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## Conversational Strategies in Same Gender Group Conversation

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### Abstract

This research aimed to analyze the conversational strategies in all male and all female conversations. The case study upon which this research is based, investigated how each member of group conversations perform conversational strategies by involving 4 male speakers and 3 female speakers which has been carried out by the researcher by applying descriptive qualitative design. The data of this research were speakers' utterances which contain features of conversational strategies taken from recorded conversations. Having analyzed the conversational strategies in each same gender group, the analysis revealed that there were not seem to be a considerable quantitative difference to suggest that certain strategies was specific to one gender group in which these two group conversations similarly performed a collaborative behaviour. The result showed that minimal response was the most dominant strategy used in both of all male and all female conversations.

**Keywords:** conversational strategy, all male, all female

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

There have been many researches in the field of language and gender which aimed to qualify the differences of male and female usage of certain linguistic as interactional strategies during conversations. Li (2014) stated that the earliest research about language and gender can be traced back to as ancient Greek. At that time, many dramas witnessed gender differences in language. However, it was not until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that language and gender attracted anthropologists' and linguists' attention. Though there is a trend to research language and gender, it has not become an independent linguistic and topic until the 1960s, when feminist movement appeared and sociolinguistics advanced.

Masaitene (2012) also describes the development gender differences in language use. She stated that the studies of male and female language differences has begun with the findings of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century American anthropologists who noted some discrepancies in language use by men and women in some remote non-Western cultures. The first attempt to describe the differences between Western men's and women's language has been made by the Danish linguist "Jespersen" who wrote about women's preference for more polite expression, their supposedly "smaller" vocabulary and less complex sentence structure and men's greater inclination to use stigmatizes forms and slang words. However, Jespersen's observations were mainly based on his intuition and personal experience but not an empirical research.

In daily communication, gendered conversational style studies have brought attention to the idea that men and women talk differently. Most studies on language and gender stress that females are generally cooperative in nature whereas males are competitive (Chavez, 2001). Cooperativeness refers to the particular type of conversation where speakers work together to produce shared meanings as women in female's talk, they share personal feelings with each other and tend to support and encourage each other by skilfully using linguistic features such as minimal responses and hedges which indicated their intimacy and great connection. While competitiveness, on the other hand, is used to describe the adversarial style of conversation where speakers vie for turns and here participants are more likely to contradict each other than to build on each other's contribution as men in male's talk, they

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either have a monologue but they rarely talk about sensitive but impersonal problems and show lack of minimal response which indicated competitive in conversation (Coates, 2004).

However, in fact, there is a possibility of men displaying femininity in their talk as well as women displaying masculinity in their talk too. Thus, there is possible condition where men adopt women's behaviour in their communication as well as it is possible for women to adopt men's behaviour in their conversation. This phenomenon indicates that the representation of femininity and masculinity can possibly perform by both male and female speech community in same-gender conversations. In line with this, this phenomenon is interesting to be explored more deeply to reveal more whether male and female speakers are seen as performing masculinity or femininity when they communicate with the same gender.

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## 2. METHODS

This research was conducted by applying descriptive qualitative research design. Qualitative means to find out how a theory works in different phenomena which data collected are in the form of words rather than numbers. By using this design, the facts and the result found in the research was descriptively described in form of words. Moreover, the object in this research was written documents. In line with the concept of the design, the researcher aimed to find out how male and female speaker perform their conversational strategies.

The data of this research were participants' utterances such as words, phrases, and sentences which contain features of conversational strategies taken from all-male and all-female conversations which were gathered by transcribing the conversations. The participants of this study were chosen purposively with the following criteria: (1) sex: male and female, (2) range of participants: 17-25 years old, (3) Participants work in the same place, and (4) participants have similar educational background. Based on the criteria, the researcher has selected 7 participants consisted of 4 male and 3 female participants as source of data. Participants were selected based on their similar characteristics as it can be claimed that the role of these characteristics have been minimized in order to foreground gender. As they were not well known to the researcher, it was felt that bias in choice according to personality type was avoided.

After collecting the data, the data then analyzed by using interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2015). There were three activities that have been conducted in this model, namely data condensation, data display, and conclusion: drawing/verification. For the ease of analysis and findings presentation, the participants were aliased.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Seven features of conversational interaction were used in all male and all female conversations namely monologue, overlap, interruption, tag-question, hedge, minimal responses, and question. Table 1 shows the frequency of each conversational features found in both of all-male and all-female conversations.

Table 1. Frequency of Conversational Features in All Male and All Female Conversations

<b>Conversational Strategies</b>	<b>All -Male</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>All -Female</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Monologue	3	6.38	5	6.57
Overlap	10	21.27	9	11.84
Interruption	7	14.89	10	13.15
Tag-question	6	12.76	10	13.15
<b>Hedges:</b>				
a. as mitigating device	0	0.00	2	2.63
b. as assertive manner	2	4.25	5	6.57
c. to elaborate statement	0	0.00	3	3.94
Minimal Response	15	31.91	24	31.57
<b>Questions:</b>				
a. to initiate conversation	1	2.12	3	3.94
b. to maintain conversation	3	6.38	5	6.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>

Based on Table 1, the result shows that both male and female speakers have the same frequency in the use of conversational features which similarly promote a cooperative and collaborative behaviour.

Minimal response was the most dominantly used in their conversations indicating their agreement and understanding to what other speaker’s saying or merely to show that they were attentive to go on to listening toward other speaker. A cooperative overlap and interruption occurred in their conversations when one speaker briefly interrupts another speaker in order to show her or his interest in the conversation. It can be in the form of repetition of some words or phrases.

The way male and female speakers taking turn and the occurrence of overlap and interruption within the sequence of conversation determined mutual understanding among the participants. In addition, the researcher found that the use of overlap and interruption can

be a choice used to create supportive and interactive conversation which not aim for dominance but rather promotes mutual reinforcement and shows active listenership and to reinforce the ideas discussed.

Furthermore, once the conversation is initiated by a question, it allows for further talk once the attention of the other participants has been obtained. Furthermore, the use of questions as maintaining the conversation found in this research can create a continuation of the conversation since these questions require answers, thus, the question can be employed as strategy to measure a coherence of a stretch of conversation.

Moreover, a tag-question found in this study used as the strategy functioned to involve other speakers in conversation by asking for confirmation to other speakers about proposition he/she being stated which create solidarity with the speaker. Monologue and hedge were used slight in their conversations. The result shows that female do monologue more than men despite that the occurrences of monologue in all-male and all-female conversations does not seem to vary drastically which utilized as one strategy to elaborate or add more detail explanation of topic being discussed. Therefore in some cases women also like to do monologue while having conversations with other women. At last, the result of the occurrences of hedge show they avoid to soften their utterances.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Conversational strategies in all-male and all-female conversations are more likely to have a collaborative style through a number of interactive strategies ranging from a way that emphasizes their solidarity such as participants responsive to other people's topic, move the conversation forward by overlapping and interrupting each other, involving other speakers with tag-questions, keeping and maintaining the conversation by asking questions, lack of softening utterances and avoid in grabbing the turn by doing monologue.

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