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COMMUNICATION AND ITS DIFFERENCES AMONG MEN AND WOMEN

What does it mean to be female or male, a woman or a man? The idea of gender has become a battleground, with scientists, philosophers, writers and activists clashing over its definition, and its usefulness as a category. Where is the line where "man" becomes "woman", and vice versa? Is it to do with having the "right" genitals, or a particular kind of brain? *Are* there fundamental differences between the two? **Historically, the terms "sex" and "gender" have been used interchangeably, but, in modern society, their meanings are becoming increasingly distinct.** Being clear on the differences between the two concepts is more important than ever. So while your sex as male or female is a biological fact that is the same in any culture, what that sex means in terms of your gender role as a 'man' or a 'woman' in society can be quite different cross culturally. "Gender" is more difficult to define but can refer to the role of a male or female in society (gender role), or an individual's concept of themselves (gender identity). In this article, we will look at the meaning of "sex", "gender" and "communication". In the context of the distinction between verbal an nonverbal communication will be shown the differences between men and women in the process of communication.

Keywords: gender, sex, verbal communication, nonverbal communication.

1. DEFINITION OF GENDER

The term *gender* is derived from the Latin word *genus* through Old French and Middle English *gendre*, gender. In English, the word gender was and still is commonly used in two senses: "*a kind of grammar*" (masculine, feminine and neuter) and "*sex*" (replacing the ambiguous word sex, commonly used to mean sexual intercourse).

Grammatical gender is a kind of grammatical category that defines the division of nouns into several groups.

In Polish for the noun it is a kind of selective category. This means that the noun has a specific type of grammar. Nouns can therefore be divided into groups according to their type. For example, the noun "towel" is masculine, and therefore belongs to the group of nouns masculine "encyclopedia" is feminine, and "chair" is neuter. The noun is not inflected by type, for example, there is the feminine form of the noun "towel". For an adjective, and some other parts of speech type in many languages it is an inflected category, which means that the adjective is inflected by types. So, for example, the adjective has a masculine form (duży), female (duża) and neuter (duże). The adjective fits in terms of the type referred to a noun (e.g. large towel, a large encyclopedia, a high chair).

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In English, the problem of determining the gender of the noun is much less complex than in Polish. In most cases, people take a kind of equivalent to the natural sex determined person, that is, men are masculine women feminine².

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines gender as created by societal behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women³. According to the Oxford Dictionary of English gender is "The state of being male or female (typically used with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones)"⁴.

Gender is defined by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as 'the relations between men and women, both perceptual and material. Gender is not determined biologically, as a result of sexual characteristics of either women or men, but is constructed socially. It is a central organizing principle of societies, and often governs the processes of production and reproduction, consumption and distribution'⁵. Despite this definition, gender is often misunderstood as being the promotion of women only. However, as we see from the FAO definition, gender issues focus on women and on the relationship between men and women, their roles, access to and control over resources, division of labor, interests and needs. Gender relations affect household security, family well-being, planning, production and many other aspects of life⁶.

2. WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

Communication is a system of signs, including both the words and gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice, as well as road signs, clothing and housing design method (e.g. a severe or full of souvenirs)⁷. According to Zbigniew Nęcki communication involves the exchange of verbal and nonverbal messages, which are symbols of actual objects. Its aim is to achieve a higher level of cooperation and obtain benefits for both sides. Conversation between two or more people is intended to the interests of all sides, in accordance with the principle of cooperation⁸.

In his theory of communication Watzlawick emphasizes circulations of causal relationships. Each of the units participating in the communication process is the participant, has an impact and is affected by the other. It is impossible to separate the sender and the recipient, as the course of the interaction is due to the interactions. The behavior of a partner of conversation stimulates behavior of another and vice versa. Therefore nonexistence of communication is impossible: any behavior or lack of it is information affecting the course of the contact⁹. If a woman asks her husband a question, "What would you want to do today",

² P. Kąkol, Differences between men and women according to the gender studies, Nauki społeczne i humanistyczne wobec doświadczeń przeszłości i wyzwań przyszłości. Wybrane zagadnienia, Exante, 2017.

³ Ibidem.

⁴ Oxford Dictionary of English 2nd edition – 2003.

