female speech leads to the current situation of a great number of researchers trying to "solve" the

"problem" using "revisitation" of the widely known sometimes controversial findings. According to the fourth "social action" wave, women are to be "observed" in their "natural" habitat where they work today.

Gender is not static [...] (and) is *accomplished* in talk every time we speak (Coates, 2004: 7).



**Figure 1:** MR scan – M vs. F brain (speech act) [1]

(The deficit approach) was challenged because of the implication that there was something wrong with women's language and that women should learn to speak like men if they wanted to be taken seriously (6) which led to the male language dominance theory:

[...] sees women as an oppressed group and interprets linguistic differences in women's and men's speech in terms of man's dominance and women's subordination. [...] dominance is enacted through linguistic practice (6).

### **B. Research method**

Condensed adapted criteria, led mainly by the pragmatic standards, were made due to the hypothesis and corpus itself:

[P]ragmatic rules help us interpret messages by analyzing the interaction completely. We need to consider the words used, how they are stated, our relationship with the speaker, and the objectives of our communication (Wrench et al., 2020: 123).

Lakoff proposes that women's speech can be distinguished from that of men in a number of ways (part of the gender deficit model), including:

1. Hedges: Phrases like "sort of", "kind of", "it seems like"
2. Empty adjectives: "divine", "adorable", "gorgeous"
3. Super-polite forms: "Would you mind..." "...if it's not too much to ask" "Is it okay if...?"
4. Apologize more: "I'm sorry, but I think that..."
5. Speak less frequently
6. Avoid curse language or expletives
7. Tag questions: "You don't mind eating this, do you?"
8. Hyper-correct grammar and pronunciation: Use of prestige grammar and clear articulation

9. Indirect requests: "Wow, I'm so thirsty." – really asking for a drink

10. Speak in italics: Use tone to emphasise certain words, e.g., "so", "very", "quite" [2]

Variables which are to be used in the research are as follows: Hedges, Polite Forms, Question Tags, Correct Grammar, Intensifiers, Indirect Commands and Requests, Swearing, Apologies, Empty Adjectives, Modal Verb Constructions, Negative-interrogative Questions and Special Lexicon.

A set of parameters – a basic summary of Tannen's ideology will be used in the corpus analysis of the chosen novel! The discourse analysis scheme contains the following variables: status, support, independence, intimacy, information, feelings, orders, proposals, conflict and compromise (Tannen: 1990).

The illustration of the analysed corpus will be followed by a descriptive analysis which might contain features in the form of comments, however, personal judgment and bias will potentially be eliminated immediately and effectively by reflecting to the statistical data derived from the analysis.

In this very research, directions found in Creswell, J. W. 2014. *Qualitative, quantitative and Mixed-method approach 4<sup>th</sup> ed.* Thomas Oaks California: Sage Publications Inc. are going to be used. The research itself will be fulfilled with a discussion which is, in fact, a descriptive analysis on semantic, syntactic and pragmatic levels, mentioning the frequency, as well as the analysis of the selected "female speech inclined speech act" (asking questions).

The main hypothesis:

Female language dominates in the novel "Memento Mori" by Muriel Spark!

is rather predictable but an answer to it and a research goal will, hopefully, be fulfilled!

For originality purposes, due to the overexploitation of certain language and gender indicators, having in mind the fact that the deficit model is found outdated:

*The deficit approach is now seen as outdated by researchers (but not by the general public [...]) (7). [3]*

due to research propositions that language (gender) studies should be "reevaluated" and compared with the language and gender situation today a null directional hypothesis, closely connected with corpus (novel) content, and demand for the research originality is:

In the novel "Memento Mori" the language of the elderly generation is being used and presented which is a likely representation of the deficit model.

The book was first published exactly in January 1959. However, Mills: 2011 detests gender trends according to which a language of a 30-year-old white female, employed in a certain sector, should be researched.

