

# Think 53: Food Talks

## Dan Jurafsky & Yoshiko Matsumoto

Cooking, Gender and Language

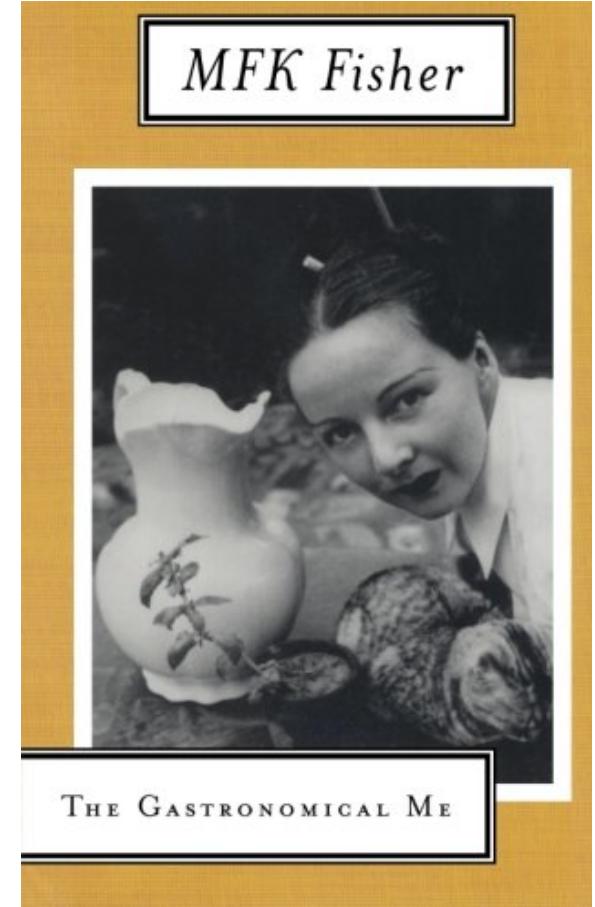
Tuesday, May 16, 2017

# Today's topics

- Food, gender and language
  - Categorization, multiple social implications
- Qualitative study
  - Methods and examples

# M.F.K. Fisher

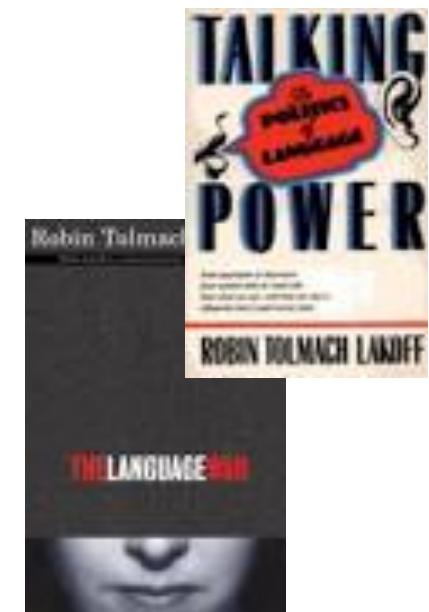
- My subject matter "caused serious writers and critics to dismiss me for many, many years. **It was woman's stuff, a trifle.**"



(1943)