⁵ FAO, *Gender: the key to sustainability and food security*, SD Dimensions (available at www.fao.org/sd).

⁶ H. Bravo-Baumann, Capitalisation of experiences on the contribution of livestock projects to gender issues. Working Document. Bern, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2000.

⁷ M. Tokarz, Argumentacja, perswazja, manipulacja. Wykłady z teorii komunikacji, Gdańsk 2006.

⁸ Z. Nęcki, Komunikacja międzyludzka, Kraków 1996.

⁹ P. Watzlawick, *Pragmatics of Human Communication*, New York 1967.

she stimulates him to respond. At the same time a way of asking the question may result from the earlier experience of the difficulties of finding common plans. A man may then feel unwillingness to take discussion and answer "nothing", which brings up with anger of his wife and convicts her that husband has a lack of interest. This type of interaction may deepen the conflict and prevent making a decision. Important here is the interdependence of the partners responses, interaction through verbal and nonverbal cues.



Fig. 1. The course of communication Resource: my own layout.

The course of communication can be represented schematically by the model shown above. The sender has a certain intention, which may be thought or emotion, which he decides to refer to the receiver of a message. Followed by the encoding process, which is concluding thoughts in words, gestures, behavior, drawing, dress, or in another form. Communication channel can be air, computer network, telephone, book or TV. Various channels allow unilateral or bilateral communication, taking place in real time or not. The next step is to receive the information by the receiver and decode the message. The recipient gives meaning to the information received in the process of interpretation, which initiates reaction to the message. It should be noted that in the case of direct contact, communication takes place simultaneously on many levels. A verbal communication and a nonverbal communication are distinguished. The first term refers to the transfer of the word, and the second to signals and symbols, such as gestures, facial expressions, body movements, behavior, tone of voice and eye contact. It is also important that the message sender is at the same time the receiver. For example, if the husband expresses his opinion on journalistic program at the same time he is watching face of his wife and her behavior. Difficulties associated with lack of compliance of the messages at different levels will be discussed later in this chapter.

In the model described above, there are several areas where may occur interference in the course of communication.

Because the transfer of information is done through symbols, the problem of the sender is to deal appropriately with their intentions. The result of the encoding process depends on the skills, linguistic wealth, ambiguity of used signals, also from the social and cultural transfer, patterns of family life, previous experience of the sender or his attitudes.

The communication channel can also be a source of interference, such as noise, excessive amount of stimuli in the environment, lack of eye contact, speech disorder, poor quality of telephone transfer and others.

The recipient receives the information through sensory organs, and then begin the process of decoding. Understanding of verbal messages is possible if the receiver uses the same language as the sender. This is essential, however, due to the different life experiences to signals can be given meanings inconsistent with the intent of the sender, which also may be a source of confusion.

The last stage is the process of interpretation of information, which depends on the current situation, the mood and the behavior, attitudes, cultural patterns and other characteristics of the individual.

Necki suggests the use of general rules that reduce the risk of disruption of communication which are described above:

- Rule of comprehensibility and grammatical correctness refers to the clarity and uniqueness of expression, its grammatical correctness and style, use the language of known recipient, a clear start and finish and avoiding excessive content.
- Rule of consistency speaks of both continuity in conversation, avoiding sudden changes in the topic of conversation, and of the consistency of the verbal and non-verbal transfer.
- Rule of economy is associated with avoidance of repetition, words which adding nothing to the content of expression and long breaks.
- Rule of expressiveness means to express themselves in a manner consistent with their own emotional state, to disclose their opinions and avoiding too harsh terms¹⁰.

Theory of attribution explains the issues related to the transmission of meaning, evaluating partner behavior as positive or negative. In contrast to real communication, during which the intention of the sender is properly read and intentional communication in which the sender's intention has not been read, in the attribution communication receiver gives intention to the statement that no one gave to it. In general, the causes of behavior can be described as internal or external, intentional (disposable) or situational and permanent, general or specific¹¹. There is a relationship between the quality of marriage and the tendency to confer meanings of partner behavior. In happy pairs the causes of positively assessed behavior of spouse would be rather seen as internal, intentional, fixed and general. Such behaviors are also longer remembered, with more details and are considered to be more positive. Negatively evaluated behavior in happy pairs are assigned to external, situational and specific causes. Are both less stored and treated as unimportant. Attribution process is reversed in unhappy marriages, which is associated with assigning external, unintentional and specific causes of behaviors assessed as positive, and internal, permanent and general causes of behavior assessed as negative. So as you can see the process of attribution can be used in increasing the satisfaction from the relationship in the case of happy marriages and escalation of conflicts and dissatisfaction in the in unhappy marriages.

