

Men talk just as much as women – can it really be true?



Research by psychologists at the University of Arizona has shown that the stereotype that women talk more than men may not be true. In the study, hundreds of university students were fitted with recorders and the total number of words they used during the day was then counted.

The results, published in the *New Scientist*, showed that women speak about 16,000 words a day and men speak only **slightly** fewer. **In fact**, the four most talkative people in the study were all men.

Professor Matthias Mehl, who was in charge of the research, said that he and his colleagues had expected to find that women were more talkative.



However, they had **been sceptical of** the common belief that women use three times as many words as men. This idea became popular after the publication of a book called *The Female Brain* (2006) whose author, Louann Brizendine, **claimed** that ‘a woman uses about 20,000 words per day, **whereas** a man uses about 7,000.’

Professor Mehl accepts that many people will find the results difficult to believe. However, he thinks that this research is important because the stereotype, that women talk too much and men keep quiet, is bad not only for women but also for men. ‘It says that to be a good male, it’s better not to talk – that silence is golden.’

Adapted from the *New Scientist*