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GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE USE

OF MINIMAL RESPONSES

Bakalářská práce

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

V Olomouci dne 29. 06. 2010

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Ondřej Duda

ABSTRACT

The conversational behaviour of people fascinates scientists all over the world. In the theoretical part of my thesis I am giving short review of the defining sociolinguistics, sociolinguistic analysis, and then moving deeper to explore conversation and minimal responses. The practical part offers analysis of transcribed conversations in order to look for functions and forms of minimal responses within conversation. I am looking at the differences of the usage of minimal responses, their occurrence and more specifically the differences in the way women and men use minimal responses.

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

As the title suggests, the goal of my bachelor thesis is to look for any differences in the conversational style of women and men with the respect to the use of minimal responses. The theoretical part deals with the sociolinguistics in general. The sociolinguistic analysis and attitudes of sociolinguists together with the further studying of spoken English, conversational styles and dialogues provide the background for my investigation. In the practical part I will concentrate on analyzing three conversations to define minimal responses and their effect on the way women and men talk and to compare frequencies of minimal responses used by women and men.

The conversational behaviour of people fascinates scientists all over the world. I picked the topic because I found the differences in communication of women and men to be the most exciting and interesting topic to be studied. I have always been interested in social and linguistic gender differences. In everyday life I experience that women and men talk differently. The reactions of people often change according to the situation they have to deal with. Every situation that I have to go through serves for me as an observation of human behaviour. Therefore, my thesis is very personal and during my study and analysis I will focus on personal benefit from the theoretical background in order to develop my own style when analyzing texts. I have great expectations about the results of my study where I will try to answer several questions concerning gender differences in the way women and men use minimal responses. My questions are: Do women and men use minimal responses in different forms? Do women use more minimal responses than man? Is it true that women are more supportive in showing cooperation and sympathising? Do males tend to interrupt in order to dominate? To answer the questions I will analyze three face-to-face conversations, compare frequencies of minimal responses' occurrences and explain functions of minimal

responses and its differences when used by females and males. I hope to find any evidence that minimal responses change the function when used by women or men.

II. THEORETICAL PART

II.1. INTRODUCING SOCIOLINGUISTICS

My purpose in this chapter is to provide theoretical background on sociolinguistic studies. There are numerous linguists and their work concerning sociology and linguistics. To avid repetition of information I chose only the most interesting authors to be paraphrased. To understand the term and distinguish problems in field occurs to be essential to proceed further. I selected the most important information and tried to display the main idea of sociolinguistics. Hudson (1980, s.4) defined sociolinguistics as *"the study of language in relation to society"*, with addition that the study of language consists of various fields of which one is sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistics is interested in human beings, their society and its impact or influence on language in any way.

Apart from studying language and society relations, as Hudson (1980) and Spolsky (1998) claim, there are relations between the language use and the social conditions in which people that use language in particular way live. Spolsky (1998, s.3) continues and generalises that human society as a living body consists of various related social behaviours and patterns that may be sometimes considered as linguistic. Scientists who search in the field of sociolinguistic are called sociolinguists.

'*For the sociolinguist, the most important verity is that language – any language – is full of systematic variation, variation that can only be accounted for by appealing, outside language, to socially relevant forces and facts.*' (Spolsky, 1998, s.10)

Sociolinguistics as a part of linguistics has its roots connected with the formal linguist Noam Chomsky who revolutionized many aspects of linguistics. '*He followed structural linguists like Leonard Bloomfield in choosing to study language*

autonomously, as a self-sufficient system'. (Spolsky, 1998, s.4) When investigating in the field of sociolinguistics you might come across two terms that revealed not to be precisely the same. Sociolinguistics and sociology of language can be viewed as two separate fields with almost the same aims. To avoid confusion, according to Spolsky (1998), Hudson (1980, s.5) and others, sociolinguistics and sociology of language differ moreover in attitude of researcher, whether the interest of the investigator is more in the society or language. The skill of analyzing social and linguistic patterns and behaviours has to be taken in to account to o. Such an investigator has more sensible skill in analyzing either the social or the linguistic patterns and behaviours (Hudson, 1980, s.5) Investigating the linguistic variation concerned with conditions of society is the main aim of sociolinguistic. There are two linguistic variations: synchronic variation and diachronic variation (Spolsky, 1998, Coates, 2004). The approach Spolsky (1998, s.13) applied to analyze language with the respect to social behaviours is called '*the ethnography of speaking or communication, which is derived from anthropology. It studies language rather with its abstract structure'* (for further reading see Spolsky, 1998, s.13).

II.1.1.   SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALISIS

As mentioned above, analyzing skill of the investigator of sociolinguistic tendencies, patterns, similarities, differences etc. has remarkable influence on the researches. What is more, the skill of analyzing social and linguistic relations might be restricted sometime. To obtain any data the people, or more precisely, the speakers have to provide both social and linguistic environment. The social and linguistic environment, as suggested by Crystal & Davy (1969, s.4), is closely related to the particular social situation. There is a demand on a response which is usually expressed vocally. The kind of language used in spoken English (will be explored further in part II.2) varies due to a socially distinguishable situation

and the type of language can change naturally following the day time. The variety of English language, though, changes more often than day by day. We use different type or variety of language at workplace, in our house or in pub (Crystal & Davy, 1969, s.4).

From the information above I assume that there are many aspects of spoken language and more importantly its linguistic environment. As far as the terminology is concerned, I agree with the sociolinguists and I understand the linguistic environment as the social situations in which speakers formulate reactions in a spoken language (Crystal & Davy, 1969), (Spolsky, 1998). There are clearly suggested so-called 'linguistic manners' depending on the varieties of situations in which the particular language is used (Crystal & Davy, 1969, s.5), (for further reading see Crystal & Davy, 1969).

II.2. SPOKEN ENGLISH

It was previously suggested that spoken English is the primary source in sociolinguistics. Therefore I am trying to understand the nature of spoken English language. Crystal and Davy (1969, s.114) claims that '*Informal, spontaneous conversation is characterised by a very high proportion of "errors", compared with other spoken varieties, involving hesitation features of all kind*' (to be discussed in chapter II.5.4.). Spoken English needs to be produced, but not in every case it is produced by the native speaker of English language. Foreign learner of English can communicate, presumably, in spoken English language to o. Nevertheless, as Crystal & Davy (1969, s.6) mentioned there are difficulties which the foreign learner of English has to deal with such as appropriate reactions in particular situations. There is also a need to be fluent and to be aware of variable types of language and finally to develop own style (for further reading see Quirk, 1982). I will concentrate on fluent

native speakers as my primary source for investigation in my thesis is *The London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English* by Svartvik & Quirk (1980), (this will be discussed in chapter.III.1.).

I will not be exploring the styles in communication in general as Quirk did in his book *Style and communication in the English language* but I will be exploring style of women and men. In the next chapter I will focus on the gender differences in linguistic behaviours, the different usage of language between males and females and finally I shall then move to discuss the use of minimal responses, their frequency and purposes (practical part).

