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A society of wankers and harlots

A comparable study of labels used for women and men in the English
language by English and Finland-Swedish pupils

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VASA UNIVERSITET**Humanistiska fakulteten****Institution:** Institutionen för engelska**Författare:** Nina Fröjd**Avhandling pro gradu:** A Society of Wankers and Harlots

A Comparable Study of Labels Used for Women and

Men in the English Language by English and Finland-Swedish pupils

Examen: Filosofie magister**Ämne:** Engelska**Årtal:** 2008**Handledare:** Sirkku Aaltonen, Jukka Tiusanen

SAMMANFATTNING:

Avhandlingen undersöker engelska termer som unga vuxna använder för kvinnor och män. Undersökningsgrupperna utgörs av elever i Brampton, England med engelska som modersmål och elever i Jakobstad, Finland med svenska som modersmål. Sammanlagt 46 elever i åldern 16-18 deltog i undersökningen. Eleverna skrev ner ord som de har hört eller ord som de själva använder om kvinnor och män. De engelska eleverna rapporterade 147 ord och de finlandssvenska eleverna 71 ord som används för kvinnor och män. Dessa ord delades in i kategorier som sedan analyserades och jämfördes sinsemellan.

Avsikten med avhandlingen är att utreda hurdana ord som används om kvinnor och män och att jämföra dessa ord med hänsyn till kön och elevernas bosättningsland. Resultaten jämförs även med tidigare forskning inom området. Hypotesen som visade sig riktig var att orden som de två grupperna rapporterade inte skulle skilja sig märkbart från varandra eftersom grupperna delar samma musik och -mediakultur som möjliggör spridningen av förnedrande ord. Tidigare forskning om slangord, förnedrande ord och teori om kön och språkanvändning utgör bakgrunden för undersökningen.

Orden som samlades in i undersökningen visar en nedsättande syn på prostituerade, homosexuella, handikappade, pedofiler och oattraktiva människor. Många ord har att göra med sexualitet, ord som bland annat beskriver könsorgan och sexuella läggningar. Män beskrivs bland annat som homosexuella och som handikappade. Kvinnor beskrivs bland annat som prostituerade och lösaktiga. Ord för män var flera till antalet än ord för kvinnor.

NYCKELORD: derogatory words, gendered language, sexist language, school slang, offensive language

1 INTRODUCTION

We categorize our experiences of the world through language. One can say that words contain the whole world, or at least all the experiences we have of our world that have been categorized linguistically. (Dirven 2004:25.) A word is not the thing itself but a symbolic sign for the concept or the meaning it refers to. This concept is related to a whole category of entities in the conceptual and experiential world. (Dirven 2004:28.) People have agreed upon certain form to have a certain meaning (Dirven 2004:2). A sign consists of a form and a meaning which is based on a human conceptualizer and her or his experience of the world. People may categorize the same thing differently and a person's idea of something can change with time so that they categorize the same thing in another way at different times. The conceptual content of a word or lexical category can cover many things. For example there are many types and different functions of a vase but as long as flowers can be put in them we categorize them as vases. (Dirven 2004:14, 16.)

A lasting claim about the relationship between language and culture is the so called *Whorfian hypothesis* or the Sapir-Worf hypothesis that states that the structure of a language influences how its speakers view the world. We depend on the particular language which has become the medium of expression for the society we live in. Our world is largely constructed on how we as members of it use our language. According to Worf the grammar of each language is "the program and guide for the individual's mental activity, for his analysis of impressions, for his synthesis of his mental stock in trade." There is an agreement in the speech community that organizes the language and gives it significance. (Wardhaugh 2006: 221, 222.) Everyone speaks according to this obligatory agreement even though it is unstated and implicit. Every speaker is constrained to certain modes of interpretation. This means that a person who is very familiar with different linguistic systems and has a wide vocabulary would find it easier to talk about things than a person familiar with only few languages and words. (Wardhaugh 2006: 223.) Language determines how speakers perceive and organize the natural and social world and it therefore forms every individual's world-view (Wardhaugh 2006: 225).

The term *society* can be defined as a group of people connected to each other by a certain purpose and the term *language* is what the members of a society speak. Society and

language interact and therefore neither of them can be considered separately from the other. (Wardhaugh 2006:1.) It is important to understand the various communities of practice in which people function to understand what is happening when people learn and use a language. Individuals take part in many different communities of practice and these communities interact with other communities in different ways. The process of participation and interaction is constantly changing and therefore every individual also constantly has to reshape their identity and the identity they have within a group. This also includes gender identity. It means that one must learn to be a particular kind of woman and a particular kind of man. A person's identity is created through interaction with others. Therefore identity changes when interactions change. (Wardhaugh 2006:329.)

The linguist Ferdinand de Saussure laid the foundation for many of the significant developments in linguistics in the 20th century. He is widely considered the 'father' of 20th-century linguistics. (Wikipedia S.V. Saussure) Saussure invented structuralism and founded the discipline of semiology. According to Saussure language must be studied as a self-contained system and not in connection to something else, for example to history or philosophy. (Cameron 1985:14.) Structuralism is a method for analyzing phenomena, especially sign-systems (Cameron 1985:18). Language is a sign system, a symbolic system constructed by human societies. A sign is constructed by a signifier and the signified. The signifier is the sound image of the sign, for example /k a t/ and the signified is the concept of the sign or the object, for example a four legged feline animal. Signs separate language from things and from reality. Through signs we can make sense of the world. Signs work only if they are put in a relation to one another. There must be a difference between them in order for them to be defined. Without each other signs do not mean anything but must be defined in relationship to each other. (Cameron 1985:14, 15.) Semiology is a discipline, a science of signs that investigate symbolic systems, for example language (Cameron 1985:18). In this study I am interested in how the words are used because they get their meaning through usage. In that way some words end up carrying connotations that can be far away from what the word initially meant.

There has been discussion about whether women's and men's speech differ and how it differs and why. Statistical differences between women's and men's speech do exist but they are difficult to apply to small amounts of data. These differences are not as visible out

in society. (Wardhaugh 2006:317.) The reason for women speaking differently from men lies in the different upbringing of girls and boys and that women and men often fill different roles in society seems very reasonable. Women and men are aware of the social roles and choose to behave accordingly to them. Girls are brought up to behave like women and boys to behave like men. (Wardhaugh 2006:333.) The expectations on what a woman and a man should be like changes from generation to generation and also varies from social class to social class. That means that gender is something that must be learned anew in each generation. (Wardhaugh 2006:316.)

Social labelling practices, slang terms or names we give women and men in different social situations, construct gendered identities and social relations in social practice. We learn about society by examining language. (McConnell-Ginet 2003: 69.) By looking at what is said about women knowledge about the way women are understood and about how we feel about ourselves can be gained (Lakoff 1975:1). Derogatory terms used of women have probably been in common use since the introduction of Modern English (Sutton 1995: 279). I have not been able to find systematic analysis made of derogatory terms used exclusively or primarily to refer to men. At least there were no such studies until 1998 (James 1998: 399).

This thesis aims at examining some of the attitudes towards women and men in society. It approaches them through the words used of women and men by young adults in both England and Finland. The pupils taking part in this study are both female and male, representing the age group 16 to 18. The survey was made in a sixth form in Brampton, England and in an upper secondary school in Pietarsaari, Finland. Observations about all collected words will be made such as how the two sexes are described by these words and what kind of attitudes they reveal as well as an analysis comparing the words divided by nationality and sex of the young adults listing the words. This thesis also examines the development of words used of women and men during the last 10-15 years. My hypothesis is that the words collected are similar to the words collected in earlier research and that the words listed by the English and Finland-Swedish pupils do not differ much because the two groups share the same media and music culture.

My research questions are:

- What serves as a reference for gendered lexis of young adults?
- Are there similarities and differences between the words according to the sexes and according to country of residence?
- What kind of development during the last 10-15 years does words used of women and men show?

I want to thank the persons who have been of tremendous help to me with this work. Inga-Leena Niiranen, at the time teaching in England, was kind enough to help collect terms from the English pupils. Cathrine Stenberg gave me permission to do the research in her class in Pietarsaari and helped me with the practical organization. I am also very thankful for all the help and support I have received from my supervisors Professor Sirkku Aaltonen and Jukka Tiusanen.

1.1 Material

The material of this study was collected in Brampton, England and Pietarsaari, Finland, two different cultures; one group of native speakers of English and one non-native. Brampton is a small market town in northeast Cumbria, 14 km east of Carlisle founded in the 7th century. It has a population of 4000 people. Pietarsaari in Finnish or Jakobstad in Swedish is a town in Ostrobothnia, western Finland. In year 2005, 19 521 people lived in the town which was founded in 1652. Of the population 56,1 % has Swedish as their mother tongue and 41,5 % has Finnish as their mother tongue. (Jakobstad 2005).

There were 46 pupils participating in the research. In Brampton, seventeen sixth form pupils in William Howard School were asked to list terms used about women and men. Ten of the English pupils were female and seven male. In Pietarsaari 29 pupils from Jakobstads Gymnasium participated in this study. The pupils were 16 to 18 years old, most of them 17. Twenty of the Finland-Swedish pupils were female and nine were male. This age group was chosen because it is the same age group as used in the Berkley-study and thus more comparable to it.

Table 1. Subjects by sex and nationality

	English pupils	Finland-Swedish pupils
female	10	20
male	7	9
total	17	29

In spring 2007 17 sixth formers were asked by their English teacher to write down words they use or have heard used of women and men. They were asked to write one column for words used of women and one column for words used of men. During an English class the pupils were given thirty minutes to write the list. They also included their own views of what they thought such names suggest about today's society. This was asked in order to get information about what parallels the pupils draw between the words they listed and their society. This information was helpful in the conclusion and the discussion on understanding the background and development of these terms. The Finland-Swedish pupils were not asked to include additional notes about the words they listed and society. The English sixth formers also included information about their age and sex. The slang terms used about women and men were also collected from pupils at the upper secondary school, Jakobstads gymnasium in autumn 2007, where the teaching is in Swedish. These pupils have Swedish as their mother tongue which has been their school language throughout the compulsory school and upper secondary school. Most of them have Swedish-speaking parents and some of them have a Finnish-speaking parent and due to this might themselves be bilingual. The first 30 minutes of an English lesson was reserved for writing the list of English slang terms they themselves use or have heard someone else use. The instructions were also written on the blackboard and the pupils were given a chance to ask questions about the process, which they did. One question was whether they were allowed to list names of certain groups of people, which, of course, was allowed as long as they were English slang terms. The pupils were asked to work individually in order to give everyone a chance to think for themselves and not only write down the same words that their classmates listed. All students participating in this study were promised anonymity. This is why their actual answering sheets are not included among the appendices, but only a list of the words they reported.

The material of this thesis consists of 147 slang terms used of women and men listed by pupils in Brampton and 71 slang words listed by pupils in Pietarsaari. English pupils¹ listed 60 words used of women and 88 words used of men while the Finland-Swedish pupils listed 35 words used of women and 36 words used of men. Some of the English pupils also included some short explanation or additional comment to some of the words they listed. The additional comments included for example if the word they listed was considered insulting or used as a joke. Slang terms were collected from ten female and seven male pupils at William Howard School in Brampton in England.

In Finland compulsory formal education starts when a child is seven years and continues until the age of 15. In England compulsory formal education starts at the age of five and continues until the age of 16. Primary education in England is composed of Infant and Junior schools or a combined Primary school. The primary education is divided into four stages; Foundation Stage, Full-time Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Secondary education is conducted through Secondary School which includes two key stages; Key Stage 3 and key Stage 4. The last stage of school for pupils between the ages of 16 and 18 is called sixth form and is not compulsory. The twelfth year in school is called lower 6th form and year thirteen is called upper 6th form. They study for A-level examinations which they must take before going to university.

The Finland-Swedish pupils participating in this study started learning English in fifth grade. After the nine years of compulsory school in Finland the pupil can choose to study in the sixth form, usually a three year long education program. According to Erik Geber from the Finnish Matriculation Examination Board, about 53% (~2000 out of ~3800) of the Swedish-speaking pupils in Finland are accepted to upper secondary school. The study requires six compulsory courses, each consisting of 36 lessons where the main aims in English are to teach the pupil to write, speak and understand English and learn about the people and culture in English-speaking countries. This further improves the good basis they already have for English that they received through education in compulsory school during the previous years. The terms these pupils listed indicate a high level of knowledge

¹ The pupils in Brampton, England are throughout this work called *English* pupils or pupils and the pupils in Pietarsaari, Finland are called *Finnish* pupils or pupils. However I am aware of that among these pupils there might also be pupils born somewhere else than England or Finland, since the pupils were not required to give information about their native country

of the English language. There will probably still be some selective reporting among the Finland-Swedish pupils since they are likely to report only terms they understand and terms that they frequently hear. It is possible that they have chosen to leave out terms they find difficult to spell. Terms appearing exotic to them have probably been left out. Code-switching probably exists in this study. It is possible that some of the English words listed by the Finland-Swedish pupils are also used by the pupils when they use their mother tongue since it is common that English words enter the Swedish language. According to the Finland-Swedish writer and linguist, Mikael Reuter (2006) the Nordic languages have received loanwords from the English language beginning from the post-war period and onwards. English loanwords exist in Swedish especially in the areas of business administration, finances, technology and computing. Already in the 1950s it was claimed that one has to at least know some English in order to be able to read and understand a Swedish newspaper.

These two groups of young adults share the youth culture with its own music, magazines, movies, computer games, console games and TV-programs. The Internet is also spreading youth culture and is popular among the age group in this study (16-18). In Pietarsaari the music television MTV broadcast their program consisting of among other things music videos and entertainment programs for many years. Radio stations also help spreading the latest hits from Europe. Some magazines targeted at young adults, originally in English are translated and sold in Finland, among other countries. Examples of these are *Cosmopolitan* and *Elle*. Magazines like this help to spread youth culture. Many movies and TV-programs made today are shown all over Europe instead of just in one country. In this way Finland-Swedish young adults have the chance to see the same movies and TV-programs as English young adults.

This study does not give answers as to whether the students use the terms they have listed themselves. There is also no information about the context in which the terms are used so it is not clear if the terms were used in a single- or mixed company situation, which would have had an impact on the choice of words used or whether the terms were used in a friendly or hostile way. Furthermore the students were not asked to report what they thought the meanings of the terms were. In order to define the terms occurring in this study Urban Dictionary, a dictionary online has been used as well as definitions provided by

linguistic students participating in Laurel Sutton's study (1995:290-294). In this study the pupils were not asked to report words used exclusively for one sex. Even though there are words listed only as used of women and words listed only as used of men, no conclusions can be drawn for certain that these words actually are used only of one sex or the other. Factors such as socioeconomic class, ethnic group and sexual orientation certainly play an important role to derogatory term use. In order to restrict the area of research data on these factors have not been collected in this study.

