

**Men Want Intelligence, Women Want Love: Sex Differential
Use of English Adjectives Among Nigerian University
Undergraduate Students**

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ABSTRACT This is a sociolinguistic study of the emotional responses of male and female undergraduate students of a Nigerian university using English as an L2. It reports the verbal mapping of these responses in terms of vocabulary choice within some selected topics and attempts to correlate vocabulary usage to speakers' sex. The contexts, which can be appraised to cause emotional responses, include talking about love/joy, morality/guilt and so forth. According to Coon (2001), an emotional stimulus can be external or internal and can make us fearful, sad or happy and it is greatly influenced by how we think about an event (p. 437). The present study demonstrates that men and women tend to appraise the issues investigated differently and their different feelings are reflected in the variable patterns of adjective selection. The study shows that in talking about future partners, while the male students tend to use more of adjectives that focus on their partners' non-romantic qualities such as 'intelligence' and showing 'respect' (focusing on certain determinants of status/hierarchy), the female speakers tend to use adjectives with romantic connotations such as 'loving' and 'caring' (expressing emotional connectedness). In talking about abortion and murder, while the male speakers preferred to use more of religious adjectives like 'evil' and 'satanic', the female students used more of expressively strong moral adjectives like 'dastardly' and 'gruesome'. The study concludes that in Nigeria, there are variations in the use of adjectives by L2 users of English, which among other factors are related to speaker-sex.