II.2.1. TECHNIQUES OF ANALYSIS

Spoken English has been studying for many decades. '*The sociolinguistic interview, modelled on the format developed by William Labov for his now classic doctoral study of NY City English, is one of the most common techniques for gathering samples of language. In the interview, the sociolinguist talks to the subject, attempting to elicit examples of various kinds of speech'* (Spolsky, 1998, s.10).

New techniques explained below were developed. Fifty years ago, conversations might be surreptitiously recorded. Surreptitious recording means that one or more speakers within conversation are not aware of being recorded. What is more, people might behave differently if they know about the recording so this technique is both the safest and the most reliable (Svartvik et. al., 1990, s.12), (Spolsky, 1998, s.10), (Crystal & Davy, 1969, s.96). I generalize that the sociolinguistic interview has developed also in to non-interview techniques such as surreptitious gathering data.

By contrast, Spolsky (1998, s.10) also points out that in present day the investigators have to ask for permission their subjects of recording. The obtaining data

for sociolinguistic purposes was quite easier in the past. When the spoken speech sample has been recorded it is passed in to process of analyzing (Spolsky, 1998, s.10-11).

II.3. CONVERSATION

In this chapter I shall move to explain the term conversation and in the next chapter I will look at the basic gender differences between women and men. This chapter is closely linked to the previous chapters as it is giving further information about communication and also to the next chapters as it together builds a basis for my investigation. Crystal & Davy (1969) says that *'conversation is the most commonly used kind of English, and a variety which will be more familiar to the vast majority of English-speaking people'*. The language of conversation could not be compared to any other variety of language because of its specific situational features thus conversational language can be considered as on e of the most neutral kind of language (Crystal & Davy (1969, s. 95). We are, of course, speaking preferably about the English language, but this state can be applied on any language. There is a general aspect of human conversation. The conversation's explicitness depends on whether the speakers know each other, if they share walks of life or social situations in their lives or if they live in the same place or share educational prerequisites. Conversation can be also characterised as an interactive spoken act where the number of prosodic features may occur (Crystal & Davy, 1969, s.103- 107). (Prosodic symbols used in my thesis will be explained in the chapter III.4.)

II.4. GENDER

II.4.1. DEFINING GENDER

In the beginning of my thesis I stated the aims of this thesis being several questions: Do women and men use minimal responses in different forms? Do women use more minimal responses than man? But there could be also more general question; simply do women and men talk differently? As Coates (2004, s.3) writes there could be performed a division into groups of males and females, or 'women' and 'men'. Another point here is that the interests of investigators lies in the field of males and females differentiation. I agree with Coates (2004) and I found her remarks in her book *Women, men and language* useful for any self-study purposes. Her attitude concentrates mainly on the different strategies of male and female speakers. One could ask why do not we use the term sex instead the gender.

Gender as a term is used to deal with categories affected by society and its situations based on sex while sex refers to a biological distinction (WHO, 2010), (Coates, 2004, s.4). I decided to adopt this terminology as gender is the key word to be discussed here.

II.4.2. SOCIOLINGUISTIC ATTITUDES

The attitude of linguists towards gender and language has changed since the classic work *Language and Women's place* by Lakoff which was published in 1975. Several approaches made possible for linguists to analyze and study gender and language from different points of view (Coates, 2004, S5). Coates (2004, s.5) divided new approaches thus: the approach of dominance, the approach of deficit, the approach of difference, and the approach of dynamics or 'social constructionist approach'. Most of the linguists now use the dynamic approach which sees the nature

of gender categories as a developing characteristic rather than given label according to society. Conversation participants should be viewed as '*doing gender'* not '*being a particular gender'* (West and Zimmerman, 1987, quoted in Coates, 2004, s.6).

On the other hand, the approach of deficit was uses rather earlier in studies gender and language by sociolinguists as Lakoff did in his work *Language and Women's place*. It is fair to say that these approaches do not have any strict boundaries so there is a threat of linguists and researchers being influenced by each other (Coates, 2004).

Through times, the evidence that women and men talk differently started to be the subject of notice. Even though not everyone could oppose the general idea that women talk to o much and do not have a much time to do serious business and thus men rule the world, there were exceptions and the interest of social differences between women and men became also an interest of linguistics (see chapter I.1.). The language of women, though, is mostly considered as '*weak and unassertive'* (Coates, 2004, s.7), (Tannen, 1990).

II.4.3. VOCABULARY

Within conversation the speakers express their ideas but sometime the meaning of either speaker might be misunderstood. He or she might use different vocabulary. Vocabulary can effect conversation on very high level therefore it deserves appropriate attention. Vocabulary also varies according to the subject which is being discussed. We use different vocabulary when speaking about work, weather, holiday or current government's diplomatic issues. There are, as Crystal & Davy (1969), Svartvik et. al. (1990), and other sociolinguists mentioned, the so-called '*vocalizations'*, or more likely the '*conversational go-ons'*. Deborah Tannen in her book *You just don't understand* (1990) explains problems women and men have and more importantly she focuses

on particular life situation where the need for vocabulary change is obvious as well as the supportive women's attitude towards conversation contrasts the ignorance or in ability of men to participate. Conversational go-on became significant part of participation (see next chapter).

II.5. MINIMAL RESPONSES

As was suggested in the last chapter I will focus here on the minimal responses. Within conversation there are two or more speakers who talk to each other. These speakers are participant who use vocabulary, vocalization etc. to produce meaningful utterances. There is also a need for feedback. Minimal responses are features of conversation that provide certain function – feedback function. These forms such as /m/, /hm/ or /yeah/ can function as a turn-take or as an indicator of support to keep the conversation going (Coates, 2004. s.87). The following extracts were taken from The London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English by Svartvik & Quirk (1980), which served as a primary source for my thesis (further information in the practical part - chapter III.1.). Minimal responses are marked in /italics/ by me, words in bold represents stressed parts of the talk. The signature represents location. The example A shows typical use of minimal response:

Example A

A   DELANEY'S the Canadian STUDENT remember last YEAR ·

B   /mhm/

A   he should have HAD his DISSERTATION in the beginning of MAY

S.1.1 710-750

Speaker A uses pause at the end of a tone unit to take a breath before he continues. Speaker B puts in /mhm/ that suggests that he knows what speaker A is talking about and he encourages speaker A to continue. Minimal response in /mhm/ form here also does not interrupt the line of speaker A. (for interruption see chapter II.5.3.)

To define minimal responses was not as easy as I presumed. As Oreström (1983) says there are more types of utterances. These are 'speaking turns and backchannel items' (Oreström, 1983, s.24). What is a speaking turn and what is a backchannel item? There are several terms used by sociolinguists to define forms such as /m/, /hm/ or /yeah/ that can function as a turn-take or as an indicator of support to keep the conversation going. I have come across terms backchannels, continuer, ago-on, feedback signal or minimal response. I choose to use Coates' term 'minimal responses' as it express, according to me, the main role of these forms. Minimal responses influence more the relationship of participants rather than the content of conversation (Oreström, 1983, s.23).

On the other hand, Stenström (1990, s.159) uses the term a go-on and defines it as items that speakers use to show that they are paying attention or sometimes to show the awareness of the other speaker's flow of words and thus not interrupt. Stenström (1990) also referred to Schegloff who uses the term continuer for the same items (s.159). Once again, I choose to use Coates' term minimal responses as it express, according to me, the main role of backchannel forms.