In the chapter "Future directions" Mills: 2011 suggests that the language of minorities, transgender persons, and homosexuals should be researched today:

The public representation of the way women and men speak is almost identical to the characterisation provided 30 years ago. These deeply entrenched gender-specific linguistic stereotypes serve critical social purposes; they appear to maintain not only the status quo that

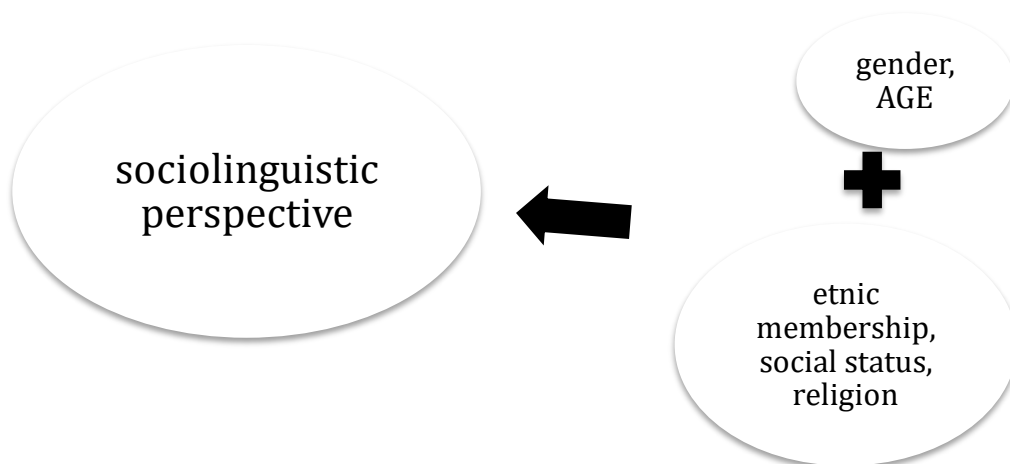
advantages men over women and heterosexuals over homosexuals and lesbians but one that helps establishes and maintain rules of feminine and masculine behaviour even if these generalisations fail to reflect social or linguistic reality. (Freed 2003: 706 in Mills 2011: 164)

It is about time that the language of the elderly is revisited! By doing so the deficit model is surely going to be revolutionized or "revisited" as a language of a specific population will be presented and compared with the contemporary "female speech acts" practices. Tannen's behavioural theory will be used as applicable as the very novel title is synonymous with "You must die!" which is also the content of the elderly characters' telephone calls immediately reported to the Police Officer identifying the one as a male caller, sometimes as a female...

In Chapter 12, "The use of dialogue in narratives," Macaulay analyzes the distribution of narrative as well as quotative verbs in narratives in Glasgow conversations. Quotative verbs include say, go, be like, be like that, think, and so on. The distribution of narratives and quotative verbs shows some differences in social class, gender, and *age*. [4]

In volume 3 "Gender Across Languages The linguistic representation of women and men" Marlis Hellinger and Hadumod Bußmann give the following recommendations:

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the tremendous variation found in the exchange of gendered messages must be placed more explicitly in a wider framework of communities of practice (CofP), considering the interaction between "gender" and *age* [5], ethnic membership, social status and religion. (Hellinger and Bußmann, 2003: 20)



**Figure 2:** Sociolinguistic framework of gender and language variables

It is difficult not to receive messages from academia.edu with notifications of various research. PhD Genderlect analysis of British tv programmes in the 1990s has been uploaded recently:

PhD thesis: gender, feminism and talk on British television 1970-1990 [6]

**Figure 3:** lang. & gender update

Therefore corpora, in language and gender studies, are the source of originality as emphasised by the extensive PhD dissertation "A sociolinguistic analysis of asynchronous communication with special reference to gender differences in language" which aim was to use potential "language evolution" in the "computer era" (Crystal: 2001) and the necessity to reanalyze gender-oriented language studies (Mills: 2011)!

### C. Corpus analysis & research results discussion

#### 1. Deficit model criterion corpus analysis

Variables for corpus analysis: Hedges, Polite Forms, Question Tags, Correct Grammar, Intensifiers, Indirect Commands and Requests, Swearing, Apologies, Empty Adjectives, Modal Verb Constructions, Negative-interrogative questions and Special Lexicon.

#### 2. Genderlect criterion corpus analysis

Parameters for corpus analysis: status, support, independence, intimacy, information, feelings, orders, proposals, conflict and compromise.

#### 3. "Female-speech inclined speech acts" indicator corpus analysis

Corpus analysis framework: the use of questions.

3.1 the use of questions language indicator corpus analysis

#### 4. A descriptive analysis on semantic, syntactic and pragmatic levels, mentioning the gender-oriented distribution and frequency of word classes: Verbs, Nouns, Adjectives, Adverbs, Prepositions, Interjections, as well as the distribution of Prefixes and Contractions.

Due to the fact that it is impossible to combine the deficit model, the genderlect model, syntactic and semantic analysis, manual statistical assessment has been done...

When revisiting the deficit model, more than one "female language indicator" could be found in a complex sentence e.g. hedges, empty adjectives, modal constructions.