1.2 Method

Statistical analysis has not been used in this study due to the limited number of terms collected from the pupils participating in this study. The limited number of terms would not have given results that would have been statistically significant. Instead I have been assuming that the number of terms in a semantic category is a good guide to the importance of that category as well as the frequency of a term. A term that has been reported by most of the students participating in this study is therefore of importance.

Social scientists place a high value on standardization of procedures in research because they regard it as a safeguard of scientific rigor. In research done within a culture, researchers strive to use identical instructions and procedures. In cross-culture research it is sometimes more useful to deliberately use different instructions and procedures in order to get the picture expressed by individuals in their own terms. (Osgood 1975: 14.) In this study the two cultures involved were different and that is why identical instructions and procedures were strived after. Both groups got the same instructions and information and the study was carried out during an English lesson, both in England and in Finland. Identical instructions do not necessarily guarantee the same motivation or interpretation (Osgood 1975: 15). Despite the same instructions and procedures there might have been some differences between the two occasions of material collection due to the fact that each study was carried out by a different person, at different times and in different places. The pupils might for example have asked questions about the words or the study that could have influenced the rest of the group in one way or another and that could in turn have led to differences between the words the two groups listed. The aim was to be able to compare the

specific words used of women and men, which the two groups listed. Nothing was said about specific kind of words, like for example derogatory terms, in order not to influence the pupils in any way. An aspect that could have been given more thought to is the time of the collecting of the words. Too early in the morning or too late in the afternoon are times of the day when teenage pupils might be tired and unconcentrated. Unfortunately the study in Pietarsaari, Finland, was carried out during the first lesson of the day and even if the pupils did not seem to be tired or unconcentrated or expressed that they were so, it might have been better to do the collecting of the words a few hours later. The study was made on a Thursday which perhaps is a better day of the week than Monday or Friday.

The first step of working with the material was to arrange the words provided by the pupils participating in the study into an ordered list in order to find out what words women had listed, what words men had listed and how many times each word occurred. It was also essential to get a clear idea of what words were used of women and what words were used of men. It is essential to note differences within a domain and to order them very carefully. One must find certain similarities in the variation. (Osgood 1975: 4.) Therefore the words were classified into different categories when certain similarities started to occur. This made it possible to compare the words women have listed with the words the men have listed. The words were then analysed as to their semantic reference. What are women and men referred to and are there differences in these references? Are these words used of women and men positive or negative? Words not carrying negative connotations, for example suggesting that the person in question is unattractive, repellent or is an outcast of the society because of certain qualities they possess, are seen as positive words and words used of women and men suggesting the opposite are considered negative words.

The words the English pupils listed were compared to the words the Finland-Swedish pupils listed. The comparison of the English pupils with the Finland-Swedish is interesting because the words from the Finland-Swedish pupils are probably influenced by the media, since it is possible that the pupils come in contact with the English language through television, music, computer and console games. It is different from the English pupils who are also influenced by the media, but also surrounded by the language in their everyday life.

1.3 Earlier research

A good deal has been written about sexist language. Early feminist writers on this topic are for example Lakoff (1975), Spender (1980) and Cameron (1985). They all argue that language is made and dominated by men and that this has far-reaching consequences for women. There has been some research about and writings on derogatory terms used to refer to women and men. The more recent are Hughes (1991), Sutton (1995), James (1998) and Stenström (2002). Older ones include Schultz (1975), Miller and Swift (1976) and Stanley (1977).

In spring 1995 Deborah James (1998) asked 92 students at the University of Toronto to collect examples of the use of derogatory terms of women and men. She also asked the students to provide a description of the context where each example was used, comments and whether the terms were primarily female- or male referential. By brainstorming in small groups the number of derogatory terms was then increased. On the basis of the material collected a questionnaire was composed and submitted to 125 other native English-speaking students at the same university. The students commented on 15 derogatory terms chosen by James. The terms chosen from different semantic areas were six primarily female-referential terms: *old hag*, *bitch*, *slut*, *airhead*, *douchebag*, *dog* (ugly person) and nine primarily male-referential terms: *slimeball*, *asshole*, *dog* (one having sexual relations with a lot of partners), *jerk*, *geek*, *wuss*, *pipsqueak*, *loser* and *idiot*. This questionnaire asked whether the 15 derogatory terms are female or male referential, how common or frequent the terms are, whether the student used the term themselves or not and which terms are used in a friendly or affectionate way. James also classified female-referential terms and male-referential terms with the respect to the characteristics being criticized. The semantic categories of female-referential terms in order of the quantity of terms collected in each category were

1. Promiscuous/ prostitute/ sexually aggressive (62 terms),
2. Terms that do not denigrate any particular characteristic but that are generally perceived by women as demeaning/diminishing, either extremely demeaning, as sex object or more mildly demeaning. (40 terms)
3. Unattractive, including overweight (33 terms)

4. Women that mistreats others and are aggressive, particularly towards men (28 terms)
5. Brainless (20 terms)
6. Masculine/lesbian (11 terms)
7. Sexually cold/ unavailable (11 terms)

The semantic categories of male-referential terms in order of the quantity of terms collected in each category were

1. Men mistreating others (108 terms)
2. Stupid (91 terms)
3. Weak in character/ like a woman/homosexual (66 terms)
4. Sexual behaviour offensive to women, including sexual predator/harasser and promiscuous male (35 terms)
5. Socially inept (18 terms)
6. Lack of accomplishment, especially ability to earn a living (16 terms)
7. Physically weak (10 terms)

Results in James' study showed that some terms were more strongly gender-linked than others. Interesting was that five of the seven male-referential categories all involved the notion of being incompetent, either in character or physical abilities. A dominating theme among the female-referential categories was sexuality. The results also showed that women are in general less likely to use derogatory terms of other women than men do of women but it was nevertheless common and women did not resist using female-referential derogatory terms to refer to women. The only category of female-referential derogatory terms women did not use to refer to other women was words for *sex object*, for example *piece of ass* and *hole*. However, some women regarded terms such as *bitch* and *ballbuster* as positive terms and were of the opinion that these terms can describe women as strong, assertive and successful. These terms were not part of 15 specific terms James used but part of the categories she got when she classified female-referential terms and male-referential terms according to the characteristics being criticized. Furthermore, the results indicated that women are not always aware of the full implications of male evaluations of women. Evidence presented of this was that women and men had slightly different understandings

of the term *slut*. For some men the term describes a woman who is not only promiscuous, but also dirty and undesirable while women did not use the term with the two latter connotations and were unaware of what meaning the term had for men. The majority of derogatory terms in the study could be used to refer to both sexes. Conclusions drawn from the results were that men are expected to be “strong, confident, successful achievers” and women are expected to meet men’s needs and desires, especially with respect to sexual attributes and behaviour. Women seem to accept these definitions of femininity and masculinity because they use these derogatory terms themselves but there is also some resistance through the creation and use of derogatory terms for men reflecting a female viewpoint. The study also revealed indications that some terms are coming to be used by both sexes as gender neutral and that it is women who are leading in this direction. This study is important to my study, because it concerns terms used not only of women but of both women and men. Furthermore it gives a background to work that has been done on names for women and men and lists researchers who worked in this field and their findings.

The study *Bitches and Skanky Hobags. The Place of Women in Contemporary Slang* made in Berkley 1991 and 1992 by Laurel A. Sutton collected slang terms from students and their friends used for women and men. Sutton has been a starting point and inspiration for this study. Sutton divided the words into negative and positive words. The study revealed that the percentage of negative words used of women was much higher than the rate of positive words. Positive words in her survey all focused on the attractiveness of women to men as sexual partners. She also divided the words on the basis of what they referred to. Categories she got were:

- women referred to animals
- women reduced to their genitals and genitals combined with food images
- terms of women built on the word *hole* seeing women as containers and receptacles
- women as sexually attractive objects in the eyes of men
- women as promiscuous or sexually loose
- women as spiteful
- attractive women
- women as fat and ugly
- insults
- words were connected to women’s appearance or behaviour.

The most frequent words listed were words for promiscuous women. This study has functioned as a model when deciding which slang terms for women and men are positive and which are negative.

Stenström (2002) has studied what pupils in London talk about and how they do it. Stenström listed the most common slang words used by pupils in London and looked at what slang words boys use about boys, girls about boys, boys about girls and girls about girls. Stenström's study serves as an interesting comparison to this study since it, among other things has studied slang words of boys and girls in the same culture as one of the groups in this study. The London pupils were interviewed in 1993 and most prominent features of their talk were studied and analysed. Stenström's (2002: 64, 70) research found that the top ten slang words used by the London pupils were *man, sad, wicked, mate, bloke, guy, cool, massive, rough* and *quid*. There is also a group of slang words she calls *dirty words*. These consist of taboo words, meaning words regarded as offensive or shocking. This group is divided into slang words and swear words. As swearwords, they can be used as intensifiers (fucking crap), abusives (you dickhead/ sod/ motherfucker) or expletives expressing strong feelings, or serving as an oath or curse (for fuck's sake, shit). The top ten most commonly used dirty slang words used by the pupils in London were *crap, arse, dick, bastard, bitch, take the piss, fuck, wanker, suck* and *cunt* (Stenström 2002:71). Girls did not use "dirty words" of boys to the same extent as boys used them of girls. Interestingly, the boys used the word *dick* when talking about girls, while the girls use both *cunt* and *slag* for boys, but *bitch, cow* and *dog* were reserved for girls. No one used the word *bastard* of a girl. Male speakers used proper slang words and dirty slang words relatively more often compared with the female speakers (Stenström 2002: 85).

There has been some research about derogatory words used of women and men in Finland also. Mila Engelberg (2002: 126, 127) writes about gendered terms of abuse in her article *The communication of gender in Finnish*. Basing her work on earlier work done by Jussila & Länsimäki and Virtanen she states that words denoting men often have tolerant, admiring or playful connotations for example paddle-man (*mela-mies*) and knife-hero (*puukko-sankari*). Words used of men have many animal metaphors implying strength and potency, for example boar (*karju*), stallion (*orhi, ori*). Words used of women are usually more directly derogatory, for example village whore (*kylähuora*), challenge cup

(*kiertopalkinto*) and loose-flesh (*irto-liha*). 400 words for a promiscuous woman and 120 terms for a promiscuous man were recorded. (Mila Engelberg 2002: 126, 127.)

A whore can refer to a woman in general, a girl who rejects a boy's company, a prostitute or a woman seeing several men as well as an unwed mother or a girl who has lost her virginity. The use of whore (*huora*) has become more common as an expression for a prostitute in the media. The information on the use of whore (*huora*) was gathered in traditional Finnish country villages. (Mila Engelberg 2002: 126, 127.)

Derogatory terms have their own history and reflect the history of the community where they are used (Tirrell 1999: 42). The social context must be taken into consideration when discussing derogatory terms because it is the social dynamics that give the terms their power (Tirrell 1999: 51). There are attempts to attack derogatory terms and diminish the power of words. There are two opposing positions involved in this work. One group consists of those who think that derogatory terms are unacceptable and must be completely erased from the language we use because they reinforce for example sexism, racism and homophobia. (Tirrell 1999: 42.) Furthermore they argue that there should be sanctions against the use of these terms (Tirrell 1999: 51). The other group is of the opinion that derogatory terms mark important features of the social history of the group they are used upon and it is therefore important to reclaim the terms and make them non-derogatory. This can be done by detaching the semantic content of the term from its pragmatic role of derogation. The result of this would be that the derogatory terms would not be as effective for those using them but would empower those who the terms are used upon. (Tirrell 1999: 42.) Some women in James' (1998: 408) study regarded terms such as *bitch* and *ballbuster* as positive terms and were of the opinion that these terms can describe women as strong, assertive and successful. This shows that these women make a conscious effort to challenge traditional gender roles.

Referring to women as one of their body parts is among one of the worst of insults. This is not the case among men. A man can in television be called a *dick* whereas a woman is never heard being called a *cunt* in such situations. It is also rare to hear a woman call another woman a *cunt*. (Sutton 1995: 280, 281.) In order to reclaim the derogatory term for female genitalia, *cunt*, there have been festivals held in the United States on two campuses

and a club has been founded at one university. The students involved in this were inspired by works like *Cunt: A Declaration of Independence*, by Inga Muscio (Seal Press, 1998), and *The Vagina Monologues*, a play by Eve Ensler. In November 1999 two feminist groups sponsored a festival at Pennsylvania State University at University Park. The festival was attended by 200 persons and it, among other things, featured feminist performance artists and self-defence workshops. An aim of the festival was to create awareness and to send the message that there is nothing negative about the word *cunt*, and that people should not let anyone use it in order to hurt somebody. The organizers of the event were of the opinion that words do not have natural meanings but they have the meanings we give them. The event immediately got criticism from state and campus conservatives. The festival was called a "classless act of debauchery". (Yachnin 2001.) This again takes us back to the fact that a word gets its meaning when people use it and can receive different connotations and that these connotations can be each others opposites.

Sutton (1995:281) mentions C.R. Whaley and George Antonelli who have studied terms referring to women as animals. Humans are generally valued over animals in Western society which makes most of the animal comparisons to persons negative. However there are some exceptions from this rule, for example the expressions *lion hearted*, *Italian stallion* and *young buck* but none of them can be applied to women. Positive animal words for women are *fox*, *kitten* and *Playboy bunny* but they are positive from a male point of view. Words referring to women as animals can be categorized into four classes— pets, pests, cattle and wild animals. The terms *pig* and *cow* used of women show that women are seen as sexually available if the man pays for them or feeds them. Women being referred to as domesticated animals and pets reveal that men think that women are soft, affectionate and easy to control. This reveals again that the world is dominated by men. The opposite of easily controlled animals is the cases of domesticated animals biting the hand that feeds it, for example a female dog protecting her puppies. Then she is reverted to her wild state becoming an uncontrollable *bitch*. Words referring to women as wild animals are for example *fox* and *wildcat*. A caught fox is a trophy. Wild animal's value from male viewpoint exists in their superior physical appearance, independence and challenge of exploiting them sexually as well as the possibility that they may steal the man's resources without giving anything back.