¹⁰ Z. Nęcki, Komunikacja międzyludzka...

¹¹ T. Rostowska, Małżeństwo, rodzina, praca a jakość życia, Kraków, Gdańsk 2008.

3. TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

According to Nęcki among the types of conversation we distinguish the verbal and nonverbal communication. In general, communication triggers impulses to get you thinking, analyzing, creating a synthesis, as well as to act. It forms the very foundation of the functioning of the world. Communication uses for its objectives all available means, from the most traditional to the latest achievements of science and technology. It is a kind of bridge between the people, their history and time¹². Communication does not only exist in the real world, appears also in the spirituality, among plants and animals. In the following paragraphs I will refer to verbal and then nonverbal communication.

Verbal (linguistic) communication is the process of exchanging information between people through the system of audio or graphic signs, called language. R. Jacobson singled out several elements of linguistic communication, characteristic for all speech acts: sender – context – contact – the message. Oral communication is the most common means of transmission of meaning between people¹³. To popular forms of oral communication we rate speech, personal or group interview, an informal network of gossip and rumors. The fundamental advantages of this type of communication are quick and easy obtaining the feedback. The disadvantage of this form is susceptibility to distortion, which increases with a larger number of people who are involved in the transfer. This is directly linked with differences in the interpretation of the message. Thus, if the messages are transmitted orally along the lines of command in the organization there is a significant risk of distorting the message. Input message often differs from output message.

Nonverbal communication is mainly our language: of the body, time, space and appearance. Many professionals and experts who were researching the information we provided, considers that the nonverbal communication and body language, accounting for more than 50% message that is passed in the interaction to the person we are talking to. The basic elements of nonverbal communication include: gestures, facial expressions, posture, touch, communication distance zone, smell, eye contact, and even appearance. Nonverbal communication is a mirror image of our attitude, lived emotional states and material status. It can refer to one or all of these elements, but does not necessarily reflect the fact, that is presented by its means. Nonverbal communication, which is what we present in our own in a given situation, can vary depending on the location and the time in which someone can take an objective or subjective conclusions relating to us. Nonverbal communication is also used to synchronize verbal communication, supporting it (feedback), complement and emphasize the importance of words and plays a large role in the rituals (repeated patterns of behavior) that do not have the instrumental function, but give rise to the social consequences, in which nonverbal signals are interconnected and appear in sequence.

As an example I provide some behaviors related to the gestures and arrangement of the body by introducing the type of behavior and then its meaning.

¹² Z. Nęcki, Komunikacja międzyludzka...

¹³ R. Jakobson, *Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics.* in Style in Language (ed. Thomas Sebeok) 1960.

Table 1. Examples of different behaviour and its meaning

Head:	
nodding of the head	attention, consent, approval, confirmation of attentive listening
turning the head	surprise, denial, disagreeing
lowering of the head	depression, sadness, fatigue
looking in the eses	honesty, directness
lowering of the person	lack of confidence, lack of respect
too insistent staring at the caller	read as excessive interference (border crossing)
Facial expressions:	
cheerful expression	kindness, interest
serious expression	can be interpreted as a lack of openness and superiority, it is often the result of shyness
Arms:	
Shrugging	contempt, annoyance
Stooped	lack of motivation to contact
Open arms	attention, interest, openness to contact
Arms and hands:	
crossed hands (closed hands)	resistance, reluctance, avoidance agreement
shivering hands, hands chaotically moving	anxiety, repressed anger
relaxed wrists, hands gesture in relation to the content of speech	openness, interest, persuading

Resource: my own layout.