### CONTEXT

Dame Lettie Colston refilled her fountain pen and continued her letter:

FEELINGS (genderlect variable)

One of these days **I hope** you will write as **brilliantly** on a happier theme (Spark, 2000: 1).  
(HEDGES) (EMPTY ADJECTIVE)

A complex sentence is treated as one sentence. Domination of "female language indicators" has been used to present a female sentence (e.g. 4 female language indicators vs. 2 male language indicators).

The initial corpora sample test was composed of 14 sentences. In the initial assessment, the selected sample contained two male sentences which were presented with 14.28 per cent:

$2/14=14,28\%$

The female language was presented with 12 sentences i.e. 85.57 per cent:

$12/14=85.57\%$

The test sample contained hedges, intensifiers, empty adjectives, modal constructions, correct grammar, polite forms which were also qualified as expressions of feelings, intimacy, proposal, support, compromise as the representatives of female language, according to the genderlect model, while male language was represented with establishing order and information exchange indicators.

The analysis has been expanded with 117 sentences. The corpus contained 131 sentences:

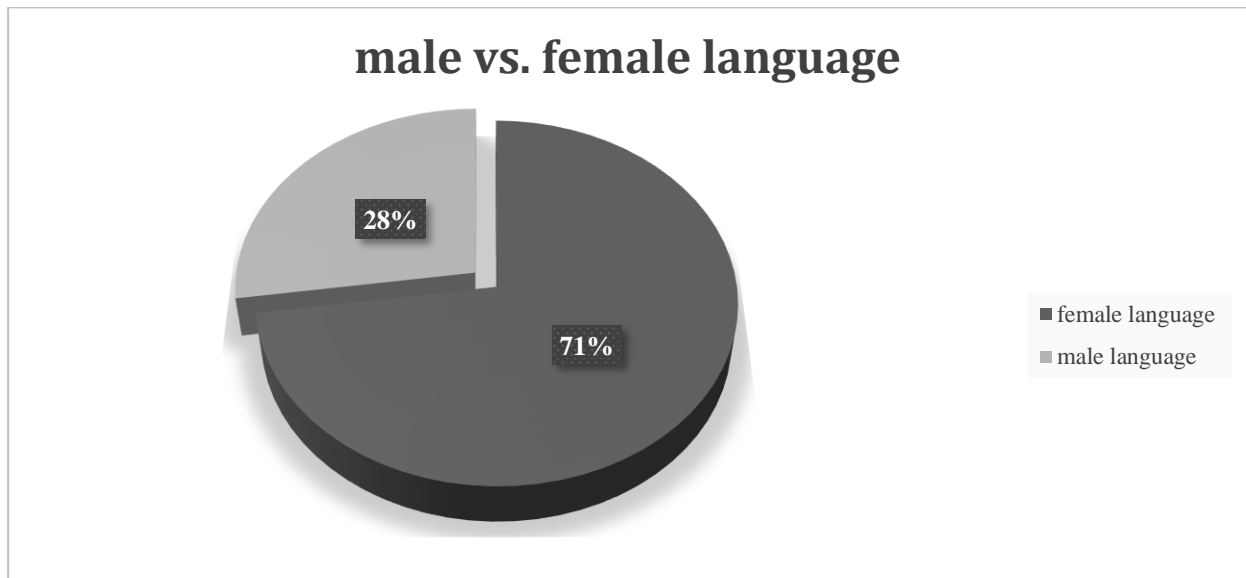
14 sample + 117 new sentences = 131 sentences.

The male language was presented with 36 sentences:

$36/131 = 28.24\%$

The female language has been presented with 95 sentences:

