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Minimal responses as a means of gender-specific conversational strategies.

Diplomová práce

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Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracoval samostatně a použil jen
uvedených pramenů a literatury.

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ABSTRACT

The theoretical part of this thesis defines sociolinguistics and gender studies as scientific bases for my research and then moving deeper to study conversation, dialogues and minimal responses. The research part develops a corpus-based analysis of conversations aiming at gender-specific usage of minimal responses. The analysis focuses on differences and similarities in their usage by men and women leading to certain strategies with regard to lexical, semantic and prosodic features of analysed texts. This paper also proposes a possible deployment of sociolinguistic findings in language teaching.

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I INTRODUCTION

It is commonly said that men are from Mars and women are from Venus. Fundamentally, it signifies that men and women are different from each other. The concept of human living on our planet, and in human societies respectively, stands on the roots of a mutual co-operation in tandem with genders. Whether one will walk this Earth as a boy or a girl will in all probability affect one's future. Many scientists and scholars have given incidental mention to the study of genders and related differences before the theme became a true field of scientific investigation. In recent years, linguists, sociologists and psycholinguists explore the biological nature of genders and language to involve the subject into the field of sociological gender studies and psycholinguistics. These scientific branches provide scholars with invaluable facts when studying the means of communication among humans. Since language is a primary communicative tool, the matter became the main interest of sociolinguists.

There are such investigators, including me, who are interested enough to dedicate most of their academic research time to investigate the gender differences with respect to the language men and women use. As the title suggests this paper investigates minimal responses using sociological, psycholinguistic, and sociolinguistic findings to study communication, communicative styles, dyadic conversations and minimal responses with regard to gender-specific usage. The purpose of this diploma thesis is to give a thorough account of sociolinguistics and gender studies followed by deep study of minimal responses with regard to lexical, semantic and prosodic features of analysed texts.

This paper addresses these questions:

- 1) Do men use minimal responses more often than women?
- 2) Does men's usage of minimal responses differ from women's?
- 3) Are there any specific men's or women's turn-taking responses?

- 4) Do men use minimal responses in order to gain dominance?
- 5) What roles do pauses play in conversation with regard to minimal responses?
- 6) Are pauses used for these purposes intentionally by either gender?

To obtain the answers the paper presents a corpus-based analysis of eight dyadic conversations of British educated people considering the lexical, semantic and prosodic features of analysed texts. Since English language teaching at Palacky University in Olomouc is my academic field of study, this thesis proposes a possible deployment of sociolinguistic findings and approaches in the domain of English language teaching. These suggestions may be further reflected in my postgraduate ELT studies.

II THEORETICAL PART

As implied in the introductory part this paper focuses on language as well as its usage. Before the research concerning minimal responses could be commenced it is indispensable to delve into theoretical background. Therefore in the theoretical part the fields of sociology, linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and gender studies are deeply explored. Sociolinguistics was briefly introduced in my bachelor thesis but during latter studies the matter became more complex and tangled than was expected. When performing the first research in 2010 there were several linguistic features being out of my concern. For instance, the phonological features of examined texts did not affect the analysis. In this paper the analysis goes deeper and expands the amount of research data (for further detail, see chapters II.3.6. and III.1.1.1.2).

At this point the ideas with which the first theoretical chapters deal should be introduced. There is a strong conviction among researchers such as David Crystal, Peter Stockwell or John J. Gumperz stating that a sociolinguist needs to be aware of all fields relating to the theme and leading to the desired problem. For a scholar it would not be possible to carry out any sociolinguistic research without proper knowledge of social and linguistic systems. Crystal (1971, p. 254) suggests and explicitly explains that since the language serves to be the main concern the linguistic competence of the scholar precedes the sociolinguistic one. In other words, such a scholar should combine both sociological and linguistic knowledge and approaches.

Based on my research experience in the matter it can be summarised that the deeper one pursues the scientific goals in the study the wider theoretical range one needs. Thus the area of psychology leads the investigator to study psycholinguistics too. Lastly, the question of gender cannot be overlooked. Gender studies 1) extend the sociolinguistic approaches, 2) enable researchers to apply valuable findings and 3) help to establish a theoretical framework.

The work of authors such as Stephanie Garrett and Cate Poynton is highly inspiring and groundbreaking not only for the academic purposes. Hence the theoretical part interprets the main ideas of these fields and researcher with great respect.

II.1 Language and society

It is well-know that language as we know it is a humans' privilege. Even though other inhabitants of our planet can communicate with each other too, the tool for human communication appears to be far more sophisticated both in form and usage. In broader sense some might argue the difference in communication among animals and humans does not exist at all. Almost every creature can, at least to some extent, talk or, in other words, send and receive messages. An example such as when flying half the world migratory birds tweet to designate the way among all members of the flock illustrates the idea. Furthermore, in recent studies the high level of dolphins' intelligence and the level of their communication have been repeatedly accentuated. It is clear that beside humans other animals can communicate and in order to do that there are numerous specific species-based languages.

What makes the language and communication of people different then? To answer the question one needs to realize that humans' language can be considered as a spoken language and a written language. The ability to write, to graphically record the language, is undoubtedly one of the privileges of human beings. Apart from our community, there is no other one on Earth that uses such a highly advanced communicative system. The development of any human language did not happen in one day, though. It is a very sophisticated process and it took hundreds of years to develop a language from initial miming and signing. Each person begins the journey as an infant when he or she indicates the hunger by crying (Montgomery, 1986, p. 5).

Since the languages are discussed in general at this point it is appropriate for future reference to mention that the language discussed in this thesis is the English language and, more specifically, English used by British speakers.

Before going further there are several matters that need to be discussed. As the title of this chapter suggests as well as the previously mentioned information, the language is directly and inherently related to society. Among many authors Peter Stockwell (2002, p. 1) claims that: *'all language events consist of a piece of language in a social context. The language used in particular situations determines the nature of that social event'*.

The social event needs to be emphasized here as every person, including me, faces numerous social events every day. The events concerning language require at least two participants to produce actual communication. Communication, however, could be written and spoken. Gumperz (1999, p. 22) says that *'in our modern socially diversified and occupationally specialized urban societies, verbal communication has become more important than ever before in human history'*. This idea interprets the reason why a spoken language, in this paper spoken English, occurs to be the main area of interest for sociolinguists. Sociolinguists look for unpredictability which is more possible to happen in spoken interaction (Gumperz, 1999, p. 22), (further discussed in chapter II.3.4).

II.2 Gender studies

Gender as a term has become a controversial and impatient topic for scholarly as well as for general public (Glover & Kaplan 2000, p. IX). The reality of discrimination as a theme is not discussed here; rather there is a greater concentration on stereotypical social roles of men and women in society. There is a distinction between gender role and gender identity. Glover & Kaplan (2000, p. X) inform that these terms are relatively new. It was not until the Second World War when the terms came to existence. Other closely related terms such as *'gender-bender'* have not been implemented into society's awareness until 1980s. To clarify the

distinction Garret refers to three theories; *'cognitive developmental theory, social learning theory and psychoanalytic theory'*. She explains that all these views are to do with the *'process of identification'* of every person from the early age. Everyone is affected by the social model of femininity and masculinity (Garrett 1987, p. 21, Glover & Kaplan 2000, p. X), (see section II 2.1 and II.2.2).

Furthermore, gender could be used as a noun or as a verb. Using gender as a verb initially served to indicate reproduction or copulation which has been discretely illustrated by Glover & Kaplan (2000) when they effectively used a short excerpt from Shakespeare's Othello. These meanings relevant in past preceded the modern function. Gender as a grammatical term is often used as a euphemism for sex but is no longer used to denote sexual activities. The real beginning of proper usage of term gender remains mysterious but there is evidence of its common presence in sexologists' works during 1960s (Glover & Kaplan 2000, p. X-XI). In their book Glover & Kaplan (2000) also refer to Scott who defined gender to be a *'category imposed on a sexed body'* (pp. XIX, XXIII) and to Witting (1992, p. 60) who cannot linguistically pluralize gender due to the question of appropriate referential system (Glover & Kaplan, 2000, p. XXIX), (for further detail, see chapter II.2.3).

II.2.1 Biological differences

In the introductory and previous sections the idea of gender differences is introduced in general. Before exploring gender-specific linguistic differences in the language usage, this chapter focuses on genders from the biological point of view. Apart from biological studies psycholinguistics is discussed in this chapter to the extent relevant for this research.

When one refers to different gender there is a need for specific words. Biological sex enables us to identify men as males and women as females. From the point of view of social gender, scholars use terms feminine and masculine (Poynton 1990, p. 4). To avoid confusion,

later in this paper genders are referred to simply by using 'men' and 'women'. In special occasions such as the discussion in this chapter terms 'males' and 'females' are used.

To understand the differences between men and women one must realise males and females are different biologically. Not only do both genders differ in secondary sexual characteristics and the size of their brain, they also possess different types and amounts of chromosomes and hormones (Garrett 1987, p. 2). Garret continues and says that the biological distinction of males and females often serve to justify different and discriminatory attitudes towards men and women. The categories have been often used as explanatory reasons of different social roles of men and women within society (Garrett 1987, p. 3). To return to the question of social roles there is a difference in the usage of terms male and female, masculine and feminine respectively. Both males and females have specific roles in society but the social roles and attitudes require using terms masculine and feminine (Garrett 1987, Poynton, 1990). Therefore terms 'male' and 'female' refer to the biological sex whereas terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' refer to the social roles of men and women in society.

II.2.2 Social roles

The question of gender roles in society leads to the deliberation of social factors as determinants of both social status and communicative behaviour. Sociologists, for instance, use biological sex differences to explain different roles in nuclear families. Garret (1987, p. 5) paraphrases Tiger & Fox (1972) who claim that humans have been predisposed to act differently. It is so due to the 'genetically-based programmes' that are often referred to as 'biogrammars'. These biogrammars control peoples' behaviour and enable men to behave in an aggressive and dominant way. On the other hand, the predisposition to women's behaviour makes women instinctively caring and nurturing mothers and householders. To put it differently, according to Parsons (1959) as summarized by Garret (1987, p. 6) women play an expressive role and men the instrumental. What is more, men can control emotions while women are emotional and expressive (Poynton 1990, p. 17). Nevertheless, whether men are

predisposed to behave dominantly even within conversation and what means do they use to achieve it is among questions to be discussed in the research part.

In broader sociological sense, there are thoughts appearing in scholarly texts pushing the edge of gender differences in society a bit further. In a classical work *Race, class, and gender: an anthology*, Audre Lorde (1992) examines the notion of human tolerance and coexistence and explaining that humans have not been programmed to equally associate with all differences nor have developed any patterns yet to do so (Lorde, 1992, p. 496).

The biological categories mentioned earlier in this paper designate the proportion of separation rather than similarity. The point of view of feminism on the matter is highly intriguing and enriching. For instance, Oakley (1972) quoted by Garrett (1987, pp. 6-9) summarizes and suggests the notion of a '*continuum*' and males and females as '*categories at opposing ends of it*'. The most significant part is the middle-edged overlap of both ends. The purpose of this summary is to emphasize the consequences arising from measuring biological and social differences and leading to rather negative tendency to look for differences, leaving similarities aside (Garrett, 1987, pp. 6-9). Based on works done in the field the concept of the research in this paper is balanced in terms of looking at differences and similarities, leaving none aside.

To put the discussion in the context with linguistics, there is a possibility of genderlects as mentioned by Poynton (1990) or Stockwell (2002). Over the years several generalised portraits of gender-specific communicative manner have been made saying that women are better speakers whereas men often swear. Women speak correctly and accurately in contrast with men who speak harsh language. The form carries the content that differs too; men talk sports and jokes and women do not. Men and women, according to this theory, talk completely different languages (Poynton 1990, p. 67, Garrett 1987, p. 35). The genderlect theory covers both the field of gender studies and linguistics and therefore is to be discussed later in chapter II.3.5.2.1.

II.2.3 Referential system

In previous subchapters the complex question of both social and gender differences has been discussed. Since gender is the main topic of this thesis it is fitting to turn to referential systems variously used in the fieldworks. Some authors use *he* exclusively, applying so called “normative rule” (Poynton, 1990, p. 44), others care about the referent and use the exact name to get personal. It may be helpful at this point to demonstrate the rules used in this paper in the following table:

- | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|
| 1. | Man /male referent | → | <i>he</i> |
| 2. | Woman / female referent | → | <i>she</i> |
| 3. | Unspecified gender | → | <i>he/she</i> |
| 4. | Male or female known by name
(e.g. Mark) | → | an appropriate name |
| 5. | Possessive pronouns | → | <i>his</i> or <i>her</i> accordingly, or <i>his/her</i> |

The pronoun *he* or *she* is used when referring to a man or a woman accordingly. In some cases, if the participant or referent is not clear to be identified *he/she* is used. If the exact name is known or the participant has been intentionally named, the name is used properly. The same pattern applies for possessive pronouns such as *his* or *her*.