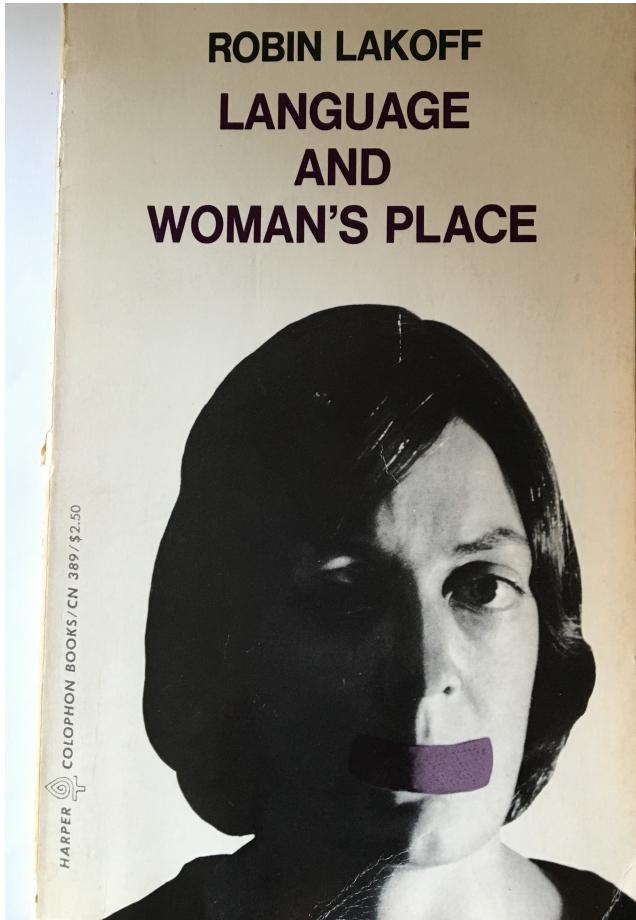
# Robin Lakoff

- The author of “Identity a la carte: You are what you eat” (2006)
- Emerita Professor of Linguistics at UC Berkeley. Pioneered the field of linguistic study of gender and power (as well as of Latin generative grammar).
- “Language and Women’s Place” in *Language in Society*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Apr., 1973), pp. 45-80.

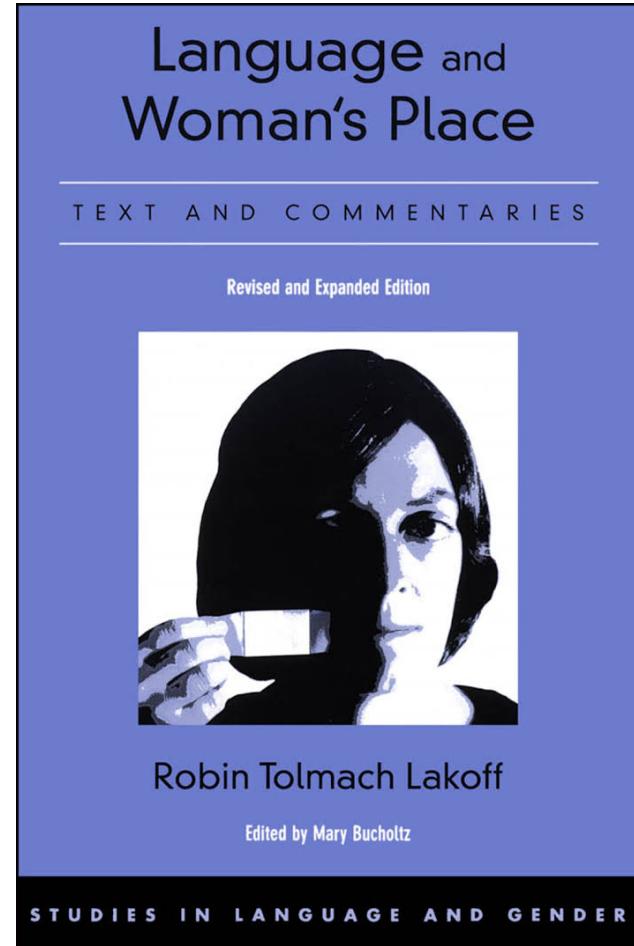


# Robin Tolmach Lakoff

## *Language and Women's Place*



1975



2004

# Social Context

- 1972: Title IX – guaranteeing women equal access to education benefits
- Male and female were viewed as two clearly defined and opposite categories with separate roles
- Social changes that feminists were striving for were viewed generally as harmful and disruptive to society

# “Language and Women’s Place”

## 1975[1973]

- Lakoff discussed features of speech of women that can be distinguished from that of men.

Hedges: "sort of", "kind of", "it seems like"

Empty adjectives: "divine", "adorable", "gorgeous"

Polite requests: "Won't you close the door?"

Avoid coarse language or expletives

Tag questions: "Sure is hot here, isn't it?"