$95/131 = 71,76\%$



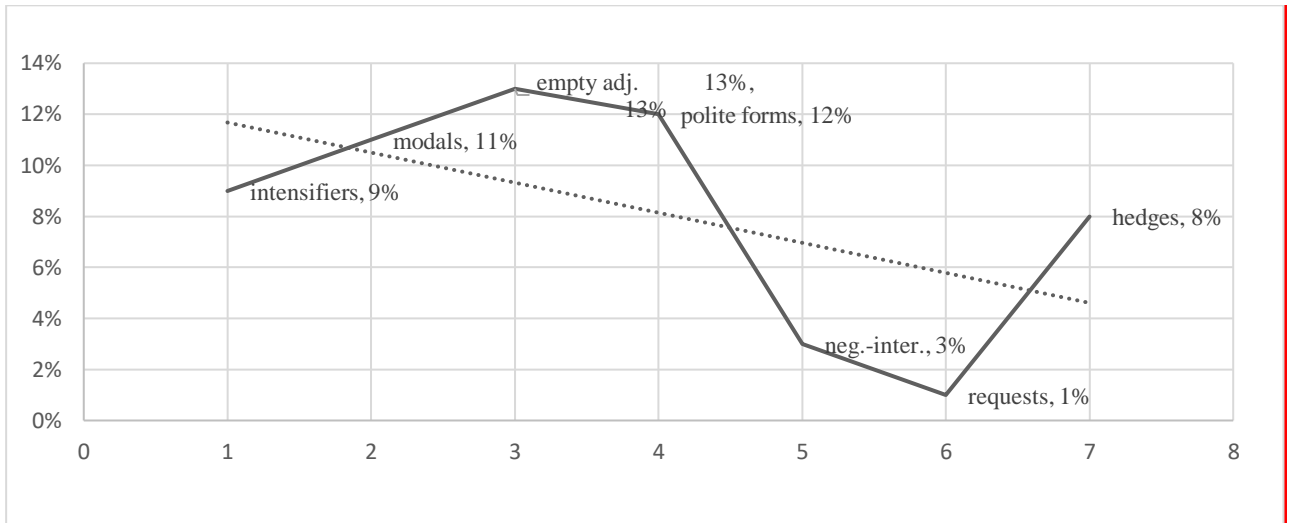
**Figure 4:** male vs. female language in the novel "Memento Mori" by Muriel Spark

according to which the directional hypothesis that "female language" dominates in the novel "Memento Mori" by Muriel Spark is confirmed as the initial test sample is qualified as reliable and the dominance of female language is great!

The language used in the rest of the novel is mostly consistent with its tested equivalents which is attributed to the novelistic technique of the author as well as the language of the population older than 85. The characteristic of the language is a repetition of the very same sentences throughout the novel which is synonymous with the content of the anonymous telephone call in which the characters are constantly reminded that they are to die and they report to the police officer that it was a man, others as a woman, some rise it to the level of God while the one of the heroine's ex-husband is being mentioned as committed to the mental institution believing he was God, which leads to the loss of inheritance due to the (additional) bigamy offence as well as the God mental issues...

Variables in the corpus are represented as follows:

- Intensifiers 9.47%
- Modals 11.57%
- Empty adjectives 13.68%
- Polite forms 12.63%
- Negative-interrogative sentences 3.15%
- Correct grammar 10.52%
- Requests 1%
- Hedges 8.42%



**Figure 5:** Distribution of female language variables in the novel *Memento Mori* by Muriel Spark

Female genderlect markers:

support,  
intimacy,  
feelings,  
proposals,  
and compromise.

Male genderlect indicators:

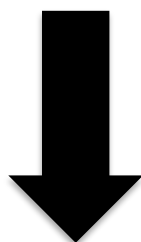
status,  
independence,  
information,  
orders  
and conflict

are presented in occasional reports or telephone conversations of police officers and reports in the newspapers usually read by a male character to females.



*female genderlect language indicators*

- support, intimacy, feelings, proposals, compromise



male genderlect language indicators

- status, independence, information, orders, conflict

**Figure 6:** Status of female and male genderlect language variables in the novel *Memento Mori* by Muriel Spark

Due to the claims of many scholars that the demand for the "corpora evidence" is an extreme necessity:

cf. "You Just Don't Have the Evidence": An Analysis of Claims and Evidence in Deborah Tannen's: *You Just Don't Understand* & also cf. evidence A&B below (Figure 7) and also cf. presentation of the female language variables in fiction an additional claim for the originality of this research (given below up to the conclusions section):

**Evidence (A)**

PROPOSAL: (genderlect variable)

"The same thing?" "Yes," she said, "the same. **Surely you have some means** of tracing—" (Spark, 2000: 1).

POLITE FORM

SUPPORT: (genderlect variable)

"Yes, Dame Lettie, we **will get him, of course** (1)."

ASSERTIVENESS

**Evidence (B)**

INFORMATION: (genderlect variable)

"**What did he say** (1)?" – DIRECT QUESTION

FEELINGS: (genderlect variable)

INT.

HEDGES

INTENSIFIER

“The same thing. And **quite matter-of-fact, not really** threatening. Of course the man’s mad. I don’t know what the police are thinking of, **they must be sleeping. It’s been going on for** six weeks (1).