II.3 The study of language

With the rule explained in the previous subchapter the topic moves on from society and gender studies to language and its social determination. As stated earlier gender is the main field of interest in this paper. It is probably fair to say now that the formal language study share the same level of importance relevant for this thesis as gender does.

Without language and linguistic studies the challenges of this paper would finish in vain before the start. Therefore, in next chapters several relevant issues are discussed: 1) sociolinguistics, 2) psycholinguistics and other related fields, 3) language and

contextualization, 4) spoken language, 5) conversation, 6) discourse, and 7) the importance of prosody.

II.3.1 Sociolinguistics

It is more than appropriate and respectful to summarize main ideas and purposes of sociolinguistics. R. A. Hudson (1980, p. 4) defines sociolinguistic as a field of investigation considering both language and society. David Crystal (1971, p. 252) generalizes that '*sociolinguistics studies the way in which language interacts with society*'. This definition seems to be the most explicit and informatively valuable one. It is here where the linguistics is logically linked to previous chapters discussing society, its variations and functions. Society and language share specific linkage and enable scholars to study their relations.

To put it differently, sociolinguistics is a scientific and academic branch exploring and analysing relations between language and society (Duda, 2010, Spolsky, 1998, Crystal, 1971). In fact, during several decades sociolinguistics evolved into highly respected field. Spolsky (1998, p 3) emphasizes the importance among other fields by hyphenising the modern role of science and thus differentiate sociolinguistics from linguistic nucleus containing '*phonology, morphology, and syntax*'. Sociolinguistics cannot be separated from its roots. The knowledge of historical and descriptive fields leads sociolinguists to general acceptance and increase the study relevance. One could not handle a phenomenon scientifically without previous encounter and long-termed devotion to scholarly.

One of the groundbreaking authors is Noam Chomsky. His revolutionary views brought many practitioners to higher level of expertise. The definition of language as a system of autonomous behaviour settled by Chomsky has been derived from classical work by Leonard Bloomfield (Duda 2010, pp. 10-11, Spolsky 1998, p. 4). Interestingly, Hudson (1980) differentiates the investigatory attitude of the practitioner. He says that the overall magnitude

of the interest of the investigator either in language or society serves as a prior modification of research (Hudson, 1980, p. 5), (Duda, 2010, p. 10).

Similarly, Gumperz (1999, p. 2) agrees that sociolinguistics is a '*new field*', but he adds that it is a '*field of inquiry which investigates the language usage of particular human groups and relies on data sources and analytical paradigms quite distinct from those employed by linguists*'. He refers to nineteenth century studies and explains the '*development of linguistic tools*'. The fundamental discovery offers sociological point of view in establishing certain '*grammatical structures*' to be the substance to grease the wheels of '*verbal communication*'. He also claims, as mentioned above, that the linguistic analysis must be performed with consideration of both form and meaning (Gumperz, 1999, p. 2).

Before approaching the methodology of investigation the existence of variables need to be explained. The social variable and the linguistic variable together summarise the idea of factors shaping the language and the situation in which it occurs (Spolsky, 1998, p. 11), (Stockwell, 2002, p. 3). According to Stockwell (2002) and other scholars referred to above, the geographical and occupational factors as well as gender or age cover the social variables. Linguistic variables, in contrast, contain the desired attribute such as a dialect, a word or language in general (Stockwell, 2002, pp. 3-15).

II.3.1.1 Sociolinguistic scrutiny

The previous chapter suggested the negotiation between analyst's linguistic and sociological competences. What makes sociolinguistics demanding but prestigious is addressing new challenges and increasing advancement of research techniques driven by contemporary sociological development (Spolsky, 1999, p. 8). Labov, as paraphrased by Spolsky (1999, p. 8), used the term '*observer's paradox*' to illustrate the concern of linguists; whether it is possible to observe human conversational behaviour when there is no way to observe. The answer is strictly negative but, on the other hand, opens the door to a variety of

distinctive research actions. The goal is to contemplate speakers within interaction and receive data. The interpretable data is necessary to obtain to carry out any sociolinguistic analysis. Peter Stockwell (2002, p. 2) emphasizes the awareness of theory and method of young researcher who are referred to as students of sociolinguistics. Students driven by the enthusiasm often run from place to place to record authentic data that is to be transcribed. Collected data then undergo an examination aimed at both content and form. This particular way Stockwell (2002, p. 1) describes as a '*trawling approach*' with a few problematic points; 1) '*they may not know what they have in their sociolinguistic net, may not be able to recognise it, classify it, nor know what to do with it*', and 2) '*they will not be able to claim anything believable about their fishing trip*'.

To avoid inaccurate approaches the pattern established by Peter Stockwell (2002, p. 2) stating that one should make a plan containing positively verified points is followed in this paper:

1. The matter of investigation is viable.
2. The matter of investigation is a constant quality.
3. The quality can be systematically reported on.

Having clarified the requirements, for an investigator it is also crucial to understand the environment in which the data could be collected. According to authors such as David Crystal & Derek Davy (1969) or Bernard Spolsky (1998), such an environment is considered to be '*linguistic and determined by situations in which speakers formulate reactions in a spoken language*' (Duda, 2010, p. 11). The linguistic environment itself, though, does not offer both variables nor enables the analyst to explore social features. Therefore, the environment relevant to sociolinguistic studies must incorporate social and linguistic perspective. If these prerequisites for further enquiry have been fulfilled the term sociolinguistic environment can be used legitimately.

II.3.1.1.2 Obtaining data

There are numerous techniques of obtaining data prior to proceeding to the analysis. The most common and renowned technique is the one developed by William Labov who introduced and proved an interview to be highly effective for its purposes. The sociolinguist does not play the role of an observer but, rather practically, he/she takes his part in the interview as the sociolinguist is also an interviewer (Duda 2010, p. 12).

Among many techniques there is one that needs to be mentioned. The model of surreptitious recording became the primary technique used by sociolinguists. As Svartvik et. al. (1990, p. 12) explains surreptitious recording requires at least one participant not being aware of the recording for that is the only way to capture the authenticity of the action (Duda, 2010, p.12). For further reading about the recording techniques, see Spolsky (1998, pp. 10-11). Nevertheless, one should be aware of the fact that a moral obligation has been imposed upon the surreptitious technique recommending analysts to get consent of the participants to be recorded.

II.3.1.1.3 Scrutiny techniques

In this subchapter the intriguing technique of analysis that follows the process of obtaining data is discussed. As mentioned earlier social factors shape the attitudes of linguists who develop new techniques of analysis and inspire others. Wallace Lambert is undoubtedly one of those innovators. With his technique of analysing excerpts of recorded speech using a sociolinguistic committee to assess the material with regard to diverse characteristics prestige of the participants/producers he balanced the qualitative and quantitative approaches. During last decades, though, the quantitative approach proved to be the dominating sociolinguistic method (Gumperz, 1999, p. 25), (Hirsch et. al., 1977, p. 125).

II.3.2 Psycholinguistics and other related fields

In this chapter the fields related to sociolinguistics influencing the process of research are considered. The extensive perspective enables researchers, including me, to go deeper and understand specific features of the data.

The purpose of psycholinguistics can be expounded as the scientific fusion of language studies and mind (Aitchison, 1998, p. 1). Psychology and linguistics combined together facilitate the potential of sociolinguistics by broadening horizons. The aim of these studies as clarified by Aitchinson (1998, p. 1) in her famous book titled '*The Articulate Mammal*' is '*to find out about the structures and processes which underlie a human's ability to speak and understand language. Psycholinguists are trying to probe into what is happening within individual*'. She describes the practitioners of psychology and linguistics as different investigators with an umbrella term of social science covering the principles of both.

As usual, the difference takes its place in technique of testing hypothesized schemes. Psychologists tend to perform experimental but intentional tests, whereas linguists perform testing spontaneously in real environment. Aitchinson (1998) uses a simile saying that psycholinguistic could be interpreted as the '*proverbial hydra*' - as an ancient creature with a myriad of heads. Every head in this context indicates limitless branches contributing to sociolinguistics. In her book Aitchinson (1998, pp. 2-3) considers three main problematic issues:

- 1) the problem of human's acquisition of languages with the goal being to explain plainly the relation of linguistic equipment and natural animalistic intelligence,
- 2) the concentration on connections between the knowledge and usage of language,
- 3) the assumption of production and comprehension of speech occupy the scientific engagement in the matter.

One topic that occurred to be of particular interest in this paper is the question of planning and production of talk. It is intriguing that when people talk no one cares about the way the speakers choose the words or how long it took to pick it in his/her mind. There is only one particular occasion when scholars can be sure about the back-processes happening in one's mind right before the utterance production; the occasion in which the speaker is attempting to recall a name (Aitchinson, 1998, p. 237). The process of planning is sometimes referred to as a '*rhetorical frame of mind*' that requires the speaker to think '*strategically through the decisions one has to make as one prepares for any speech*' (Gronbeck et. al., 1994, p. 52). The problem is quite complex, though, thus for further detail, see Gronbeck et. al. (1994, pp. 52-9)

Among other related fields such as ethnolinguistics that tries to define the problematic ethnically-specific language entities, Crystal (1972) explains that anthropological linguistics correlates with manners of sociologists but is easily subjected to scholars' field-specific inclination. Stylistics, on the other hand, deals with '*the distinctive linguistic characteristics of smaller social groups such as occupational or class differences*'. To summarise the contributions of all fields mentioned above, the substances of each area blend together with sociology, anthropology, psychology, linguistics and ethnolinguistics (Crystal, 1972, pp. 252-33).

II.3.3 Language and contextualization

In this chapter the linguistic and lexicological concept of contextualization is discussed as it deserves appropriate attention. Language production, and of course the speakers and producers of the language, need to face a number of factors such as social influences and gender. There is a factor that has not been mentioned yet; situation in which speakers use language. When talking to a supervisor or a boss one must use different language than when talking to a partner or a friend. It is obvious that the person, his/her social and professional status, modify speaker's choice of language and the usage as well. The variable of persons is

not the only factor, though. The place or surroundings effect the language at the same level as the person does. The context in which the language is produced influences both the speaker and the speech itself.

To summarise the factors Martin Montgomery (1993) implies that there are different variables such as diverse groups of people, social and regional varieties or gender and age. There is also a deeper layer of contextualization concerning the particular language situation. This problem is often interpreted by the register abstraction, generally referred to as '*stylistic variation*'. The existence of context-based dimensional language variations can be regarded as a certain '*sensitivity of language*' (Montgomery, 1993, p. 101).

Considering all above-mentioned, the meaning of language is conveyed simply by words. In a very simplified way it means that a speaker puts words together to form the utterance and express the idea. He or she chooses the words according to the situation and the topic discussed. Since people use different words when talking about science, shopping or other common or less common actions it seems to be justified to claim that vocabulary merges the notion of context as the specific vocabulary connect certain contexts but does not evidently serve as a means of the change (Montgomery, 1993, p. 102), (Duda, 2010, p. 15). Montgomery and Oreström (1983) go further and draw attention to register as field, tenor and mode might be helpful when studying deep this problematic area of interrelationship of language and context (Montgomery, 1993, p. 103), (Oreström, 1983, p. 20). There are also so-called '*contextualization cues*', as specified by Gumperz (1999, p. 162), that, even though lacking the meaning, function as indicators of the potential contextual assumption. For further reading, see Montgomery (1993), Hudson (1993, p. 48) and Gumperz (1999, p. 162).

The contextualization within conversation may influence speakers in both good and wrong manner. Since this paper addresses also the possible application of sociolinguistic knowledge and results it is necessary to make a connection to language teaching. The topic choice may efficiently affect learners' speech abilities within the process of teaching speaking

(Cohen, 2001, pp. 383, 410). Nevertheless, the pedagogical aspects are to be discussed later in the research part.

II.3.4 Spoken language

Much has been said about language and society but less has been said about the relation of culture. Language is presumably in a connection with culture (Hudson, 1993, p. 83). People use language to communicate, to pass the information and to secure the cultural heritage. By words, people keep the history and attendant customs alive. Sociolinguists refer to such actions as ‘*speech*’ (Hudson 1993, p. 106). Similarly, this paper concentrates on spoken language that has been transcribed for academic purposes. Scholars such as Hudson concentrated on face-to-face interactions and excluded other types such as conversations, jokes, interviews, etc (Hudson 1993, pp. 106-7), (for further detail, see chapter II.3.5.1).

Turning back to the primary notion of speech it is important to clarify that this study concerns spoken language, and more specifically spoken English. The production of spoken English is a subject to native or foreign speech determinism. Without produced speech there would not be anything for sociolinguists to be examined, although not every produced excerpt of language is valuable enough to grow into desired sociolinguistic material worth analysing (Crystal & Davy, 1969, p. 114), (Duda, 2010, p. 11). Therein English produced by non-native speakers is not included in this paper as the primary data source is a London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English by Svartvik & Quirk (1980). The corpus is described as well as its relevance is deemed in chapter III.1.1.1.1.