Women are also seen as desserts. Hines (1999: 148, 149) collected terms used of women as desserts from slang dictionaries, journals, magazines, television sitcoms and advertisements. She also used data collected from undergraduate students in a linguistic class at the University of California at Berkeley. Hines (1999:145) concludes that there is a “consistent, widespread, generally unconscious and undocumented metaphor in English equating women-as-sex-objects with desserts, manifested both in linguistic expressions (such as *cheesecake*, *cookie*, *tart*, and so on) and in customs (such as women jumping out of cakes).”. Metaphors are not just conceptual systems but can also be means of structuring language and our identity. The metaphor that sees women as desserts is a way of defining women in our culture in a derogating way, reducing women to objects implying that women are powerless and inanimate (Hines 1999: 146).

There exists both female-referential and male-referential terms that indicate unintelligence, but they carry different connotations depending on whether they refer to women or men. The terms used of women implying that they are stupid draw on the notion that there is nothing in the woman’s head, for example words like *airhead* and *bubblebrain*. The respective terms for men are more likely to imply that there is something in the man’s head which should not be there, for example words like *shit-for-brains* and *farthead*. This suggests that it is more typical for women to be empty-headed than for men, and to be empty-headed is to be truly unintelligent. (James 1998: 404.)

The study done by James (1998) revealed a large number of terms describing men as mistreating others. The explanation provided for this is that men are perceived by both sexes to be more likely to treat other people badly than women are. Men are encouraged to engage in aggressive and selfish behaviour more than women are. Men are also more likely than women to be in a position where they have power over others and be able to misuse this power. The results in James’ study show that women mistreat others in a slightly different way. A woman called a *bitch* violates not only basic social rules, but also those gender roles that see women as passive and docile. Particularly by men, a bitch is described as arrogant, mean, bossy or pushy. Adjectives like this did not occur in connection to words used of men like *bastard* or *prick*. (James 1998: 405.)

In most cases female-referential derogatory terms mean the same if they are used of men and vice versa. One exception to this rule is when a female-referential term suggesting promiscuity, for example the term *slut*, is used to refer to a man it does not carry the same weight and power as when it is used of a woman. Sometimes men even attach positive connotations to such terms. (James 1998: 411.)

Derogatory terms do not always function as insults but can sometimes be used jokingly or as a way to show affection to a good friend (James 1998: 410). In Sutton's (1995) study some of the Berkley female students used *ho* and *bitch* to address other women affectionately. Men never used these words in this way. The female students said that the words *ho* and *bitch* are used among friends as "joke insults" or that the words are "just another name", "a neutral word" or that it "doesn't really mean anything". It is possible that this kind of usage of the terms *ho* and *bitch* is influenced by Black English Vernacular (BEV) which probably has influenced the Berkley students. BEV is an important source of slang in general and its covert prestige for white youth is well known and increasing. It is a feature of BEV to humorously put down the listener. Women do not address one another like this in order to talk like men or like African Americans (if they are not black) but because they search for identity as individuals and as a group. Using these terms mentioned here is a sign of solidarity between women, just as the use of *nigger* is between African Americans. African Americans can use *nigger* among themselves but it is not an accepted term for outsiders to use. (Sutton 1995: 288, 289.) Of the women participating in James' (1998) study 24 % replied that they would use *bitch* in the way described above. However, it seems to be more characteristic for men than women to use derogatory terms in this way. Examples of words men use in a friendly form of address are *asshole*, *slimeball*, *dog* and *douchebag*. (James 1998: 410.)

Female-referential and male-referential derogatory terms shows a construction of gender by which men are supposed to function as competent masters of every situation and has to do so in order to gain and maintain status in the eyes of other men. Women are only as good as they can make themselves be seen in the eyes of heterosexual men. Women should be attractive, faithful to one man, be relatively intelligent but not too intelligent and be supportive. This reveals a man's perspective. These powerful labels give language an

opportunity to pressure individuals to accept and act accordingly to these gender roles (James 1998: 406).

Derogatory terms used to refer to people can include stereotypes associated with the term or be tied to frameworks of oppression of different kind, for example racist or sexist oppression. (Tirrell 1999: 42.) Through association with stereotypes derogatory terms harm those they are used upon. Stereotypes oversimplify the diversity within the group and they are difficult to abolish in the society. The stereotypes tell the group how they ought to be, not how they actually are. (Tirrell 1999: 52, 53.) Tirrell (1999: 53) mentions Sarah Hoagland who has argued that “attributions of femininity to women function prescriptively rather than descriptively, since the claim that women are feminine is not, in practice, empirically falsified by the numerous unfeminine women among us.“. There are different types of derogatory terms. Some are more deeply derogatory than other. The derogatory term *jerk* is for example not as deeply derogatory as *nigger* or *dyke* because its history and background is not as complex and it has not the same power to insult. The semantic content of the word *jerk* is little more than *stupid or foolish person* whereas calling someone a *nigger* is tied to many other social practices including a racial and oppressive history. (Tirrell 1999: 62.) Derogatory terms like *nigger* and *dyke* have a rich history within American culture which has tied the words to negative associations. On the other hand, these words are sometimes used as positive in-group terms by those formerly being victims of the same words. (Tirrell 1999: 43.) When the terms are used in this way they are a badge of pride that recognizes an important history of degradation but not wishing it to continue. This is a way to consciously change the meaning of the term by using it the other way around. (Tirrell 1999: 56, 57.) The problem here is that not all members of the in-group think that it is acceptable to use the derogatory terms when referring to one another. There is controversy among African Americans as well as lesbians about which terms are appropriate group labels. Some of them think that the stereotype associated with the derogatory term is too powerful and therefore impossible to detach. (Tirrell 1999: 59.) The term *nigger* has formerly only being used of African- Americans but changed and can now also be used to indicate someone’s second-class status. The term is not always used with the intention to be derogative but it is sometimes forgotten that the term *always* carries contempt even if the one using it does not wish for it to offend. (Tirrell 1999: 45.) A derogatory term reminds the intended receiver of the word of the social sanction of their

status as lesser and furthermore tries to convince the person that their lower status is really deserved, for example suggesting that it has biological roots. Derogatory terms divide society into separate and unequal classes according to for instance skin colour, sex and sexual preference. (Tirrell 1999: 53, 54.)

Marlis Hellinger (2002: 3) writes that “an appropriate use of personal nouns may contribute towards the maintenance of an individual’s identity, while inappropriate use, for example identifying someone repeatedly (either by mistake or by intention) by a false name, by using derogatory or discriminatory language, or by not addressing someone at all, may cause irritation, anger or feelings of inferiority”. Offensive terminology may reveal attitudes towards a person or group. Persistent use of terms like “spade”, “nigger”, “paki”, “chav” and “queer”, for example at work, is against legislations such as the Race Relations Act, the Race Relations Amendment Act or the Sex Discrimination Act. (Clements 2007: 27.)

There are four categories of offensive language: epithets, profanity, vulgarity and obscenity. Epithets refer to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, appearance and disabilities, for example retard, bitch, or fag. Profanity is religious cursing and uses what is taken to be sacred, for example hell or damn. Words or expressions which refer to genitals or sexual and excretory functions in a crude way belong to vulgarity and obscenity depending on the degree and prurience. Words or expressions can also belong to more than one category. (Battistella 2005: 72.)

There are several arguments for reasons for offensive language to be persistent and tolerated. One explanation is that the offensiveness lies in the listener’s attitudes towards topics rather than in the words themselves. Another explanation is that certain types of verbal art in for example fiction, poetry and film requires authenticity and therefore uses language that reflects the way people actually talk. (Battistella 2005: 76.) Arguments against offensive language speak for the public language to be suitable to all listeners and claims that offensive language is impolite, disruptive or dangerous. Offensive language is not a simple matter of propriety or impropriety but involves effects, intentions, rights and identity. (Battistella 2005: 78.)

1.4 Slang

Slang is a rich source of creative metaphors and, like language in general, man made and man authorized. This is how it was a hundred years ago and still is. Until recently, women have been seen as linguistic conservatives, meaning that they prefer using the standard form of speech. Furthermore women have been seen as linguistic deviants because the way they speak differs from the norm set up by men. Research about sexual slang has revealed that men generate or report more words and phrases than women do. (Sutton 1995: 281-283.)

Stenström (2002: 67) has studied how pupils in London talk. She says that linguists and lexicographers seem to agree that slang includes words that are below the level of stylistically neutral language, and that slang is group-related, innovative, playful, metaphorical and short-lived. She does not agree with slang being short-lived because many slang words are old and still used as slang words today. An example of this is the early 17th century word *cock* for “penis”. Other old slang words are completely outdated and a person using them today would be ridiculed.

According to Stenström pupils use slang because they are expected to violate social taboos and therefore use “their own language” as a means of provocation and keeping the older generation outside, while at the same time strengthening the bonds between their. Sutton (1995: 290) agrees. She says that adolescent use slang in order to establish an identity that separates them from adults and children. Furthermore the use of slang allows the adolescent to feel as if they have control over at least one aspect of their lives.

Here follows a discussion about language and gender. It includes social gender, sexist language and differences between women’s and men’s speech. In chapter three the results are presented and they are analysed and discussed in the following chapter.

2 LANGUAGE AND GENDER

During the last decade of the 20th century there was a lot of discussion about the connection between language and the social roles of the women and men who speak a particular language (Wardhaugh 2006: 315). It is important to make a distinction between the terms *sex* and *gender*. The latter is preferred throughout this work because it refers to masculinity and femininity that are socially acquired, not to the biological aspects the term *sex* refers to. Many other linguists also prefer *gender* over *sex*, for example Wardhaugh (2006), Coates (2004) and Chambers (1995). Gender is something we cannot avoid or escape because it is part of the way society is ordered and each society is doing that ordering in different ways. Gender is essential when we create and maintain our identity. (Wardhaugh 2006: 316.)

Social identities, including gendered identities originate primarily from memberships in different communities of practice (McConnell-Ginet 2003: 71). A community of practice is defined by McConnell-Ginet as “a group of people brought together by some mutual endeavour, some common enterprise in which they are engaged and to which they bring a shared repertoire of resources, including linguistic resources, and for which they are mutually accountable”. Wardhaugh (2006: 329) says that a community of practice is a group in which people function to understand what is happening when people learn and use language. Individuals take part in many different communities of practice and these communities interact with other communities in different ways. In the present study the community of practice is the pupils that have listed their knowledge of slang terms used for women and men. They belong to the group of young adults studying and taking part of the jargon that is used in their everyday life.

2.1 Social gender and sexist language

Social gender refers to “the socially imposed dichotomy of masculine and feminine roles and character traits.” In language there is an underlying principle that male is the norm, because of general personal nouns majority have a male bias. Many higher-status occupational terms such as lawyer, surgeon, or scientist are often pronominalized by *he* in contexts where referential gender is either not known or irrelevant. Low-status

occupational titles such as secretary, nurse, or schoolteacher are often linked with the pronoun *she*. Social gender has to do with stereotypical assumptions in our society. There are some social roles that are more appropriate or typical for women and some that are more appropriate or typical for men. *Surgeon* is an example of a term that is more often associated with a man and *nurse* is an example of a term usually linked with a woman. Deviations from such assumptions must often be clarified, for example *female surgeon* or *male nurse*. (Hellinger 2002:10, 11.) The language in our society gives women either the role of a sex objects or the role of a servant (Lakoff 1975: 4).

Another example of women being looked at in a negative way in society is that for example in Finnish a man can be insulted on purpose by comparing him to a woman, for example the female title *neiti* (miss, young lady) referring to an effeminate man or the adjectives *akkamainen* (old-womanish, unmanly) and *naismainen* (womanish, effeminate). A man can also be told to *vetää hame päälle* (to put on a skirt). (Engelberg 2002: 126, 127.) This is according to the findings of the present study where the biggest category of derogatory terms used of men listed by the English 16-18 year old pupils see men as homosexuals or womanish.

Muriel Schultz (1975) is one of many that have analyzed the ways in which sexism is built into language. Even though much work and research was done then in this area the efforts were trivialized and seen as “radical feminism”. (Hines 1999:145.) Language is man-made and through it men have constructed a sexist reality of male supremacy and female subordination (Dale Spender 1980: 1). Men have decided what words will mean and also who have the right to use them. Language reflects men’s perception and experience of the world. And since language determines reality, women may be alienated from language and also from the female experience that language lacks. (Cameron 1985: 93.) Descriptions of or terms for women tend to have negative sexual and moral implications which are not found for corresponding male terms (Hellinger 2002:16). Spender (1997: 165) mentions Mary Dale who has analysed the Bible and revealed how males have named themselves as superior and have classified women in negative terms. It is not a coincidence that there is no name for a sexually healthy woman and that is the reason why its existence is doubted by both women and men. An example is that males have named themselves as *virile* and

potent but that there are no comparable names for women. A woman engaging in sexual activity is called a *nymphomaniac* or a *bitch*. (Spender 1997: 175.)

Predicative labels, like *bimbo*, characterize and categorize people and they are gendered, for example emphasising male social incompetence and female brainlessness. Labels give content to and shape gender identities. They also challenge gender dichotomies, in other words interrupting in the system of how genders are divided into two separate groups. (McConnell-Ginet 2003: 69, 71.) A term that has for example been used only of women may change with time so that it later becomes a term used of men as well. An example of this is the negative term *slut*, earlier implying sexual promiscuity that nowadays can be applied to males as well, even though it before has been a term used of women only. Labels often identify social, political and attitudinal grouping which people take part of or reject. Some negative labels can be rehabilitated by a group's appreciation of the label and thus they can become terms that can be used without expressing prejudice. The term *queer* is an example of this. The word *queer* can nowadays be used without suggesting prejudice against sexual minorities, even by those who do not belong to the minority group in question (McConnell-Ginet 2003: 70).

Some derogatory terms are used only by women, for example terms for boring men (*Mr. Dry Guy*, *fatiguer*), unattractive or fat men (*craterface*, *doughboy*) and for worthless men (*sperm donor*). Terms used only by women parallel to terms for attractive women, such as *babe*, *hunk* and *hotty*. These terms tell about how women evaluate men. Women tend to recognize and accept most male-biased derogatory terms used of women but men do not tend to accept or use female biased derogatory terms used of men. This makes it impossible for female-biased terms used of men to act as sanctions on male behavior in the way male-biased terms used of women can function as sanctions on women's behavior. (James 1998: 409.)

Sexist language forces women to be second-class citizens who should not be seen nor heard, eternal sex-objects and personifications of evil. In some feminist's point of view there is no neutral language but only a sexist language belonging to and controlled by men. This language prohibits women to understand and be able to change their situation. (Cameron 1985: 91, 92.) Throughout the history of the language there are words referring

to women or girls with neutral or even positive connotations that gradually after a period of time acquired negative implications and finally ending up as abusive, sexual slur. An example of this is *tart*, which in the nineteenth century was a term for a pleasant or attractive woman (Hines 1999: 150). Today the term stands for a prostitute or a woman who “dresses or behaves as if she wants to attract men and have sex” (Macmillan English Dictionary 2002: 1469). These terms are created by men because of their sexual fear of women. Men experience that women’s sexuality threatens their hegemonic power. (Schultz 1975:135.)