MODAL  
CORRECT GRAMMAR

**Figure 7:** Deficit model criterion (corpus analysis illustration) & Genderlect criterion corpus analysis (corpus analysis illustration)

The uniqueness of the novel is characterized with the reports on the dwellings of the elderly: “You know, Taylor,” said Dame Lettie, “I do not feel I can continue to visit you. These creatures are too disturbing, and now that I am not getting my proper sleep my nerves are not up to these decrepit women here. One wonders, really, what is the purpose of keeping them alive at the country’s expense.” (123)

This is sometimes followed by the occasional reports on obituaries: Are there lots of obituaries to-day?” said Charmian. “Oh, don’t be gruesome,” said Lettie. “Would you like me to read you the obituaries, dear?” (4).

Adjectives dominate...:

unsuitable  
valuable  
unutterable  
damnable  
reasonable  
invaluable  
vital  
dental and guttural  
substantial  
general  
threatening ...

Similes could be easily identified:

Mrs. Mortimer was opening and closing her mouth like a bird (148).

Questions dominate...

1451 words long sample contained 26 questions. The distribution is as follows:

10 wh- questions,

2 wh- questions preceded with interjectional hedges,

6 yes/no questions,

6 affirmative questions,

1 negative-interrogative question.

One question was repeated as it is:

“Did you have a nice evening at the pictures, Taylor?”(4) “Did you have a nice evening at the pictures, Taylor?”(4)

One question was almost repeated:

Why can’t one be kind to her?” (2) Why can’t one be more gentle?” (2)

i.e. contained almost the same words. Two affirmative sentences contained hedges "perhaps".

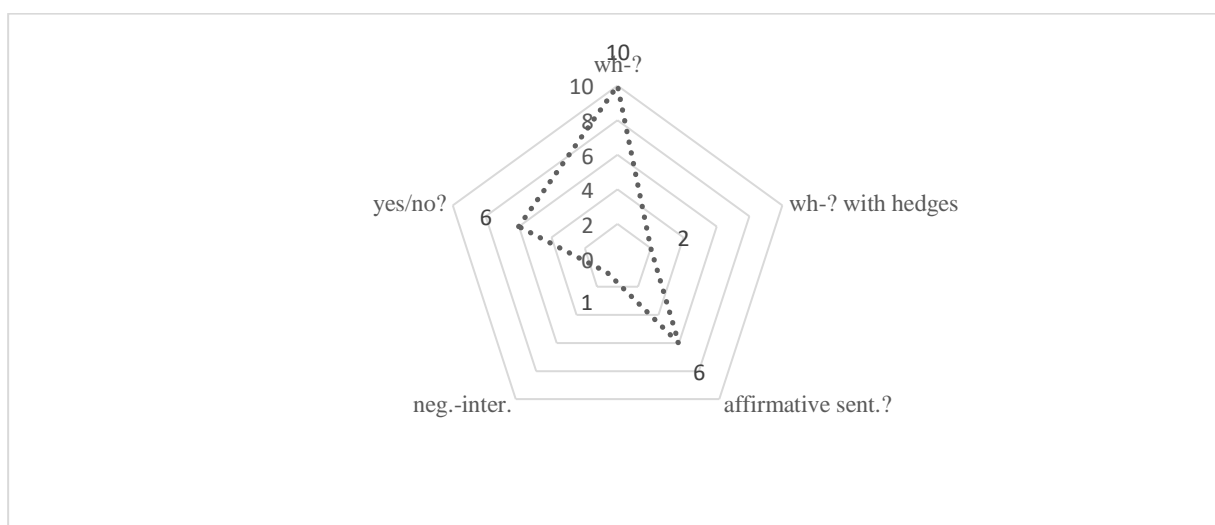
The dominance of the female language hypothesis has been confirmed by the number of questions i.e. frequency of 26 questions in such a scarce corpus. Polite form questions have been identified:

“Would you like me to read you the obituaries, dear?” (4)

Perhaps, however, you mean the First World War? (4)

Another "female language" variable – the use of affirmative sentence questions has been identified:

“Your brother actually heard the voice? Heard it himself?” “Doubting your word?” (6)



**Figure 8:** Distribution of questions variable in the novel *Memento Mori* by Muriel Spark

Uncertainty is expressed with hedges perhaps, sure:

An example of a feature of women’s language is the use of tag questions, which, according to Lakoff, are employed more by women than by men (Lakoff, 1973: 57 in Svendsen, 2019: 2). Lakoff defines tag questions as being ‘midway between an outright statement and a yes-no question: it is less assertive than the former, but more confident than the latter (sic)’ (Lakoff, 1973: 15 in Svendsen, 2019: 2). Thus, the function of tags lies somewhere in between declaratives and questions and can be used ‘when the speaker is stating a claim, but lacks full confidence in the truth of that claim’ (Lakoff, 1973: 15 in Svendsen, 2019: 2). Lakoff identifies tag-use as ‘legitimate’ in situations where the speaker is uncertain about something which the addressee is likely to know better (Lakoff, 1973: 16 in Svendsen, 2019: 2).