Minimal responses tend to occur more in women's speech as they are naturally supportive. Women produce minimal responses and other features such as hedges or tag questions more often than men and also their timing respects the speech flow of other speaker, as explained Coates (2004, s.87) by quoting Holmes (1995:55). Coates (2004,

s.87) is also discussing whether minimal responses could be considered as a special conversational recipe.

In my opinion, female sense of understanding stands for a basis to give supporting signals. Thus women can be described as good listeners. To listen carefully to any interaction means to have a clear order both in the content of conversation and the messages that others want to give. Example C shows the conversation of three people. Speaker B is female and speakers A and C are male:

Example B

A	oh I think that your STANDARD of LIVING certainly was a VERY HIGH then
B	/m/
A	but it's the GENERAL standard of LIVING
B	/yes/ /yes/
C	the general STANDARD of living has GONE up

S.1.13. 509-515

The main issue here in the conversation in Example B is the way of living of speaker B who is female. Notice how supportive she is using not only /m/ but also /yes/ twice.

Tannen (1990) presents numerous daily life situations of women and men and shows that men fail to understand women on the psychological level not only due to the different attitudes and opinions but also due to the in ability to listen, to receive the message and to provide appropriate responses. Therefore men usually do not help to keep the conversation going and the level of support is minimal. In my investigation, I will try to focus on the tendencies women and men belong to and more specifically if the in ability of men to cooperate properly at the right time is connected with the in tension to dominate (see practical part).

II.5.1. CONVERSATIONAL DOMINANCE

It was suggested in the last chapter that men differ from women in the level of participation. They produce minimal responses that might be set in appropriately and thus considered as delayed. The delay of responses, in general, together with interruptions can be the subject under discussion in terms of power and tactical dominance (Coates, 2004, s.88). There are several studies that describe dominance of males in conversation as very unstable. For further interests see Tannen's books *You just don't understand (1990)* and *Conversational Style: Analyzing Talk Among Friends* (1984).

II.5.2. TURN-TAKING

When speaking about conversational dominance, there are several specific strategies. The turn-taking phenomenon is closely related to the dominance. The conversational talk follows particular social norms which the speaker's conversational competence is built upon in order to coordinate the talk. The interaction should not be chaotic but should follow the 'turn-by-turn basis' (Coates, 2004, s111), (Tannen, 1990).

Example C

A   without doing TOO much HARM I suppose

A   on the COMPREHENTION question

B   */oh yes/*

A   */m/*

B   */YES, but you SEE/*

S.1.1 147-153

In the example C there are two participants talking probably about academic studies. The most noticeable aspect here is that the minimal responses which speakers use function differently. In the third line speaker B responses /*oh yes*/ and thus prepares the moment to take over the turn. Speaker A than quickly replies again /*m*/ which is followed by backchannel form /*yes*/ and /*but you see*/.Speaker B controls the to pic and make it clear that he intends to go on.

II.5.3. INTERRUPTIONS

Apart from turn-taking there are also interrupting form uses in the conversation. Interruptions function as a form breaking the basis of spontaneous speech, moreover, interruptions may control the choice of the topic of the conversation. If there are two speakers, on e male and on e female, male speaker may interrupt several times within the conversation to take over the turn and dominate the conversation (Coates, 2004, s.114-116). The frequency of interruptions, however, changes from talk to talk. It also depends on the topic, whether the speaker in tend to turn over the topic or not.

II.5.4. HESITANCY

The speaker must be creative and think properly about the topic he or she is discussing. Hesitancy occurs in the situation when speaker create a pause to find the words to continue the conversation. In other word, as Coates (2004, s.107) pointed out, if the speaker thinks to o much about his words the hesitancy occurs more. This phenomenon is called 'word-searching' and it has sometime other function. When speaker uses the situation to search for words intentionally, he or she might avoid the impression that he or she is to o educated in the field or knows to o much about the particular problem.

Example D

A	then it's NOT so BAD
A	but /@:/ how are you GOING to be PLACED
A	for (having)
B/	@:/ I wouldn't WANT it before the END of
B	JUNE anyhow Reynard

S.1.1 687-690

In the example D, the hesitancy feature occurs when speaker A intends to continue but he is giving the short pause filled with /@:/, (marked in *italics* by me). The /@:/ used by speaker B functions also as hesitancy filler but it is placed more naturally as for answering the question the speaker needs to organize his thoughts.

The speaker must be creative and think properly about the topic he or she is discussing. Hesitation can be expressed as voiced or unvoiced. Hesitancy occurs in the situation when speaker create a pause to find the words to continue the conversation. In other word, as Coates (2004, s.107) pointed out, if the speaker thinks to o much about his words the hesitancy occurs more. This phenomenon is called 'word-searching' and it has sometime other function. She is also adding that when speaker uses the situation for searching the right words intentionally, he or she might avoid the impression that he or she is to o educated in the field or knows to o much about the particular problem.

In the theoretical part, we discussed the nature of sociolinguistics, sociolinguistic attitudes, sociolinguistic techniques of analysis, defining spoken language, conversation, gender differentiation and spoken language features, including minimal responses in their various functions. In the following practical part of my paper I will follow the theoretical background as well as my own experience in the field to explore deeper the minimal responses' occurrences, functions and differences with the respect to gender.

III.   PRACTICAL PART

III.1.   THE LONDON-LUND CORPUS

As I said in previous chapters I chose the London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English as the primary source for my investigative study. It is probably fair to provide basic information about this remarkable source. The London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English was created from two projects. The first was the Survey of English Usage at University College London launched in 1959 by Randolph Quirk who was later appointed to direct the survey by Sidney Greenbaum. The Survey of Spoken English became the second part of the whole London-Lund Corpus. The initiator of this project was Jan Svartvik at Lund University In 1975 (Svartvik et. al., 1990, s.11).

According to authors, the main aim of these projects was 'to provide the resources for accurate descriptions of the grammar of adult educated speakers of English' (Svartvik, et. al., 1990, s. 11).

III.2.   MATERIAL

At this point it is appropriate to say that, firstly, I cooperated with the revision book of the London-Lund corpus labelled The London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English: Description and Research (Svartvik et. al., 1990), which was edited by Jan Svartvik at Lund in 1990. This source provides information about spoken conversations that amount to 100 texts. The Corpus of 100 texts is labelled Complete London Lund Corpus. Secondly, there are only 34 texts of the total that are available in printed form (Svartvik & Quirk, ed., 1980). Nevertheless, printed edition is not available in our location. Therefore I investigate the on-line version which has been provided by London-Lund Press under permission to download.

The main interests in The London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English were concentrated on the spoken language variety. Speakers are educated British. There can

be made a distinction between monologue and dialogue. Among others, Svartvik et. al., (1990) describes conversation as it is distinguishable in to dialogue (see chapter II.3.) and public discussion.

III.3. DIALOGUES

I decided to study dialogues, in other words, to explore interactive spontaneous spoken act between two participants (Spolsky, 1998, s.81) and, more specifically, the face-to-face type of conversation. The conversations were recorded surreptitiously (see chapter II.2.1).