Moreover, as suggested by Quirk (1968, p. 163), the existence of distinctive dialects and accents of both written and/or spoken language respectively deserves appropriate attention of researchers. This theory, however, is left aside for the purposes of this thesis (for further reading, see Quirk, 1968).

II.3.5 Conversation

It is generally marked that people communicate on a daily basis through language. Since communication can be divided into written and spoken, in the speech study sentences occur to be the basic unit where conversation is viewed as a part of a system of speech (Spolsky, 1998, p. 16), (Oreström, 1983, p. 21).

Oreström says that the definition of '*conversation*' is difficult to provide '*since conversation is a speech event which involves a mutual exchange of information, thoughts, ideas, and emotions which takes place on a here-and-now level and is therefore both a social and psychological, as well as linguistic activity*' (Oreström, 1983, p. 21). It is now clear the importance of all fields related to the study of conversation needs to be emphasized. The first half of the theoretical part of this thesis deals with sociology, as well as psychology and linguistics. To be able to define conversation one must not exclude any of relevant fields mentioned above. The interpretation of conversation therefore needs to follow several principles to characterise the phenomenon comprehensively and meaningfully (Oreström, 1983 p. 21). In his book Oreström (1983) quotes other linguists and shows other interpretations that might appear in fieldworks such as a '*set of speech exchange systems*' or a '*form of focused interaction*' and finally he generalizes the topic by providing an extract from a book by Abercrombie saying that the system of conversation should contain at least two speakers. There is a criterion for the action of speakers that they must be active and the information exchange needs to be performed by any which way (Oreström, 1983, p. 21).

This definition, however, does not say whether the non-verbal communication such as supporting gestures is included or not (Válková, 2004, p. 53). As the verbal speech occurrences are the primary phenomenon to be studied in this paper, the non-verbal communication is left aside. Before moving further to the theory of turn-taking there is a certain obligation to include another example that helps to put the pieces of puzzle together. Yngve (1970, p. 568) cleverly points out that turn-taking among participants is the very

natural and essential action pattern of conversation. Furthermore, according to Oreström (1983, p. 23-24) there is a list of typical features of conversation:

1) a conversation is not in most cases public and participants do not prepare what they will be saying and the planning happens simultaneously with production,

2) the aim of the action must not be the information or factual side but rather the principle of interaction,

3) speakers are not restricted in the spectrum of possible themes, and lastly and most relevantly here,

4) there are no standards for the use of tag questions or responses and hesitation features occurances.

Furthermore, the background share of the speakers as well as the share of educational experience can influence the explicitness and the subject matter of conversation. All factors may influence the conversation and provide participants with possible choices in style, pronunciation and content (Gumperz, 1999, p. 22), (Duda, 2010, p. 12).

From the point of view of gender, it is intriguing that, according to Stockwell (2002), there is a different way of seeing the purpose of conversation by men and women. Men take it as a tool to '*gather information*' and women, in contrast, see conversation as a method of achieving '*support*' (Stockwell, 2002, p. 16).

To conclude the indentifying conversation there are examples that manifest the conversation. The most common one is a talk between friends or members of family (Oreström, 1983, p. 24). Also the academic talk among scholars can be considered a less casual conversation. The formality of the language used within conversation does not serve as a criterion, though.

II.3.5.1 Discourse

Conversation has been interpreted in a variety of ways and discourse is another term to be discussed. Among many definitions the one by Hudson (1993) is considered to be the most informative and acceptable. He uses the term '*discourse structure*' as a '*structure of speech above the sentence level*'. In other words there is a certain system that links the utterances together. No one can exactly state how many structures there are but Hudson (1993, pp. 13-14) made to develop a structure typology and talks about three types:

- 1) regarding the importance of turn-taking as a basis for discourse structures,
- 2) viewing the theme as the main principle determining the system, and
- 3) often referred to as an '*encyclopaedic structure*' that is based on the general knowledge.

Gumperz (1999), on the other hand, uses the term '*communicative economy*'. The term basically denotes the existence of '*linguistic settings*' enabling participants a free access at any particular situation. The system is changing and the economy is thereby sensitive and highly receptive (Gumperz, 1999, pp. 29-30, 43-44). Apart from that, there is an interesting survey aimed at different discourse strategies used by men and women in magazines (for further reading, see Tomášková, 2009, p. 77).

II.3.5.2 Types of conversation

Thus far the conversation and all aspects have been discussed in general therefore it is necessary to move deeper to inspect different types of conversation. The purpose of this chapter is more informative rather than investigative, though. There are numerous types of conversation. The typological system seems to be best interpreted by Svartvik (1990) in his tremendous description of the London-Lund Corpus survey. Spoken language, often labelled simply '*speech*', can be distinguished as a dialogue or monologue. In academic literature one

may come across the term dyadic conversation. Dyadic conversations are divided into '*private conversation*' and '*public discussion*'. Since conversation is a major theme here, the division goes further to distinguish '*face-to-face conversations*' and '*telephone conversations*' (contemporarily also skype-like conversations). These types can be divided into '*spontaneous*' or '*prepared*'. Lastly, the perspective of the conversational categorization considers the recording technique as '*surreptitious*' or '*non-surreptitious*' (Svartvik, 1990, p. 12-13), (for detail, see chapter II.3.1.1.2).

At this point it would be helpful to explain what exactly is applicable in this thesis. When preparing the survey there has been a decision made to limit myself to dyadic conversations, more precisely face-to-face spontaneous conversations between two participants. The telephone conversations are not studied here nor does this thesis deal with any other types appearing in the corpus.

II.3.5.3 Conversational style

Style in its broadest sense refers to a distinguished, unique and presumably desirable way of behaving. A specific tendency of doing things (e.g. riding a bike) varies from person to person. The same contention could be easily applied to speech as talking is one of many '*actions*' and everyone talks '*differently*'. It means that if a person rides a bike in his/her own way the same person can also talk in his/her way, although the tools for both the former and latter remains the same for all people.

The analogy between the language used in conversation and the process of riding a bike is apparent. But the problem is not that straightforward, though. In fact, the definition of style as described above is not lucidly applicable to conversation as such. Tannen (2005) expounds the style of conversation to be a variety of language tools people use to communicate. One needs to know the reason for the way other speakers talk in a particular situation. The specific way of speaking equals the notion of speaker's intentional usage of linguistic features such as

tone, pausing, loudness or vocabulary (Tannen, 2005, pp. 3-4, 14). Tannen analysed the thanksgiving conversation among friends from the conversational style perspective and reflected the results in her book '*Conversational Style: Analyzing Talk among Friends*' (2005). The fresh and original findings presented in the book are considered to be highly valuable for the sociolinguistic study purposes.

Considering the semantic viewpoint on the matter Tannen also declares that '*the same linguistic and, inseparably, paralinguistic form can have different meanings depending on the speaker (who is saying it) and the context (how the speaker perceives the situation and the relationship among the participants)*' (Tannen, 2005, p. 12). Both the area of semantics as well as the area of sociolinguistics, according to Hymes, studies primarily meaning, in terms of sociolinguistics only more socially aimed. The momentous concern lies in the manner people convey the meaning of what they say in conversation (Tannen, 2005, p. 13). In this thesis not only the way people use language to express the meaning is explored but also the different ways of doing so by men and women is discussed. Tannen (2005, p. 15) commented on this matter by saying that there are a number of speech devices that men and women differ in their use.

To return to the substance of style as a manner of choosing tools at different linguistic layers within the speech it is important to clarify that numerous linguistic occurrences create only one element characterising one's individual style (Tannen, 2005, pp. 13-14). To know more about conversational style Deborah Tannen's book entitled '*You just don't understand: Women and Men in conversation*' (1990) is giving a deep examination of the style, mostly from the sociological angle regarding the roles of men and women in family.

II.3.5.3.1 Gender-lects

The previous chapter suggests the possibility of gender-specific usage of linguistic features in terms of passing the message in conversation. As mentioned in chapter commenting on social roles (II.2.2.) there is an academic hypothesis about different language

varieties determined by gender-specific conversational style (Stockwell, 2002, p. 16). There is evidence for difference in *'hypercorrection'* or *'covert prestige'* by men and women coming from the same social class and region and having the same age, and, interestingly, the findings say that women did not use as much *'prestige features'* as predicted and, equally, men did use more of them than it was initially expected (Stockwell, 2002, pp. 16-17).

The term *'genderlect'* has been eligibly used to *'refer to the different lexical and grammatical choices that are characteristically made by men and women'* which was proved by Lakoff who performed an inquiry on the topic and discovered that women tend to talk frequently about colours or use more *'evaluative adjectives'* and *'superpoliteness'* (Stockwell, 2002, p. 17). Another experiment launched by Lauren tested 5 males and 5 females on the first fifty word-like occurrences that came to their minds. The experiment resulted surprisingly due to the *'overwhelming production'* of words connected with *'surroundings'* by women whereas men occurred to be more *'abstract-based'* (Stockwell, 2002, pp. 41-42).

In respect to all scholars studying the English language and its system the term *'genderlect'* can be hyphenized thusly: *'gender-lect'*. The reason for that is simple: it derives from the term *'dialect'* that denotes a *'variety of language'*. The hyphen serves to emphasize and distinct the term. Based upon everything previously said, the existence of gender-related variety of English is evident.

II.3.6 Prosody

As suggested earlier in the theoretical part there is an analysis performed in which the transcripts of eight conversations are examined. In the transcription there are several linguistic features enabling readers to decode separate ways of different language usage. One of these features is represented by systems of prosody. For that reason this system is deeply

investigated in this chapter resulting in presentation of a table of prosodic symbols inevitably relevant for the purposes of this study.

Prosody as an area of linguistic scholarly has been much unexplored and academically mysterious (Svartvik et. al., 1990, p. 267). Nevertheless, as regards speech, that is in almost every language composed of set of sound signals following certain rhythmical patterns typical for the language used, it is not surprising that scholars concentrate on language '*sounds*', as mentioned by Gumperz (1999, p. 10) and (Wooley, 1970, p. 560). Simply put, the study of prosody deals with characterising the roles of intonation, tempo, stress, phrasing and uneven manners of expressing ideas (Crystal, 1969, p. 126), (Gumperz, 1999, p. 5).

The same levels of speech manners of participants within conversation, or simply systems, indicate a prerequisite for successful communication. One of these systems can be a '*system of signalling shifts or transitions from one activity to another*' (Gumperz, 1999, p. 6). Gumperz continues with explaining and demonstrates three processes that are on one hand isolated but on the other are connected cognitively; 1) the first one he calls '*tone grouping*', 2) the second one '*nucleus placement*' and 3) the third is a '*turn*' or '*melodic shape*' or as Holliday refers to a '*tonality, tonicity and tune*' respectively (Gumperz, 199, p. 109-110). He also clarifies that '*tone groupings*' form the base for studies of prosody and, more specifically, such groupings in English language distinguish, phonetically speaking, a '*foot*' or more '*feet*' (Gumperz, 1999, pp. 109-110).

Furthermore, Crystal & Quirk (1969, p. 44-45) describe prosodic features even more exhaustively when talking about simple and complex systems for '*tempo, prominence and pitch range*' (for further reading, see Gumperz (1999), Svartvik et. al. (1990, pp. 74-78) and Crystal & Quirk (1969).

In studied texts there are several prosodic symbols that convey additional message and are relevant for the study. Therefore the prosodic as well as the descriptive symbols are presented in the research part in chapter III.1.1.1.2.1.

II.4 Minimal responses

As the title of this chapter implies minimal responses are discussed as well as their forms, functions and general usage. When studying the fieldworks it is noticeable how much attention is drawn to the phenomenon of turn-taking but how little attention is drawn to the discussion of minimal responses in general. Therefore, as stated in the introduction, the goal of this thesis is to give a thorough sociolinguistic account of minimal responses with regard to gender differences in their usage and purpose. All extracts used for demonstration in this paper have been taken from the London-Lund Corpus, unless specified otherwise, and are designated according to the system of symbols (chapter II.3.6.1). Before moving on to the chapter dealing with turn-taking, of which the importance is not questioned here, it is necessary to clarify basic information about minimal responses first.

Briefly speaking, speakers within conversation talking with each other produce so-called '*feedback features*'. The occurrences such as /*m-hm*/ or /*hm*/ are very common and are considered being certain supportive elements (Coates, 2004, p. 87), (Duda, 2010, p.16). Although researchers use numerous terms referring to the same notion, such as back-channels, back-channel signals or backchannels, in this paper the term minimal responses is used. In some cases the verb '*back-channelling*' may be used when indicating the process or action of using minimal responses. The following extract shows a typical back-channelling:

Example 1

A it`s only four years# -

B /*m*/#

A but he has increased the pace enormously#

S.1.6 970-990

It is clear that the /*m*/ form of response serves to show that speaker B understands what speaker A says. Note the pause after the end of a tone unit of the speaker A's utterance that provides the time for speaker B's supportive response.