The use of interjectional hedges in front of the wh- questions, as expressions of feelings, make this analysis unique and might be attributed to the elderly population’s speech characteristics as well as the repetition of the same and almost the same questions combined with a question tag.

Predictably, the verbs dominated without any hyper prefix or suffix creation elements which have been followed with "usual" contractions. The "female" use of questions "to keep the conversation going" dominates in the novel "Memento Mori" which is in contrast to the male use of questions to direct conversation. The questions (in most cases) have been used as representatives of female dependence (cf. Coates, 2004: 93).

Interjections found in the novels are as follows:

“Oh, Godfrey, you made me start.”(Spark, 2000: 1)

“Oh, don’t be gruesome,” said Lettie. (4)  
Oh, who is it?” (4)  
A tiny bunch of violets—oh, see, it says, (13)  
“Oh,” said Godfrey, “you should have said funeral service. (18)  
Charmian said, “Oh, and what a clever man he was!” (20)

The neuroscience research article "Poor coherence in older people’s speech is explained by impaired semantic and executive processes" (Hoffman et al., 2018) says the following about the inability (of the elderly) to follow the conversation:

During a conversation, each person must plan and monitor what they say to make sure it is relevant to the discussion. [...] Studies suggest that as people get older they find it harder to remain coherent, and become more likely to produce irrelevant or off-topic [7] information when speaking. (2)

The production of the irrelevant might lead to the lack of ability to understand the elderly or the elderly to understand clearly:

He made notes of the information Miss Taylor gave to him. “Make it clear,” she said, “that this is a message from me. If my hands were in use I would write to him myself. Tell him from me he has nothing to fear from Mrs. Pettigrew. Poor old man.”(Spark, 2000: 123)

“Out of these wet woods,” he said, “by a short cut. Tell me, now, surely you understand what I am asking? It’s a plain question....” (47)

“That thing he says to Lettie. But he said ‘Mr. Colston, it’s for you, Mr. Colston.’ I don’t understand.... (85)

When I meet him, you understand, he is a different personality.” (65)

Godfrey did not at first understand what she meant, for he had long since started to use his advanced years as an excuse to omit the mannerly conformities of his younger days, and he was now automatically rude in his gestures as if by long-earned right. (116)

According to Hoffman et al.: 2018 the quality of semantic knowledge and the ability to retrieve information are potentially problematic (Hoffman et al., 2018).

Mrs. Reewes-Duncan, however, made the great mistake of threatening the sister with her solicitor one dinner-time when the meat was tough or off, Miss Taylor could not recall which. “Fetch the ward sister to me,” Mrs. Reewes-Duncan demanded. “Fetch her here to me.” (Spark, 2000: 30)

If you don’t remember Death, Death reminds you to do so. (125)

Dame Lettie recalled, as she spoke, that rheumatoid arthritis was one of Miss Taylor’s afflictions, but, she thought, after all she must face the facts. “Very advanced case,” said Dame Lettie, “he was managing with great difficulty on two sticks.”(24)

“It’s difficult,” said Miss Taylor, “for people of advanced years to start remembering they must die. It is best to form the habit while young. I shall think of some plan, Dame Lettie, for tracing the man. I did once know something about the telephone system, I will try to recall what I knew.” “I must go.” Lettie rose, and added, “I expect you are keeping pretty well, Taylor? (25)

And might be faced with various difficulties:

When Gwen had left Dame Lettie’s employment she quite understandably told her boy friend all about the nightly goings-on, how the mad Dame would go round the house, poking into all the cupboards and corners, and the garden, poking into the shrubberies with an electric torch, no wonder her eyesight was failing. (125)

The vocabulary of the elderly is qualified as being "broader" indicating a richer repository of semantic knowledge (Grady, 2012; Nilsson, 2003; Nyberg et al., 1996; Park et al., 2002; Rönnlund et al., 2005; Salthouse, 2004 in Hoffman et al., 2018: 3).