There is a frequent insistence that neutral words should be used as often as possible. For example when describing occupations one should use *chair person* instead of *chairman*. Words like *salesclerk* and *actor* referring to both sexes are recommended to be used. However, even though these changes are made it does not automatically mean that there has been a real shift in sexist attitudes. (Wardhaugh 2006: 319.) Some feminists are not satisfied by the language becoming more gender neutral, but want to reclaim language for themselves. For example Dale Spender thinks that women should reinvent language for their own purposes. (Wardhaugh 2006: 331, 332.) In October last year The Finnish Language Board suggested that there should be a change in sex-indicating terms and titles for different professions. The discussion about the inequality of the Finnish language was initiated by language researchers Kaisa Karppinen and Mila Engelberg who asked for the Language Board’s attitude when it comes to sex- neutral language usage. This started a lively discussion in the media. The Language Board is of the opinion that when possible, sex-neutral language should be used, especially when it comes to language used in legislation and administration. When new vocabulary is needed and when a section of an act is changed, words ending with –man should be avoided. The media was encouraged to leave out expressions revealing the sex of a person whenever it is not relevant. As an example the heading “Female driver fled from the police” (*naisautoilija pakeni poliisia*) was given. In this case the sex of the person is irrelevant and a heading like this prohibits equality between women and men. The Language Board stresses that it cannot forbid words but only give recommendations. (Länkinen 2007.) In an article in *Helsingin Sanomat* Mila Engelberg comments on the sexism in the Finnish language, saying that it is an extensive and complicated matter. Sex-indicating terms for professions are increasing and as a result the inequality between sexes is kept alive. For example there are terms for

professions with the suffix –hostess (*emäntä*) which indicates that the profession is for women only and that it also pays a woman's salary, which usually is lower than in the case of male professions.

Sexist language is not always intentional and people are not always aware of the associations it has. Terms and expressions that by some are clearly sexist can be used with genuine affection by others. (Hines 1999: 151.) One way of thinking about sexist language is presented by Cameron (1985: 90). She says that it is not the words that should be changed but the minds of the people using the words because language can always be sexist in the mouths of those who are sexists.

Robin Lakoff was one of the first women to publish theories on the existence of women's language. Lakoff's work has served as the basis for much research on women and language. (Githens 1991.) This is why her findings are presented in this study even though her research is older than the research made during the last 10-15 years which is the time period that this study is interested in. Lakoff discusses the term *lady* used about women saying that it is a euphemism- a word that has acquired a bad connotation by being associated with something unpleasant or embarrassing and thus being substituted with something that sound less unpleasant (Lakoff 1975: 19-26). The use of the word *lady* tends to trivialize the subject discussed and often also ridicule the woman talked about. For example a female doctor is not in a serious context referred to as a *lady* doctor but as a *woman* doctor. An organization of women who have a serious purpose does not use the word *lady* in their titles, but those not so serious may. The difference between a euphemism and the euphemism *lady* is that the new word that replaces the one that has acquired bad connotations is usually positive but *lady*, replacing the word *woman* still has negative connotations. The pair *mistress* and *master* has an uneven relationship where *master* refer to a man who has acquired control and ability in some field but *mistress* is a woman having a sexual relationship with a married man (Lakoff 1975: 28, 29). This also pinpoints the fact that men are defined in terms of what they do in the world but women are defined in relationship to men. One cannot say: *She is a mistress*. A woman has to be somebody's mistress, a man's mistress (Lakoff 1975: 29, 30). This relationship between women and men is also illustrated by the use of the word *professional*. A man being a professional is linked with the job he does but a woman being a professional is referring to her as being a

prostitute. Another pair is *spinster* and *bachelor*. *Bachelor* can be a neutral term, used in a positive way or suggest sexual freedom while *spinster* can be pejorative, and suggest puritanism or celibacy. A spinster is not someone one wants to marry, which a bachelor very well can be. (Lakoff 1975: 32, 33.) Rosalie Maggio (1997: 3) mentions the unparallel term *man and wife*. To be equal it should be either *husband and wife* or *man and women*. Lakoff (1975: 34, 35) also comments this pair by pointing out that a man is a man before he marries as well as after but a woman is a woman before she marries but a wife when she marries. The explanation to the inequality in these pairs is that women are given their identities in relationship to men but not vice versa. Surprisingly, these word pairs were not found in this study, only one kind of word pair; *bull* and *cow*, discussed in chapter three. Another inequality between the sexes when it comes to referring to people is that masculine pronouns are considered neutral or unmarked and used when referring to both women and men, for example *Everyone takes his seat* or *It is important for a person to take care of himself*. It is the same with words like *mankind* and *man* and this is due to the fact that men used to be the writers and the doers. (Lakoff 1975: 44.) A famous quotation by Protagoras is “Man is the measure of all things”.

Animal names can be applied to both women and men. The difference is that animal names used for men can have connotations in all sorts of areas but animal names used for women almost always makes sexual reference as well as whatever other connotations the word suggests (Lakoff 1975: 31.)

It is interesting that both women and men can use the terms *dear*, *honey* and *luv* but women use it under different circumstances than men do. A socially subordinated woman, for example a waitress or a saleswoman, can use it both when addressing men and women but a heterosexual man would not use it when addressing another man. They only use it to women and when they do she is always in an inferior position. (Lakoff 1975: 79, 80.)

2.2 Differences between women's and men's speech

The difference between women's and men's way of talking and how language is taught to girls in early childhood gives the background and an understanding to how language is

taught to children and how gender is learned. Girls are taught a different way of speaking than boys. Little girls are ridiculed and considered unfeminine if they talk rough, while rough talk is much more accepted when it comes from the mouth of a little boy. Parents may find it more amusing than shocking when a little boy talks rough. Both boys and girls are taught “women’s language” as their first language because mothers and other women are the dominant influence when the children are under five years or so. What happens next is that the children go through a stage of rough talk where little girls are more strongly discouraged to talk rough than little boys. At about the age of ten the children have acquired two languages. Boys have distanced themselves from the women’s language and adopted new forms of expression, while girls still use the women’s language because otherwise they would be made fun of. Talking the way girls do indicates that they are considered unable to think clearly and unable to take part in a serious discussion. (Lakoff 1975: 4.) However, most of the women who get as far as college learn to talk a neutral language. This language is scholarly, objective and unemotional. These women use this language when for example talking in class, addressing professors and applying for jobs. The problem with this is that these women have to learn two dialects and like many bilinguals they never master either language which would require sensitivity for all the nuances of social situations. This is why these women may not feel comfortable when using the neutral language and unable to express themselves “as well, as fully or as freely” as they could otherwise (Lakoff 1975:6, 7).

In many languages there are phonological differences between women’s and men’s speech. The differences are sometimes not only gender related but also age related. One example of phonological differences is schoolgirls in Scotland that pronounced the *t* in words like *water* and *got* more often than schoolboys. The boys preferred to use a glottal stop instead. Another famous example of that women speak different from men is the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Margaret Thatcher who was advised to speak more like a man in order to be the first woman ever to get the position as British Prime Minister. She lowered the pitch of her voice, diminished its range, and started to speak more slowly in order to sound more authoritative. (Wardhaugh 2006: 318.)

Studies suggest that women and men have different paralinguistic systems. They also say that women are titled and addressed differently from men because women are more often

addressed by their first name and if not by their first name, by terms as *lady*, *miss*, *dear*, *baby* or *babe*. There are a wider range of address names used of women than of men. (Wardhaugh 2006:3 22.) Researchers agree that men speak more than women do in conversations involving both sexes. There are also differences in the choice of topic. (Wardhaugh 2006: 324.) Some research show that women ask more questions than men, encourage others to speak, use more back-channeling signals like *mhmm* in order to encourage others to continue speaking. Women tend not to protest as much as men when interrupted. Men tend to try to control the topics that are discussed and dispute and challenge more often than women do. These patterns in conversation reflect the power relationship that exists in society- men as dominant and women as subservient. (Wardhaugh 2006: 326.) Women tend to use more compliments and polite forms than men because they use talk to develop solidarity and maintain social relationships. The aim of men's talk is often to get things done. (Wardhaugh 2006: 324, 325.)

Another difference between women's speech and the way men talk lies in the choice of vocabulary. An example is that women tend to give much more precise descriptions of colours than men do. If a man uses words like *lavender* or *aquamarine* they are considered to sarcastically imitate a woman, be a homosexual or be an interior decorator. Certain adjectives are used by women but seldom by men, adjectives such as *lovely*, *adoreable* and *sweet*. (Lakoff 1975:12.) A woman must be careful when using these "feminine" adjectives. For example a woman advertising executive using the expression *what a sweet idea* at an advertising conference would perhaps not be taken seriously. It would be more suitable for her to use an expression like *what a terrific idea* instead. The expressions *oh dear* clearly belongs to women's language and *shit* to the language men use when something has gone wrong, because stronger expressions are reserved for men and the weaker expressions for women (Lakoff 1975:10). By stronger expressions Lakoff means how strongly feelings about something are expressed. Tag questions are more often used by women than by men (Lakoff 1975: 16, 17). An example of a tag question is the last question following a statement like *He has blue eyes, hasn't he?*. Tag questions give the impression that the one using them is not being really sure of himself and therefore needs confirmation from the addressee or even that the speaker using tag questions has no views of his or her own. On the other hand tag questions can also express politeness and women's speech sounds more polite than men's. (Lakoff 1975: 18.) The result of women being

forced to talk in a feminine way and therefore not taken seriously is that women are denied access to power and made to feel that they deserve it because they are not as intelligent or as educated as men (Lakoff 1975: 7).

Differences between women's and men's speech also interacts with other factors like social class, race, culture, discourse type, group membership (Wardhaugh 2006: 322, 323). It is the linguistic task or the situation in which the conversation takes place that determines the style of speaking and not the gender of the speaker (Wardhaugh 2006: 326). The reason for women speaking differently from men lies in the different upbringing of girls and boys and that women and men often fill different roles in society (Wardhaugh 2006: 333). The most distinct gender differences seem to exist in societies where the women's and men's social roles are most clearly differentiated. Men have more power than women and they are less influenced by others linguistically but they do for example use non-standard varieties of their language to seek solidarity among each other since using the non-standard variety seems to indicate toughness. Women tend to be kept in their place but use language as a tool to aspire to a higher social class. Therefore women appear to be more conscious of how those socially superior use language and direct their speech towards the way the socially superior speak. (Wardhaugh 2006: 330, 331.) Quoting Wardhaugh: "Gender differences in language become established early and are then used to support the kinds of social behaviour males and females exhibit. It is mainly when males and females interact that the behaviour each uses separately becomes noticeable." (Wardhaugh 2006: 328). Languages themselves may not be sexist but appear so because women and men use language to achieve certain goals (Wardhaugh 2006: 328).

The interesting development in language and gender studies in recent years is known as *queer linguistics* and *lavender linguistics* and focus on sexuality rather than sex or gender. *Queer linguistics* and *lavender linguistics* study the language of for example gays, lesbians, bisexuals and the transgendered. (Wardhaugh 2006: 332.)

3 RESULTS

This study does not give answers to how to make the relation between the sexes more equal. It will only map out what the situation is like in two small areas of the world, Brampton and Pietarsaari. The main concern is how women and men are described by the collected material and what they reveal about attitudes. A secondary question concerns possible national and gender differences of the labels as well as the development of words used of women and men during the last 10-15 years.

As Table 2 shows, the English pupils listed 60 words used of women and 88 words of men, while the Finland-Swedish pupils listed 33 words used of women and 36 words used of men. The reason for the fact that the English pupils produced more words is probably because they live in an English speaking environment whereas the Finland-Swedish pupils have Swedish as their mother tongue. This makes a difference because the English pupils have the English language constantly present which gives opportunities to use the slang terms more often compared to the Finland-Swedish pupils who, in order to do the same have to switch from their mother tongue to a foreign language. The English pupils also have an advantage in being able to constantly improve and increase their vocabulary since English is the language they and people around them use. The Finland-Swedish pupils might have long periods of time during which they do not hear or speak English at all.

Table 2. The number of words the pupils listed

	English pupils (n=17)	Finland-Swedish pupils (N=29)
words for women	60	35
words for men	88	36

The material from the English pupils is presented first, followed by the material collected from the Finland-Swedish pupils. First the categories are presented and discussed and then the specific words are considered.

3.1 Categories

In the following all the categories of words listed by the pupils are presented, starting with the categories of words listed by the English pupils and continuing with the categories of words listed by the Finland-Swedish pupils. Then a comparison of the categories are presented where similarities and differences between the sexes and nationalities are looked at.

3.1.1 Categories of words used of women by the English pupils

The words used of women listed by English pupils quite naturally fell into five categories. Due to the fact that many of the words listed by the pupils participating in this study refer in some way to sexuality, sex and genitals, many of the category names also refer to this area. The categories for words used of women is *Promiscuous lifestyles*, *Sexuality* with the subcategories *Sexual orientation* and *Body parts*, *Animals*, *Physical appearance* and *Disability*. These categories are listed in order of the quantity of terms in each category. The group containing most words is the category *Promiscuous lifestyle* with 16 words. The second largest category is *Sexuality* with 13 words followed by *Animals* with 11 words. The category *Physical appearance* contains nine words. The category *Disability* consists of eight words.