Generally speaking, minimal responses are used to express interest in the topic, to show support and may or may not be accompanied by facial expressions and gestures and they are typical for spoken language exclusively (Tottie, 1991, p. 255), (Duda, 2010, pp. 16-17). According to Tottie, (1991, p. 255) /m/ is among the '*most frequently used words in British English conversation and one of the most common lexical items in the London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English*'. There are, of course, numerous kinds and forms of minimal responses that are exposed in a classification of minimal responses later in the research part (see chapter II.1.1.2).

II.4.1 Functions of minimal responses

The talk of two people is possible to happen only if participants naturally exchange the turns in conversation to keep it going and, more specifically, there is one speaker who holds the floor of the conversation and the other who follows and waits for his/her turn (Yngve, 1970, p. 567), Gumperz (1999, p. 163). This illustrates the common functions of minimal responses. Yngve is interested in something more complex, though. He studies the way speakers exchange the turns, the system of holding and passing the floors (Yngve, 1970, p. 568), (Tottie, 1991, p. 256). The question of turn-taking will be further discussed in next chapter (II.4.1.1).

Among many authors Tottie (1991, p. 256) and Coates (2004, p. 87) emphasize the purpose of showing support often referred to as a '*supportive function*' and the purpose of '*encouraging*' to go on often referred to as a '*regulative function*' (Duda, 2010, pp. 16-17). Schegloff, for instance, emphasizes the regulative function of minimal responses and uses the term '*continuer*' while Duncan creates a typology and divides responses into '*verbalized signals, sentence completions, requests for clarification*' etc. (Tottie, 1991, pp. 256-7)

Furthermore, Oreström (1983), for instance, goes into the problem of functions very deeply and combines forms and functions. He describes a back-channel item as an indicator of

zero intention of turn-taking (Oreström, 1983, p. 31). After that he speaks about '*typology*' and divides responses into four different types:

1. '*supports*' expressing whether the speaker '*accept, agree or understand the message*'
2. '*exclamations*' are considered '*purely emotional expressions*'
3. '*exclamatory questions*' are considered a '*mixture of exclamations and questions*'
4. '*sentence completions and restatements*'

(Oreström, 1983, pp. 106-7)

Oreström (1983, p.107) also excludes '*requests for clarification*' and points out different possible functions of /yes/ and /no/ with an example of each function. The functions are the following:

- a) '*answers to questions*',
- b) '*objections to assertions*' and
- c) '*supports for assertions*'.

An '*assertion*' means a statement or a claim that provides other recipient with information or, in other words, recipient A informs recipient B about his/her beliefs. By contrast, '*elicits*', that is closely connected with assertions, means that participant A wants to get information from participant B. Such an elicit item could be a '*question*' or a '*command*' in '*imperative or interrogative form*' (Oreström, 1983, pp. 108-9).

It is important not to omit the role of background knowledge as mentioned earlier in theoretical part in general terms. As Labov says the background knowledge is more than important when participants exchange turns by interrupting questions. The transformation of the interruption into informational request is based on shared knowledge of speakers

(Stenström, 1983, p. 110). Labov quoted by Oreström (1983, p. 110) also points out three possible speech instances where the above-mentioned feature applies:

1) a situation in which speaker A knows the object of conversation while speaker B does not,

2) a situation in which speaker B knows the object of conversation while speaker A does not, and finally,

3) a situation in which both participants know the object of conversation (the object of conversation is considered to be the topic discussed by the speakers at the moment).

Finally, when considering the meaning of what is being said by words, Gumperz (1999, p. 164) cleverly points out that the way speakers say things influence the conveyed meaning more than the actual content with referring to prosody and intonation as a determiner of that. It is here where the connection between prosody and responses is obvious and the significance of prosody for sociolinguistic analysis is proved.

II.4.1.2 Turn-taking

The process of turn-taking has been mentioned in previous chapters several times. Since the possible functions have been discussed it is more than fitting to look at turn-taking in detail. Taking turns basically means that one person talks and the other does not and this pattern changes vice-versa but both participants are active due to back-channelling (Mulholland, 1991, p. 54), (Yngve, 1970, p. 568). Back-channelling enables either of the speakers to speak occasionally when the other holds the floor and, for instance, show support (Yngve, 1970, p. 268). Oreström (1983, p.23) is convinced that it must be distinguished that not every minimal response is purposed to yield the turn, though. Therefore he uses different terminology; '*turns and back-channel items*' and explains that the former strictly takes over the floor while the latter usually enriches the theme.

The roles of the speakers can be also emphasized or deemphasized by minimal responses as explained by Oreström (1983, p. 25) who says that either type of the response defines and indicates the activity in conversation, listener or speaker regardless. The difference between the turn and the backchannel is explicitly illustrated by Oreström (1983, p. 25) in the example which is adopted and showed below. For illustrative purposes the speakers are hypothetically switched from the second utterance on (originally: A-B-A-B-A, in the version here: A-B-B-A-B).

Example 2

- A 'did you see Sam the other day'
B '/yes/'
B 'I think he is rather happy with the new system of organization'
A '/m/'
B 'but he was against it a couple of months ago'

The first minimal response used in the example is /yes/ produced by speaker B. Speaker B thusly takes over the floor and continues with his/her utterance. Then speaker A reacts by simple /m/ but in this case without taking the turn. Rather, speaker A shows support and lets speaker B to keep holding the floor.

This example indicates that speakers are harmonious in the way they interact. All that is achieved, among other features, by minimal responses only their form and purpose changes from person to person (Yngve, 1970, p. 568), (Oreström, 1983, p. 25). Interestingly, Yngve (1970, p. 269) also draws the attention to gestures and claims that one must be careful when crediting the importance to gestures because the conversation can happen even without them.

Furthermore, Mulholland (1991, p. 55) concentrates on the strategies by which speakers yield or hold the floor. A turn can be taken over by '*grammatical constructions indicating the termination point*' or the different voicing. This statement does not specify the grammatical

construction, though. In my opinion the role of theme and rheme in the sentence/utterance produced by speakers can have its relevance too.

Moreover, speakers can, understandably, hold the floor by a '*long turn*', by changing loudness or not using pauses for breathing (Mulholland, 1991, pp. 55-6), (for further detail, see chapter II.3.7.6). For further reading about the topic a breath-taking and voluminous book '*Turn-taking in English Conversation*' by Bengt Oreström (1983) is highly recommended. Turn-taking is closely related to domination and gender-exclusive tendencies that are dealt with in chapter II.4.1.2.2.

II.4.1.2.1 Overlapping

Apart from turn-taking there are few functions subjected to turn-taking that have not been mentioned. For that reason the most interesting information concerning other functions of minimal responses are briefly summarized and presented here. Overlapping signifies presumable mistakes within conversation when speakers did not express whose turn it is and their utterances overlap, as put by Yngve (1970, p. 574).

Yngve claims that there is a possibility of simultaneous back-channelling and speaking too. When a stream of signals such as '*/uh-huh – uh-huh/*' occurs at the same time as the end or/and beginning of utterance of other speaker, the action can be, in my opinion, called '*overlapped back-channelling*' (Yngve, 1970, p. 574). One must also consider the appropriateness of such action, as not in every situation could it cause neutral effect.

II.4.1.2.2 Domination and interrupting

Many papers have been published on the matter of domination and interruption but only few dealt with the relations between dominance/interruption and minimal responses. Oreström (1983) thoroughly illustrates the result by mentioning selected experiments. Key states that men tend to interrupt more than women while Argyle, Lalljee & Cook are convinced that men

talk more in general and actually use interruption for dominating purposes (Oreström, 1983, p. 146).

Oreström also mentions a survey by Zimmerman & West who analysed more than 30 surreptitiously recorded dialogues and who recognise two different ‘*groups of turn-takings*’; 1) when a speaker is entering the talk smoothly and continuing after the previous speaker, and 2) when a speaker is violating the talk turns by entering the conversation by interrupting it (Oreström, 1983, p. 146), (for further reading, see Oreström (1983) and Yngve (1970, pp. 575-6).

The dominance features, however, do not need to be significant since the minimal response usage evidence has not been showed yet as well as the gender-specific tendency to dominate the talk. This paper confronts the problem of dominance even though the texts studied here of overall amount of approximately 35 000 words do not straightforwardly lead to one hundred per cent statistically reliable results.

II.4.1.2.3 Pausing and silence

Lastly, there is a concept of pauses and silence relevant for this paper. Pauses and silence are sometimes mixed together therefore the distinction is necessary to be made. According to Crystal (1969, p. 166) there are two types of pauses; ‘*filled and unfilled*’ or ‘*voiced and silent*’, respectively, and according to Mulholland (1991, p. 54) a pause is a ‘*short silence*’ with number of functions, such as signalling ‘*hesitancy*’ or ‘*disagreement*’ whereas silence in its pure concept is connected to rather polite ‘*zero silence*’ indicating intention or to a ‘*complete silence*’ accompanying participants’ mutual relaxation. In some cases silence means rudeness, all according to situation, circumstances and cultural differences (Válková, 2004, p. 55), (Mulholland, 1991, p. 54), (Montgomery, 1986, p. 159).

It is certain now that there are different features of speech connected with minimal responses. All the knowledge gained by theoretical research is respectfully applied in research part of this thesis.

II.5 Theoretical part summary

As implied earlier this paper focuses on language as well as its usage. It is indispensable to delve into theoretical background before the research concerning minimal responses could be commenced. What is more, sociolinguists need to be aware of all fields relating to the theme and leading to the desired problem. Therefore the theoretical part describes various fields and related phenomena. Linguistics and sociology deal with language in context of society and human communities. These two areas merge into a new field of sociolinguistics that enable researchers examine people's communicative behaviour and language as a tool for social interaction.

Apart from sociology and linguistics there are other influences that should not be overlooked. Gender studies primarily concentrate on stereotypical social roles of men and women in society and make a distinction between gender role and gender identity. More specifically, gender studies infuse sociolinguistic attitudes and expand the topic of language usage by men and women. The field of psychology enriches linguistics with findings concerning brain development and thus enable linguistics to grow into the field of psycholinguistics. Psycholinguistics provides researchers with valuable information on planning the speech production and reaction.

Going deeper, this thesis explains sociolinguistic techniques of obtaining data as well as the scrutiny methods. The conversation, conversational styles and contextualization are discussed and lead to the definition of dialogue. Through the theory of prosody and specific symbols used this paper deals with minimal responses and their functions.

This paper also addresses possible ways of application sociolinguistic findings in language teaching. According to Cohen (2001, p. 410) teaching speech acts, or simply speaking, to foreign learners may be efficiently managed by deliberation of '*situational features*' and different conversational strategies, in context with this paper, used by men and

women. Apart from teaching speaking, sociolinguistic findings may be reflected when preparing subject syllabi, for example a notional-functional or situational syllabus. The above-mentioned are further discussed later in the summary of the research part.

III RESEARCH PART

III.1 The scrutiny

III.1.1 Description

In the theoretical part there are several characteristics of the analysis mentioned. In the following chapters the basic characteristics of the scrutiny presented in this thesis is described. Also this chapter specifies the source of material used in the analysis of which the conversations were depicted for the study. What is more, the classification of minimal responses is introduced in the research part of this paper. Basic symbols used in the analysis description are presented here as well as the outline of the scrutiny that is perceived as a prerequisite to successful analysis and understanding the procedures.

At this point the reference to a pattern developed by Stockwell (2002, p. 2), paraphrased in chapter II.3.1.1, stating that one should make a scrutiny plan containing positively verified points 1-3 is fitting. For intelligible purposes these questions are answered to make sure that:

- 1) The matter of investigation is viable – yes, minimal responses has been studied by several renowned scholars and are considered a linguistic feature.
- 2) The matter of investigation is a constant quality – yes, minimal responses are very common in speech and occur frequently.
- 3) The quality can be systematically reported on – yes, the analysis presented in this paper is being done according to a step-by-step planned research, in a thorough, determined way.

III.1.1.1 Source of data

Over the years there has been a huge increase in the development of academic material based on a spoken variety of any language all over the world. Many scholars, though,

specialize in studying spoken English that has resulted in several data sources available for analysts. Prominent linguists and sociolinguists such as Victor Yngve, Karin Aijmer & Bengt Altenberg or David Crystal have presented fieldworks in honour to Jan Svartvik's and Randolph Quirk's groundbreaking and remarkable corpus, usually referred to as the London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English. The corpus is described in detail in the next chapter.

