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Discourse Analysis of Japanese EFL Learners

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Introduction

Transcripts can be used to investigate (1) negotiation of meaning, (2) dominance, and (3) topics. These elements illustrated the gender differences of Japanese EFL (English as a Foreign Learners) speakers quite clearly in the research of Gass and Varonis (1986). Language and gender closely link together. It is often said that gender differences in language reflect social status or power differences. This paper is intended to clarify gender differences among Japanese EFL speakers.

1. Discourse Analysis

(1) Negotiation of meaning

Doughty and Pica (1986) researched 'conversational adjustments' as a way to analyse negotiation of meaning in group work, pair work and lockstep teaching. The 'adjustments' were comprehension checks, confirmation requests, and clarification requests.

Nunan (1993: 122) clarifies comprehension checks, confirmation requests, and clarification requests.

Comprehension checks (a strategy used by the speaker to make sure that the listener has understood correctly):

A: The paper should go on the outside of the packet — *Know what I mean?*

B: Mmm.

Confirmation request (a strategy used by the listener for confirmation that what he or she has just heard is correct):

A: I saw a bank robbery a couple of weeks ago.

B: *A robbery?*

Clarification request (a strategy used by the listener for a more explicit formulation of the speaker's last utterance):

A: Did y' see Theo last night? He was as pleased as a lizard with a gold tooth.

B: Sorry? *What do you mean by that exactly?*

Doughty and Pica found more negotiation of meaning in group work and pair work than in lockstep teaching. Nunan (1993: 122) explains the 'negotiation of meaning' as:

The interactional work done by speakers and listeners to ensure that they have a common understanding of the ongoing meanings in a discourse.

Ellis (1994: 716) explains the negotiation of meaning as:

Communication involving L2 learners often leads to problems in understanding and breakdown. Frequently, one or more of the participants — the learner or the interlocutor — attempts to remedy this by engaging in interactional work to secure mutual understanding. This work is often called 'negotiation of meaning'.

The strategies used to measure the 'negotiation of meaning' are, in general, comprehension checks, confirmation checks and clarification requests according to Doughty and Pica (1986). In the research of Gass and Varonis (1986), the negotiation of meaning was analysed by looking at 'indications' and 'echoes'.

Indications

Interlocutor's indications of non understanding could be of two types. These are 'direct indication' and 'indirect indication'. Gass and Varonis (1986) analysed the negotiation of meaning by counting the two indications. Direct indication employs such terms as "what?" or

"hunh?". Indirect indication normally consists of a repetition of all or part of the interlocutor's previous utterance with rising intonation. There are examples of the two indications of Gass and Varonis (1986: 329).

[Direct indication]

Hiro: What type of chair?

Nobue: Hmm? (Direct indication)

Hiro: What type of chair?

Nobue: Like this one.

Hiro: Oh.

Nobue shows her lack of understanding by saying "Hmm?". Hiro replies by repeating his previous utterance completely. Nobue then answers the question appropriately, and the conversation continues.

[Indirect indication]

Nobue: uh . . . uh, there's two people.

Hiro: Two people? (Indirect indication)

Nobue: umm.

Hiro: Uh-hmm.

Hiro indirectly shows his lack of understanding by repeating part of Nobue's previous utterance. Gass and Varonis (1985) found that the conversation of NNSs included significantly more negotiation than that of native speakers.

Echoes

In terms of echoes, Crystal (1991: 116) defines an echo as:

A term used in some grammatical descriptions to refer to a type of sentence which repeats, in whole or in part, what has just been said by another speaker.

According to Gass and Varonis (1986: 334), an important difference between an echo and an indirect indication of non understanding lies in the intonation of the utterance. Indirect indicators which repeat a part of a previous sentence have a rising intonation, while echoes

have a falling one.

[Indirect indicator]

A: He has a dog.

B: He has a dog. (rising intonation)

B repeats the utterance in rising intonation.

[Echo]

A: No, she has a dog.

B: She has a dog. (falling intonation)

B responds with an echo. In general, the echoer picks out exactly that portion of the previous utterance that seems to constitute new information. Gass and Varonis (1986: 335) found that males use more echoes than females, which can be considered to indicate male Japanese speakers engaging more in the negotiation of meaning.

(2) Dominance

Dominance is the area which checks who dominates the conversation. Holmes (1992: 329) states about dominance that:

A study of women in business organizations showed that women bosses did not dominate the interactions. Male dominated regardless of whether they were boss or subordinate.

Holmes says that women's subordinate status in male-dominated society seems the most obvious explanatory data. Argyle et al. (1968 cited in Gass and Varonis 1986: 341) and Bernard (1972 cited in Gass and Varonis 1986: 341) find that men produce a greater amount of talk than women. Also Gass and Varonis (1986: 341) find that men dominate conversations. But Hirschman (1972 cited in Gass and Varonis 1986: 341) finds no sex-related differences in discourse.

Tannen (1990: 18) states about dominance that:

It (male dominance) is not sufficient to account for everything that happens to women and men in conversations — especially conversations in which both are genuinely trying to relate to each other with

attention and respect. The effect of dominance is not always the result of an intention to dominate.