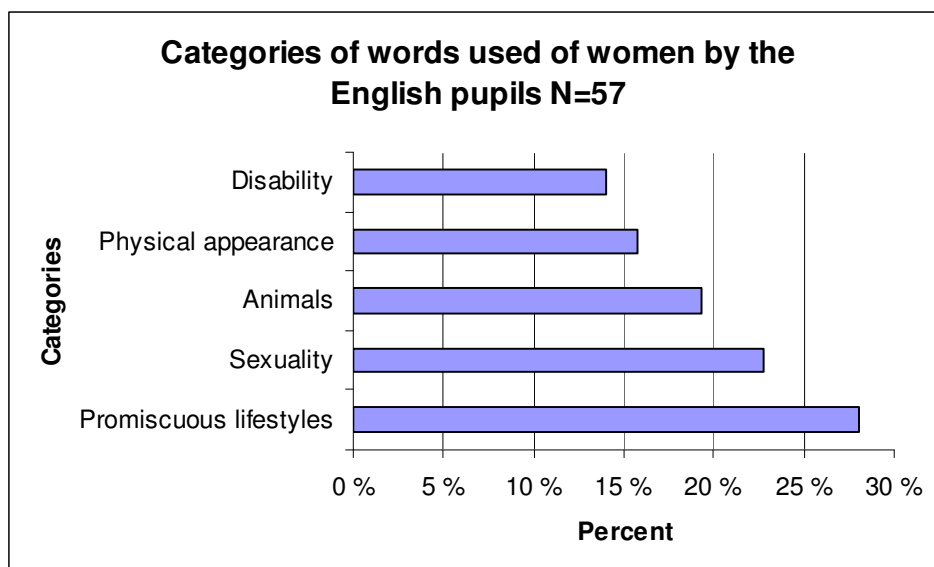


Figure 1. Categories of words used of women by the English pupils

The words in the category *Promiscuous lifestyles* describe women who are prostitutes or having sex with many different people. Examples of words from this category are *slut* and *whore*. Five of the words in this category describe a woman who, besides being promiscuous, also has poor taste, personally degrading behaviour and low socioeconomic class or a woman who is criminal, for example *slag* and *tramp*. These words are all describing women in a negative way. A woman being a prostitute or having sex with many different people is looked down upon and is not respected. The person using a derogative term like these in the category *Promiscuous lifestyles* is probably looking at promiscuous lifestyle as something dirty and as sinful behaviour and that is also why the term has ended up as a derogatory word. These words are also telling what a perfect woman should be like. She should be of high social class, well dressed, only have sex with her husband (preferably no sex before marriage), never having committed a crime and be well-behaved. Perhaps it creates jealousy when women make their own money. A whore usually has sex with men mainly for the sake of the money. She earns her living based upon the men's sexual desire. The fact that he is not able to get sex for free and must go as far as to pay for such services must be at least a bit humiliating. In order to make the humiliation feel less painful and putting himself in a better position he looks down on the prostitute and puts her in the same category as low status people who on top of it all are behaving sinfully. But how come the woman is doing something wrong and not the man? It is after all, because of his willingness to pay a woman to have sex with him, that there are prostitutes.

The words in category *Sexuality* describe women as homosexuals, for example *lesbo* and *dyke*. This indicates that it is not right for a woman to have sexual interest in the same sex. It is seen as unnatural but also as something very wrong and degrading. It is difficult to know the reason to why women's homosexuality is looked down upon, especially since many men seem to enjoy erotic lesbian film material and the fantasy about lesbian's sexlife. Perhaps heterosexual people distance themselves from homosexuality due to the lack of knowledge and understanding or they might feel hostile against women due to their unavailability. Homosexual women are also seen as independent and strong and this is an identity many lesbians want to create, but by men it is regarded as a threat to them. Traditionally a woman should depend on her man to take care of her and provide for her. The subcategory to the category *Sexuality* consists of words describing women as body

parts, mostly female genitals like *cunt* and *twat*, but also male genitals and women's breasts. Again, the use of words for genitals indicates a negative outlook on sex as sinful and wrong. A woman's sexual organ is seen as something disgusting and something to be ashamed of, shameful enough to be suitable for a derogatory term used of women. Women referred to their genitals are according to Sutton (1995: 287) reduced to their genitals. A woman is not a person anymore, just a sexual organ and therefore degraded.

The words in category *Animals* describe women in both positive and negative ways. Examples of negative animal words used of women are *whale* and *bitch* while a more positive word is *bird*. The purpose of calling a woman a *whale* is to indicate that the woman in question is as large as a whale. Describing a woman as a *rat* and *pig* perhaps refers to her being ugly, unhygienic and in lack of value while a woman who is seen as a *cow* or a *sheep* perhaps is stupid. When a woman is called a *dog* she is considered ugly, but when a man is called the same he is just unpleasant (Macmillan English Dictionary 2002: 409). In her study James (1998: 400) defined the female-referential word *dog* as and "ugly person" and the male-referential word *dog* as a "person who has sexual relations with a lot of partners". These negative words tell us that a woman should not be overweight, ugly or stupid (Sutton 1995: 287). If a woman is one of these things she will not be socially accepted, respected or taken seriously. Calling a woman *bird* is to refer to her as something positive but as Sutton (1995: 287) points out women are attractive only if they are sexually attractive in the eyes of a man. Sutton (1995: 281) mentioned Whaley and Antonelli who categorized terms referring to women as animals into four classes– pets, pests, cattle and wild animals. All four categories were represented in this study among the words collected from the English pupils. There were words used of women as pets (cat), pests (rat), cattle (cow, pig) and wild animals (bird, whale). (The words in brackets are examples from the words occurring in this study) One example of the "domesticated animal gone wrong", as Sutton put it, also occurred in this study– the word *bitch*. This term was one of the most frequently listed words used of women. Whaley and Antonelli said that a human life is generally valued more than an animal's life in Western society and therefore comparing a person to an animal is usually meant in a negative way. By describing women as animals women are deprived of their human value. (Sutton 1995: 281.) Reduced to animals, women are seen as things that can be bought and sold, cared for and neglected, even put down and killed. Women seen as cows, pigs and horses imply that they too can be eaten or competed

with in animal shows. As mentioned earlier Lakoff (1975: 28, 29) points out the difference between the pair *mistress* and *master*. *Master* refers to a man who has acquired control and ability in some field but *mistress* is a woman having a sexual relationship with a married man. In this study the slang term *cow* was listed as a term used for women. The pair of *cow* would be *bull*. The male part of this pair is considered to be an animal with great strength and courage but a cow, when it is used as a derogatory term for women refer to her being stupid and ugly. The term *bull* was not listed among words referring to animals.

Most of the words in the category *Physical appearance* describe women as ugly, for example *minge* and *hag*. As mentioned above, women are not allowed to be ugly in order to be socially accepted or respected. There are also one racist word (*gype* as in *gypsie*) and one word implying that the woman in question is cute (*funny face*). A woman is also called a *troll*. The words in category *Disability* are divided into two groups, one describing women as small and weak or as dwarfs, for example *puny* and *hobbit* and one group describing women as disabled, for example *mong* (from the word *mongol*) and *gimp*. Describing women as small and weak is just another way of enforcing male supremacy and female subordination.

3.1.2 Categories of words used of men by the English pupils

The six categories for words used of men listed by English pupils were *Sexuality* with the subcategories *Sexual orientation* and *Body parts*, *Disability*, *Excrement and anus*, *Promiscuous lifestyle* with the subcategory *Deviant sexual behaviour*, *Animals* and *Unsuccessful people in society*. The largest category *Sexuality* consists of 24 words. This category is followed by *Disability* containing 12 words, *Excrement and anus* with 11 words, *Promiscuous lifestyle* with 8 words and , *Animals* and *Unsuccessful people in society* each consisting of 3 words.

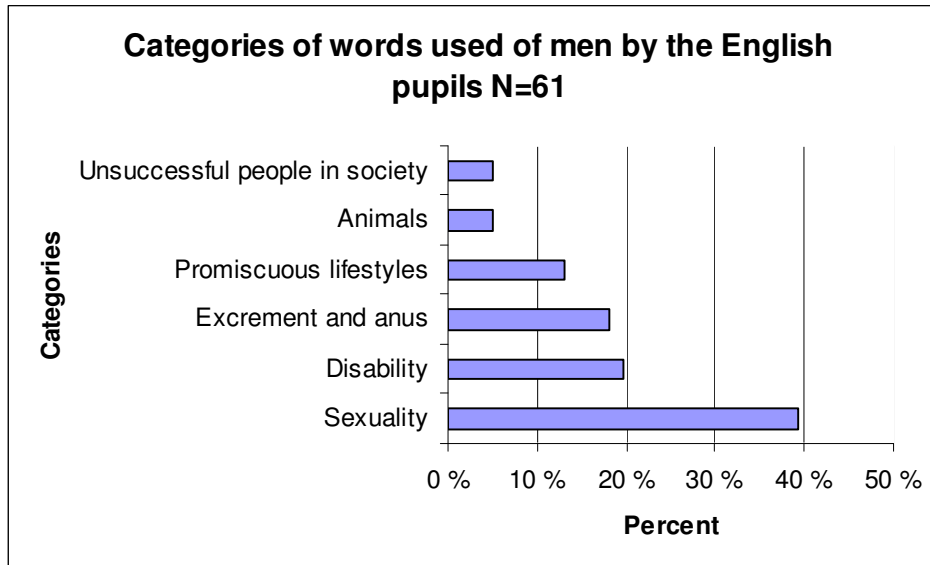


Figure 2. Categories of words used of men by the English pupils

The category *Sexuality* contains words describing men as homosexuals, for example *gay* and *faggot*, but also words describing men as body parts like female genitals, male genitals and women's breasts. Examples of words for body parts are *cunt*, *cock* and *tit head*. Almost a third of these words, belonging to the largest category of words used of men listed by the English pupils, are words referring to men as homosexuals. This indicates that the English pupils do not accept men as homosexuals and being a homosexual is degrading enough for homosexuality to be used as a source for derogatory words. A homosexual can also be seen as a feminine man. In this way it is bad for a man to be like women, a member of the weaker sex. This is also the case in Finland, as Engelberg (2002: 126-127), mentioned earlier, reports. In Finnish a man can be insulted by comparing him to a woman. Another third of the words in the category *Sexuality* are words for a man's penis. It seems to be a body part very central to men but also looked at in a degrading way. Being called something that means a man's penis seems to indicate that the person referred to is stupid or unworthy in some way. Perhaps making words for a man's penis derogatory words is an attempt to aim at a man's vulnerable spot and that way get at his self-esteem and get the power over him or hurt him. The fact that in the category *Sexuality* there are words for women's breast and women's genitals shows that it is insulting for a man to be referred to these things. The word *pussy*, used of both women and men, is a word for women's genitalia but can also refer to someone not brave enough and weak in character.

The category *Disability* describes men as disabled people, people with low IQ but unlike the words used of women, men are not compared to people short in growth. Examples of words in this category are *ejit* and *retard*. Calling somebody a derogatory term that refers to genitals indicated that the person in question is stupid or unworthy. Referring to somebody as disabled is a more straight forward way of reaching the same goal or intention. Disabled are looked down on to the extent that they are a source for derogatory terms. Creating derogatory words of disabled people shows that disabled have a subordinated position in the society, a position not much unlike the one women have. The category *Excrement and anus* consists of words comparing men to excrement and the anus. Examples of words from this category are *arse* and *shit*. Excrement is a soiling product that has no value. Most people express revulsion towards excrement so it is not surprising that it is a source for derogatory words. More interesting is that this category was not found among the words used of women. Are these words considered too rough to be used of women? That seems unlikely since women are being called worse things than words referring to excrement. The word *cunt*, for example, was by several of the English pupils considered as a very insulting word to be used of a woman.

In the category *Promiscuous lifestyle* words describing men as promiscuous are found, for example *manslut* and *rake*. This category also contains words describing deviant sexual behaviour. Examples of words like this are *necro* (from necrophiliac) and *paedophile*. The effect of words describing men as promiscuous comes much from men being compared to women doing things women are known to do. It is traditionally women who are considered sluts. It is usually women who are looked down on when having many different sexual partners. A man having many sexual partners often improves his qualifications. Just as homosexuality is not accepted by the pupils participating in this study, also other deviant sexual behaviour is looked down on. It is easy to understand that paedophiles are depreciated. They hurt innocent children and bring up disgust and horror in people. It is strange that a strong taboo word like paedophile is used as a derogatory word since most people do not want to be reminded about the criminal and devastating phenomenon. A paedophile goes far beyond being a stupid, ugly, promiscuous or disabled person. A paedophile is a sick person that deliberately hurts children.

One of the two smallest categories *Animals* contains the words *dog*, *pig* and *rat*. Compared to the respective category in words used of women this is much smaller. The category on women's side contained 11 words. Unsurprisingly men are called *dogs*. The word itself can refer to a male animal. It is also a verb referring to someone causing trouble for someone over a long period of time. The references for *pig* and *rat* were discussed in 3.1.1 and as far as I am concerned they work in the same way for women as they do for men. All of the animal words used of men are also found among the animal words used of women. Why are women but not men called *whale* or *cow*? Is it more acceptable for men to be overweight, ugly or stupid like these two words might suggest? Of Whaley's and Antonelli's four categories of animal terms used of women (mentioned in Sutton 1995: 281) –pets, pests, cattle and wild animals, the only category not represented among animal referents used of men in this study is wild animals. The term *rat* could be put in this category but it fits better in the category of pests. The other category, besides *Animals*, containing three words are *Unsuccessful people in society*, with the words *bum*, *bummer* and *loser*. These words describe men lacking of accomplishment, especially in the ability to earn a living. This is another category that is specific for men. In a home it has traditionally been the man who is the provider. He is the one making money or making sure there is food on the table. Women's role has been to clean the house, cook, give birth to children and looking after them. It is only recently that women are showing a desire to be independent financially and this has challenged the traditional gender roles. The fact that only men are described as lacking in the ability to earn a living could indicate that these traditional gender roles are still present in the minds of people.

3.1.3 Categories of words used of women by the Finland-Swedish pupils

The categories for words used of women listed by Finland-Swedish pupils were *Sexuality* with the subcategories *Sexual orientation*, *Titles with sexual connotations* and *Body parts*, *Physical appearance*, *Promiscuous lifestyle*, *Sweetening agents*, *Mothers*, *Friends* and *Animals*. Both category *Sexuality* and *Physical appearance* contain six words each. Categories *Promiscuous lifestyle* and *Sweetening agents* include five words each. The category *Mothers* consist of four words as well as the category *Friends*. The smallest category is *Animals* with two words. It is important to point out that the category *Friends*

do not necessary contain all the words used in a friendly or positive way. Words like *bitch* can indicate both friendship and hostility but is put in another category due to the lack of information about the context the term is used in. The category friendship therefore contains only terms that are clearly used in a friendly way.