III.1.1.1.1 The London-Lund Corpus

As mentioned earlier, the London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English, or simply referred to by an abbreviation as LLC, has been used as the primary data source of the scrutiny carried out in this diploma thesis. In 1959 Randolph Quirk launched the Survey of English Usage (SEU) at University College London in London and, similarly, in 1975 Jan Svartvik started the Survey of Spoken English (SSE) at Lund University in Lund as a SEU sister project. Shortly after that, Jan Svartvik became an initiator of the London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English which was comprised of the two above-mentioned projects (Svartvik et.al., 1990, p. 11), (Duda, 2010, p. 22).

The London-Lund Corpus originally consisting of 87 texts has been supplemented by another 13 texts to form the '*complete*' London-Lund Corpus. It is necessary to mention all abbreviations referring to a particular corpus version. LLC officially refers to the '*original London-Lund Corpus*' while LLC:s refers to the '*supplement*' of 13 texts and LLC:c refers to the '*complete London-Lund Corpus*' containing 100 texts, that represent 100 spoken conversations transcribed into written form (Svartvik et al., 1990, pp. 14, 19).

The London-Lund Corpus is available for academic purposes both in printed and computerized (or electronic) form. For purposes in this paper the access to the electronic format was permitted by Lund University and the access to any audio-visual versions of the LLC has never been gained. In this thesis the complete London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English is referred to simply as LLC, leaving supplement and original corpus form aside.

It is appropriate to make it plain that there is existence of other sources of topic-related data such as British National Corpus (BNC) etc. The fact that the LLC could be referred to as a dated document is taken into account. Nevertheless, the decision to use the LLC primarily has been made for several reasons:

- 1) the matter of investigation is not evidently determined by the present-day language change,
- 2) the interest lies mostly in dialogues and spoken British English, as the corpus is an invaluable resource of mostly dialogic transcribed conversations by educated British speakers (unless indicated otherwise) (Válková, 2004, p 134), (Svartvik et. al., 1990, p. 19),
- 3) and lastly, the attendant book titled the London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English: Description and Research edited by Jan Svartvik (Svartvik et. al., 1990) provides information on the corpus, more detailed, information on text category, year of recording, speaker category and age etc. The research book informs about thorough linguistic findings based on the LLC by several renowned scholars and presents the TESS project description (Svartvik, 1990, pp. 3, 19). The third reason is also the reason for choosing the London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English: Description and Research book (1990) as a secondary source of the investigation in this paper.

The above-discussed explanatory reasons directly and explicitly suggest the invaluable significance and relevance of the LLC as a primary data source in this paper.

III.1.1.1.2 Dyadic conversations

III.1.1.1.2.1 Prosodic symbols

Before the description of conversation standards it would be helpful to present basic descriptive and prosodic symbols. In studied texts there are several prosodic symbols that convey additional message to the analyst. Svartvik et. al. (1990, p. 7) shows a table of

symbols used in his research book. He divides these symbols into categories according to its type and function. The typology of prosodic symbols consists of comments, tone units, boosters etc.

To keep the symbols a simple and supporting feature for the analysis these categories are not combined. To some extent Svartvik's division is respectfully adopted with emphasis on the symbol itself and on what he calls '*explanation*' (Svartvik et. al., 1990, p. 7). In this paper the term '*function*' is used according to the function the symbol has in the transcript. To make the matter less complex all symbols considered being the most relevant for the study in this paper are showed below:

General description:

Example:

Explanation:

S.2.2	→	distinguishing text/number of conversation
380-430	→	text location
A, B	→	speakers

Prosodic symbols:

Example:

Explanation:

'no	→	normal stress
"no	→	heavy stress
#, ■	→	end of tone unit
∨, ^	→	fall-rise, rise-fall
no	→	simultaneous talk
+no+	→	simultaneous talk
no·no, no-no	→	pauses

/italics/ → minimal responses

III.1.1.1.2.2 Standards

As for the format of data the analysis is limited to dyadic conversations, or simply dialogues. The selected face-to-face mixed or same-sex spontaneous conversations were recorded surreptitiously. There are a few speakers who knew they were recorded, though. Such speakers are denoted by using lower case letters (*a* or *b*). This fact does not negatively affect the research due to the obligation of such speakers to keep the conversation going. In other words speakers might use more responses in order to do that but provide equally valuable information on form and function as those who did not know they were recorded (Svartvik et.al., 1990, pp .11-19, 20-45). The speakers are educated British (unless indicated otherwise) (Svartvik et.al., 1990, pp. 11-19, 20-45).

III.1.1.1.2.3 Descriptions

Rested on the criteria mentioned in prior subchapter eight dyadic conversations out of seventeen have been chosen. Six of them represent mixed-sex talks and two of them same-sex talks. In this subchapter the conversations are introduced separately. The information has been adopted from the description by Svartvik et.al. (1990, pp. 19-45). Some texts were used in my bachelor thesis (Duda, 2010), from the point of view of method of analysis, differently though. Such conversations are marked (for future reference) with (b) in brackets after the number [(b) refers to '*bachelor thesis*']. It is necessary to inform the reader on the fact that the speakers' names were chosen randomly by me and thus in any case do not intentionally refer to real persons.

Text S.1.1 → **Conversation 1(b)**

Speaker A: **Frank**, male academic, aged 44

Speaker B: **Henry**, male academic, aged 60

Text S.1.6 → **Conversation 2(b)**

Speaker A: **Hillary**, female academic, aged 45

Speaker B: **Jack**, male academic, aged 28

Text S.2.11a → **Conversation 3**

Speaker A: **Charles**, male computer specialist, aged 30

Speaker b: **Kate**, female research worker, aged 25

Text S.2.12 → **Conversation 4(b)**

Speaker a: **Rose**, female teacher, aged 25

Speaker A: **Joan**, female medical nurse, aged 23

Text S.3.2a → **Conversation 5**

Speaker A: **David**, male academic, aged 52

Speaker B: **Helen**, female ex-researcher assistant, aged 30

Text S.3.2c → **Conversation 6**

Speaker A: **Roy**, male academic, aged 50

Speaker B: **Caroline**, female academic, aged 30

Text S.4.1 → **Conversation 7**

Speaker a: **William**, male undergraduate, aged 25

Speaker b: **Sarah**, female teacher and housewife, aged 24, (married to William)

Text S.4.2 → **Conversation 8**

Speaker a: **Dan**, male solicitor, aged 40

Speaker b: **Lily**, female academic, aged 26

Following the basic but essential information on the conversations, the focus turns to the classification of minimal responses in the next chapter. In the classifications there is information gained from all 8 conversations. The findings relating to each conversation separately are thoroughly discussed later.

III.1.1.2 Classification of minimal responses

The notion of quick responses has caused a great deal of interest of many scholars, as mentioned previously, and therefore there is a need for classification of such responses. Among those who divided responses into different categories is undoubtedly Bengt Oreström (1983). Although Oreström concentrated mainly on turn-taking in dyadic conversation he found out several facts about minimal responses. In Oreström's opinion, who studied ten dyadic conversations from the London-Lund Corpus, minimal responses are simply '*items*' purposed mainly for turn-taking activities. Oreström found that the most common responses are /m/ and /yes/ while /hmm/, /no/ and /yeah/ are rather rare and, unlike in this study, he excluded /you know/ and /you see/ (Tottie, 1991, pp. 258-9).).

In this research, the results of frequency in which the responses are used are similar to those presented by Oreström as the most frequently used minimal responses are /m/ and /yes/. Interestingly, /yeah/ as a response is the third most commonly used minimal response (for further detail, see chapter III.1.1.2.2).

In the following subchapters three different classifications are presented concerning with form, frequency and function respectively. The reason for such an arrangement is that the form is considered to be the first feature of a response that one faces with frequency of occurrence whereas function follows the form.

III.1.1.2.1 Form classification

There are researchers that describe minimal responses in a complex way by using several categories such as Shegloff or Oreström

(for further detail, see Oreström, 1983, pp.106-7, and Tottie, 1991, p. 266). This paper with respect to all researchers presents a classification of minimal responses isolating the form from the frequency and function. Nevertheless, several terms are adopted from the division used by authors such as Tottie (1991), Orestöm (1983) or Stenström (1984).

The classification adopted for this thesis aims at being explicit and informative rather than implicit and shallow. There are fifty-seven different forms of responses (laughs and tag questions are considered as a single unit each). All forms of minimal responses found in the texts are demonstrated in the table 1 below. The frequency classification as well as the function classification is illustrated in chapters III.1.1.2.2 and III.1.1.2.3 respectively.

Table 1

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Sub-classification</i>	<i>Form</i>
Basic		mhm, ɜ:m, m, hm, uh, oh, no, yes, ah, yep, um, ooh, aha, yeah, e- hm, uhuh, uh-huh, m-hm, hm-hm, wow, really, right, well, quite, sure, great, why
Compound		oh no, oh yes, oh yeah, oh-really, oh-well, ah yes, oh I see, ah yeah, I mean, that's right, you think so, you didn't, I don't know, you know, yes of course, of course, OK, all right so, I see, are you
Extra	<u>Exclamations</u>	oh-Christ, Jesus, oh dear, oh gosh, my gosh
	<u>Tag questions</u>	didn't you, have you, has she, do they
	<u>Laughs</u>	

In table 1 there are three categories presented:

1) in the basic category there are simple one-syllable or two-syllable responses such as /hm/ or /u-huh/ and words such as /really/ or /sure/. Since speakers usually pronounce these short forms very quickly they are all in the basic category,

2) the second category of compounds contains responses that consist of two or more elements.

3) the rest of minimal responses is included in the extra category, but subdivided into exclamations, tag questions and laughs.

The reasons for the extra category are as following: a) the exclamations such as */oh-Christ/* or */oh-gosh/* refers to either proper names ('*Christ*') or the concept of '*God*' and b) speakers use strong rise-fall intonation and thus make the response exclamatory as demonstrated in the example below:

Example 3

a ^but [@:m] he couldn` t do them this week#

b /^(oh) Christ#

a he was " ^going on holiday# -

S.4.2 130-160

As tag questions and laughs highly contrast all other forms they are included in special subcategories. Tag questions used by a speaker as a response are derived from the grammatical structure of previous sentence produced by the other speaker, which is noticeable in the example below:

Example 4

A and it ^told us in the programme# we were ^only going to get sixty minutes for our interval# -

B /did it/

A and in ^fact# we ^had well over 'seventy-five#

S.2.11a 970-1010

Furthermore, the form of laughs is intriguing as laughs do not possess any linguistic form and could be taken as a '*non-format verbal response*'. Nevertheless, laughter is included in all three classifications in this paper and its purpose will be discussed in chapter III.1.1.2.3.

III.1.1.2.2 Frequency classification

This chapter looks at frequency in which minimal responses occur in all eight dialogues. Table 2 below shows the frequency of selected forms of minimal responses found in the analysed texts. For the frequency classification of all forms, see appendix 1.

In order to make the frequency overview easy to follow the figures are matched with the desired formats in descending order. After that there are several comments made on each conversation with regard to overall frequency classification of minimal responses.

The frequency of minimal responses follows the form classification and shows the most frequent units of all fifty-two distinctive forms in *table 2* below:

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Sub-classification</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Basic		<i>/m/</i>	374
		<i>/yes/</i>	182
		<i>/yeah/</i>	84
Compound		<i>/You know/</i>	7
		<i>/oh well/</i>	4
		<i>/I see/</i>	4
Extra	<u><i>Exclamations</i></u>	<i>/oh dear/</i>	2
	<u><i>Tag questions</i></u>	<i>/didn't you/have you/has she/</i>	10
	<u><i>Laughs</i></u>	<i>/laughs/</i>	185

As mentioned above, table 2 shows the most frequent units of response categories. As pointed out earlier, Stenström (1983) states that */m/* and */yes/* are the most common instances (Tottie, 1991, pp. 258-9). Thus the results of the investigation at this point meet the results made by Oreström. The total occurrence of */m/* is noticeably higher than any other, which is no surprise. The occurrence of laughs as responses is almost twenty times higher than the occurrence of other extra forms, such as tag questions or exclamations. At this point making

any conclusions would be premature as there is the last but not least important category of functions to be classified.

There are significant differences in the units' frequency within each conversation. Table 3 below shows the response occurrence in each text regarding the particular speakers in the instances of occurrence and in per cent. To keep the table simple there are no names used. Speakers are designated by upper case letters or lower case letters (see chapter III.1.1.2.2).

Table 3

<i>Text</i>	<i>Speaker A(a)</i>		<i>Speaker B(b)</i>		<i>Total</i>
S.1.1	120	71.1%	49	28.9%	169
S.1.6	111	62.4%	67	37.6%	178
S.1.12	29	17.2%	140	82.8%	169
S.2.11a	3	6%	47	94%	50
S.3.2a	50	36.5%	87	63.5%	137
S.3.2c	10	19.2%	42	80.8%	52
S.4.1	55	26%	98	44%	153
S.4.2	119	61%	76	39%	195

Generally speaking, according to the results shown in table 3 there are speakers that tend to produce more minimal responses. The most productive speakers appear to be speaker B in conversation S.1.12 and speaker A in conversation S.1.1. More information is provided later on in this paper.