4. FEMALE AND MALE STYLES OF COMMUNICATION

Several studies in social psychology approach the problem of the existence of differences between the means of communication between men and women. At the same time modern scientists, trying to answer the question of whether these differences exist at all, tend to the extreme theories: from a biological view of David Jessel, saying that the similarity between men and women is only belonging to the same species – Homo sapiens, to the social theories, which adopting the existence of only a few differences, the importance of which is magnified in the process of education¹⁴.

There is no doubt that men and women talk differently. Understanding these differences could be a great help in the communication process, but you must defend yourself from falling into stereotypes. Relatively recently, there was a tendency to transmit label feminine patterns as weak and passive, while male as a strong and vibrant. Modern research often opposed to such a simplifications.

What are the differences in communication style between men and women and from what they derive?

¹⁴ D. Jessel, A. Moir, *Brain sex: the real difference between men and women*, London 1989.

- 1. Differences in communication of both sexes are determined biologically and socially. Among the factors resulting from our physiology crucial significance have vocal characteristics of women and men.
- 2. Most researchers believe that vocal characteristics are determined biologically. Women usually make sounds with higher tones, while men with lower tones. However, recent studies show, that men and women have the same opportunities to voice, but because of the different social functions men avoid high tones because their fear that they could sound feminine. Men use the low register of voice, because high-pitched voice speaking is often laughed at others. For example, boxer Mike Tyson often met with taunts because of the high tone of voice when he began his career.
- 3. In Western society female voices are considered less reliable. Watching TV, we can see that men more often than women are in sleepers for commercials, but in television women try to speak in a voice lower than normal, to give the impression of a more competent.
- 4. It is generally accepted that the brain of men is better for tasks that require specialized handling numbers, space, and think logically, while women have an advantage in verbal abilities. It is partially supported by research, according to which girls learn the language faster and more smoothly operate it, rarely reveal the problems with speech and reading. This is explained by higher number of neural connections between the cerebral hemispheres of women, as well as centers of speech in both left and right hemisphere, while the male brain has only left-sided location of these centers.

Let us now turn to other differences in the way of communication between men and women. According to the gender researcher Robin Lakoff women more often than men use measures of a proposal, which weakens the strength of the message, giving the impression that women seem to be uncertain¹⁵. As examples of such linguistic structures are given: rising intonation (which is to look for confirmation from others), added questions like: "Is not it?", "Right?", "Do not you?". Lakoff also believes that women are more likely to use such structures as:

- qualifying statements such. Well, you know, sort of, maybe, probably ..- delivering views circuitous route rather than simply
- b) the expression of assurance for example. I believe, I feel, it seems to me ..
- the expression of denying such. *I could be wrong, but; Maybe a silly question, but.* weaken the effect of statement. These structures evoke in the listener the impression of uncertainty or confusion.
- strengthening such as: *enormously, extremely*. For example, instead of saying: "I like him", a woman rather would say; "I like him so much".

In spite of this views feminism researcher Julia Penelope drawn the following conclusions: "It is said that women benefit from structures that are submissive and well-behaved, having the character of the proposal, uncertain and emotionally overdone, while the term illustrate a stereotype of how women talk, not the actual way in which they talk"¹⁶. Recent studies show that expression of a proposal are used equally by women and men. Many

¹⁵ R. Lakoff, Language and Woman's Place, Cambridge University Press 1975.

¹⁶ J. Penelope, Unlearning the Lies of the Fathers' Tongues, New York 1990.

managers often used added questions and qualifying expressions in dealing with employees in order to build a more friendly relationship in the group.

Other interesting studies were conducted by psychologist named Mulac and his colleagues. They applied analysis, consisting in searching for such features of speech, which will allow the identification of the gender of the speaker. For this purpose they recorded many texts spoken by men and women, and then drew typescripts of these texts and analyzed the frequency of the occurrence of various phenomena of language. It turned out that on this basis in almost 100% we can identify sex of the author of expression.

Characteristics of male expression are:

- feeding their own contemplations and opinions (best would be if; should be etc.),
- using the pronoun "I",
- the use of the present tense,
- vocalization pauses (different types of growls, grunts, spacers like: hmmm, eeee),
- grammatical errors,
- verbs in active and dynamic voice (done, hit etc.)
- assessing adjectives
- reference to the people ("most people", "everyone knows that ...").