Hyper-correct grammar and pronunciation

Indirect requests: "It's getting cold here"

Speak in italics: Emphasizing such words as "so", "very", "quite"

Politeness principles

# “Language and Women’s Place”

1975[1973]

- “Language uses us as much as we use language. As much as our choice of forms of expression is guided by the thoughts we want to express, to the same extent the way we feel about the things in the real world governs the way we express ourselves about these things. Two words can be synonymous in their denotative sense, but one will be used in case a speaker feels favorable toward the object the word denotes, the other if he is unfavorable.” (p.3)

# Synonyms with different speaker attitudes

- (a) Pat is strong-minded.
- (b) Pat is obstinate.
- (c) Pat is pigheaded.

STINGY : GENEROUS

THRIFTY : WASTEFUL

[Frame lecture: April 25]

# Words for Women

- *Woman* and *Lady*
- Euphemism?

Professor, doctor, bank president

Custodian (janitor), cleaning lady (domestic worker)

Lady doctor? Garbage gentlemen?

(p.20ff)

# Frames and Categories, and Attendant Social Implications

- *Bachelor*
- *Spinster?*

Mary hopes to meet an eligible **bachelor**.

Fred hopes to meet an eligible **spinster**.

Linguistic expressions cannot be separated from the users' understanding of the world in which they live.

(p.32)

# Frames and Categories

- Bachelor
- Bachelor~~ette~~ (diminutive)

Kitchenette

Cigarette

Towelette

Luncheonette

Featurette

Suffragette

# **Categories, labels and their implications in our lives: Gender, food and culture**

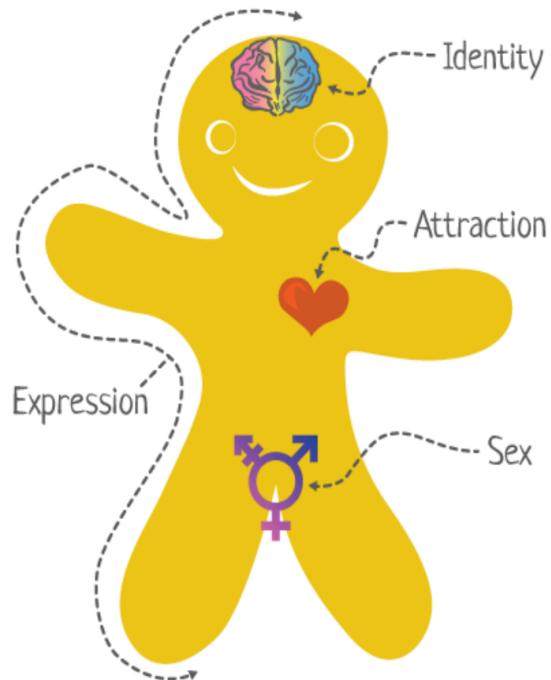
“One of the basic things language does is allow us to label categories, making it easier for them to figure in our shared social life to help guide us as we make our way in the world.”

Eckert, P and S. McConnel-Ginet (2003) *Language and Gender*. Cambridge University Press.

# Problems of Categories and Labels

- Society insists on a binary classification
- Once categorized and labeled, complexity associated with the categorization seems to disappear
- Society's insistence on the permanence of the classification
- The future course of category labels may not be controllable

# The Genderbread Person v3.2 by its pronounced METROsexual.com



❤ Sexually Attracted to  
Nobody {  
    ○ → (Women/Females/Femininity)  
    ○ → (Men/Males/Masculinity)



❤ Romantically Attracted to  
Nobody {  
    ○ → (Women/Females/Femininity)  
    ○ → (Men/Males/Masculinity)

## ***Expressions of generic category of human being***

*Man and his place in nature*

[Star Trek 1966]

*“To boldly go where no **man** has gone before”*

[Star Trek: The next generation 1987]

*“To boldly go where no **one** has gone before”*

# Category Boundaries and Criteria

- “Linguistic division of labor” (Hilary Putman 1975): Scientific theories and experts provide definitive criteria and determine how boundaries are to be drawn.
  - Tomato – fruit (botanists), vegetable (cooks)
- **But** most of us lack the scientists’ expertise and **base our own categorizations on stereotypical properties.** E.g. Gender

# Category Boundaries and Criteria

- Gender categorizations profoundly influence an individual's behavior, talents, interest, and appearance.
  - how they speak, how they dress, what they pursue, **what they eat!**