What is more, in total speakers labelled A used 45.1 per cent of all responses while speakers labelled B used 54.9 per cent of all responses. The total of one hundred per cent equals the total of 1102 instances (as suggested earlier).

Finally, the differences in frequency of minimal responses used by men and women are presented in the table 4 below. Generally, women use more minimal responses than men. The information is used later in this paper when discussing gender differences in the usage of responses and different strategies.

Table 4

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Units	499	604	1103
Per cent (%)	45,2 %	54,8 %	100 %

III.1.1.2.3 Function classification

Apart from form and frequency classification it is necessary to discuss the functions of minimal responses. In my bachelor thesis there is a division of minimal responses into two main categories ('*basic*' and '*advanced*') and four subcategories according to '*their interest and emotional effect*' stating that basic minimal responses '*tend to repeat as a supportive signal without any other intention*' (Duda, 2010, p. 25). I am not completely satisfied with this division due to the fact that it combines form and purpose. Within the framework of this thesis such a division does not make a one hundred per cent sense.

With respect to all researchers and their function classifications (for detail, see chapter II.4.1) the findings and knowledge are partly applied in this paper in order to develop the desired classification of back-channels. The function classification of minimal responses reflecting their purposes is clearly presented in the table 5 below:

Table 5

<i>Function classification</i>	<i>Sub-classification</i>
1. Regulars	
2. Supports	<u><i>Less/more emotional</i></u>
3. Continuers	
4. Turn-takers	
5. Overlaps	
+ Pauses	

There are five categories that are divided according to the function and one extra category concerning pauses as a unique phenomenon. Nevertheless, the function of showing interest is not classified as a separate function as it can be included as a function in all categories. The presented functions may be mixed according to the situation in which the response is used.

Minimal responses classified as *regulars* are brief, spontaneous replies. These answers or replies do not usually contain strong emotions and serve to indicate the speaker (responder) that he/she follows the flow of utterances of the other speaker (producer). Regulars are very often produced in basic forms such as /hm/ or /m-hm/. The regular function of a minimal response is demonstrated in the example below:

Example 5

A ^for a for a ^week# - for ^both of us# ^and for [@:m] a fortnight for you#

b /m/

A ^right through 'till - - Thursday fourteenth# ^Sunday - the seventeenth#

S.2.11a 670-740

Supports are such responses that allow the responder to show his/her support to the speaker. Supports occur in a variety of forms such as /great/ or /why/. Supports are further divided according to the level of interest as less or more emotional. For instance, basic /wow/ or extra exclamations such as /Jesus/ indicate higher emotional level of the reply. Supportive function can be expressed by any which form of responses and could be combined with the function of regulars. A minimal response such as /wow/ can function as a regular or a support or a combination of both, depending on the way the speaker says the word. The context as well as prosodic features accompanying the transcript indicate the nature of the response and allow analyst to specify the function. Such a combination is illustrated in the example below due to the response being produced simultaneously with words of the at-the-time speaker:

Example 6

- A ^stay in# -^on . a sort of *month* 'month 'type basis# -
a */wow/*
A sort of you ^won` t have to 'pay rent# ^do stay you know#

S.2.12 640-680

Laughter should not be omitted as it is considered highly emotional and usually a very spontaneous response. In its form laughter is considered an extra response and in its function laughter is often highly supportive and encourages speakers to talk.

Next category marks *continuers* that function to prompt the speaker who is talking to continue the talk. Continuers are used when the speaker who is speaking does not intend to terminate the talk. In this case such a continuer can combine both emotional and supportive functions. Continuers can be realized by an extra response category such as a tag question which is illustrated in the example below:

Example 7

- b it ^says a vaccination# - -
a ^/does it/# -
b ^well# it was ^always said on the news# that you ^must have a cholera
 vaccination#

S.4.2 380-450

Continuers could be also further sub-classified as assertions and elicits according to the intention of the response producer. Nevertheless, this division is not included in the function classification in this paper. It is rather a suggestion of a possibility. There can be a possibility that a minimal response is followed by a clause that poses the same purpose as the minimal response and therefore the whole utterance can be considered responsive elicit. Such a situation is illustrated in the example below:

Example 8: Elicit

- A ^very cleverly 'done# that ^tiny stage# .

- b /uhuh/ /who else was in it/
A ^Ryland Davies# - .

S.2.11a 400-430

In contrast to continuers, *turn-takers* enable the recipient to take over the floor of the conversation. Turn-takers are considered to be very common and natural in any conversation. Their production depends on the context, pace as well as speakers' intentions. The natural exchange of the turns can be violated by interruptions, though. It is necessary to point out that some turn-takers may be even intentionally interruptive. If so, the interruptive turn-taker enables the response producer to take over the floor. The interruptive manner of turn-taking is considered violent but effective and does not necessarily indicate rudeness. The following example shows a typical turn-taking function of a basic response which is neither interruptive nor overlapping:

Example 9

- a you ^always have passengers# .
b ^/m/# . don't think I've "ever driven on my ^own## - - -
a ^big adventure#
b ^/m/# ^nobody`s 'ever trusted me# with a ^car before do you 'understand#.

S.4.2 030-090

Rarely, laughter can function as a turn-taker. Since laughs are highly emotional and they might not be interruptive elements, rather laughs can behave as natural turn-takers as presented in the example below:

Example 10

- A computer 'business# that I ^don't know how his PhD is going#
B - /laughs/ - ^shouldn't 'think# he ^had much time left# -

S.1.6 690-720

Overlaps occur spontaneously however in some cases overlapping might indicate intentional purpose of a speaker to interrupt the talk and, presumably, take over the floor.

Overlaps should be distinguished from simultaneous talk, however, in this study no particular overlapping instances for intention of interrupting or tur-taking have been found.

Lastly, in this paper *pauses* are considered an extra function category for several reasons:

- a) pauses do not possess a linguistic form,
- b) in most cases they are expressed by silence,
- c) sometimes pauses may act as a response when providing speakers with time.

Pauses usually precede and follow laughs and thus enable speakers to make proper timing for laughter. In some cases pauses follow laughter repeatedly in a row as shown in the example below:

Example 11

- A it`s ^always like this#*.
- B */laughs/ - - - *

S.3.2a 190-200

Furthermore, a brief pause can follow a minimal response in a natural way not indicating any extra purpose. On the other hand, in some occasions a pause can suggest speaker`s hesitation that enables the other speaker to take over the floor. Another occasion may suggest that a pause function as an additional supportive element to the prior supportive response as demonstrated in the example below:

Example 12

- A certainly 'no bigger than 'Nottingham 'Street#
- a /m/ - -
- A well I ^guess the 'second double bedroom`s a

S.2.12 050-070

Since all three classifications are introduced, at this point the importance of intonation needs to be discussed. As suggested earlier, prosodic symbols enable researchers to look at intonation and its affect on minimal responses. More specifically, prosody provides researchers with transcription of the form of intonation as well as function. For instance, some of basic minimal responses such as /m/ or /yes/ behave in fact as one-syllable utterances. There is a distinction of tones that affect the level of interest or emotions of minimal responses.

The relations are presented below together with response types according to the function classification:

Intonation form

Minimal responses

Simple tones

Level

(pitch at a constant level)

neutral level of interest – regulars, turn-takers

Falling

(pitch descending lower

lower level of interest - regulars, supports, turn-takers

Rising

(pitch ascending higher)

higher level of interest - supports, continuers, turn-takers

Complex tones

Fall-rise

(pitch descending/ascending)

high level of interest - supports, continuers, turn-takers

Rise fall

(pitch ascending/descending)

high level of interest, high level of emotions, supports, continuers, turn-takers

Generally, the functions of responses that are affected by the tones change according to the situation in which they occur. For instance, turn-takers in either of forms presented in the function classification can be affected by either of the tones described above; therefore they are repeatedly included in the classification above. Nevertheless, the variety of tones changes of produced turn-takers change according to the response form and situation.

III.1.2 Conversations

In this chapter each conversation is described separately, as suggested earlier, and the general classifications of minimal responses presented earlier are further utilized specifically to each conversation thusly:

- a) Form classification,
- b) Frequency classification, and
- c) Function classification.

For the illustrative purpose only the most intriguing or explicitly descriptive situations are prioritized and demonstrated in examples. What is more, in this scrutiny stage the speakers are considered separately with regard to the gender. Therefore each dialogue description serves as a particular summary of the phenomena studied in this thesis. The generalizations and answers to the questions this paper addresses are presented in the summary of the research part and in the conclusion.

III.1.2.1 Conversation 1

Text S.1.1 → **Conversation 1(b)**

Speaker A: Frank, male academic, aged 44

Speaker B: Henry, male academic, aged 60

This conversation represents a same-sex talk between two educated men Frank and Henry. Neither of the speakers was aware of being recorded during the conversation.

a) *Form classification*

Frank (A) → **Basic:** hm, m, yes, no, ah, yeah, eh, m-hm, well, hm-hm

Compound: I see, oh-well, you know

Extra: laughs, has she, did you

Henry (B) → **Basic:** aha, m, yes, no, yeah, m-hm, well, hm-hm

Compound: oh really

Extra: laughs

Frank and Henry produce basic forms of minimal responses nearly on the same level of equality. Henry, though, uses compound responses more often than Frank. Henry excludes tag question as minimal responses while Frank derives a tag question from the previous utterance. Both men produced laughter as a response.

b) *Frequency classification (in %)*

	<i>Frank (A)</i>	<i>Henry (B)</i>
Basic	70 %	30 %
Compound	80 %	20 %
Extra	80 %	20 %

(For table of units, see appendix 2)

Frank produces minimal responses noticeably more often than Henry. Frank also excels in using various forms of responses more often. For instance, Frank uses /m/ form thirty-four times and /yes/ form forty-four times. Interestingly, both speakers engaged themselves in laughing six times.

c) *Function classification*

	<i>Frank (A)</i>	<i>Henry (B)</i>
Regulars	✓	✓
Supports	✓	✓
Continuers	✓	✓
Turn-takers	✓	✓
Pauses	✓	✓

Since Frank uses minimal responses more frequently he uses them mostly as regulars. There are instances when a basic or compound response supports the other speaker indicating agreement. In this conversation supports used are mostly less emotional. Henry dominates the conversation, nevertheless, the turn-taking processes flow naturally and no interruptive response instances have been found. The nature of the conversation is rather neutral from the point of view of emotions. On the other hand, the above-mentioned natural turn-taking processes indicate spontaneity as visible in the example below:

Example 13

- B the ^two phonemic . cluster# . ^no#* - - - /laughs/*
A * - - - /laughs/* - ((^that`s [@])) ^where did you hear that# you ^must have coined ((this)) yourself#
B ^/well/# [@] *I ^put* I ^put the linguistic jargon

S.1.1 260-320

Furthermore, both speakers reflect a lower level of interest in their responses and no special pause purposes have been found. Since both speakers are men the overall interactive equality without any extreme or extraordinary instances is predictable.

III.1.2.2 Conversation 2

Text S.1.6 → **Conversation 2(b)**

Speaker A: **Hillary**, female academic, aged 45

Speaker B: **Jack**, male academic, aged 28

This conversation represents a mixed-sex talk between two educated people named Hillary and Jack. Neither of the speakers was aware of being recorded during the conversation.

a) Form classification

Hillary (A) → **Basic:** m, yes, ooh, no, uhuh, yeah, oh

Compound: I mean, oh really, oh-well, oh yes, you know, of course

Extra: laughs, oh dear, my gosh

Jack (B) → **Basic:** m, um, yes, no, ah, uhuh, oh, m-hm

Compound: /

Extra: laughs, have you

Hillary and Jack produce basic forms equally. Interestingly, Jack does not use compound forms at all whereas Hillary produces compound responses very frequently. None of the speakers avoid laughing in the conversation. Note that Hillary uses extra exclamatory responses while Jack produces a tag question, excluding exclamations completely. Generally, Hillary uses a wider range of forms of minimal responses.

b) Frequency classification (in %)

	<i>Hillary (A)</i>	<i>Jack (B)</i>
Basic	65 %	35 %
Compound	100 %	0 %
Extra	62 %	38 %

(For table of units, see appendix 3)

Hillary produces minimal responses noticeably more often than Jack. Hillary also excels at using various forms of responses more often. For instance, she uses /m/ form thirty-four times and /yes/ form forty-four times. Interestingly, both speakers engaged themselves in laughing six times. Since Hillary is a women and Jack is a man it is obvious that in this conversation Hillary used minimal responses more often than Jack.

c) Function classification

	<i>Hillary (A)</i>	<i>Jack (B)</i>
Regulars	✓	✓
Supports	✓	✓
Continuers	✓	✓
Turn-takers	✓	✓
Pauses	✓	✓

Both speakers produce minimal responses for a wide range of functions. Regulars occur frequently as well as supports. Hillary, as predicted, produces more emotional supports than Jack. On the other, Jack offers highly supportive responses that function as continuers too as presented in the example below. Note the occurrence of pauses that Jack provides with proper timing:

Example 14

- A and ****^not**** come and made# his dra"^^matic statement like this# .
- B ***/m/#*** - -
- B *****/m/#**** - -
- B ***/m/#**
- A **^wouldn` t 'he#**
- B ***/m/#** -
- B ***/m/#*** -

S.1.6 680-750

Generally speaking, Hillary naturally dominates the talk in the first half of the conversation, whereas Jack naturally dominates the talk in the second half of the conversation. This fact, however, does not mean that either Hillary or Jack is considered to be exclusively dominating.