During the study I discovered that the corpus contains nine face-to-face conversations of which five are male-male, three male-female and on e female-female. I have been through the texts and chose three of them to analyze for my purpose in this paper. Let me provide basic information about chosen conversations based upon those displayed in the research and description of corpus (Svartvik et. al., 1990):

S.1.6, conversation between female academic aged 45 and male academic aged 28, named Hillary and Jack

S.1.1, conversation between male academic aged 44 and male academic aged 60, named Frank and Henry

S.2.12, conversation between female teacher aged 25 and female medical nurse aged 23, named Rose and Joan

As mentioned before the data were gathered by surreptitious recording. Rose, however, knew about the recording. I would like to emphasize that the names of speaker are fictitious and given by me for better organization of investigation findings. I also have had no access to other forms of these texts so far than on -line form as referred above.

III.4.   PROSODIC SYMBOLS

Apart from the flow of the words of speakers there have been transcribed also numerous prosodic symbols (for further details see Svartvik et. al., 1990). I will not include some of these features originally found in the texts in order to eliminate confusion when reading the texts. Some of the prosodic symbols are irrelevant for my investigation and if not removed they might have negative impact on understanding exposed observations. To study also the phonetic transcription would require further studies therefore I did not include this investigation feature to my thesis. You can see the list of symbol used in conversation transcription below:

S.1.1   distinguishing texts

490-42O   locality

CAPITALS   stressed word

\#   tone unit end

/mhm/   vocalization, sounds, minimal responses

To present any statistically significant results the total amount of almost 20 000 words of analysed texts is not enough, but I can search for similarities, differences, tendencies and suggest acknowledgeable systems. To prepare for another chapter I will point out several features used in the transcribed texts and also I will give separate and total results with appropriate comments on functions and distinctions thorough the texts.

III.5.   THE TEXT ANALYSIS

I shall focus on the occurrence of minimal backchannels that appeared in all three conversations. I shall than provide examples that shows typical or unusual way of the use of backchannels. The exposed graphs serve as notice tables where assumptions are displayed. Because the amount of all three texts would fill about 180 pages, and also the

access to these texts has to be approved I decided that I will provide only 2-page examples of each conversation in appendices part.

III.5.1. DIVISION OF MINIMAL RESPONSES

I searched for minimal responses in each conversation separately. I put together the frequency in each conversation. Firstly, I organized minimal responses' forms in to a table according to their interest and emotional effect (table 1).

Table 1

Basic – */m/, /yes/, /no/, /yeah/, /oh/, /eh/, /mhm/*

Advanced: Complex – */oh yeah yeah yeah/*

 Exlamations - */oh gosh/*

 Questions - */have you/*

 Laughs

Let me explain the reasons for such organization. Basic minimal responses occur more often than any other form of minimal responses. They are produced spontaneously but for purposes of showing agreement with the participant. Basic minimal responses tend to repeat, as a supportive signal without any other intention. Speaker usually does not express much emotion so basic forms are considered as less emotional.

Advanced minimal responses are divided in to four categories. First category marks complex minimal responses. In other words responses that are more complicated in their form. They are often formed by repeating basic minimal responses on e by on e several times. Second category consists mainly of exclamations like */Oh dear/* or */Oh my god/*. These forms express higher level of personal interest. Third category represents mainly short and questions. Fourth category includes only laughs. As laughs are most spontaneous they are less expectable. Laugh usually does not function as an

intended reaction or as the turn-taking feature. Sometime, though, laugh may be followed by the situational reaction and provide speaker the chance to take over the turn.

III.5.2.   CONVERSATION 1

S.1.6, this is conversation between female academic aged 45 and male academic aged 28, named Hillary and Jack, for longer example see appendix 1

I decided to study first mixed gender conversation. When I gathered the data I listed the most frequent minimal responses according to my categories used by both speakers. Hillary used basic responses 74 times, complex 7 times, exclamations like /*oh gosh*/ 2 times and laughs 26 times. By contract, Jack offered 47 basic forms of responses, on e response question and 19 times he laughed. It is clear that Hillary uses more vocalization to be supportive. Laugh stands here as the least creative response together with basic forms but unlike simple /*m*/, laugh function also as an emotional signal of spontaneous speech. There are obvious differences in the frequency of minimal responses produced by Hillary and Jack, but I personally thought, that the occurrence of responses would be more frequent by female speaker.

The total number of 178 minimal responses in the conversation between Hillary and Jack suggests that both speakers are active participants. Hillary, though, used more minimal responses. As Graph 1 shows, most frequent were basic minimal responses. Basic responses do not offer much active participation, on the other hand, by using basic forms Hillary could be supportive as a listener and do not interrupt the talk. In some cases she could also take advantage of this, because she could concentrate more on the topic. The second most frequent category belongs to laughs.

Graph 1 - Most frequent categories used in the conversation S.1.6
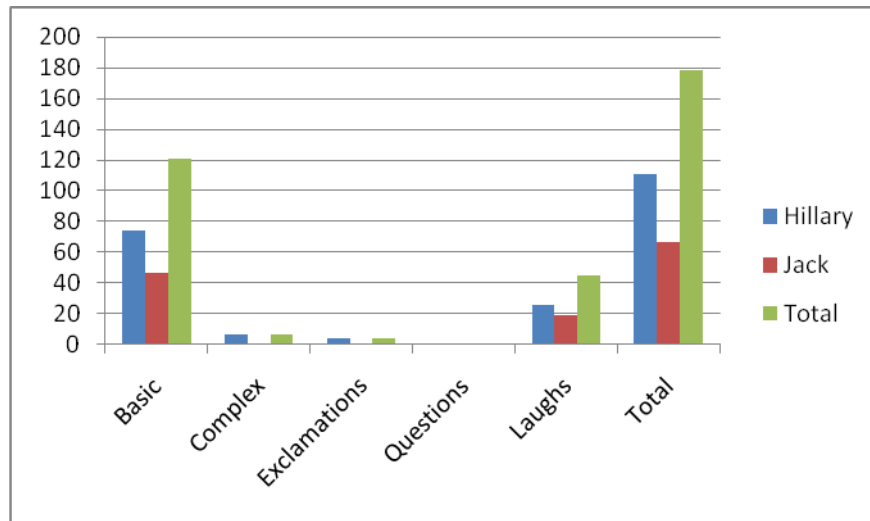
In the Graph 1 laughs are clearly on the top of the level of interest. Hillary presented more laughs than Jack as they sometime followed basic forms of responses. Laughs do not support creativity of the listener but definitely have positive impact on the pace as well as the relationship of Hillary and Jack. I also noticed that laugh forms are very spontaneous and can be hardly controlled and predicted. In the following examples I will point out and comment some of these situational uses of minimal responses.