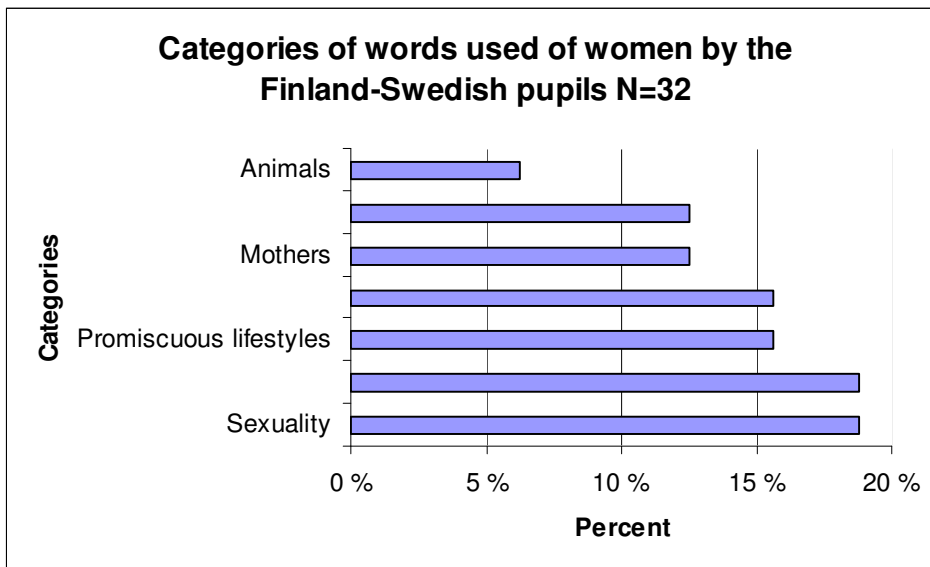


Figure 3. Categories of words used of women by the Finland-Swedish pupils

The category *Physical appearance* describe women as blond and cute but also as infants or people short in growth, but not as dwarfs, like the words used of women listed by the English pupils. Examples of words from this category are *blondie*, *cutie* and *mini*. The words in category *Sexuality* describe women as homosexuals like *lesbo* and compare women to the female genitals, for example *pussy*. It also includes two titles carrying a sexual connotation, *miss* and *lady*. The category *Promiscuous lifestyle* contains of words describing women as promiscuous and prostitutes, for example *slut* and *whore*. In Sutton's (1995) study some words referring to women were connected to food. This also occurred in this study but only among words used of women. Examples of words in category *Sweetening agents* are *sugar*, *sweetheart* and *hunny*. The words in this category have in common that they all have a starting point in and are connected to sweetening agents. The word *sweetheart* originally referred to a sugar cake shaped as a heart. It later became a metaphor for a lover. (Hines 1999: 152.) It is used of both women and men but in this study it is only found among words used of women. The category *Mothers* consists of words connected to motherhood but only one word, *mummy*, can be used without preconceived

notions. Some of the words in this category bear sexual connotations, for example the word *milf* that is a shortening for *mother I would like to fuck*. The word *mama*, also found in this category, is sometimes seen in the combination *hot mama* which alludes to a sexually attractive woman. The category *Friends* contains words without sexual connotations. These words are used in a clearly friendly and positive way about the woman in question. Examples of words in this category are *sis* and *gal*. The category *Animals*, containing only two words, describes women as *chicks* and *bitches*. Even if the category is the smallest, both words are listed by many of the Finland-Swedish pupils participating in the survey. The word *bitch* is one of the most frequently listed words among the Finland-Swedish pupils, both women and men. 80 % of the Finland-Swedish women listed the word *bitch* and 89 % of the men. The word *chick* is listed by 50 % of the Finland-Swedish women and 22 % of the men. The English students listed 11 terms referring to women as animals whereas the Finland –Swedish only listed two terms. Comparing to the four categories of women as animals made by Whaley and Antonelli (mentioned in Sutton 1995) –pets, pests, cattle and wild animals, only two are represented among the words listed by the Finland-Swedish pupils, cattle (*chick*) and wild animal (*bitch*).

3.1.4 Categories of words used of men by the Finland-Swedish pupils

The categories for words used of men listed by Finland-Swedish pupils, from the largest to the smallest, were *Friends* consisting of nine words, *Sexuality* with the subcategories *Sexual orientation* and *Body parts* consisting of six words, *Promiscuous lifestyle* with the subcategory *deviant sexual behaviour* with four words, *Physical appearance* including four words, *Animals* with three words and *Low IQ* consisting of two words.

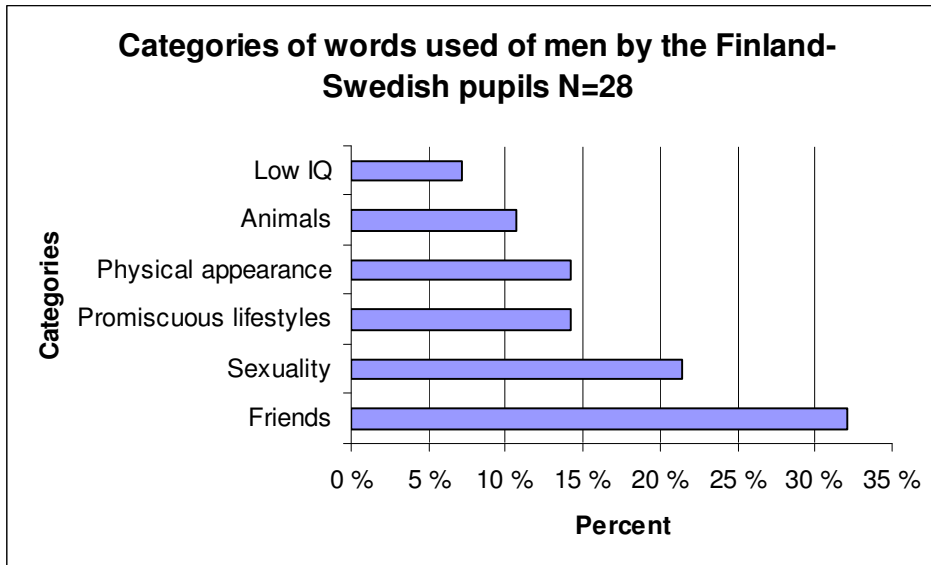


Figure 4. Categories of words used of men by the Finland-Swedish pupils

The category containing the largest amount of different words used for men listed by the Finland-Swedish pupils is the category *Friends*. These words describe men as a friend from the point of view of a friend. Examples of words from this category are *homie*, *bro* and *buddy*. The category *Sexuality* is divided into subcategories *Sexual orientation* and *Body parts*, the latter of them being the subcategory containing most of the words. The first subcategory consists of two words describing men as homosexuals, *fag* and *gay*. In the second subcategory words for both women's and men's genitals are found, for example *cunt* and *bollocks*. The words in category *Promiscuous lifestyle* with the subcategory *deviant sexual behaviour* describe men as promiscuous, for example man *slut* and *player*. The subcategory only includes one word, *mother fucker*. Words like *hunk* and *body* are part of the category *Physical appearance*. They refer to men with well trimmed bodies and good looks. This category also includes a racist word *nigger*. Even if it is a negative word when the other words are used in a positive way it has been included in this category because racism mainly concerns the colour of the skin and that is connected to looks and physical appearance. The category *Animals* consist of the words *pig*, *horse* and *son of a bitch*. The last one of these words are not exactly like the rest of the words because it includes the word *son* which is referring to humans but it has been included in this category due to the fact that it is constructed using a reference to an animal. The term *son of a bitch* is constructed using a female referent, the word *bitch*. Being a son of a bitch is equally bad as being a bitch. It is interesting how there does not seem to be a similar derogatory term

constructed with a male referent. This can partly be explained by the fact that there is no negative animal referent used of men as Whaley and Antonelli concluded (Sutton 1995:281). The category consisting of least words is the category *Low IQ*. The two words in this category are *jerk* and *stupid*.

It is easy to consider most of the words collected in this study as negative and derogatory but one has to keep in mind that even though a word might seem as clearly derogatory it *can* be positive and friendly when used within an in-group, depending on the context. As mentioned earlier, when derogatory terms are used in this way they are a badge of pride and a way to consciously change the meaning of the term by using it the other way around (Tirrell 1999: 56, 57). Unfortunately it is and remains unclear whether the term heard by the student participating in this study was used to offend or to show belonging to an in-group. Only the person using the term knew how it was intended and it is possible that the one hearing the word did not understand the context correctly.

3.1.5 Comparison of the categories

One of the categories that both women and men regardless of nationality have in common is the category *Sexuality*. Also the subcategories of this category, *Sexual orientation* and *Body parts* occur among the words listed of both Finland-Swedish and English pupils. Compared to the other categories listed by English men the category *Sexuality* was the one including most words. This was also the case regarding the categories of words Finland-Swedish women listed, although the category *Physical appearance* included the same amount of words as *Sexuality*. Among the categories of words listed by Finland-Swedish men and by English women the category *Sexuality* was the second largest category. The media is likely to be a reason for this to a large extent. Many products that have young adults as their target group are sold with the help of sexual images in order to make them attractive for this target group. Examples of this kind of products are music, magazines, clothes, movies and make up. Sexuality is confusing for young adults, especially women, because these kinds of products make it desirable to be sexually attractive but at the same time women are not allowed to be too sexual and definitely not sexually active.

Another category found in all four groups (Finland-Swedish women, Finland-Swedish men, English women and English men) is the category *Animals*. It is most prominent among words used of English women listed by English pupils. Among words used of Finland-Swedish women and men as well as words used of English men this category is one of the smallest, including the least amount of words. The last category found in all four groups is the category *Promiscuous lifestyle*. By these findings it can be established that derogatory terms using animals and promiscuous lifestyle as referents exist among pupils in both England and Finland. Interestingly the category *Promiscuous lifestyle* has the subcategory *Deviant sexual behaviour* only among words used of men (both Finland-Swedish and English men) but not among words used of women. The category contained words like *paedophile*, *necro* (from *necrophiliac*) and *mother fucker*. This finding can perhaps be explained by the fact that it is men that usually are paedophiles. The term *mother fucker* is a noun that can represent any person place or thing and it is used both in a friendly and in a hostile way (Urban Dictionary 2008). It is also used to emphasize something. When thinking of the words actual meaning it is also difficult to imagine a woman being referred to as a *mother fucker* when it is usually a woman and a man that are engaged in sexual activity. However, this term does occur among words used of women listed by the English pupils. Perhaps the actual meaning is not thought of in cases where this term is used of a woman but instead the term refers to any person. Interestingly there is no corresponding term for a woman having sex with her father.

A difference between the words listed by English and Finland-Swedish pupils is that among the words used of women and men the Finland-Swedish pupils listed words belonging to the category *Friends*. This category is not found in the categories of words listed by the English pupils. This does not mean that there are no friendly words used of women and men among the English pupils. As pointed out earlier for example the word *bitch*, included among words English pupils listed, can be used in a friendly way. In this study the information about in what kind of a context the words are used are lacking. Therefore it can only be noted that among the English pupils there are no terms that are exclusively used in a positive way. A category of words listed by English pupils but not Finland-Swedish pupils is the category *Disability*. The category is found both among words used of women and of men listed by the English pupils. This finding combined with the fact that the English pupils did not list any words that would have been primarily friendly

suggests that women and men are looked at in a more negative way among the English pupils compared to the Finland-Swedish.

Words describing a woman's or a man's physical appearance was found among words used of women and men listed by Finland-Swedish pupils as well as among the words used of women listed by English women. The English men were the only ones not described according to a person's physical appearance. Perhaps it is more common to use derogatory terms of men that refer to men's abilities than their looks. This in turn could indicate that women are valued by their looks more than men. Men are allowed not to be attractive because there are other things that are of higher value when it comes to men, for example physical strength, as revealed by terms *body* and *hunk*.

Table 3. The three largest categories in each of the four groups (Finland-Swedish women, Finland-Swedish men, English women and English men)

	Finland-Swedish	English
Women	Sexuality+subcategories Physical appearance Promiscuous lifestyle	Promiscuous lifestyle Sexuality+subcategories Animals
Men	Friends Sexuality+subcategories Promiscuous lifestyle	Sexuality+subcategories Disability Excrement and anus

3.2 Words listed by the pupils

Table 4 below shows the words that were listed by both English and Finland-Swedish pupils. The total number of words listed by both English and Finland-Swedish pupils was 11. Four of these were words for men and seven words used for women. Of these words the word *bitch* was the most commonly used word followed by *whore* and *slut*. The words *cunt* and *gay* was also commonly used words.

Table 4. Words used of women and men listed by both the English and Finland-Swedish pupils

<i>Words for women</i>			<i>Words for men</i>		
	Engl.	Fin-Swe		Engl.	Fin-Swe
Bitch	13	24	Mother fucker	4	1
Lesbo	1	1	Pig	4	3
Hocker	1	2	Pussy	2	1
Whore	16	6	Gay	9	4
Slut	15	4			
Cunt	12	3			
Pussy	4	1			

There were words used of men that the English pupils listed created with different combinations of the suffix –head, like *shit head*, *tit head*, *knob head* and *dick head*. These kinds of words were not found among words used of women. This corresponds with James' findings that derogatory terms used of men seem to indicate that there is something in men's heads that should not be there. In James' (1998: 404) study derogatory terms described women's heads as empty, for example *air head*, but words like that were not found in this study.

In both the group from Brampton, England and the group from Pietarsaari, Finland the pupils listed slang words that have a clear connection with the modern popular culture. The Finland-Swedish group listed *chav*, *chavette* and *bau-chika-wau-wau*. The term *chav* has been widely adopted by the British media and the word describes a certain type of downmarket consumer that dresses in a certain way, favouring certain fashion brands, especially the brand Burberry. The term *bau-chika-wau-wau* is familiar from advertisement of deodorant for men that has been showed in Finnish television for a period of time in summer 2007. The English pupils listed the terms *munchkin*, *hobbit*, *oompa loompa* and *gimp*. The term *munchkin* comes from Frank Baum's books about *Oz*, *hobbit* from J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, *gimp* from Quentin Tarantino's movie *Pulp Fiction* (1994), *oompa loompa* from the movie *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005) based on the children's book by Roald Dahl (1964).

As a result of the popularity of the 1939 film, *The Wizard of Oz*, the term "munchkin" has entered the English language as a reference to small children, dwarfs, or anything of diminutive stature. For example, the Boston-based coffee and doughnut chain Dunkin

Donuts has registered MUNCHKINS as a trademark for small round treats made from doughnut dough (Wikipedia S.V. munchkin).

3.2.1 Words listed by the English pupils

Words used for women that the English students listed was in all 60 different words. The most common word is *dog* (n=17) that every student put on their list. The word *dog* represents 28 % of all the words used of women listed by the English pupils. The second most common words are *whore* and *cow* (n=16, 27%) followed by *slut* and *slag* (n=15, 25%). The words *bitch* (n=13, 22%) and *cunt* (n=12, 20%) were also words often used or heard used as well as *slapper* (n=9, 15%), *dyke* (n=8, 13%), *tart* (n=8, 13%), *lemon* (n=5, 8%) and *twat* (n=5, 8%). Words listed by more than one student were *mong* (n=4, 7%), *bird* (n=4, 7%), *pussy* (n=4, 7%), *whale* (n=3, 5%), *pig* (n=3, 5%) and *tramp*, *hag*, *tit*, *fanny*, *rat*, *nestle cock*, *minge*, *hussy* (n=2, 3%). The rest of the words were listed only once.

