

## Women talk three times more than men

23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2013



Researchers in the USA have found that a protein in the brain might explain why women are more talkative than men - three times more chatty, in fact. The research team at the University of Maryland say a "language protein" that goes by the name of Foxp2 is a lot more prevalent in women's

brains. The protein was first discovered a decade ago and was deemed to be a key neurological component of speech. The scientists say it is a lot more abundant in girls than boys. They believe the protein is the reason why girls start speaking earlier and more quickly than boys. It also supports claims that women speak about 20,000 words a day, compared to just 7,000 words for the average man.

Research team leader professor Margaret McCarthy said: "This study is one of the first to report a sex difference in the expression of a language-associated protein in humans or animals." She added: "The findings raise the possibility that sex differences in brain and behaviour are more [widespread], and established earlier than previously [thought]." Other scientists have said there is more than one protein responsible for speech and that the research is in its infancy. Readers of Britain's Daily Mail newspaper offered some interesting insights into the chattiness of women. One said women have to talk more because, "men are not good listeners and women must repeat themselves to be heard".

Sources: *The Daily Telegraph* / *The Daily Mail*

### Writing

What are the advantages and disadvantages of being talkative?

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

*researchers / protein / talkative / women's brains / speech / speaking quickly / words / professor / expression / possibility / widespread / responsible / infancy / insights*

### True / False

- Women talk more because their diets are richer in protein. T / F
- Women have more of something called Foxp2 in their brain than men. T / F
- Foxp2 was first discovered ten years ago. T / F
- Women use 13,000 more words a day than men. T / F
- The report is the very first to report sex differences in human speech. T / F
- Other scientists say Foxp2 is the only protein responsible for speech. T / F
- The scientists said more research needs to be carried out on infants. T / F
- Someone said women have to talk more because men don't listen. T / F

### Synonym Match

- |                        |               |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 1. talkative           | a. assertions |
| 2. goes by the name of | b. started    |
| 3. prevalent           | c. linked     |
| 4. deemed              | d. is called  |
| 5. claims              | e. provided   |
| 6. associated          | f. widespread |
| 7. established         | g. wisdom     |
| 8. infancy             | h. chatty     |
| 9. offered             | i. early days |
| 10. insights           | j. judged     |

### Discussion – Student A

- Tell me about someone you know who talks too much.
- What do men talk about and why?
- Why do you think women have a protein in their brain that makes them talk three times more than men?
- What do men and women talk about that is boring?
- Does everyone talk too much?
- Do you believe that "silence is golden"?
- Are men really such bad listeners?
- What questions would you like to ask the scientists?

## Phrase Match

- |                                 |                           |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. a protein                    | a. good listeners         |
| 2. goes by the name             | b. prevalent              |
| 3. a lot more                   | c. insights               |
| 4. a key neurological           | d. in the brain           |
| 5. compared to just 7,000 words | e. previously thought     |
| 6. established earlier than     | f. themselves to be heard |
| 7. more than one protein        | g. of Foxp2               |
| 8. some interesting             | h. component of speech    |
| 9. men are not                  | i. responsible for speech |
| 10. women must repeat           | j. for the average man    |

## Discussion – Student B

- How talkative are you?
- What do you think of people who talk too much?
- Do you prefer to talk to men or women?
- What do women talk about and why?
- Do you think women talk three times more than men?
- What's your favourite topic of conversation (and why)?
- Should men try and talk more to keep up with women?
- What advice would you give to shy people who can't find things to say?

## Spelling

- language rtinpeo
- a lot more relaevtnp
- cleolraognui component
- The ssscnetiit
- a lot more bduanant
- the agravee man
- orerfossp Margaret McCarthy
- language-csatdisoea
- differences in brain and bevruhiao
- earlier than yrosluevip thought
- some interesting gtnhssii
- the ainscthsset of women

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. d	3. f	4. j	5. a
6. c	7. b	8. i	9. e	10. g

## Role Play

**Woman** - You love talking. Tell the others three reasons why. You think men aren't so good at talking. You think men's topics are boring. You believe women are naturally more interesting to talk to. Tell the man he should talk more and be more interesting.

**Man** - You love talking. Tell the others three reasons why. You think women aren't so good at talking. You think women's topics are boring. You believe men are naturally more interesting to talk to. Tell the woman she should talk more and be more interesting.

**Speech scientist** - You believe women speak a lot more than men but what they say isn't so interesting. Tell the others three reasons why. Ask the woman why she thinks she has more interesting things to say than men. Ask the man why women aren't interesting and men are.

**Alien** - You have been on Earth for a year now. You think both men and women talk a lot of nonsense. Ask them why they gossip. Tell them their discussions are full of untrue facts. Tell the woman talking about shopping is a waste of time. Tell the man that talking about sport is meaningless.

## Speaking - Conversation

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |            |                       |
|------------|-----------------------|
| • yourself | • gossip              |
| • politics | • the meaning of life |
| • English  | • the weekend         |
| • food     | • the weather         |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.