III.1.2.3 Conversation 3

Text S.2.11a → **Conversation 3**

Speaker A: **Charles**, male computer specialist, aged 30

Speaker b: **Kate**, female research worker, aged 25

This text represents a mixed-sex talk between Charles and Kate. Speaker *b* was aware of being recorded during the conversation.

a) Form classification

Charles (A) → **Basic:** m,

Compound: oh no

Extra: /

Kate (b) → **Basic:** m, uh-huh, yeah, oh, yes, ah

Compound: oh really, oh no, ah yes

Extra: laughs, did it, oh did you

It is clear that Kate produces more minimal responses in a wide range of forms. Charles, in contrast, produces only two forms of minimal responses. Kate also excludes extra responses.

b) Frequency classification (in %)

	<i>Charles (A)</i>	<i>Kate (b)</i>
Basic	8 %	92 %
Compound	0 %	100 %
Extra	0 %	100 %

(For table of units, see appendix 4)

Kate is considered a more productive speaker in terms of responses usage. Kate offered basic responses thirty-seven times while Charles only three times.

c) Function classification

	<i>Charles (A)</i>	<i>Kate (b)</i>
Regulars	✓	✓
Supports	×	✓
Continuers	×	✓
Turn-takers	×	×
Pauses	✓	✓

Noticeably, in this conversation Kate tends to be highly supportive. Kate, among other forms, uses tag questions for that purposes. Supports combine the function of continuers and prompts Charles to continue as demonstrated in the example below:

Example 15

- A and it ^told us in the programme# we were ^only going to get sixty minutes for our interval# -
- b /did it/
- A and in ^fact# we ^had well over 'seventy-five# ^so *^so*
- b */oh did you/*

S.2.11a 970-030

Clearly, Charles naturally dominates the talk. This fact is indicated by the high frequency of responses used by Kate. She does not use turn-takers, but rather supports and continues therefore her production is considered highly supportive and encouraging. Interestingly, despite the fact that Charles dominates the talk he does not use any turn-takers.

III.1.2.4 Conversation 4

Text S.2.12 → Conversation 4(b)

Speaker a: **Rose**, female teacher, aged 25

Speaker A: **Joan**, female medical nurse, aged 23

This text is a same-sex conversation between two women named Rose and Joan. Speaker *a* was aware of being recorded during the conversation.

a) Form classification

Rose (a) → **Basic:** wow, m, yes, no, yeah, oh, m.hm, well, right

Compound: oh yeah, oh yes, I see, I don't know

Extra: laughs

Joan (A) → **Basic:** yes, no, yeah, oh

Compound: oh yes

Extra: laughs, did you

Rose produces a wider range of forms while Joan offers only seven forms within the conversation.

b) Frequency classification (in %)

	<i>Rose (a)</i>	<i>Joan (A)</i>
Basic	95 %	5 %
Compound	86 %	14 %
Extra	55 %	30 %

(For table of units, see appendix 5)

c) Function classification

	<i>Rose (a)</i>	<i>Joan (A)</i>
Regulars	✓	✓
Supports	✓	×
Continuers	✓	×
Turn-takers	×	×
Pauses	✓	✓

Joan uses laughter mostly simultaneously with Rose as a reaction to the utterance of hers. Therefore, laughter is not considered a support but is considered highly emotional element. Rose produces different types of compounds as well as basic forms that are highly supportive which is demonstrated in the example below:

Example 16

- A ^several days of the week "since# .but ^that was :√all# - -
a /m/
A ^has she got a flat-mate# -
a /I don` t know/
A or has ^Alan not gone yet# you ^did get a 'long way last night#

Joan naturally dominates the talk and neither of the speakers uses turn-takers for the purposes of taking over the floor. The high frequency of laughter occurrence signals spontaneity which is predictable since both speakers are women.

III.1.2.5 Conversation 5

Text S.3.2a → **Conversation 5**

Speaker A: **David**, male academic, aged 52

Speaker B: **Helen**, female ex-researcher assistant, aged 30

This text represents a mixed-sex conversation between David and Helen. Neither of the speakers was aware of being recorded during the conversation.

a) Form classification

David (A) → **Basic:** 3:m, m, yeah, no, yes, right, well, quite, sure

Compound: OK

Extra: are you

Helen (B) → **Basic:** 3:m, m, hm, yeah, really, oh, no, yes, m-hm, well,

Compound: oh yes, you know

Extra: laughs

Surprisingly, both speakers use several forms of responses, although mainly basic ones. David excludes laughs and is the only speaker in all conversations studied in this paper who used a compound /OK/.

b) Frequency classification (in %)

	<i>David (A)</i>	<i>Helen (B)</i>
Basic	37 %	63 %
Compound	33 %	67 %
Extra	20 %	80 %

(For table of units, see appendix 6)

Helen produces more than sixty per cent of all responses in the conversation.

c) *Function classification*

	<i>David (A)</i>	<i>Helen (B)</i>
Regulars	✓	✓
Supports	×	✓
Continuers	×	✓
Turn-takers	✓	×
Pauses	✓	✓

David dominates the talk although occasionally, at the time when Helen dominates the talk, David uses turn-takers as illustrated in the example below:

Example 17

- B ^just 'said *one* ^thing## and ^I said I must 'see you# /laughs/ .
A *^/yeah/#*
A ^/yeah/#
A ^/yeah/# . [@:] . ^is to . "ferry 'up the M . one# .
A to wherever you are "living

S.3.2a 990-070

Helen is a highly supportive as well as emotional speaker in this conversation. She tends to produce more responses and do not use any particular turn-takers. Mostly, the flow of conversational turns is natural.

III.1.2.6 Conversation 6

Text S.3.2c → Conversation 6

Speaker A: **Roy**, male academic, aged 50

Speaker B: **Caroline**, female academic, aged 30

This conversation represents a mixed-sex talk between two educated people named Roy and Caroline. Neither of the speakers was aware of being recorded during the conversation.

a) Form classification

Roy (A) → **Basic:** m, yeah, right

Compound: /

Extra: /

Caroline (B) → **Basic:** m, yeah, no, yes, m-hm, well,

Compound: oh-really, you know, ah yeah, that's right

Extra: do they

Caroline offers more compounds while Roy excludes compounds and extras completely.

b) Frequency classification (in %)

	<i>Roy (A)</i>	<i>Caroline (B)</i>
Basic	21 %	79 %
Compound	0 %	100 %
Extra	0 %	100 %

(For table of units, see appendix 7)

c) Function classification

	<i>Roy (A)</i>	<i>Caroline (B)</i>
Regulars	✓	✓
Supports	×	✓
Continuers	×	✓

Turn-takers ✓ ✓

Pauses ✓ ✓

Roy dominates the whole talk. The most intriguing concept of function is the turn-taking one. Even though Roy dominates the talk he uses only one turn-taker. The situation is demonstrated below:

Example 18

- B all right I th/ink#
A "^^/yeah/# they`re perfectly willing#
A they`re ^perfectly 'willing to 'talk to ^talk in

S.3.2c 760-790

Similarly, even though Caroline does not dominate the conversation in one occasion she takes over the floor by using a minimal response. The situation is illustrated in the example below:

Example 19

- A ^how 'near we`re 'getting to [dhi:] . 'magic 'sixty-four#
B ^/m/# . ^/m/# .
B /well/ I ^think we`re onto a good thing with 'this cassette# be^cause the only other - commercially

S.3.2c 250-290

Furthermore, Caroline is considered a more supportive speaker as she uses more regulars in combination with supports. Surprisingly, there is no laughter in this conversation.

III.1.2.7 Conversation 7

Text S.4.1 → Conversation 7

Speaker a: **William**, male undergraduate, aged 25

Speaker b: **Sarah**, female teacher and housewife, aged 24, (married to William)

This conversation represents a mixed-sex talk between William and Sarah. Both speakers were aware of being recorded during the conversation.

a) Form classification

William (a) → **Basic:** m, yeah, really, oh, no, yes, ah, m-hm, well, why

Compound: you didn't, oh I see

Extra: laughs, did you

Sarah (b) → **Basic:** yep, 3:m, m, yeah, really, oh, no, yes, right, m-hm, well, great, why

Compound: you think so

Extra: laughs

Despite the fact the speakers are of different gender they both produce more or less the same range of response forms.

b) Frequency classification (in %)

	<i>William (a)</i>	<i>Sarah (b)</i>
Basic	36 %	64 %
Compound	66 %	34 %
Extra	32 %	68 %

(For table of units, see appendix 8)

c) Function classification

	<i>William (a)</i>	<i>Sarah (b)</i>
Regulars	✓	✓
Supports	✓	✓
Continuers	✓	✓
Turn-takers	✓	✓

Pauses ✓ ✓

Both speakers use all functional responses. Sarah, however, uses more turn-takers. This fact is surprising but does not mean that Sarah tend to interrupts. In contrast, there is an equal domination in the conversation with natural turn-taking processes. A rather complex situation in which speakers combine regulars, turn-takers and spontaneous laughter with pause is presented below:

Example 20

- a she`ll ^have such m {variety} of material# at ^least they 'might be bored with 'me# they`ll ^probably be 'bored with me /\anyway# but at ^least they`ll 'have 'different material#
- a . /laughs/ - - d`you ^not think *'so*
- b *^/m/#* ^/m/#
- b /I ^see what you mean/# - - -^/m/# ^that`s an idea# .**./laughs/**
- a **. /laughs/** - -
- b - /laughs/ - - -
- a and already this week#

S.4.1 150-290

III.1.2.8 Conversation 8

Text S.4.2 → Conversation 8

Speaker a: **Dan**, male solicitor, aged 40

Speaker b: **Lily**, female academic, aged 26

This conversation represents a mixed-sex talk between two educated people named Dan and Lily. Both speakers were aware of being recorded during the conversation.

a) Form classification

Dan (a) → **Basic:** nhn, 3:m, m, yeah, oh, no, yes, m-hm, well, sure

Compound: yes of course

Extra: laughs, does it

Lily (b) → **Basic:** m, yeah, oh, no, yes, right, well, quite

Compound: oh well, oh I see

Extra: laughs, oh did she, isn't it, Jesus, oh Christ

Dan offers ten basic forms while Lily offers only eight basic forms. They both used laughter and tag questions. Lily produces exclamations more often than any other speaker analysed in this paper.

b) Frequency classification (in %)

	<i>Dan (a)</i>	<i>Lily (b)</i>
Basic	61 %	39 %
Compound	33 %	67 %
Extra	67 %	33 %

(For table of units, see appendix 9)

The frequency of response production is balanced even though it differs according to the form classification.

c) Function classification

	<i>Dan (a)</i>	<i>Lily (b)</i>
Regulars	✓	✓
Supports	✓	✓
Continuers	✓	✓
Turn-takers	✓	✓
Pauses	✓	✓

In this conversation both speakers use minimal responses for a variety of purposes. As demonstrated several times earlier there are no examples demonstrating the functions except

for one; the occurrence of exclamation */oh Christ/* contains a combination of supports and continuers as well as it indicates a high level of emotions and interest. The situation is illustrated below:

Example 21

- a ^but [@:m] he couldn` t do them this week# .
b ^/oh Christ/#
a he was " ^going on holiday# -

S.4.2 140-160

In general, Lily talks more yet the flow of turn-taking processes is rather equal and natural. In this conversation there is a high level of spontaneity reflected in laughter as suggested earlier.

III.2 Research part summary

The purpose of this paper is to give a thorough account of sociolinguistics and gender studies followed by deep study of minimal responses with regard to lexical, semantic and prosodic features of analysed texts. Before the questions this paper addresses can be answered the information gathered in the research part needs to be summarised first.

The research part specifies The London-Lund Corpus as the source of material used in the analysis of which the conversations were depicted for this scrutiny. Basic symbols used in the analysis description are presented and the outline of the scrutiny that is perceived as a prerequisite to successful analysis and understanding the procedures is introduced. There is also a pattern developed by Stockwell (2002, p. 2) followed for intelligible purposes. There are eight conversations chosen for the analysis carried out in this paper. Each conversation is deeply analysed according to the classification of minimal responses that is introduced in the research part. The classification develops three categories:

1. Form classification

Form classification divides minimal responses into three different categories; a) basic, b) compound, and c) extra that can be further sub-classified as i) exclamations, ii) tag questions, or iii) laughs.