Godfrey stepped backwards and stood on a spray of pink carnations. “Oh sorry,” he said to the carnations, stepping off them quickly, and then was vexed at his folly, and knew that in any case no one had seen him after all. He ambled away from the trampled flowers. (Spark, 2000: 14)

In the study (Hoffman et al., 2018) a set of cognitive ability tests has been done according to which the young participants performed faster and have been qualified as more "fluent" i.e. the young participants have "produced more items in the category fluency" while the old participants have been distinguished for its "set of verbal semantic information" (4).

I’m afraid I sent Percy Mannering the last instalment of your memoirs. He would have seen it, in any case. I’m afraid he is a trifle upset about your further reference to Dowson. Mannering in replying to thank me for sending him the article, tells me he is coming down to see you, no doubt to talk things over. I hope he will not prove too difficult and that you will make all allowances. Now, dear fellow, you will, I know, assist me by taking the old fellow’s pulse and temperature as soon as it can conveniently be done after he has discussed the article with you. Preferably, of course, during the discussion, but this may prove difficult. Any further observations as to his colour, speech (clarity of, etc.) and general bearing during the little discussion will be most welcome, as you know. Mannering will be with you tomorrow, i.e. the day on which you will, I expect, receive this letter—at about 3.40 p.m. I have supplied him with train times and all necessary directions. (Spark, 2000: 130-131)

The uniqueness of the elderly vernacular was:

"Older people are generally considered to produce more enjoyable stories than young people (Ryen, et al., 1992 in Hoffman et al. 2018)":

...By the fire sat a frail old lady, a lady who once set the whole of the literary world (if not the Thames) on fire.... Despite her age, this legendary figure is still abundantly alive.... (2).

Idiolects of the main characters could be seen in the specific use of grammar and vocabulary which Jean Aitchinson sees as easily connected with the specific choice of vocabulary and one's tendencies to create a mental lexicon:

[...] mental maps are unlike real-life maps in that they have to depend on inspired guess work, since we cannot easily look into the head and see the connections we hypothesize. Our models are therefore often based on metaphors, as when we test out that the mind may be something else we know about, such as a library or a computer. (Aitchinson, 2006: 37)

Dame Lettie Colston is frightened, scared, uneasy, nervous throughout the novel which is seen through the use of repetitions, imperatives, requests and questions:

“Wait a minute, wait a minute, Godfrey,” said Dame Lettie who was being helped out. “Don’t pull me.” (102)

Godfrey is described as a caregiver and somebody to rely on and shares news on this and that making his narrations more or less interesting or simply reading from the newspapers:

“Lydia May,” said Godfrey, reading from the paper, “died yesterday at her home in Knightsbridge six days before her ninety-second birthday.” (51)

And complaining about his "responsibilities" using conditionals and imperatives:

“What is the use,” said Godfrey, “of me paying big doctor’s bills if you ... (52)

Charmian is recovering from a stroke and constantly reports on her medication use which reflects the use of certain, constantly repeated, vocabulary:

“I did take them,” said Charmian. “I took them with my early tea, and they tried to force me to take more at breakfast. I know I took them with my early tea, and just suppose I had taken a second dose—” [...] “But surely,” said Mrs. Pettigrew, “it is always dangerous to exceed a stated dose.” (55)

Deborah Cameron (2003), in the handbook "Gender and Language Ideologies", indicates that:

The late twentieth-century equivalents of conduct literature (self-help books, radio and TV talkshows, and articles in women's magazines, for example) often advised women in a more piecemeal manner on how to be taken more seriously by [...] "women's language" features [...] phrasing commands in the form of questions, adding question tags to statements. (451)

which evidence could be traced in the novel "Memento Mori" and the language of its main characters.

#### **D. Conclusions**

Directions found in Creswell, J. W. 2014. *Qualitative, quantitative and Mixed-method approach 4<sup>th</sup> ed.* Thomas Oaks California: Sage Publications Inc. have been used. The main hypothesis was: Female language dominates in the novel "Memento Mori" by Muriel Spark. Variables used

in the research are as follows: Hedges, Polite Forms, Question Tags, Correct Grammar, Intensifiers, Indirect Commands and Requests, Swearing, Apologies, Empty Adjectives, Modal Verb Constructions, Negative-interrogative Questions and Special Lexicon. The discourse analysis scheme (a basic summary of Tannen's ideology) contains the following variables: status, support, independence, intimacy, information, feelings, orders, proposals, conflict and compromise.

In the initial assessment, the selected sample contained 85.57 per cent of female language (hedges, intensifiers, empty adjectives, modal constructions, correct grammar, polite forms which were also qualified as expressions of feelings, intimacy, proposal, support, compromise as the representatives of female language, according to the genderlect model, while male language was represented with order and information indicators).