Words used of men that the English pupils listed were 88 different words. The most common word used for men by the English pupils are *dickhead* and *bastard* (n=16). The words represent 18 % of all the words used of men listed by the English pupils. Since there were only 17 English pupils participating in the research only two pupils did not list each of these words. The second most used words were *twat* (n=13, 15%), *prick* (n=11, 13%), *cock* (n=10, 11%), *gay* (n=9, 10%) and *retard* (n=8, 9%) followed by *tit* (n=7, 8%), *wanker* (n=7, 8%), *nob jockey* (n=7, 8%), *nonce* (n=6, 7%), *nob* (n=6, 7%), *cunt* (n=6, 7%), *faggot* (n=6, 7%), *git* (n=6, 7%), *gayboy* (n=6, 7%) and *arsehole* (n=6, 7%). Words listed by five English pupils were *gaylord*, *dick*, *gimp*, *fucker* and *mong* (n=5, 6%). Words listed by four English pupils were *spazz*, *shit head*, *fudge packer*, *pig*, *bummer*, *toss pot*, *fag*, *bugger* and *motherfucker* (n=4, 5%). Words listed by three English pupils were *manslut*, *homo*, *piss lips*, *ponce*, *tosser* and *shite* (n=3, 3%). The words *jizz-cock*, *shit stabber*, *cock washer*, *shit*, *wank shaft*, *pussy*, *dog*, *knob*, *nob head*, *dip shit* and *bollocks* (n=2, 2%) were listed by two English pupils. The rest of the words were listed only once.

The most frequent terms used of women listed by the English students are *dog*, *whore* and *cow*. The terms *dog* and *cow* both belong to the category *Animals*. *Dog* refers to a close

friend and is usually used among men. The term can also mean a person that takes off and leaves a close friend. (Urban Dictionary 2008). There is no information about whether the term is meant in a friendly or in a hostile way but the high frequency of the term among words used of women could indicate that it has been more common than before to use the term *dog* about women in a friendly way. In this case a habit that has primarily been male behaviour has been expanded to also include women. The words *whore* and *cow* are usually used in a hostile way. Calling someone a whore is usually meaning that the person in question is said to be behaving in a way that is unacceptable, which in this case is to have sex with many different men. When someone is called a cow the person is usually referred to as ugly and stupid. That these two terms are as frequent as they are in this study shows that women are not looked at in a positive way. There is however a small chance that the frequent use of *dog*, if it is used in a friendly way, could give some balance to the negative way of looking at and talking about women. The most frequent words used of men listed by the English pupils were *dickhead* and *bastard*. The first one of these is seldom used in a friendly way whereas the latter sometimes is. Even if this seems to reveal both a positive and a negative way of looking at men there another pattern is revealed when looking at all the words collected in this study. They show an overall negative way of looking at men since most of the words carry negative connotations.

3.2.2 Uncategorizable items by the English pupils

The words listed by the English pupils outside the categories of words used of women are *FU* (from *Fuck You*), *slipper*, *austronaut* and *loser*. These words did not fit in any of the categories of words used of women. Each of them occurred only once in the list of words which indicates that they are not very common. All of them carry negative connotations but as mentioned earlier there is no information on whether the terms collected were used in a friendly or in a hostile way. Words outside the categories of words used of men are *FU*, *pleb*, *bugger*, *git*, *fucker*, *greebo*, *fuckface*, *ginger*, *bastard*, *pona*, *gusse*, *fog*, *aqua-bavine-necrophiliac*, *donnet* and *dogbox*. Of these words *FU*, *pleb*, *greebo*, *fuckface* and *ginger* occurred only once which indicates that they are not very common. The word *bastard* is the most common one listed, along with *dickhead*. The word *bastard* is discussed above. *Git* was listed six times, *fucker* was listed five times and *bugger* was listed four times. The rest

of the words used of men outside the categories were listed only once and are therefore not very important to this study. The words *pona*, *gusse*, *fog*, *aqua-bavine-necrophiliac*, *donnet* and *dogbox* are cases of doubtful reporting since the meaning of the terms have remained unclear, despite many efforts of finding them out. *Aqua-bavine-necrophiliac*, *pona* and *gusse* are all written at the end of the pupil's lists. This could indicate that the pupil reporting the term ran out of common and familiar words and started inventing their own words. Due to a spelling mistake the term *fog* could be meant to mean *fag* since *fag*, which is a term reported four times in this study, is not present in this pupil's list. None of the two possible explanations count for the words *donnet* and *dogbox*. Both of them are in the beginning of the pupil's list and both are very clearly written.

3.2.3 Words listed by the Finland-Swedish pupils

The total number of words used of women the Finland-Swedish pupils listed are 35 of which *bitch* (n=24, 67%) is the far most frequently listed word. The second most listed word is *chick* (n=12, 33%). The words *babe*, *sis*, *whore* and *hoe* are listed six times (17%). The word *slut* is listed four times (11%) and *baby*, *bimbo*, *diva*, *mama*, *blondie*, *player* and *cunt* are listed three times (8%). The words *Sweetie*, *gal* and *hocker* occur two times (6%). There are 18 words that are listed only by one pupil once.

The total number of words used for men that the Finland-Swedish people listed is 36 of which the word *dude* (n= 23, 64%) is the most frequently listed followed by *guy* (n=14, 39%). The word *bro* occurs 10 times (28%). *Player* and *mate* were both listed seven times (19%) and *lad* six times (17%) followed by *fag* listed five times (14%). The words *gay*, *nigger* and *homie* were listed four times each (11%), *pig* three times (8%) and the words *pal*, *hunk*, *creep*, *cunt*, *bastard* and *son of a bitch* two times each. There are 19 words listed only once by one pupil.

There is no information about whether the most frequent term used of women *bitch* is used or heard used among Finland-Swedish in a friendly or in a hostile way. If it is meant to be offensive it indicates that women are seen in a very negative way among Finland-Swedish pupils. The most frequent words used of men among the Finland-Swedish pupils, *dude* and

guy, reveal a more positive picture of men. These two words are not used in order to offend. The term *dude* is slang used particularly by skaters and surfers as a name for anyone. The term *guy* is used in the same sense as *man* or *bloke*. (Urban Dictionary 2008). The fact that both of the two most frequent words used of men are positive words emphasizes that men are looked at in a more positive way than women among Finland-Swedish pupils.

3.2.4 Uncategorizable items by the Finland-Swedish pupils

Words used of women outside the categories listed by the Finland-Swedish pupils are *diva*, *creep*, *jude* and *chavette*. The respective words outside the categories of words used of men are *hero*, *creep*, *bastard*, *diva*, *candy*, *baby*, *romeo* and *chav*. The words *chav* and *chavette* are interesting. According to Tungate (2005: 29) the etymology of the term "chav", that in this study occurs as a slang term used of men, is unclear but theories range from the word deriving from the Romani word "chavi", meaning a child or being an acronym of "Council Housed and Violent". He says that especially the fashion brand Burberry has become associated with chavs. The term *chav* has been widely adopted by the British media to describe a certain type of downmarket consumer. A website called *Chavscum.co.uk*, was first to identify the group. They used the definition "Britain's peasant underclass" and listed a baseball cap in Burberry check as the first distinctive feature of a chav. The plaid fabric became so closely associated with hooliganism that some pubs and clubs instructed door staff to refuse entry to young people wearing it. (Tungate 2005: 29.)

3.3 The English pupil's views of slang terms

The English pupils were asked to include their own views of what they thought the slang terms they have listed suggest about today's society. This question was a supplementary question to the first and main question. The precise question was: *What do you think that such names [the names used of women and men] suggest about today's society?* This was asked in order to get information about what parallels the pupils draw between the words they listed and their society. One of the things these answers suggest is that the usage of

derogatory words and slang terms has increased as well as the severity of them. Words like *shit* have been replaced by *fuck* and *cunt*. Fewer words are taboo today compared to before. Several of the respondents were of the opinion that nothing is shocking anymore and that it is more difficult to offend people by calling them names in today's society. One of the respondents was of the opinion that slang words are used in general conversation from a young age which might suggest that derogatory names are becoming more acceptable. An opinion that came across among the answers was that the use of the derogatory terms shows lack of respect for people and reveal how the one using these words see other people. Another view expressed by the English pupils was that there are more derogatory words used of women than of men and that these words are more offensive than those used of men, which shows that there are less respect for women and that women have less respect for themselves. This last claim does not correspond with the findings in this study, since the number of different words used of men listed by the English pupils is 88 and the number of different words used of women is 60.

From the additional comments some of the English pupils had included in the list of slang terms used of women and men it was clear that the slang terms often are intensified by the use of words like for example *fucking*, like in *fucking whore*. This way of using the slang terms can be considered cursing. Some of the English pupils participating in this study were of the opinion that the slang terms *gay*, *tit* and *tart* are used jokingly. By reading the additional comments it was also clear that there is a big difference in how offensive the slang term chosen is, depending on if the speaker is serious or not, which is something that is left for the listener or receiver to interpret. According to the English pupils the derogatory term *cunt*, used of both women and men, is the most offensive word of the slang terms used of women and men.

3.4 Comparison with other studies

Comparing the terms in this study with the terms in Sutton's (1995) study *Bitches and Skanky Hobags. The Place of Women in Contemporary Slang* some differences are clearly visible. The terms that occur in both studies are terms describing women as promiscuous, as animals, as body parts and according to their physical appearance which includes both

attractive and unattractive women. In Sutton's study there are no words referring to women according to their sexual orientation, nor are there words describing women as dwarfs or disabled. Both of these two semantic categories were strongly present in this study. Terms that were absent from this study but occurred in Sutton's study was words describing women as holes, receptacles or containers. In Suttons' study there were several terms that viewed women as different kinds of food, for example *cheesecake* and *peach*. In this study these kinds of terms were absent among the words the English pupils listed, with the exception of the word *tart*. In this study *tart* has not been considered as food since the word seem to have lost that sense of meaning and is today used to refer to a woman as a prostitute. The Finland-Swedish pupils listed some terms used of women referring to sweetening agents, for example *sugar* and *honey*. The word *honey* also occurred in Sutton's study. Many of the words referring women to food in Sutton's study were food that is sweet. Theses findings are consistent with the findings of Hines (1999:145) that there is a metaphor in English equating women with desserts which in general are sweet.

James' (1998) study provides an interesting comparison to this study. Even though the way the words have been classified into semantic categories differ between this study and James' there are many similarities among the terms collected in each study. This gives some insight to how terms used of women and men have changed during the last ten years. Unfortunately the whole list of words collected in James' study was not available, only examples of words from each semantic category. Therefore only major similarities and differences can be looked at. The similarities between the two studies regarding words used of women are that both include terms that refer to women as promiscuous. In James' study this was the largest category among female-referential terms. In this study it was the largest category among female-referential words among the terms listed by the English pupils and third largest category among female-referential terms listed by the Finland-Swedish pupils. Words referring to women as sex objects and body parts are present in both studies as well as women referred to as unattractive and overweight. James has classified the terms *bitch*, *cow*, *cunt*, *tit* and *twat* as women who mistreat others, especially men. In this category she also included other words but the ones listed here all occur in this study too only under different categories. Terms describing women as brainless or stupid, as animals and as lesbians occur in both studies. The only kind of terms included in James' study that are not present in this study are terms describing women as food and as sexually cold and

unavailable. On the other hand James' study does not include terms used of women as disabled, women as sweetening agents, women as mothers or women as friends. On the whole the female-referential terms in James' study and the female-referential terms listed by the English pupils in this study correlated more than the female-referential terms listed by the Finland-Swedish pupils. Looking at differences and similarities between the two studies regarding male-referential terms following discoveries can be made; both studies contain terms describing men as stupid, homosexual and lacking of accomplishment, especially in the ability to earn a living. Many of the words in James' category "Mistreats others" can also be found in this study, for example *asshole*, *bastard*, *creep*, *dick*, *dickhead*, *jerk*, *git*, *motherfucker*, *rat*, *prick*, *shit*, *shithead* and *son of a bitch* only that they in this study are in different categories. Just as in James' study the category describing men as stupid or disabled are the second largest category also in this study. Differences between the two studies regarding male-referential terms are that in this study there are no words describing men as physically weak or socially inept. In James' study there are no words describing men according to their physical appearance or describing men as friends. It is obvious that James' study do not include words describing men as friends since the study deals with clearly derogatory terms used of women and men and not words used in general of women and men as this study is dealing with. It is worth noting here that it was only the Finland-Swedish pupils that listed words describing men referring to their physical appearance and as friends, not the English pupils. The male-referential terms in James' study were largely very similar that the male-referential terms listed by the English pupils in this study.

In James' (1998: 403) study five of seven male-referential categories all involved the notion of men being mentally or physically incompetent whereas the female-referential categories do not. This pattern shows in this study as well. Men are seen as stupid (idiot), worthless (shit), unsuccessful (bum, loser), physically or mentally disabled (mong, spazz). Derogatory words used of men in this study, like *cunt*, *shirt lifter* and *homo*, serve as a comparison to women as something weak and undesirable. On the contrary to James' findings among the female-referential categories, this study does see women as stupid (cow) and disabled (mong). It is interesting how derogatory terms are made effective by comparing men to women and women to men. A *faggot* is considered repulsive because he behaves in a feminine way and a man called a *pussy* is weak like a woman. A woman

referred to as *a dyke* is often seen as masculine and aggressive and the term is derogatory because a woman should not have those characteristics but be passive and accept her secondary position in society. Terms referring men to women appear to be more derogatory than terms likening women to men because men lose status by being compared to women, while women can be raised in status by being likened with men (James 1998:406). This reflects the view that it is after all better to be a man in this world than to be a woman. In this study there were slightly more words referring a man to a homosexual (10) than referring a woman to a homosexual (7). In James' (1998: 406) study the difference was much larger- 66 terms for men as homosexuals compared to 11 terms for women as homosexuals.