Example 1 - S.1.6 213-219

| Hillary | and we`re getting ANOTHER on e# ACTUALLY# so I shan't be the JUNIOR girl any longer# |
| Jack | /*m*/# /*m*/# |

If minimal responses offered by listener occurred as combined, the effect might be even more courageous for first speaker to continue talking and expand the topic. When I studied the text I noticed that Jack combined basic forms in to more complex forms more often than Hillary. Jack also used more effective backchannel form like questions. In the extract S.1.6.310-340, for instance, he said /*have you*/ as a reaction to the

completely new information. He has just found out that Hillary knows Malcolm's mother. This fact strongly influenced the relationship as speakers discovered pieces of their own social backgrounds to be connected. Question serves as a response that indicates higher level of interest, because Jack received completely new in formation and reacted surprisingly.

Other aspects I was looking for are the signals of dominance. Surprisingly, I did not find any particular signal of strong interruption in order to dominate as well as any unnatural turn-takeovers by male speaker. No on e here could be considered as really dominative because, in terms of minimal responses, their functions and the flow of words of both speakers lead to the equality.

III.5.3.   CONVERSATION 2

S.1.1, this is conversation between male academic aged 44 and male academic aged 60, named Frank and Henry, for longer example see appendix 2

After mixed talk I wanted to see any differences of response behaviour within the same gender talk, more precisely here, within the conversation between two men. The category division of minimal responses in the graph 2 suggests almost primarily use of basic minimal responses. Frank presented basic responses 107 times, the complex 5 times, questions 2 times and 6 times Frank laughed. Henry responded by basic forms 43 times and he laughed 6 times. It is clear that they both specialize in simple forms rather than complicated ones. One should also note the total lack of exclamations in function of minimal response. Frank said /*did you*/ and /*has she*/ to respond to Henry and therefore he showed higher interest.

Graph 2 - Most frequent categories used in the conversation S.1.1.
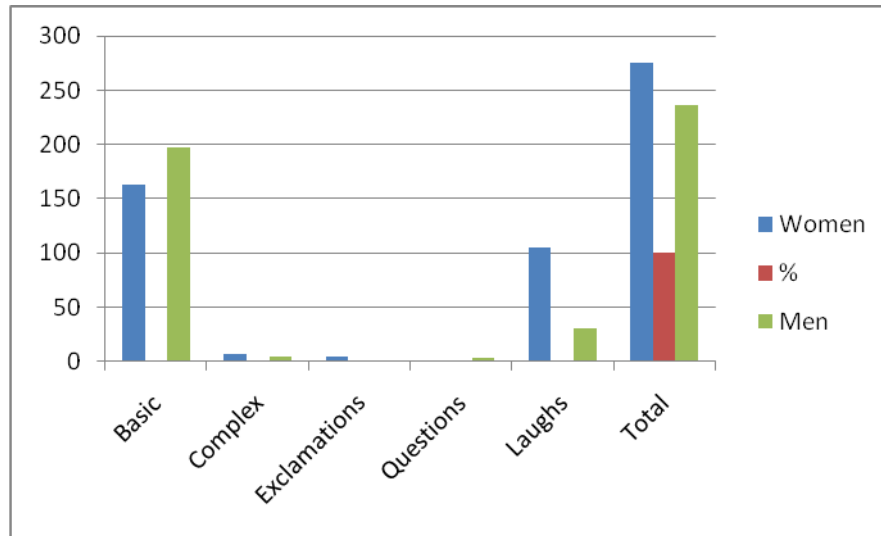
There is a difference between the specific forms of basic responses preferred by both Frank and Henry. Frank tends to produce mostly simple /m/ and /yes/ thorough the whole talk. The /m/ occurred 34 times and /yes/ 48 times. Yes as a minimal response is not very creative and if preferred to o much it tends to be monotonous. This repetition of such a low interest form might serve, apart from continuer, to control the topic and turns. On the other hand, as following example indicate, when /yes/ is represented several times after another it functions as a strong agreement of what other speaker says and provide s a signal of higher interest without taking over the turn.

Example 2 - S.1.1. 631-650

Henry   worth reading# - which is SIMILAR to - it is not   /

Frank   /ah/#   /yes/#   /yes/#   /yes/#

Henry   WORTH the reading#

To contrast what was said about Frank, Henry specialized in /m-hm/ rather than /m/. The former was used 20 times but the latter only 3 times. The predictability of /m-hm/ was almost impossible. The conversation manner was very stable, following the on e-at-a-time speaking concept. In terms of dominance, I found no extreme situation where either of the participants interrupted the talk and showed evidence of intention to dominate. The relationship behaviour of conversation between Frank and Henry was

built mainly of short forms. The tension coming from non-emotional responses that might be expected could not be exposed here, because I did not determine any reasonable expression to claim that. Equality of both participants logically kept the conversation going.

What I consider intriguing is the low number of interpreted laughs. This could be the only reason to state that this conversation of two males is less spontaneous. Nevertheless, it is not true. According to me, the minimal use of laughs does not necessarily mean less spontaneous conversation. When spontaneous laughs were offered, it happened often simultaneously by both men. On the whole, Frank produced all together 120 minimal responses of all categories, while Henry responded 49 times.

III.5.4.   CONVERSATION 3

S.2.12, this is conversation between female teacher aged 25 and female medical nurse aged 23, named Rose and Joan, for longer example see appendix 3

Unlike in the previous chapter I concentrated on conversation between two males, I will now study the third text representing a conversation between two females. I chose this text to be the last presented in my thesis because of my highest expectations about the results. The total number of used minimal responses in female/female conversation is 169. Rose offered minimal feedback 29 times, of which basic responses 5 times and laughs 24 times. While Rose did not rely on giving responses, Joan produced 140 minimal responses during their talk, of which 84 were basic responses, only on e exclamation and, finally, 55 times she laughed. The lack of complex responses and questions in function as a supportive feedback is very noticeable.

The graph 3 below shows the frequency of minimal responses within this conversation.

Graph 3 - Most frequent categories used in the conversation S.2.12
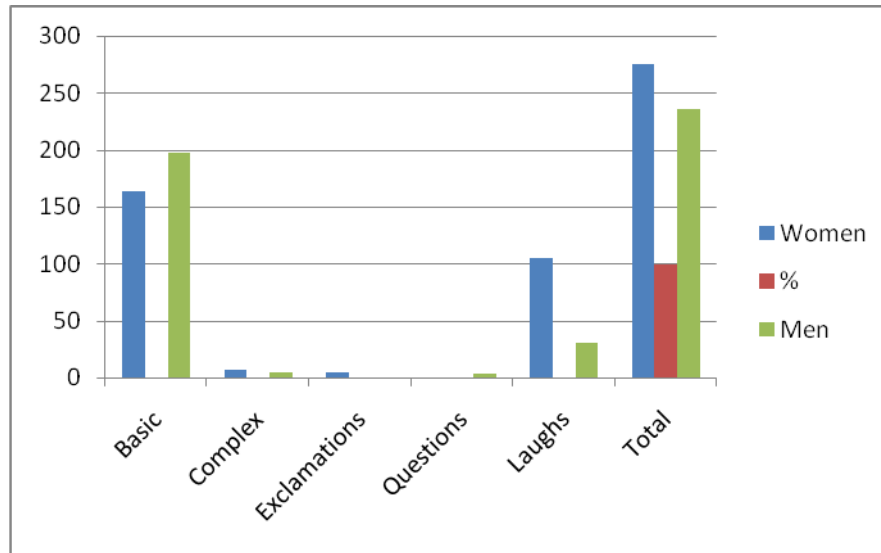
Both women were very spontaneous because they know each other well. Unlike previous conversation, where the participants usually did not share much personal background, Rose and Joan discussed particular situation from work. Rose evidently dominated this interaction as she was talking about her experiences. Joan almost in all cases responded minimally using basic forms like /m/ or /yeah/ as the most frequent ones. At this point, I think, it have to be emphasised that Joan knew that their conversation was going to be recorded (Svartvik et. al., 1990) She is the only participant of all three texts that I am studying who was aware of being recorded. There is no doubt that I have to take in to account Joan's awareness. Joan expressed herself mostly as a very good listener. She responded spontaneously when it was needed and the flow of words of the second participant who talked was not interrupted. Where possible she mixed the basic forms and laughs. Thus the function of minimal responses clearly serves as enormously encouraging for Rose to go on talking. Joan agreed with

Rose and gave her signals that she was interested about the topic and she did not want to take over the turn.