Characteristics of female expression are:

- the use of the opposition (the denial of their own postulate: "you should do it now, but you can later"),
- rhetorical questions,
- references to emotional states ("I was so surprised!"),
- the use of cutscenes ("oh"),
- longer sentences,
- negations, denials,
- the use of adverbs intensifier ("so much", "very much", "extremely").

Psychologist Tadeusz Mądrzycki grants women a higher level of emotional empathy, while frequent manifestation accepting to others, tends to a positive assessment (Pollyanna phenomenon, "the effect of gentleness")¹⁷.

Speaking about the preferences of men and women in the choice of words, we will focus on the following issues: the name of colors, curses, slang associated with sex.

Women are much more accurate in naming colors, perhaps because they are closer to the traditional affairs of fashion and interior design. amusing anecdotes circulate about it. At one movie an American trying to persuade his girlfriend to purchase "mauve-pink" costume, which he was considered to be a homosexual, because ordinary man does not use such terms. In the modern generation that is change with the phenomenon of entering men in occupations related to fashion and interior design.

Curses for a long time were connected with the behavior of a man, as assigned to them higher rates of aggression and the desire to dominate. Many men still emphasizes that the will when their partner avoid vulgar words. Once I have heard the boy on the bus saying, densely interwoven with curses ending in a conclusion: "but I fu .. do not like when a girl swears".

¹⁷ T. Mądrzycki, Osobowość jako system tworzący i realizujący plany, Gdańsk 1996.

With regard to the sexual slang is shown a preference for men to use the indelicate terms, while women often use euphemisms or formal terms. During the study on a group of students it turned out that the young people of both sexes in mixed company would use the correct, clinical sexual terminology. In the company of friends of the same sex men often switched to sexual slang while women among friends preferred to stay with the formal terminology.

Analyzing the behavior of men and women in conversation pedagogue Carole Edelsky distinguished two different types of discussion¹⁸.

Discussion of the first type is organized and is characterized by the fact that in any given time, only one caller says. There are monologues here, control is exercised by one side, callers are waiting for their turn, some people dominate the discussion, interrupting the speech of others and acting as moderators.

For the second type of interaction more characteristic is cooperation rather than competition. It is expressed by a common construction of response to a question, and speaking at the same time. Conversation of this type is characterized by more pleasant character, sometimes fragmented and interrupted, themes are often changed.

Which type of discussion is typical for men, and which for women? In the light of Carole Edelsky research men are more likely to engage in discussions of the first type. Still popular is such scheme in mixed discussions that one man controls the conversation, deciding about who takes the floor. Women are less likely seek to dominate, preferring cooperation. In the discussion of the second type participation of women and men is balanced. This is the main way of talking in groups exclusively for women¹⁹.

However, we should be careful, because the stereotypical division of conversation styles of women and men interferes with effective communication, if only because it triggers the expectation that conversation accepts certain forms because of the participation of men and women. Both styles of discussion can produce good results, and regard the first type of interaction as the only effective is an outdated stereotype.

5. MEN AND WOMEN AT WORK

We stop for a while at the issue of communication between men and women in the workplace. Here is an example of a situation described by Katrin Oppermann: the head of the sales department in a large company, asking his employee about the course of trade negotiations, expected mainly mentioning specifics and numbers²⁰. The worker, however, her reports began from the presentation of the atmosphere accompanying the talks, which gave rise to a slight irritation of boss. Only aware of the differences in the way of communication between men and women can make that the boss patiently will wait for information about the outcome of negotiations. Training in modern US companies teaches employees that for women more important are human relationships, it is why they sometimes weave into their accounts threads which are less specific, but that does not mean that they are less competent. It is believed that women are more sensitive to the atmosphere in the workplace, they also have in itself a greater stock of empathy and thus enjoys helping colleagues. For

¹⁸ C. Edelsky, *Who's got the floor?*, pp. 189–227 in D. Tannen (ed.), Gender and Conversational Interaction, Oxford University Press 1993.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ K. Oppermann, E. Webber, Style porozumiewania się w pracy, Gdańsk 2007.

example, when company employee is loudly complaining about crunched of the responsibilities and lack of time for the family, it is very likely that any colleague will offer to help him, while men remain oblivious to this message. Women are often accused of indirect way of communicating their wishes, which causes the appearance of indecision. Many publications proves that this is due to traditional instilling to adolescent girls that they should be polite and do not impose themselves, what leaves a trail in their way of being. The use of suggestion rather than a strong demands is a sign of strive to maintain the harmonious relations with co-workers. It exhibits a distinct tendency among women to submit to the interaction over the competition.