The group of London pupils, mentioned earlier, was interviewed about slang words they use in 1993. Stenström's (2002: 64, 70) research found that the top ten proper slang words used by the London pupils were *man, sad, wicked, mate, bloke, guy, cool, massive, rough* and *quid*. Of these words *mate* was listed seven times and *guy* 14 times by the Finland-Swedish students. The top ten most commonly used dirty slang words used by the pupils in London were *crap, arse, dick, bastard, bitch, take the piss, fuck, wanker, suck* and *cunt* (Stenström 2002: 71). Of these words only *crap, suck* and *take a piss* were not listed in this study. This is because they are not slang words used of persons. Of the slang words used of persons *arse* was listed once, *dick* was listed five times, *bastard* 18 times, *bitch* 37 times, *fuck* in the form of *fucker* six times, *wanker* seven times and *cunt* 23 times. In Stenström's (2002: 72, 73) study words boys used for boys included *arsehole, bastard, dick, crap, faggot, knob, penis, shit* and *wanker*. All but *penis* and *crap* are found among words used of men listed by men in this study. Words girls used for boys were *arsehole, bastard, cunt, knob, cock, shit* and *slag*. The first five words are all found among words women listed as words used of men. *Shit* is not among those words but *shite* and *shitter* are. *Slag* is not found as a word used of men listed by women in this study. In Stenström's study boys used *bitch, cow, dick, fuck* and *tart* about girls. All but *dick* and *fuck* are used of women by men in this study. Of the London pupils girls used *bitch, cow, tart* and *whore* about girls. All these words are frequently listed as words women listed as words used of women because they are all among the eleven most used words. Stenström's study confirms that many of the words in this study are very commonly used slang words among pupils in England.

The four categories of offensive language: epithets, profanity, vulgarity and obscenity, was mentioned earlier. Most of the words collected in this study are epithets and vulgarity/obscenity. Epithets are words referring to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, appearance and disabilities. Vulgar or obscene words refer to genitals or sexual and excretory functions in a crude way. (Battistella 2005: 72.) Words used of men include more vulgar or obscene words than epithets. There are almost equally many words referring to sexual functions, genitals and excretory functions. Most epithets among the words used of men refer to disabilities and sexuality. The words used of women are mostly epithets. The largest group of epithets refers to appearance and some to disabilities and sexuality. Vulgar or obscene words used of women refer to sexual functions and genitals.

4 CONCLUSION

It is not surprising that the Finland-Swedish pupils listed fewer words (n= 62) compared to the English pupils (n=147) even though the Finland-Swedish pupils participating in the survey (n= 29) were far more by number than the English pupils (n=17). The Finland-Swedish pupils listed fewer English words because they have a smaller vocabulary in English than they have in their mother tongue. Furthermore they probably use English and English vocabulary much less than the English pupils who live in an English speaking society and are surrounded by the language on daily bases. It would perhaps have been favourable to the Finland-Swedish pupils to have talked, heard or read English right before they participated listed their words. It is difficult to suddenly switch from Swedish which they talk as their mother tongue, to English which is a second language to them. One solution could have been to ask the pupils to list English slang words they know in the end of the English lesson instead of in the beginning.

Looking at the negative slang terms collected in this study they are picked from areas that are sensitive and personal, for example sexuality and appearance. The words are picked from these areas in order to be hurtful and therefore have an effect on the one receiving these labels. The slang terms collected in this study show discrimination against prostitutes, blacks, disabled, homosexuals, paedophiles and unattractive people.

Many of the derogatory words for black people refer to their physical characteristics (Lakoff 1975: 24). In this study some of the words listed by the pupils participating in this study also refer to physical characteristics. One of the categories of words used of women and men are called *Physical appearance*. Also the animal words used of women and men listed draw on the physical characteristics of the animal in question. Derogatory words for women often have a clear sexual connotation (Lakoff 1975: 24). Many of the words collected in this study and most of the female-referential categories refer in some way to sexuality, sex and genitals, especially among the derogatory terms used of women, which shows the same as the results of the study made by James (1998). In her study five of seven female-referential categories involve sexuality in some way (James 1998: 403). Women are seen as sex objects and being sexually attractive (milf, babe), failing to be sexually faithful to one man (whore, slut) and being sexually unavailable to men (lesbo, dyke).

These are all viewpoints of a heterosexual man which in turn reveals that a woman should be able to meet the needs of a heterosexual man or she is not good enough or accepted in society. This shows a man centered world view strongly tied to the idea of man made language mentioned earlier. In this study the largest category of words used of women listed by the English pupils was *Promiscuous lifestyle* containing words like *slut* and *whore*. Among the categories of words used of men listed by the English pupils *Promiscuous lifestyle* was only the fourth largest category, containing half of the number of words compared to the same category on the women's side. There were 16 words used of women in the category *Promiscuous lifestyle*, when there were only eight words used of men in the same category. These results could indicate that it is more effective in the way that it is hurtful to call a woman a *slut* than it is to call a man the same. As mentioned earlier derogatory terms are used in order to offend or hurt the one they are aimed at. A reason for it being more effective to offend a woman by indicating that she has a promiscuous lifestyle than it is to offend a man could be that women having many sexual partners is considered wrong whereas men having many sexual partners is considered a proof of being sexually desired which among men is good thing.

The fact that most terms in this study are used of both women and men suggests that there is some blurring of gender role stereotypes, even if some terms mean different things when used of women and when used of men. The term *bitch* carry different meaning when used on men compared to when they are used of women. A man being referred to as *bitch* by other men indicates that he is weak like a woman and that he will obey other men, whereas the same term used of a woman indicates that the woman is for example arrogant, complaining, domineering and mean.

Since this study only is a minor study of English words used of women and men, no all-embracing or universal conclusions can be drawn. However, comparing Sutton's (1995) and James' (1998) studies with this study shows that the changes in words used of women are that around 1995 there were no terms referring to women as homosexuals. This is perhaps the most interesting difference found comparing these three studies. There has been much work done in order to make homosexuality more accepted in society. More and more people dare to "come out of the closet" and be open about their homosexuality. Furthermore homosexuality is no longer seen as a disease. In many countries it is today

possible for homosexuals to get married and in some countries even to adopt children. Still the derogatory words referring both women and men to homosexuals seem to be very strongly present in James' study and this study but not in Sutton's, which is the earliest of these studies. Words used of women constructed around different foods seemed more strongly present in Sutton's study than in James' study or this study. In James' study they are some words referring women to food, for example *pie*, *piece of meat* and *beef*. James' study is the only one containing words for an unavailable or sexually cold woman. This study is the only one containing words used of women as disabled, for example *mong* or *gimp*. Words referring women to animals are present in all three studies. In all three studies words used of women bearing sexual connotations played the most prominent part.

It has been suggested that there are typically far more derogatory terms referring to women than to men (James 1998: 401). This view is also shared by Wardhaugh (2006: 322). In this study there were more derogatory terms used of men than about women. This is consistent with the study made by James (1998). Even though there is a large number of negative words about men, men's status are not harmed from these words in the same extent that women's are, because women have a secondary status in society. In claiming this I do not consider individuals harmed by derogatory terms but the two groups in society- women and men in general. It is a shame that women do not protest more than they do when faced with the kind of derogatory words used about them. Instead women use the words among themselves, calling an enemy, a person they dislike or even a close friend *bitch*, *slut* or other horrible names. Women should realize that spreading these terms and including them in everyday language, making them even more common in everyday speech is not a step towards a more equal society and same wages as men for same job done but a big leap from it. Language is a strong tool when wanting to change something in society. It is not only the ones using derogatory terms that need to change their behavior. It is also those who witness the use of derogatory terms that need to react. Staying silent is in a way the same as approving to the behavior. Lakoff (1975: 41) points out that linguistic and social change go hand in hand. If we could change the way we talk about women and men, if we could extinguish the derogatory words used for women and men we could perhaps start showing each other more respect and by doing so give our children new models of treating people, regardless if their women, men, homosexual, black or white.

My hypothesis was that the words collected in this study would be similar to the words collected in earlier research and that the words listed by the English and Finland-Swedish pupils would not differ much because the two groups share the same media and music culture. Many of the words collected in this study turned out to be similar to the ones collected in earlier research but there were also differences, as discussed in the results. This was also the case concerning differences and similarities between the words listed by the English and the Finland-Swedish pupils. One difference was that among the English pupils there are no terms that are exclusively used of women or men in a positive way, as there was among the words listed by the Finland-Swedish pupils. One of the most surprising differences between words used of women and words used of men was that there were more words used of men than of women.

It would be interesting to do research about men and women who have been called these names themselves and how they feel about these names that they are called. Do they accept it or not? There is also a need for research about the different ways women and men perceive and understand female- and male-referential derogatory terms, since there is clearly a difference in the way these terms are understood by women and by men. The slang words listed in this study have not been divided in a way that would show whether they are used by women or men. They only show which words both women and men use of women and men. More research could be done to find out what kind of words *women* use of women and men and what kind of words *men* use of women and men, in the same way Deborah James (1998), mentioned earlier have done in her research at Toronto University.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Words used of women and their occurrence in England

dog 17	trollop
whore 16	skank
cow 16	shit face
slag 15	les
slut 15	loser
bitch 13	oompa loompa
cunt 12 (very insulting)	fucker
slapper 9	freak
tart 8 (used as a joke)	munter
dyke 8	hocker
lemon 5 (lesbian)	fish
twat 5	lesbo
bird 4	puny
mong 4	gype (as in gypsie)
pussy 4	gimp
pig 3	troll
whale 3	hobbit
minge 2	pleb
tramp 2	munchkin
hag 2	lezzet
hussy 2	haw
nestle cock 2	harlot
tit 2	horse
fanny 2	mother fucker
rat 2	slipper
fuckingwhore	astronaut
cat	sheep
FU (fuck you)	gimp-cock

syphilis lips	duffy
hobag	funny face

Appendix 2. Words used of men and their occurrence in England

dickhead 16	knob head 2
bastard 16	knob 2
twat 13	dog 2
prick 11	ginger
cock 10	necro
gay 9	donnet
retard 8	greebo
wanker 7	pansy
tit 7	nestlecock
nob jockey 7	gimp face
faggot 6	puff
gayboy 6	loser
git 6	ejit
cunt 6	piss kidney
nonce 6 (paedophile)	bum
arsehole 6	shirt lifter
knob 6	pona
fucker 5	shitter
dick 5	scope
gimp 5	arse
mong 5	pleb
gaylord 5	shat
spazz 4	FU
bugger 4	monger
fag 4	freak
bummer 4	aqua-bavine-necrophiliac

mother fucker 4	fog
pig 4	nobcheese
fudge packer 4	tit gump
shit head 4	paedophile
toss pot 4	nonce pocket
tosser 3	dogbox
ponce 3	rip
shite 3	rat
manslut 3	gump
homo 3	rake
piss lips 3	twit
dip shit 2	tit head
bollocks 2	fuck face
cock washer 2	anal astronaut
shit 2	gusse
wank shaft 2	anal
jizz-cock 2	batty boy
pussy 2	
shit stabber 2	

Appendix 3. Words used of women and their occurrence in Finland

bitch 24	lady
chick 12	guy
babe 6	lesbo
whore 6	sweetheart
hoe 6	chavette
sis 6	pussygirl
slut 4	sugar
player 3	honey
baby 3	bigmama

blondie 3	creep
diva 3	dude
mama 3	hunny
cunt 3	miss
bimbo 3	mummy
gal 2	milf
sweetie 2	cutie
hocker 2	pussy
mini	

Appendix 4. Words used of men and their occurrence in Finland

dude 23	mother fucker
guy 14	man whore
bro 10	slut
player 7	jerk
mate 7	body
lad 6	baby
fag 5	pussy
nigger 4	buddy
gay 4	chav
homie 4	horse
pig 3	bollocks
son of a bitch 2	son
creep 2	diva
hunk 2	stupid
cunt 2	pussy boy
pal 2	candy
bastard 2	hero
romeo	bau-chika-wau-wau

Appendix 5. The words listed by the English pupils in categories

WOMEN: Sexuality	
subcategory:sexual orientation	subcategory:bodyparts
les	cunt
lesbo	pussy
lemon	twat
dyke	fanny
troll	syphilis lips
lezzzer	tit
	nestle cock

WOMEN: Animals
Cat
Bitch
Cow
Dog
Bird
Sheep
Horse
Whale
Pig
fish
rat

WOMEN: Promiscuous lifestyle	
hocker	subcategory²
whore	tramp
slut	skank
hobag	trollop
fuckingwhore	slag
hussy	slapper?
harlot	
haw	
fucker	
tart	
freak	

WOMEN: Disability	
gimp	subcategory³
mong	hobbit
gimp-cock	puny
freak ?	oompa loompa
	munchkin

WOMEN: Physical appearance
hag
munter
minge
duffy
pleb

² Subcategory to the category Promiscuous lifestyle consists of words seeing women as, besides being promiscuous, also having poor taste, personally degrading behaviour and low socioeconomic class or women who are criminal.

³ Subcategory to the category Disability consists of words describing women as small, weak or dwarfs.

shit face
funny face
troll
gype

MEN: Sexuality	
subcategory: sexual orientation	subcategory: bodyparts
gay	cunt
gayboy	pussy
gaylord	piss lips
faggot	twat
homo	dickhead
ponce	wankshaft?
fudge packer	cock
shirt lifter	dick
	wanker
	nestlecock
	prick
	jizz cock
	cock washer
	tit gump
	tit
	tit head

MEN: promiscuous lifestyle	
rip	subcategory: deviant sexual behaviour
manslut	mother fucker

rake	necro
	paedophile
	nonce
	nonce pocket

MEN: disability
retard
mong
monger
ejit
tosspot
spazz
scope
tosser
gimp
gimpface
gump
freak

MEN: excrement and anus
arsehole
arse
shit head
shat
anal
shit
dip shit

piss kidney
shite
shitter
anal astronaut

MEN: animals
dog
rat
pig

MEN: unsuccessful people in society
bum
bummer
loser

Appendix 6. The words listed by the Finnish pupils in categories

WOMEN: promiscuous lifestyle
slut
whore
hoe
hocker
player

WOMEN: mothers
big mama
mama
mummy
milf

WOMEN: physical appearance
baby
babe
cutie
mini
bimbo
blondie

WOMEN: sexuality		
subcategory:sexual orientation	subcategory:bodyparts	subcategory:titles with sexual connotation
lesbo	pussy girl	miss
	pussy	lady
	cunt	

WOMEN: animals
chick
bitch

WOMEN: sweetening agents
sweetheart
sweetie
sugar
hunny
honey

WOMEN: Friends
gal
sis
guy
dude

MEN: friends
dude
homie
buddy
pal
guy
bro
mate
lad
son

MEN: sexuality	
subcategory: sexual orientation	subcategory: body parts
fag	pussy boy
gay	pussy
	cunt
	bollocks

MEN: promiscuous lifestyle	subcategory: deviant sexual behaviour
slut	mother fucker
player	
man whore	

MEN: physical appearance
hunk
body
bau-chika-wau-wau
nigger

MEN: animals
pig
horse
son of a bitch

MEN: Low IQ
jerk
stupid