Nevertheless, in cases where further reaction was accurate, Joan continued talking after she used minimal response. When talking, the spontaneous laughing indicated very high level of interest, and, what is more, it also prepared the occasion for another minimal response. The example 3 represents a very short extract where laugh was followed by simple minimal responses in a creative way that did not suggest taking over the turn.

Example 3 - S.2.12. 892-895

Rose   cos he'd be even MORE hurt#

Joan   /*laughs*/

Rose   cos he was PATHETIC#

Joan   /*yeah*/ -/*m*/

I would like to point out another feature of this particular text. Joan seemed to specialize in using /*yeah*/ more than any speakers in my study. She also used /*yes*/ many times during the speech. Svartvik et. al., (1990, s.161) describes /*yes*/ and /*yeah*/ as a signalling set of positive and supportive responses. He also adds that the logical opposite to /*yes*/ and /*yeah*/, if present, is /*no*/, which in his researches occurred very rarely. My investigation in this case discovered the same as Svartvik's research. Rose and Joan used /*no*/ as a response only once each. It is clear that not only /*yes*/ and /*yeah*/ but also /*m*/ and /*laughs*/ create together highly emotional, intuitive and productive conversational relationship between these two females.

In the next chapter I shall move to general comments on my research and I will also expose further results of analyzing texts in terms of gender differences in the use of minimal responses.

III.6. FINAL REMARKS

This chapter is closely linked to previous chapters because I will generalize all results and compare them. I analyzed three texts which represented transcribed conversations of two participants. These conversations were taken from the electronic version of the London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English (see chapter III.1). The first conversation (S.1.6.) of Hillary and Jack represented mixed gender conversation where the female speaker used 111 minimal responses. She specialized in using basic forms of minimal responses, which meant the level of interest was lower. Apart from basic responses she laughed more than Jack, all together 24 times Hillary's laugh suggested emotional relationship and had encouraging effect on the stream of utterances of other speaker. Jack minimally responded 67 times of which 19 minimal responses were laughs. In the second conversation (S.1.1) the results differ. Frank and Henry in their dialogue represent here the first of two same gender conversations.

As I studied two males' interactive talk I found great differences in the use of minimal responses. Frank responded 120 times but Henry only 49. The conversation lacks the laugh parts due to the minimal occurrence of laughs. Although Frank and Henry laughed 6 times each, their dialogue did not appear to be very impersonal. Frank managed to respond appropriately where needed and did not interrupt. He also showed supporting behaviour even though to o much use of simple /*yes*/ or /*m*/ sometimes gave the impression of monotonous responding. On the other hand, Henry dominated the conversation naturally and was encouraged by the signals of interest produced by Frank.

The third analyzed conversation (S.2.12.) stands as the second same gender dialogue. I was eager to find any unusual signals or obvious differences in responding from other conversations. Two females named Rose and Joan created warm and friendly conditions during their talk. Joan transferred more minimal responses than any participant I studied in my thesis. She responded 140 and therefore the functions of here

basic forms such as /m/ served as supporting feature of whole conversation. I was surprised that Joan expressed herself minimal but she managed to be very good and supportive listener. Due to the awareness of being recorded, I assume, she used more responses that obviously and predictably indicated the in tension of controlling the topic.

On the whole all six speakers produced precisely 511 minimal responses. I identified several differences in the function and form of responses the females and males tend to use. Unlike Coates (2004) and other sociolinguists I found no direct evidence that women tend to use more minimal responses. I expected higher frequency in occurrence of minimal responses produced by women. Graph 4 shows that in my study women used less basic minimal responses. I expected women to use at least twice as many minimal responses as men.

Graph 4
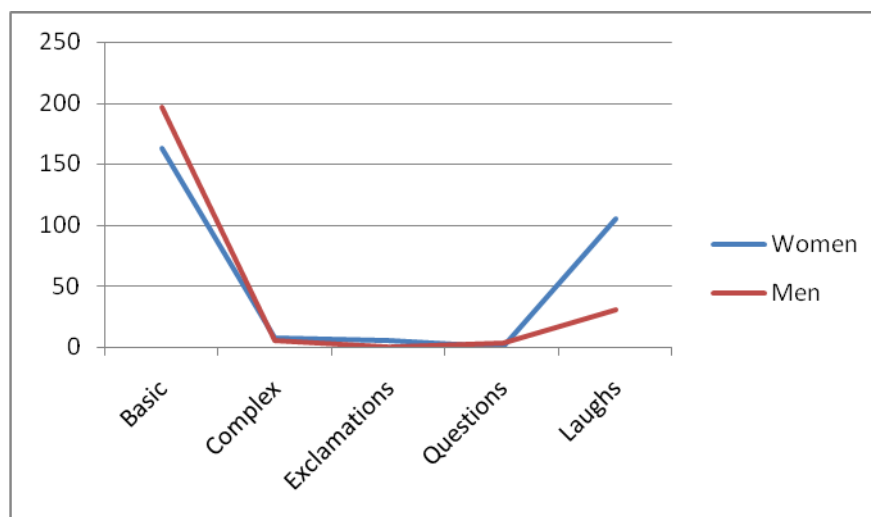
Another thing to notice is that women presented more spontaneous laughing which is generally predictable but still valuable result. Men produced 55 per cent of all basic responses used by all speakers but only 23 per cent of the total laughs. By contrast, women offered 100 per cent of exclamations within all three texts and 77 per cent of all laughs.

To compare the three texts I discovered that women tend to produce more supportive signals, be great listeners and provide highly interested conditions to talk. They are very spontaneous but in my research women did used more minimal responses than men. Men, on the other hand, presented more basic forms of minimal responses than women but I found no evidence or particular situation to claim that men tent to interrupt and thus dominate the conversation. In some cases, however, I must consider males to be less supportive and providing lower level of interests within their responding than women. Therefore women in my study seem to be more sympathizing and encouraging towards the conversational situations. I found women to be more willingly cooperative and supportive.