Men, in turn, focus on emphasizing his status as the hard way can affect teamwork. Competition and desire to achieve power over others introduces the distance between employees and can inhibit their spontaneous creativity.

Deborah Tannen, sociolinguist, whose book came to be in the list of "New York Times" bestsellers said that in communication between men and women there is a significant asymmetry, which weakens the process of communication between them. Tannen by the asymmetry understood the incompatibility of objectives and expectations connected with the conversation, especially when talking about problems. Women often want to understanding and confirm that they are preserved properly, while men tune in to the conversation to look for solutions and strategies. Tannen believes that men often try to support women by practical advice and sometimes get frustrated when their sincere willingness are not received with gratitude. According to the researcher women expect more compassion. In my opinion, this is not entirely true theory²¹.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Nowadays we know a lot of examples from life, when women as much as men adjust to specific strategies to solve the problem. Some teachers effectively use their knowledge of male and female communication styles, creating a climate of understanding (important for women) and providing specific information (relevant for men). However, in today's world raises the question of whether the patterns recognized by Tannen are a bit outdated. Women seeking to equality have taken in many cases a strong and specific style of discussion, and the emotional stereotype more than the substantive conversation of women is just a stereotype. Norms around gender expression change across societies and over time. One need only consider men wearing earrings or women having tattoos to see the flexibility of social expectations about gender. Even the seemingly intractable notion that "pink is for girls, blue is for boys" is relatively new. Prior to the mid-twentieth century, pink was associated with boys' clothing and blue with girls' clothing (still due to the gendering of colors, but with a different rationale associating each color with particular gendered characteristics).

Because expectations around gender expression are so rigid, we frequently assume that what someone wears, or how they move, talk, or express themselves, tells us something about their gender identity. But expression is distinct from identity -we can't assume a person's gender identity based on their gender expression. For example, a cisgender boy may like to wear skirts or dresses. His choice in clothing doesn't change his gender identity; it

²¹ D. Tannen, Co to ma znaczyć. Jak style konwersacyjne kobiet i mężczyzn wpływają na to, kto jest wysłuchany, kto zbiera laury i co jest zrobione w pracy, Poznań 1997.

simply means that he prefers (at least some of the time) to wear clothing that society typically associates with girls.

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KOMUNIKACJA I JEJ RÓŻNICE MIĘDZY MĘŻCZYZNAMI I KOBIETAMI

Co to znaczy być kobietą lub mężczyzną? Pojęcie płci stało się polem bitwy, a naukowcy, filozofowie, pisarze i działacze sprzeciwiają się jego definicji, a także jego użyteczności jako

kategorii. Gdzie jest granica, w której "mężczyzna" staje się "kobietą" i odwrotnie? Czy ma to związek z odpowiednimi narządami płciowymi, czy różnicami w budowie mózgu? Czy istnieją podstawowe różnice między nimi? Historycznie, pojęcia "gender" i "płeć" były używane wymiennie, ale w dzisiejszym społeczeństwie ich znaczenie stało się coraz wyraźniejsze. Wyraźne różnice między tymi dwoma pojęciami są ważniejsze niż kiedykolwiek. Podczas gdy płeć jako mężczyzna czy kobieta jest faktem biologicznym, który jest taki sam w każdej kulturze, to pojęcie gender w społeczeństwie, może być zupełnie inne pod względem kulturowym. Pojęcie "płci" jest trudniejsze do zdefiniowania, ale może odnosić się do roli mężczyzny lub kobiety w społeczeństwie (rola płci) lub indywidualnej koncepcji siebie (tożsamości płciowej). W tym artykule przyjrzymy się znaczeniu "płci" i "komunikacji". W kontekście rozróżnienia pomiędzy komunikacją werbalną i niewerbalną ukażą się nam różnice między mężczyznami a kobietami w procesie komunikacji.

Słowa kluczowe: gender, komunikacja werbalna, komunikacja niewerbalna.

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