The expanded corpus contained 131 sentences. The male language was presented with 36 sentences (28.24%). The female language has been presented with 95 sentences (71,76%). The initial test sample is qualified as reliable and the dominance of the female language is great! The directional hypothesis that "female language" dominates in the novel "Memento Mori" by Muriel Spark is confirmed (test sample 85.57 per cent of female language + the expanded corpus analysis 71,76% per cent of female language). Variables in the corpus are represented with intensifiers 9.47%, modals 11.57%, empty adjectives 13.68%, polite forms 12.63%, negative-interrogative sentences 3.15%, correct grammar 10.52%, requests 1%, hedges 8.42%. Female genderlect markers: support, intimacy, feelings, proposals, and compromise dominate in the corpus! Male genderlect indicators: status, independence, information, orders and conflict are presented in occasional reports or telephone conversations of police officers and reports in the newspapers usually read by a male character to females.

The domination of various adjectives is more than evident. Similes and metaphors also dominate as well as questions. 1451 words long sample contained 26 questions. Namely, 10 wh- questions, 2 wh- questions preceded with interjectional hedges, 6 yes/no questions, 6 affirmative questions, 1 negative-interrogative question. One question was repeated as it is. One question was almost repeated. Two affirmative sentences contained hedges "perhaps". The number of questions (26 questions in such a scarce corpus) is an additional confirmation of the female language dominance hypothesis. Polite form questions have been identified as well as the use of affirmative sentence questions. Uncertainty is expressed with hedges. The use of interjectional hedges in front of the wh- questions as expressions of feelings might be attributed to the elderly population's speech characteristics as well as the repetition of the same and almost the same questions which is combined with question tags. The "female" use of questions "to keep the conversation going" dominates in the novel "Memento Mori" which could additionally be added to the female language dominance hypothesis confirmation.

The likelihood of the production of irrelevant or off-topic information among elderly characters in the novel is great which is a confirmation of the previous findings. The quality of semantic knowledge and the ability to retrieve information are potentially problematic which is similar to recent studies on the elderly population findings. The vocabulary of the elderly is qualified as being "broader" indicating a richer repository of semantic knowledge which is also equivalent to the previous findings. Similarly to the previous findings, the old participants have been distinguished for their "set of verbal semantic information" and produced more enjoyable stories than young people. Idiolects of the main characters could be seen in the specific use of grammar and vocabulary. Due to the demand for the research originality the language of the elderly generation is being presented as well as the gender stratification in the novel. 1959 publication was selected because of the need for comparison with the current speech act practices!

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- [11] <https://www.google.com/search?q=male+vs+female+brain+scan+speaking&tbm10.5.2022>
- [12] [https://www.sil.org/system/files/reapdata/12/60/10/126010589043590188208897210471696335507/SILEBR\\_2009\\_017.pdf23.6.202](https://www.sil.org/system/files/reapdata/12/60/10/126010589043590188208897210471696335507/SILEBR_2009_017.pdf23.6.202)
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### N. B.

The novel "Memento Mori" by Muriel Spark is widespread since 1959, exposed to the public which includes a corpora analysis of the language used by the characters in the novel

### Notes

[1] <https://www.google.com/search?q=male+vs+female+brain+scan+speaking&tbm=10>.5.2022

[2] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robin\\_Lakoff](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robin_Lakoff)11.5.2022

[3] Italicized by the author!

[4] [https://www.sil.org/system/files/reapdata/12/60/10/126010589043590188208897210471696335507/SILEBR\\_2009\\_017.pdf](https://www.sil.org/system/files/reapdata/12/60/10/126010589043590188208897210471696335507/SILEBR_2009_017.pdf)23.6.2022 [underlined & italicized by the author!]

[5] Underlined & italicized by the author!

[6] Personal e-mail!

[7] Underlined by the author!

### Figure Legends

**Figure 1:** MR scan – M vs. F brain (speech act)

**Figure 2:** Sociolinguistic framework of gender and language variables

**Figure 3:** lang. & gender update

**Figure 4:** male vs. female language in the novel "Memento Mori" by Muriel Spark

**Figure 5:** Distribution of female language variables in the novel *Memento Mori* by Muriel Spark

**Figure 6:** Status of female and male genderlect language variables in the novel *Memento Mori* by Muriel Spark

**Figure 7:** Deficit model criterion (corpus analysis illustration) & Genderlect criterion corpus analysis (corpus analysis illustration)

**Figure 8:** Distribution of questions variable in the novel *Memento Mori* by Muriel Spark