IV. CONCLUSION

People's behaviour concerns many scholars all over the world. As I mentioned in the introductory chapter my purposes here were clearly personal as I am interested in human being's behaviour, specifically their concept of conversation behaviour and responding within conversation. The investigation in the field of sociolinguistics was the aim of this thesis. The theoretical part was concerned with the definition of sociolinguistic as a new field of study. I organized the chapters in the theoretical part from the general point of view of sociolinguistics to the deeper definition of particular problems. We discussed spoken English, its features and varieties, gender differences in way women and men use minimal responses and the phenomenon of dominance.

This theoretical background was essential for further investigation. In the practical part I described the London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English as my primary source. The following chapters dealt with practical defining minimal responses in face-to-face conversation. Three texts were taken from the electronic version of the Corpus to be studied and analyzed. I looked for functions and forms of minimal responses and more detailed I was looking at the differences in the way women and men used minimal responses. My questions were: Do women and men use minimal responses in different forms? Do women use more minimal responses than man? Is it true that women are more supportive in showing cooperation and sympathising? Do males tend to interrupt in order to dominate? The results of my work were quite different from my expectations. I discovered that women tend to be more supportive and represent more spontaneous encouraging signals for second participant of the dialogue. On the other hand, I found no highly differing evidence that women use more minimal responses. In my study women produced less basic minimal responses such as /m/ or /hm/ than men but they laughed 10 times more than men. Despite this men did not prove to be less supportive even though sometimes they tend to respond monotonously with the lack

of high level of interest. Men specialized more in simplified forms of minimal responses, women, by contrast, preferred laughs with the combination of basic minimal responses such as */yeah/* or */m/*. I keep in mind that analyzing the amount of almost 20 000 words thorough the three texts is not enough to give statistically reliable data which could be applied generally. The results of my investigation suggest that the question of male and female conversational behaviour needs further studies and analyses to provide statistic evidence. On the whole I am satisfied with the results as they suggest another, greater challenge for me to expand the topic.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

```
1 6  72 6840 1 1 A   11  ^he`s !/always#                    /

 1 6  73 6850 1 1 A   11  "^driving h/ere#                   /

 1 6  73 6860 1 1 A   11  and "^driving th/ere# - .             /

 1 6  73 6870 1 1 A   11  ^he`ll burn 'him'self !\out#             /

 1 6  73 6880 1 1 A   11  if he ^goes on  at th/is 'rate# - .          /

 1 6  73 6890 1 1 B   11  ^think 'that`s the :general !f\eeling r/eally# .  /

 1 6  73 6900 1 1 B   11  ((he)) ^does 'seem to  'over:d\/o it# .       /

 1 6  73 6910 1 1 A   11  "^oh he !d\oes#                  /

 1 6  73 6920 1 1 A   11  [@] ^{n\o} d\oubt#                 /

 1 6  74 6930 1 1 A   11  ^he`s 'been . in !creasing the :p\ace#       /

 1 6  74 6940 1 1 A   11  ^I`ve 'not 'known him !\all 'those y/ears# -    /

 1 6  74 6950 1 1 A   11  (([@m] and)) I ^came 'up !h\ere#          /

 1 6  74 6960 1 1 A   11  ^in [@m] - :nineteen s\ixty# -           /

 1 6  74 6970 1 1 A   11  ((it`s)) ^only !four _y\/ears# -          /

 1 6  74 6980 1 1 B   11  ^[=m]#                       /

 1 6  74 6990 1 1 A   11  ^but he 'has in 'creased the 'pace e!!n\ormously#  /

 1 6  74 7000 1 1 A   11  he was ^n\ew here th/en# .             /

 1 6  75 7010 1 1 A   11  ^new "!b\ack 'here#                /

 1 6  75 7020 1 1 A   11  ^you kn/ow#                    /
```

1 6 75 7030 1 1 A   11   ^he`d !b\een 'here as a l/ecturer#   /

1 6 75 7040 1 1 A   11   ^then he`d !gone up to D\urham# .   /

1 6 75 7050 1 1 A   11   he ^came 'back 'here as a . pro!f\essor# - -   /

1 6 75 7060 1 2 A   11   ^and [@] . he !certainly :stirred the :{pl\ace}   /

1 6 75 7060 1 1 A   11   :\/up#   /

1 6 75 7070 1 1 A   11   which ^didn`t 'do it any :h\/arm# .   /

1 6 75 7080 1 1 A   11   ((it)) was . ^slightly "!d\ormant#   /

1 6 75 7090 1 1 A   11   ^if 'not !st\agnant you :kn/ow#   /

1 6 76 7100 1 1 B   11   ^[\m]# - -   /

1 6 76 7110 1 1 B   11   well ^{\at the} :m\/oment# - .   /

1 6 76 7120 1 2 B   14   ^just [n] ^just this . ^just at this . 'these ^this/

1 6 76 7120 1 1 B   14   [@m] - . :tour he`s 'on in . 'Yugo:sl\avia#   /

1 6 76 7130 1 1 B   11   et"^c\etera# -   /

1 6 76 7140 1 1 B   11   he`s ^g\oing 'through I 'think# .   /

1 6 76 7150 1 1 B   11   ^far as I re:m\ember#   /

1 6 76 7160 1 1 B   11   ^three c\ountries or# .   /

1 6 76 7170 1 1 B   11   "^m\ight be 'more than thr/ee#   /

1 6 76 7180 1 1 B   11   ((I)) ^think it`s thr\ee# -   /

1 6 76 7190 1 1 B   11   and in "^\one of 'them#   /

1 6 77 7200 1 1 B   11   ^he`s _giving !f\ourteen 'lectures#   /

1 6 77 7210 1 1 B   11   (. giggles) - ^seems pre:p\osterous to *:m/e#*   /

Appendix 2

```
1 1  55 8520 1 1 B    11  for ^all these . "!sc\ientists#                    /

 1 1  55 8530 1 1 B    11  and ^engineers and !th\at kind of thing# .        /

 1 1  55 8540 1 1 B    11  "^why can`t we have :something . on  econ!!\omics#  /

 1 1  55 8550 1 1 B    11  or ^p\olitics# .                       /

 1 1  55 8560 1 1 B    11  [@:] ^wouldn`t !\advertising#               /

 1 1  55 8570 1 1 B    11  ^be !just as g\ood#                  /

 1 1  55 8580 1 1 B    11  or or ^t\esting these _people#              /

 1 1  55 8590 1 1 B    11  with [@] ^lexical !s\ets#               /

 1 1  55 8600 1 1 B    11  and se^mantic f\ields#                 /

 1 1  55 8610 1 1 B    11  as the ^stuff that you`re getting !n\ow# -      /

 1 1  55 8620 1 1 B    11  ^and of course they "!\all _want#            /

 1 1  55 8630 1 1 B    11  this ^l\iterature _stuff#               /

 1 1  55 8640 1 1 B    11  I ^m=ean# .                       /

 1 1  55 8650 1 2 B    11  the "^language paper has "!grown up under the     /

 1 1  55 8650 1 1 B    11  con!tr\ol {of these ^l\iterary *_wallahs#}#*      /

 1 1  55 8660 2 1 B    21  and they`re ^even talking about              /

 1 1  56 8670 1 1 A    11  *^[=m]#*                       /

 1 1  56 8660 1 2(B    11  :setting a combined language and !l/\iterature    /

 1 1  56 8660 1 1(B    11  _paper {at at ^\P _section#}# .            /

 1 1  56 8680 1 1 B    11  ((in^stead of)) [dhi:] . :paper n/\ow# .        /

 1 1  56 8690 1 1 B    11  ^I t\old _them#                     /
```