It is clear that women specialize in a wider range of forms of minimal responses. In some cases, however, male speakers reach the same level of range of forms used as visible in conversation 5.

2. Frequency classification

Frequency classification divides minimal responses according to the number of instances in which they occur and the overall occurrence in per cent. The tables illustrating number of instances for each conversation are presented in appendices (app. 2-9). Noticeably, the forms such as */m/*, */yes/* or */laughs/* are the most frequent ones in all eight texts. The most productive speakers appear to be Kate (b) in conversation S.1.12 and Frank (A) in conversation S.1.1.

Finally, it is appropriate to mention that the differences in frequency of minimal responses used by men and women are presented too. Generally, according to the results women use minimal responses more frequently than men.

3. Function classification

This classification focuses on functional aspects of minimal responses and classifies the minimal functions accordingly as: a) regulars, b) supports that are further sub-classified as i) less emotional or ii) more emotional, c) continuers, d) turn-takers, e) overlaps, and f) pauses.

Apart from these three classifications, laughter is discussed as well as the efficiency of intonation is perceived. Furthermore, there are number of examples illustrating each categorization by providing short excerpts from the texts. In general, women tend to talk more than men and they tend to be more supportive and emotional. Occasionally, however, men

produce supportive elements equally as women. Men tend to use more turn-takers but, surprisingly, there are male speakers who do not use turn-takers, such as Charles (A) in conversation 3, yet dominate the talk.

III.2.1 Deployment in ELT

As implied earlier this paper challenges the possibilities of applying the sociolinguistic findings in language teaching. These suggestions may be further reflected in my postgraduate ELT studies.

Cohen (2001. p. 410) suggests that teaching speaking to foreign learners may be efficiently managed by deliberation of '*situational features*' and different conversational strategies used by men and women. Since minimal responses are a common feature in both casual and formal speech production, below are suggestions using the results of this paper.

The proposals are following:

1) Teaching speaking via PW or GW

In pairs or groups there may be speakers of either gender. More specifically, there is a chance that males dominate the group in terms of number. This is momentous for teacher when choosing the topic for speaking. Hypothetically speaking, males may be more interested in car racing than females while females may have great regard for fashion. Moreover, teachers may prompt learners to talk if they are shy by indirectly explaining the process of turn-taking and providing examples.

2) Getting immediate feedback from learners

Teachers can systematically enhance the communicative competence of learners via indirect implementation of minimal responses in the speaking acts.

3) Syllabus design

Sociolinguistic findings may be reflected when designing subject syllabi. The types of syllabi enabling teachers to apply the sociolinguistic knowledge are:

- a) a notional-functional syllabus,
- b) a situational syllabus.

In this context, a notional-functional syllabus refers to the context of communication and its purpose. As mentioned in chapter II.3.3 there are different language variables such as diverse groups of people, social and regional varieties or gender and age. There is also a deeper layer of contextualization concerning the particular language situation. This problem is often interpreted by the register abstraction, generally referred to as '*stylistic variation*'. The existence of context-based dimensional language variations can be regarded as a certain '*sensitivity of language*' (Montgomery, 1993, p. 101).

The process of learning and teaching needs to be highlighted with regard to context in which the processes occur. There is a '*continuum*' determining the level of context involving the language used (Hornberger, 2001, p. 459). What is more, the meaning of language is conveyed simply by words. In a very simplified way it means that a speaker puts words together to form the utterance and express the idea. He or she chooses the words according to the situation and the topic discussed. This notion has a close relation to the application of sociolinguistics in teaching speaking via PW or GW as mentioned earlier.

IV CONCLUSION

As stated in the introduction, the purpose of this diploma thesis is to give a thorough account of sociolinguistics and gender studies followed by deep study of minimal responses with regard to lexical, semantic and prosodic features of analysed texts.

Therefore the theoretical part of this paper describes the field of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics as well as gender studies that expand the topic of language usage by men and women. Going deeper, the theoretical part explains both techniques of obtaining data and scrutiny methods, and thoroughly deals with minimal responses and their functions.

The research part presents a corpus-based analysis of eight dyadic conversations and presents form, frequency and function classification of minimal responses respectively. Rested on the result of both theoretical and research findings the answers to the questions that this paper addresses are the following:

1) Do men use minimal responses more often than women? Generally, according to the results men do not use minimal responses more frequently than women but rather the opposite. Additionally, women tend to use a wider range of forms of minimal responses than men do.

2) Does men's usage of minimal responses differ from women's? Since the higher frequency of minimal responses usage belongs to women it is reasonable to state that women tend to use more supportive and emotional minimal responses. Occasionally, however, men produce supportive elements equally as women.

3) Are there any specific men's or women's turn-taking responses? Generally, men tend to use more turn-takers but, surprisingly, there are male speakers who do not use turn-takers. There are no gender-specific minimal responses used exclusively, though.

4) Do men use minimal responses in order to gain dominance? As stated above, men use more turn-takers than women in order to take over the floor. This fact suggests that men do use minimal responses in order to gain dominance. However, no satisfactory evidence to

support this theory has been found. What can be concluded is that men simply use some minimal responses for the purposes of turn-taking (as well as women do).

5) What roles do pauses play in conversation with regard to minimal responses? Pauses can precede and/or follow minimal responses and provide speakers with proper timing. Pauses usually precede and/or follow laughter, sometimes repeatedly.

6) Are pauses used for these purposes intentionally by either gender? There have been no specific gender-exclusive intentions for pauses found apart from the above-mentioned general purposes.

In general, the results of the study are satisfactory but sometimes surprising such as the fact that the processes of turn-taking are not directly connected to the concept of dominance.

Even though the analysis of the eight texts (of overall amount of approximately 35 000 words) studied in this thesis do not straightforwardly lead to one hundred per cent statistically reliable results the paper provides a deep insight into the problematic area of gender-specific usage of minimal responses and thus fulfils the purpose. To present statistically reliable results the data of higher overall amount of words should be used for similar scrutiny.

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VI APPENDICES

VI.1 Appendix 1

Frequencies of occurrence of minimal responses

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Sub-classification</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Basic		/m/	374
		/yes/	182
		/yeah/	84
		/m-hm/	57
		/no/	49
		/really/	37
		/well/	29
		/oh/	22
		/right/	11
		/ɜ:m/	9
		/quite/	6
		/sure/	5
		/ah/	5
		/uhuh/	4
		/hm/	4
		/why/	2
		/yep/	1
		/um/	1
		/ooh/	1
		/hm-hm/	1
	/wow/	1	
	/great/	1	
	/uh/	0	
	/aha/	0	
	/e-hm/	0	
Compound		/You know/	7
		/oh yes/	8

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Sub-classification</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
		<i>/oh well/</i>	4
		<i>/I see/</i>	4
		<i>/oh I see/</i>	2
		<i>/oh yeah/</i>	1
		<i>/oh no/</i>	1
		<i>/ah yes/</i>	1
		<i>/ah yeah/</i>	1
		<i>/I mean/</i>	1
		<i>/that's right/</i>	1
		<i>/you think so/</i>	1
		<i>/you didn't/</i>	1
		<i>/I don't know/</i>	1
		<i>/yes of course/</i>	1
		<i>/of course/</i>	1
		<i>/OK/</i>	1
		<i>/all right so/</i>	1
Extra	Exclamations	<i>/oh dear/</i>	2
		<i>/oh Christ/</i>	1
		<i>/oh dear/</i>	1
		<i>/oh gosh/</i>	1
		<i>/my gosh/</i>	1
		<i>/Jesus/</i>	1
	Tag questions	<i>/didn't you/have you/has she/</i>	10
	Laughs	<i>/laughs/</i>	185

VI.2 Appendix 2

Frequency classification (units) – conversation 1

<i>Form</i>	<i>Frank (A)</i>	<i>Henry (B)</i>	<i>Total</i>
Basic	104	45	149
Compound	4	1	5
Extra	12	3	15
<i>Total</i>	120	49	169

VI.3 Appendix 3

Frequency classification (units) – conversation 2

<i>Form</i>	<i>Hillary (A)</i>	<i>Jack (B)</i>	<i>Total</i>
Basic	70	48	108
Compound	12	0	12
Extra	28	20	48
<i>Total</i>	110	68	178

VI.4 Appendix 4

Frequency classification (units) – conversation 3

<i>Form</i>	<i>Charles (A)</i>	<i>Kate (b)</i>	<i>Total</i>
Basic	3	37	40
Compound	0	3	3
Extra	0	7	7
<i>Total</i>	3	47	50

VI.5 Appendix 5

Frequency classification (units) – conversation 4

<i>Form</i>	<i>Rose (a)</i>	<i>Joan (A)</i>	<i>Total</i>
Basic	79	4	83
Compound	6	1	7
Extra	55	24	79
<i>Total</i>	140	29	169

VI.6 Appendix 6

Frequency classification (units) – conversation 5

<i>Form</i>	<i>David (A)</i>	<i>Helen (B)</i>	<i>Total</i>
Basic	48	81	129
Compound	1	2	3
Extra	1	4	5
<i>Total</i>	50	87	137

VI.7 Appendix 7

Frequency classification (units) – conversation 6

<i>Form</i>	<i>Roy (A)</i>	<i>Caroline (B)</i>	<i>Total</i>
Basic	10	38	48
Compound	0	3	3
Extra	0	1	1
<i>Total</i>	10	42	52

VI.8 Appendix 8

Frequency classification (units) – conversation 7

<i>Form</i>	<i>William (a)</i>	<i>Sarah (b)</i>	<i>Total</i>
Basic	46	82	128
Compound	2	1	3
Extra	7	15	22
<i>Total</i>	55	98	153

VI.9 Appendix 9

Frequency classification (units) – conversation 8

<i>Form</i>	<i>Dan (A)</i>	<i>Lily (b)</i>	<i>Total</i>
Basic	106	68	174
Compound	1	2	3
Extra	12	6	18
<i>Total</i>	119	76	195

RESUMÉ

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá rozdíly a podobnostmi v použití minimálních reakcí muži a ženami. Teoretická část je zaměřena na definici samotné lingvistiky, sociolingvistiky a genderových studií, které slouží jako vědecký základ pro bádání v této práci. Výzkumná část je věnována hloubkové analýze konverzací, která se zaměřuje na genderově specifické konverzační strategie s konkrétním zaměřením na minimální reakce a jejich lexikální, sémantické a prozodické vlastnosti. Práce také obsahuje návrhy na využití sociolingvistických poznatků v učitelství anglického jazyka.

ANOTACE

Jméno a příjmení:	Bc. Ondřej Duda
Katedra:	Anglického jazyka
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Josef Nevařil, Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2012

Název práce:	Minimal responses as a means of gender-specific conversational strategies.
Název v angličtině:	Minimal responses as a means of gender-specific conversational strategies.
Anotace práce:	Tato diplomová práce se zabývá rozdíly a podobnostmi v použití minimálních reakcí muži a ženami. Teoretická část je zaměřena na definici samotné lingvistiky, sociolingvistiky a genderových studií, které slouží jako vědecký základ pro bádání v této práci. Výzkumná část je věnována hloubkové analýze konverzací, která se zaměřuje na genderově specifické konverzační strategie s konkrétním zaměřením na minimální reakce a jejich lexikální, sémantické a prozodické vlastnosti. Práce také obsahuje návrhy na využití sociolingvistických poznatků v učitelství anglického jazyka.
Klíčová slova:	Lingvistika, sociolingvistika, jazyk, angličtina, mluvená angličtina, pohlaví, ženy, muži, konverzace, konverzační strategie, rozdíly, podobnosti, styl, typ, dialog, minimální reakce, reakce, odpověď, dominance, přerušení, analýza, studie, corpus, frekvence
Anotace v angličtině:	The theoretical part of the thesis defines sociolinguistics and gender studies as scientific bases for my research and then moving deeper to study conversation, dialogues and minimal responses. The research part develops a corpus-based analysis of conversations aiming at gender-specific usage of minimal responses. The analysis focuses on differences and similarities in their usage by men and women leading to certain strategies with regard to lexical, semantic and prosodic features of analysed texts. This paper also proposes a possible deployment of sociolinguistic findings in language teaching.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Linguistics, sociolinguistics, language, English, spoken English, gender, sex, women, men, male, female, conversation, conversational strategies, differences, similarities, style, type, dialogue, dyadic, minimal responses, response, back-channels, backchannelling, domination, interruption, hesitation, turn-taking, analysis, LLC, frequency

Přílohy vázané v práci:	Tabulky
Rozsah práce:	95 s.
Jazyk práce:	Anglický