



Women talk more than men?

Claire Smith, Anna Claire Barrett, Paige Davis

Myth

Women talk more than men.

“A man a word, a woman a dictionary” (German saying).

“The tongue is the sword of a woman and she never lets it become rusty” (Chinese proverb).

*The existence of this historically cultural stereotype has been confirmed by prior research (quantitative and qualitative data).

Tidwell et al. (2025:p. 368)

Big-Picture Research Question

Does gender influence how much people talk?



Measurable Research Question

Do women have a daily word use larger than men?

How this relates to the Big-Research Question

Breaks down the big-picture research question by focusing on the speech of men vs women on a daily level

Focused on one aspect of speech

- amount of words

Methodology

Participants

2, 197 participants analyzed
Looked at men and women
binarily

- 1,323 women
- 874 men

Age range

- 10-94

Audio Samples

Samples came from multiple previous experiments
that addressed different topics

- Only included samples of participants that reached the criteria
- Collected over 14 years

22 samples from four countries

- United States (18), Australia (1), Serbia (1), and Switzerland (2)
- Most samples had a percentage of around 50% women
- A couple samples were 100% women or 100% men

Methodology Continued

Materials

Electronically Activated Recorder (EAR)

- Sporadic short recordings
 - 30 seconds-5 minutes
- “Valid waking files”
 - 16 hours for ages 10-17
 - 17 hours for ages 18-older

Calculations

Transcription

- Speech was transcribed, analyzed, and counted using Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count software

Daily word estimation

- Average number of words recorded through EAR files multiplied by total hours awake

Task

Participants wore the EAR throughout the day

- Participants stated that the EAR was comfortable and easy to forget
- Participants went about their day unaware of when the EAR would record
- Because the samples were taken from different studies, the participants were not concerned with their word use
- Participants consented to their sound files being analyzed

Why this design?

This experiment was originally conducted in 2007 by
Mehl et al. in *Science*

The original experiment was flawed in participant size,
age demographic, and location.

For this experiment, the process for analyzing and
calculating the results is identical to the original, but
with new participants that better fulfill these areas.

Data table

The variable measured is **Words spoken per day**.

Statistics reported in columns:

- **M** = Mean (average)
- **Mdn** = Median
- **SD** = Standard Deviation
- **Min** = Minimum
- **Max** = Maximum
- **N/n** = Sample size

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Research Question 1

Gender	Words spoken per day					Sample size
	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max	<i>N/n</i>
All participants	12,792	11,013	9,154	62	124,134	2,197
Men	11,950	9,851	9,025	62	124,134	874
Women	13,349	11,620	9,199	143	120,731	1,323

Note. Min = Minimum; Max = Maximum.

Tidwell et al. (2025: p.381)

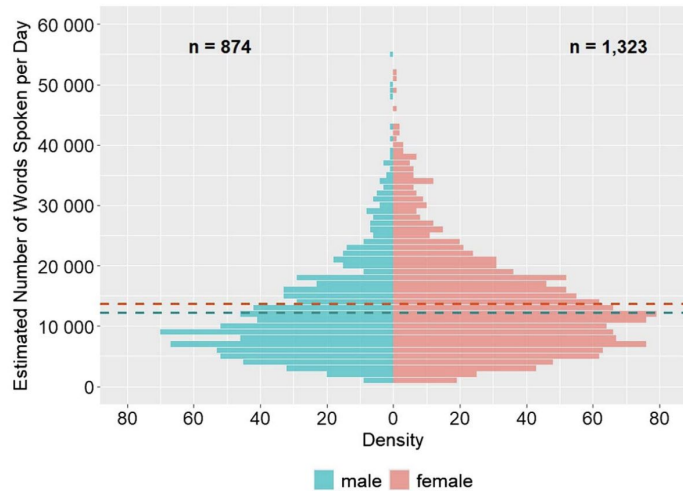
The rows separate the statistics by gender:

- All participants
- Men
- Women

Data graphic

Figure 2

Distribution of Estimated Number of Words Spoken per Day



Tidwell et al. (2025: p.381)

Y-axis:

- Represents estimated number of words spoken per day (WPD)
- Ranges from 0 to 60,000

X-axis:

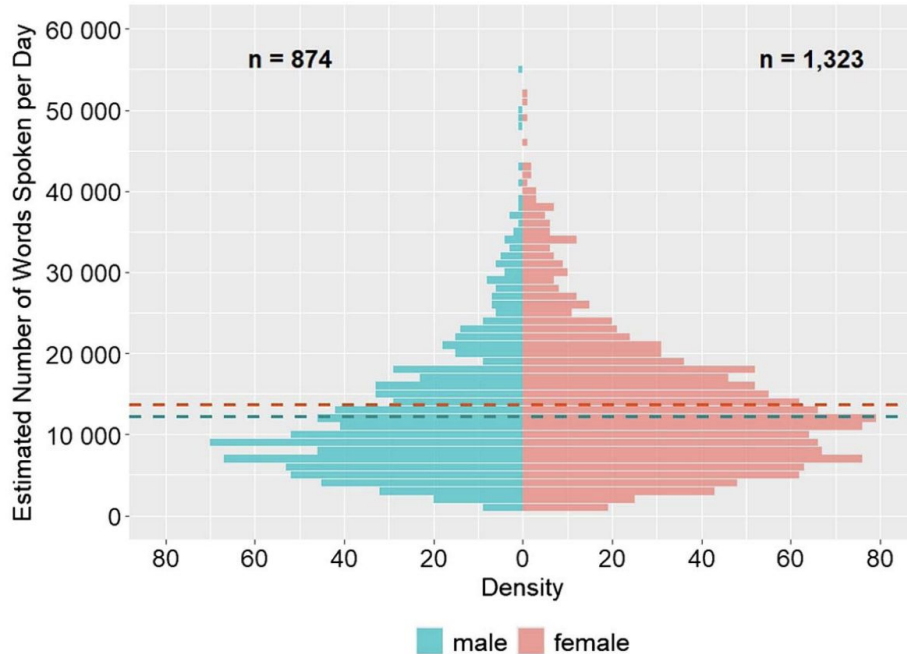
- Shows density of participants (how many spoke a given number of WPD)
- Wider bars = more participants at that word count range
- Ranges from 0 to 80

Bar Colors (Legend):

- Blue bars = Male participants
- Pink bars = Female participants

Figure 2

Distribution of Estimated Number of Words Spoken per Day



Sample Size (n =):

- n = 874 for men (left side)
- n = 1,323 for women (right side)

Dotted lines:

- Represent the mean number of words spoken per day for each gender
- Dotted blue line = mean for men (11,950 WPD)
- Dotted pink line = mean for women (13,349 WPD)
- Difference in line position shows that women spoke more on average

Why are these results important?

What to look for in figure 2:

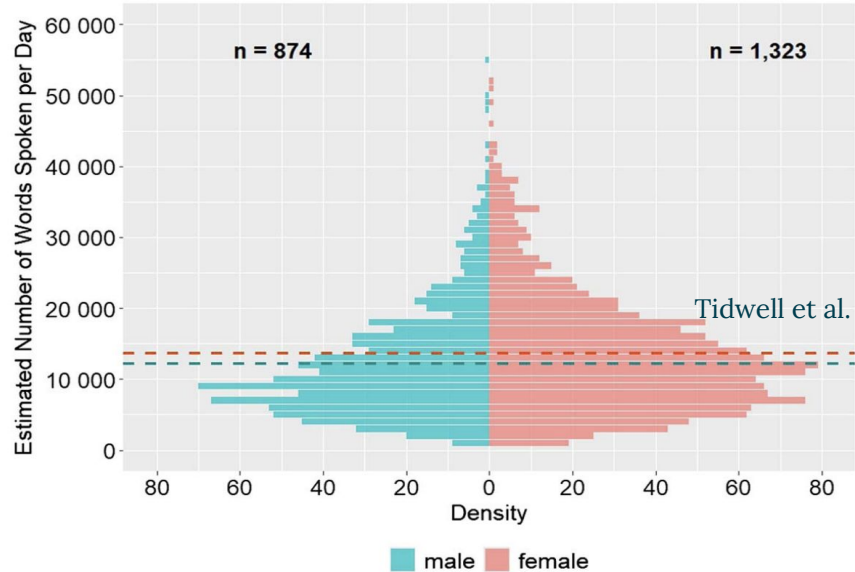
Dotted Lines = Average Words Spoken (WPD)