- Food and gender stereotypes

# Category Boundaries and Criteria

- Category-based expectations can be useful but also problematic.
  - Limits one's activities
  - If men do gender-atypical things, they are often characterized as feminine and deviant
  - Dominant (sub)category gets erased
    - White people don't have race
    - “ordinary women” and “women of color”

# Femininity and Masculinity

- Gender recursivity
  - Feminine men are seen as inferior men
  - Masculine women are seen as inferior women
- How is masculinity constructed? Properties?
- How is femininity constructed? Properties?
- Are men also a target of sexism?

# Gendered Discourse

- Use of grammatical categories
  - Pronouns: *They, ze,e*, (English) *Boku* (Japanese)
  - Tense and gender agreement (Hindi by Hijras)
  - Affixes : *-ess, ette*
- Discourse and communication strategies
  - Asking questions, attenuated expressions, tentative expressions, bold statements, imperatives....

✧ Recall

First-order indexicality

Second-order indexicality

# Masculinity and Femininity

Advertisements:

Culturally different expectations?

Burger King Whopper U.S.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZWCdW\\_WaqU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZWCdW_WaqU)

Burger King Whopper Japan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLS2riW3DKA>

# Burger King Whopper U.S.

What make the advertisement gendered?

What is the message of the advertisement?

- Non-linguistic semiotic background
  - Who are major figures?
  - What scenes are depicted?
  - What kind of food are men and women supposed to eat?
- Linguistic expressions
  - What is said?
  - What is implied by them?
  - Whose point of view?

# I Am Man Lyrics

Burger King Whopper U.S. (2006)

I am man, hear me roar,  
In numbers too big to ignore,  
And I'm way too hungry to settle for  
chick food!

Cause my stomach's starting to  
growl,  
And I'm going on the prowl,  
For a Texas Double Whopper!

"Man that's good!"

Oh, yes, I'm a guy!  
I'll admit I've been fed quiche!  
Wave tofu bye-bye!  
Now it's for Whopper beef I reach.

I will eat this meat  
(Eat this meat)  
'Till my innie turns into an outie!

I am starved!  
I am incorrigible!  
And I need to scarf a burger beef  
bacon jalapeno good thing down!  
(Yeah!)

I am hungry!  
(I am hungry)  
I am incorrigible!

I AM MAN!

# I Am Man Lyrics

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(Yeah!)

I am hungry!  
(I am hungry)  
I am incorrigible!

I AM MAN!

character   appetite   food men eat   food women eat

# Stereotypes and Construction of Gender through Food

- Stereotypes of men and women are used for the advertisement
  - Men are hungry, rough, strong and invincible
  - Men need plentitude of real food that gives energy
    - Also see Epic Meal Time episodes (e.g. 100lbs Big Mac)<https://www.youtube.com/user/EpicMealTime>



# Stereotypes and Construction of Gender through Food

## Versus

- Women eat small portions of light food  
“chick food” “quiche” “tofu”
- Women are weak and need only trifles

# Stereotypes and Construction of Gender through Food

Also

- How about “hipsters” and their preferences of food?



# I Am Woman Lyrics

Helen Reddy (1972) – No.1 on the Billboard Hot 100

I am woman, hear me roar  
In numbers too big to ignore  
And I know too much to go back an'  
pretend  
'Cause I've heard it all before  
And I've been down there on the floor  
No one's ever gonna keep me down  
again

Oh yes, I am wise  
But it's wisdom born of pain  
Yes, I've paid the price  
But look how much I gained  
If I have to, I can do anything  
**I am strong**  
(Strong)  
**I am invincible**  
(Invincible)  
I am woman

You can bend but never break me  
'Cause it only serves to make me  
More determined to achieve my final  
goal  
And I come back even **stronger**  
Not a novice any longer  
'Cause you've deepened the conviction in  
my soul

Oh yes, I am wise  
But it's wisdom born of pain  
Yes, I've paid the price  
But look how much I gained  
If I have to, I can do anything  
**I am strong**  
(Strong)  
**I am invincible**  
(Invincible)  
I am woman

