



AQA English Language

Enhanced resources

Updated teacher knowledge materials –
Language and gender and
Children's language development



Contents

You can use the title links to jump directly to the different sections. (Use Ctrl and click to follow the link)

Section	Page
Language and gender	3
Children's language development	6

These resources are aimed at teachers and designed to refresh subject knowledge in two fields – **Language and gender** and **Children's language development**. In both, there have been quite significant developments in the research and thinking in recent years. Most of what you will find here takes the form of links to external sites, with some commentary to steer you in the right direction for how the links might work alongside existing schemes of work and plans.

Both of these topics will be an important part of your teaching of AQA A-level English Language specification 4.1 – Language, the individual and society.



Language and gender

Much of the work on language and gender has developed apace since the days of the ‘three Ds’ (deficit, dominance and difference). The textbooks produced at the launch of the current specification also referenced a fourth ‘D’ – ‘diversity’ – and this is something that most teachers will be aware of. However, there’s now also much new work about:

- trans and non-binary identities
- how gender is performed in different settings
- how gender is performed for the creation of different social meanings
- language use online.

It is also worth remembering that – like all areas in Language diversity for 7702/2 – the focus on language is not just about how it’s used but also how the users of it are represented. In the case of language and gender, this might mean that you would look at the language **used to represent** sex, gender and sexual identity (eg ‘man up’), alongside the ways in which different people **use language** to construct and express their identities. (eg, a person may refer to themselves with the pronoun ‘they’ instead of ‘he’ or ‘she’.)

The foundational texts for language and gender are probably worth revisiting too, as there’s been discussion among teachers about how the course can be structured and where to start. Teachers are also discussing whether gender should be taught discretely or as part of a wider focus on language and identity that explores the intersectionality of our language identities.

The links that follow are broken down into different areas for simplicity, but it’s probably a good idea to look over the different areas here holistically to decide on the most appropriate way to develop materials for your own students.

Books about language and gender

These are suggested as good starting points for teachers to build up an overview of the field, including the thinking and work that has gone on since the earliest days of linguistics.

Goddard, A and Mean, L. (2009). *Language and Gender*. London: Routledge.

<https://www.routledge.com/Language-and-Gender/Goddard-Mean/p/book/9780415466639>

Sauntson, H. (2020) *Researching Language, Gender and Sexuality: A Student Guide*. London: Routledge.

<https://www.routledge.com/Researching-Language-Gender-and-Sexuality-A-Student-Guide/Sauntson/p/book/9781138637368>

Sunderland, J. (2006) *Language and Gender: An Advanced Resource Book*. London: Routledge.

<https://www.routledge.com/Language-and-Gender-An-Advanced-Resource-Book/Sunderland/p/book/9780415311045>

Talbot, M. (2019) *Language and Gender*. 3rd edition. UK: John Wiley and Sons Ltd.

<https://www.wiley.com/en-gb/Language+and+Gender%2C+3rd+Edition-p-9781509530106>



Titjen, F. (2018) *Language and Gender*: Cambridge Topics in English Language series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

www.cambridge.org/gb/education/subject/english/english-language/cambridge-topics-english-language/cambridge-topics-english-language-language-and-gender-language-and-gender-digital-edition-2-years?isbn=9781108442503&format=EB

July, A. (2018) *Speaking Up: Understanding language and gender*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. www.multilingual-matters.com/page/detail/Speaking-Up/?k=9781783099603

Baker, P. (2014) *Using Corpora to Analyze Gender*. London: Bloomsbury. www.bloomsbury.com/uk/using-corpora-to-analyze-gender-9781441108777

Podcasts and resources for discussion about teaching the course

Lexis podcast: *Language and gender special part 1* – with Deborah Cameron
open.spotify.com/episode/3t5fbbS2USWBLyTxzB50Mp?si=XF7uRa_PQ9apICGiMXIfQw

Lexis podcast: *Language and gender special part 2* - teacher discussion
open.spotify.com/episode/58PEZKb3pf2Yx47QV5MhPQ?si=O6Q6oPgbSIG75qO1Ye3v5w

Deborah Cameron's 2015 research update for teachers
www.englishandmedia.co.uk/blog/language-gender-a-research-update-for-teachers

Deborah Cameron's blog, *Language: a feminist guide*
debuk.wordpress.com

Lancaster University's Corpus for Schools material (including corpus-based activities on language and gender)
www.lancaster.ac.uk/corpusforschools/lesson-ideas

Sources for new material on language, gender, sexuality and identity

The English and Media Centre's *New Directions* free download contains summaries of recent research and Q&As with linguists on the work in its *Gender and Sexuality* section. That resource can be found here:
www.englishandmedia.co.uk/publications-magazines/20710/new-directions-language-diversity-research-and-resource-pack-download-emc-free

Many links to resources, papers and conference presentations can be found through Lucy Jones' website here:
queerlinglang.wordpress.com

The Lexis interview with Lucy Jones is also a useful starting point for making links between existing work on gender and more recent research:
open.spotify.com/episode/1m9UKNUUysD6Vawj61C2kW?si=dUvBbiHMQDW4VwgtG-2r1g

Episode 87 of the *Because Language* podcast has an interview and discussion about 'trans-inclusive language':
becauselanguage.com/87-trans-inclusive (from 45 minutes in)



Representation of gender

In the Lexis Language and gender special part 1, Deborah Cameron makes the point that Robin Lakoff's 1973 *Language and Woman's Place* paper discussed the fundamental link between ideas about how women are represented and how women use language, so that is something to think about in the teaching of this part of the course.

