

Power vs Powerless Language

The Powerless Features

Features	Examples
Hedges	sort of, kind of, I guess, it seems like
(Super) Polite Forms	Would you please...., I'd really appreciate it if ...
Tag Questions:	You really don't want to go, do you?
Speaking in Italics	Into national emphasis equivalent to underlining words in written language (It was SO big that . . . , He was VERY tall)
Empty Adjectives	divine, charming, sweet, adorable
Hypercorrect grammar and pronunciation	Bookish grammar and more formal enunciation
Lack of Sense of Humor	Women considered to be poor joke tellers and frequently "miss the point" of jokes told by men
Direct Quotations	Use of direct quotations rather than paraphrases
Special Vocabulary	In domains like colors where words like magenta, chartreuse are typically used only by women

Question Intonation	Declaration statement sounds like a question instead of statement: Question: When is dinner ready? Answer: Around 6:00? (Response is as though seeking approval)
People 50+ to under 25	Occurs more frequently the younger the person
New Quotative	“Be like” (followed by glottal stop and pause) Indicating general attitude rather than actual words (she’s like, yeah right)
Doubling of is	Phrases like The thing is is ..., the problem is is..., the trouble is is ...)
Use of just or so	Value judgment (It’s just so nice to see you, it’s just so cold out today)
Use of so before present participle	“I am so enjoying this”
Liking/Loving	Influence from McDonald ad “I’m lovin’
Confidence / Attitudinal	
Biased attenuation	ASL User