# I Am Woman Lyrics(cont.)

Helen Reddy (1972)

I am woman watch me grow  
See me standing toe to toe  
As I spread my lovin' arms across the land  
But I'm still an embryo  
With a long, long way to go  
Until I make my brother understand

I am woman  
I am invincible  
I am **strong**  
I am woman  
I am invincible  
I am **strong**  
I am woman

Oh yes, I am wise  
But it's wisdom born of pain  
Yes, I've paid the price  
But look how much I gained  
If I have to, I can do anything  
I am **strong**  
(Strong)  
I am invincible  
(Invincible)  
I am woman

Written by Helen Reddy, Ray Burton • Copyright ©  
Universal Music Publishing Group

# Masculinity and Femininity

Advertisements:

## ❖ Culturally different expectations?

Burger King Whopper U.S.

✧ Burger King Whopper Japan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLS2riW3DKA>

- semiotic non-linguistic background
- linguistic expressions and implications
- messages

✧ Mukbang in Korea

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdbsrQ1pvho>

# *Otona (adult, mature) femininity versus otona masculinity*

**Otona femininity**



**Otona masculinity**



# *Otona* as gendered life-style - contrasting markets -

Kroo, J and Y. Matsumoto (to appear) "The case of Japanese *otona* 'adult': mediatized gender as a marketing device" *Discourse & Communication*

- サッポロ生ビール黒ラベル (Sapporo Draft Beer Black Label):
  - "Don't become a round (rounded), become a star!"
  - Encourages consumers to be interesting adults
- オトナの甘さキットカット (KitKat: Feminine Sweetness)
  - *Otona no KitKat* encourages 'mature' femininity where 'mature' is keyed to sexuality.

***'Everyday products' are transformed into symbols of gendered adulthood and adult experiences***

**Think about these questions while you  
watch the Niki Nakayama episode**

***Niki Nakayama Profile***

- What does NN say about herself as a person and as a cook?
- What does she say about her cooking?
- How do other people describe NN?
  - Food critics, her mentor, her family, her partner
- Are the descriptions above gendered?
- How are NN and NN's cooking labeled?

# Today's index card question

## *Niki Nakayama Profile*

- What does she say about her cooking?

# Today's index card question

## *Niki Nakayama Profile*

- What does she say about her cooking?
  - “It’s all based on feeling” In meditative state, artistic  
“Expressive of who I am”
  - “When I’m cooking, I’d put as much heart into it as I can”
  - “Do my own thing and be free”
  - “Make a loud bold aggressive statement in cooking food – regularly cannot do so because of the culture”
  - Etc.

# Niki Nakayama Profile

Going beyond the “traditions” of professional cooking

- Gender of the cook
  - “I really don’t wanna make being a woman an issue in the work we do, but it’s just there.”
- Style of the food
  - “light and formal,” “richer styles of cooking than traditional Japanese *kaiseki*,” “*artistic and creative*”

# Niki Nakayama Profile

- How do other people describe NN? -- **Gender implications?**
  - Food critics, her mentor, her family, her partner

# Gendered Narratives

## Chef's Table

NN's mentor (the first impressions) 6:35

- “When I first saw her, to tell the truth, I didn't think such a small girl would be able to cook at our restaurant.”
- “I told her it was like she was playing chef.”
- “Niki was very petite and very pretty ... She became a mascot.”
- “It is very rare for a female chef to work in a Japanese kitchen.”

# Gendered Narratives

Food Critic (Maria) 15.18

- “There is intimacy that she imparts. That feels really unique to me. She does not look at her diners as just customers... She is grateful for everyone who comes to her restaurant and she wants to please them.”
  - Contrast to Jiro

<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/films/jiro-dreams-of-sushi/>

- We will continue examining the relationship between food, gender and language

# Questions on Thursday's Materials

## *Sex and Sea Bream: Food and Prostitution in Hishikawa Monorobu's Visit to Yoshiwara*

- What does the food in “A Visit to Yoshiwara” symbolize?
- What made prepared foods popular in the 1600s?
- What did Yoshiwara have within the property?
- From whose perspective is Yoshiwara depicted?