In the same way that views and attitudes (and even media representations) of people's accents and dialects can shape the ways in which people use language, so representations of different groups' speech – eg that women who speak out are too bossy; that women who don't speak out need to be more forceful; that women who say 'sorry' come across as weak – can lead to pressures on how people feel they can use language.

When looking at how language is used to represent gender, and how sexism in language operates in different ways, there are a number of different links and texts that could be explored.

Cameron, D. (2023) *Language, Sexism and Misogyny*. London: Routledge.

www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781003294115/language-sexism-misogyny-deborah-cameron

Baker, P. (2008) *Sexed Texts*, Lancaster: Equinox.

www.equinoxpub.com/home/sexed-texts-language-gender-sexuality-paul-baker

Lexis interview with Anna Islentyeva and the representation of masculinity in advertising:

open.spotify.com/episode/2jEaBQ4dl7xGc5s7zD5k7i?si=Ddc6Ne8WQNexHSwV4xT-SA

Lexis interview with Kate Barber and the language of misogyny in online communities:

open.spotify.com/episode/2VYmNbkS2y3kvPcGWfpgk8?si=RBhAuyPLT1urn75HSoX3Ug

Fought, C and Eisenhauer, K. (2011-present) 'Gender, Linguistics and Walt Disney'.

www.kareneisenhauer.org/projects-and-publications

A Q&A with Karen Eisenhauer about her work on 'Gender, Linguistics and Walt Disney': english.news.chass.ncsu.edu/2017/04/20/language-gender-and-disney-princesses



Children's language development

The development of digital technology has significantly helped the research in this field, meaning that many of the more anecdotal observations and handwritten data sets from early research have been superseded by vast, millions-of-words databases of children's and caregivers' language. From these corpora, patterns of language can be observed and a much clearer picture of both input and output investigated.

There has been a huge amount of work carried out on the nature of infant-directed speech and how children respond to it, so some of the most interesting studies for A-level students might be the ones in the York English Language Toolkit materials below.

York English Language Toolkit

Detailed summaries of research, resources aimed at A-level teachers and students, and videos of presentations from recent workshops.

englishlanguagetoolkit.york.ac.uk/case-studies/individual-paths

englishlanguagetoolkit.york.ac.uk/case-studies/isolated-words

englishlanguagetoolkit.york.ac.uk/case-studies/onomatopoeia

englishlanguagetoolkit.york.ac.uk/case-studies/exaggerated-babytalk

englishlanguagetoolkit.york.ac.uk/case-studies/iconicity

englishlanguagetoolkit.york.ac.uk/case-studies/changing-ids

This interview with Dr Catherine Laing, one of the researchers involved in some of the York studies, might also be interesting for A-level students as it links to the wider questions that have often been set:

open.spotify.com/episode/2lwBpKOWDD8yW1eKsBVtYD?si=omWrdPvnRCyd2sgmPeL7EQ

Other studies

The Liverpool Language Lab (www.language05.co.uk) has also carried out many studies on children's language, with a useful summary of their completed and ongoing work here:

www.language05.co.uk/completed-projects

A useful summary of relatively recent studies can also be found here:

www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/language-development



Suggested reading and viewing

TED talks

Deb Roy: The birth of a word

www.ted.com/talks/deb_roy_the_birth_of_a_word?language=en

Patricia Kuhl: The linguistic genius of babies

www.ted.com/talks/patricia_kuhl_the_linguistic_genius_of_babies?language=en

Alison Gopnik: What do babies think?

www.ted.com/talks/alison_gopnik_what_do_babies_think

Books

Saxton, M. (2017) *Child Language Acquisition and Development*. 2nd edition. London: Sage.

uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/child-language/book242865

Ibbotson, P. (2018) Chapter 'Child Language Acquisition' in *Language Handbook*. 2nd edition. London: EMC.

www.englishandmedia.co.uk/publications-magazines/19802/language-handbook-2nd-edition-key-thinkers-on-key-topics-hard-copy

Jean Stillwell Peccei, *Child Language: a resource book for students*, Routledge, 2008.

www.routledge.com/Child-Language-A-Resource-Book-for-Students/Peccei/p/book/9780415281034

Rudman, R and Titjen, F. (2018) *Language Development*. Cambridge: CUP.

uk.bookshop.org/p/books/language-development-rachel-rudman/4326389

Stillwell Peccei, J. (1999) *Child Language*. 2nd edition. London: Routledge.

www.routledge.com/Child-Language/Peccei/p/book/9780415198363

Foster-Cohen, SH. (2014) *An Introduction to Child Language Development*. London: Routledge.

www.routledge.com/An-Introduction-to-Child-Language-Development/Cohen/p/book/9780582087293

Gillen, J. (2003) *The Language of Children*. London: Routledge.

www.routledge.com/The-Language-of-Children/Gillen/p/book/9780415286213