1 1 56 8700 1 1 B   11 the ^only thing ":w\e`re conc/erned _with#   /

1 1 56 8710 1 1 B   11 is com^munic\ation#   /

1 1 56 8720 1 1 A   11 ^[\m]# -   /

1 1 56 8730 1 2 B   11 ^[dhi] re!port on :English ex/amining {^as you   /

1 1 56 8730 1 1 B   11 kn/ow#}#   /

1 1 56 8740 1 1 B   11 ^talked about . [dhi] :best wr\/iting#   /

1 1 56 8750 1 1 B   11 ^of . !different :k\inds# -   /

1 1 56 8760 1 1 B   11 but the "^only thing !th\ey can _think _of#   /

1 1 56 8770 1 1 B   11 ((as)) the ^best writing of :different :k\/inds# . /

1 1 56 8780 1 1 B   11 ^=is# .   /

1 1 56 8790 2 1 B   21 *to ex"^tend* the :number of   /

1 1 56 8800 1 1 A   11 *((^that`s s=o#))*   /

1 1 57 8790 1 1(B   11 *-* :literary !\authors# **-**   /

1 1 57 8810 2 1 B   21 ^and [@] I :got on to   /

Appendix 3

212 57 5120 1 1 A   11 ^((or)) !t\ell them#   /

212 57 5130 1 1 A   11 that ^th=ey`re# .   /

212 57 5140 1 1 A   11 they`re ^m\/ore or less#   /

212 57 5150 1 1 A   11 so^l\iciting#   /

212 57 5160 1 1 A   20 (- laughs)   /

212 57 5170 1 1 a 20 [m]   /

212 57 5180 1 1 A   11 ^=and# - -   /

212 57 5190 1 1 A   11 the ^advert :r\/ead# .   /

212 57 5200 1 1 A   11 [@:] ^girl Fr\/iday# .   /

212 57 5210 1 1 A   11 ^nursing do'mestic . w/anted#   /

212 58 5220 1 1 A   11 ^six _hours a _week _twelve !p\ounds# - .   /

212 58 5230 1 1 A   11 ^so I thought 'oh w/ell# - .   /

212 58 5240 1 1 A   11 *^six 'hours* . during the w/eek#   /

212 58 5250 1 1 a 20 *(- gasps)*   /

212 58 5260 1 1(A   11 can be ^worked 'in to :almost !\any . j/ob I 'get# /

212 58 5270 1 1 A   11 ^y\/ou know#   /

212 58 5280 1 2 A   11 and an ^extra :forty-eight _pounds !casual   /

212 58 5280 1 1 A   11 :l\/abour . [ge] a _month# .   /

212 58 5290 1 1 A   11 ((it can)) . ^probably :pays !r\ent# -   /

212 59 5300 1 1 A   11 you ^kn/ow# .   /

212 59 5310 1 1 a 20 [m] .   /

212 59 5320 1 1 A   11 ^so I :rang the :n\umber# .   /

212 59 5330 1 1 A   11 and of ^course it was an :\/answering 'service#   /

212 59 5340 1 1 A   12 so I ^left . I ^left the !flat n/umber# .   /

212 59 5350 1 1 A   11 and I ^left "!h\ome 'number# .   /

212 59 5360 1 1 A   11 cos I was ^in the "!fl\at till half past tw/elve# /

212 59 5370 1 1 A   11 and ^then I was _going "!h\ome# .   /

212 59 5380 1 1 A   11 sup^p\/osed to 'be# - -   /

212 59 5390 1 1 A   11 how^ever :during that m/orning#   /

212 60 5400 1 1 A   11 I ^made the mo:mentous de:c\/ision#   /

212 60 5410 1 1 A   11 to go a^long to 'Marks and :Sp\arks#   /

212 60 5420 1 1 A   11 and have an ^\interview# -   /

212 60 5430 1 2 A   11 [@:m] . and ^having been :told on e could :do 'that /

212 60 5430 1 1 A   11 !all "d\/ay# .   /

212 60 5440 1 1 A   11 I ^g\/ot there at 'half past 'twelve to 'find#   /

212 60 5450 1 2 A   11 that they weren`t ^d\oing any 'more till 'three   /

212 60 5450 1 1 A   11 o`cl/ock#   /

212 60 5460 1 1 A   11 cos we`ve had ^so many 'bloody p/eople#   /

212 60 5470 1 1 A   11 we ^don`t h\ave to _do it _all _day# -   /

212 61 5480 1 1 A   11 I ^thought !\oh {^f\ine#}#   /

212 61 5490 2 1 A   21 (- laughs) *and ^I* de"!cided   /

RESUMÉ

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá problematikou v konverzaci mezi muži a ženami se soustředěním na minimální reakce. Teoretická část je věnována definicím sociolingvistiky, sociolingvistických přístupů a analýz spojených se studiemi konverzačních stylů a jejich rozdílů vzhledem k pohlaví.

Praktická část je věnována analýze tří textů, jež reprezentují přepisy dialogů vzdělaných Britů. Tento výzkum se hlouběji zabývá identifikováním minimálních reakcí ve zvolených konverzacích za účelem vyhledat rozdíly ve funkcích, formách a použitích minimálních reakcí ženami a muži.

ANOTACE

Jméno a příjmení:	Ondřej Duda
Katedra:	Anglického jazyka
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Josef Nevařil, Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2010

Název práce:	Gender differences in the use of minimal responses
Název v angličtině:	Gender differences in the use of minimal responses
Anotace práce:	Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá problematikou v konverzaci mezi muži a ženami se soustředěním na minimální reakce. Teoretická část je věnována definicím sociolingvistiky, sociolingvistických přístupů a analýz spojených se studiemi konverzačních stylů a jejich rozdílů vzhledem k pohlaví. Praktická část je věnována analýze tří textů, jež reprezentují přepisy dialogů vzdělaných Britů. Tento výzkum se hlouběji zabývá identifikováním minimálních reakcí ve zvolených konverzacích za účelem vyhledat rozdíly ve funkcích, formách a použitích minimálních reakcí ženami a muži.
Klíčová slova:	Angličtina, jazyk, styl, komunikace, pohlaví, mluvená Angličtina, minimální reakce, dominance, prerušení, frekvence, muži, ženy
Anotace v angličtině:	In the theoretical part of my thesis I am giving short review of the defining sociolinguistics, sociolinguistic analysis, and then moving deeper to explore conversation and minimal responses. The practical part offers analysis of transcribed conversations in order to look for functions and forms of minimal responses within conversation. I am looking at the differences of the usage of minimal responses, their occurrence and more specifically the differences in the way women and men use minimal responses.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	English, language, style, communication, gender, spoken English, minimal responses, domination, interruption, frequency, male, female
Přílohy vázané v práci:	Ukázky textů
Rozsah práce:	47 stran
Jazyk práce:	Anglický