Bars = Spread of Word Counts

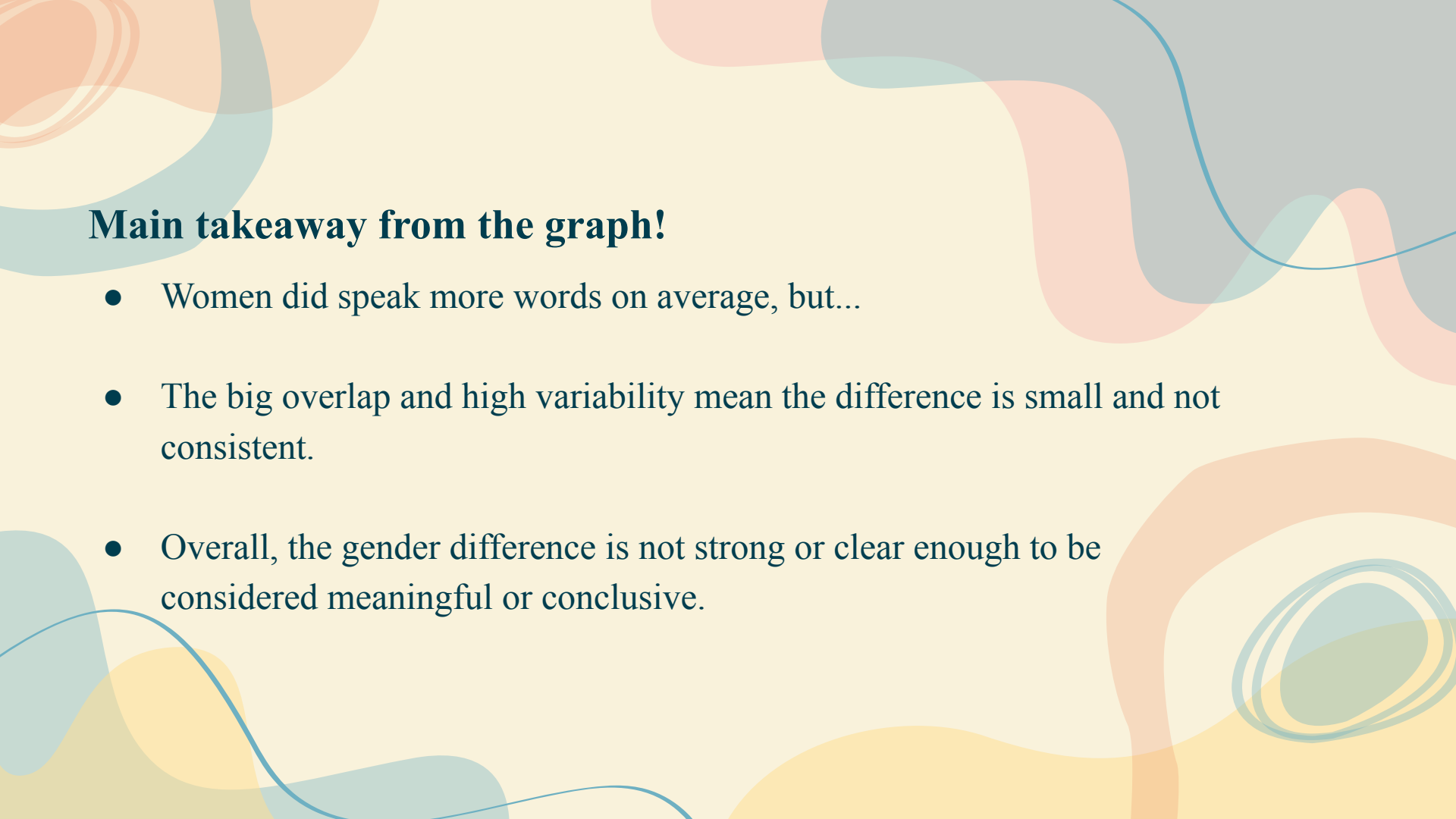
Overlap Between Genders

Figure 2

Distribution of Estimated Number of Words Spoken per Day



Tidwell et al. (2025: p.381)



Main takeaway from the graph!

- Women did speak more words on average, but...
- The big overlap and high variability mean the difference is small and not consistent.
- Overall, the gender difference is not strong or clear enough to be considered meaningful or conclusive.

Let's think back...

Myth: Women talk more than men.

bpRQ: Does gender influence how much people talk?

mRQ: Do women have a daily word use larger than men?

The study ultimately found **inconclusive evidence** regarding gender differences in daily word use.

Discussion

Could not determine if:

1. One gender speaks more words per day (WPD) than the other.
2. Men and women speak about the same number of words per day (WPD).

The **bpRQ** and **mRQ** question can **not** be confidently answered.

What this means...

The myth can not be proven true.

- Information shows an insignificant difference between number of daily word use, so the myth is not supported.

References

Tidwell, Colin A., Alexander F. Danvers, Valeria A. Pfeifer, Danielle B. Abel, Eva Alisic, Andrew Beer, Sabrina J. Bierstetel, Kathryn L. Bollich-Ziegler, Michelle Bruni, William R. Calabrese, Christine Chiarello, Burcu Demiray, Sona Dimidjian, Karen L. Fingerman, Maximilian Haas, Deanna M. Kaplan, Yijung K. Kim, Goran Knezevic, Ljiljana B. Lazarevic, Minxia Luo, Alessandra Macbeth, Joseph H. Manson, Jennifer L. Mascaro, Christina Metcalf, Kyle S. Minor, Suzanne Moseley, Angelina J. Polsinelli, Charles L. Raison, James K. Rilling, Megan L. Robbins, David Sbarra, Richard B. Slatcher, Jessie Sun, Mira Vasileva, Simine Vazire, & Matthias R. Mehl. 2025. *Are women really (not) more talkative than men? A registered report of binary gender similarities/differences in daily word use*. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 128(2): 367–391. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000534>

Kaplan, Abby. 2016. 'Women talk more than men.' In *Women Talk More Than Men: ... And Other Myths about Language Explained*, 155–189. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.