Tannen claims that roles are not given but are created in interaction. Likewise, context is not given but is constituted by talk and action.

There are several measures to investigate dominance. Gass and Varonis (1986) used four measures for their investigation, which were amount of talk, number of turns, leading, and overlaps. Among them, I will explain two measures, which are amount of talk, and leading as they were adopted in this research because of their clearness and frequent appearance.

Amount of Talk

Leet-Pellegrini (1980 cited in Graddol and Swann 1989: 73) has researched amount of talk in relation to two speaker variables, they were sex and expertise. Her subjects were 140 US college students asked to discuss the negative effect on children of violence scenes on TV. Her results suggested that amount of talk was associated with both speakers' sex and expertise. Leet-Pellegrini found that men talked more than women, experts on the topic talked more than non-experts, and male experts talked more than female experts. Graddol and Swann (1989: 73) claim about amount of talk that:

Personality and emotional state will be important, as will many other aspects of the speaker's social identity, such as whether they have higher or lower status than their interlocutor.

In terms of 'amount of talk', in this study, dominance was analysed by comparing the number of words of each speaker of a dyad in each discourse in the same way Gass and Varonis (1986) did.

Leading

As for 'leading', dominance was examined by counting the number of 'leadings' in each discourse. The picture-description task was fo-

cused on for examination. In the task, one person describes a picture so that the other person can draw the picture. To measure the amount of 'leading', the number of questions that the 'drawer' asked was considered. There are several examples given by Gass and Varonis (1986: 343) for the analysis. In their examples, a woman is describing a picture to a man.

[Example 1]

M: She's wearing boots? Lo-long boots?

F: No, only shoes.

She has not yet mentioned what the woman in the picture wears on her feet. The man starts a new area of description, which the woman had not at that time dealt with.

[Example 2]

M: Dog. So man-which-um-which side man sit?
They-he-di-does he sit on the floor?

F: No, no. I'll explain it.

M: Okay, so which one does man sit — I mean the left side or right side?

F: There is a man standing to the right side.

He tries to guide the description the way he wants to. She resists. He ignores her resistance and clarifies the question. Her response, nonetheless, is not a straight answer to his question but provides him with the information he needs.

[Example 3]

F: She has she wears a hat.

M: Hat.

F: Hat, yeah.

M: A hat.

F: A hat.

M: ... What is he doing?

There is a period of silence that he breaks with his question. And the question is not directly connected with the former conversation.

(3) Topics

In NS/NNS (native speakers/non-native speakers) interactions, Richards (1980 cited in Gass and Varonis 1986: 337) says that cultural background is a decisive factor in the selection of conversational topics. Scarcella (1983 cited in Larsen-Freeman and Lond 1991: 121) found that native Spanish groups selected more personal topics (home, age, family, marriage, etc.) than native English groups did (classes, careers, places of residence, etc.). When the language groups were mixed in NS/NNS dyads, neither American nor Spanish speakers chose personal topics. Wardaugh (1985 cited in McCarthy 1991: 70) considers topic as an outcome of a consensus. The fate of topics chosen by a speaker depends upon the other speaker's choice. If one speaker insists on carrying on his or her topics, neglecting the wishes of others, it is the case of deviance into monologue. Utterances by one speaker are an invitation to another speaker, and making a turn is a contribution to the forward moving of the discourse.

In terms of topics and gender, Fishman (1983 cited in Fasold 1990: 110) found that topic-handling in conversations is not necessarily balanced between men and women. Fishman stated that women were far less successful than men in getting topics picked up. Fishman found that men almost effortlessly raised topics for talk and women often took a role of supporting men. Tannen (1990: 236) states about topics when both men and women meet that:

When women and men got together, they tended to avoid the topics that each group liked best and settle on topics of interest to both.

It can be said that in this mixed-sex situation, both men and women choose objective topics. Coates (1993: 113) argues about topics thus:

Control of topics is normally shared equally between participants in a conversation. In conversations between speakers of the same gender, this seems to be the pattern, but when one speaker is male and one female, male speakers tend to dominate.

When male and female speak together, according to Coates (1993), the male tends to dominate. This paper tries to certify whether these ideas are true to topics in conversations of Japanese EFL speakers.

2. Methodology and Results

(1) Methodology

This research was built on the research of Gass and Varonis (1986). Their data base consists of 30 taped conversations of 10 NNS/NNS dyads. All of their subjects were native Japanese speakers. The subjects were adults studying in an intensive language program at the English Language Institute of the University of Michigan. Among the 10 dyads, 3 were male/male pairs, 4 were male/female pairs, and 3 were female/female pairs.

Each dyad participated in three tasks, which were two picture-description tasks and one conversation task. Subjects participated in free conversation before the picture-description tasks or vice versa so that the results would not be affected by the order. In the conversation task, subjects were directed to talk in English about any topic they would like to choose. In the picture-description task, one person described a picture while the other person drew it. After that, they changed roles and completed the task. The describer explained the given picture in English so that the drawer was able to draw the picture exactly as it appears. The describer was not allowed to use gestures or show the picture to the drawer, but was allowed to answer questions from the drawer. Each of their tasks was tape-recorded using lavalier microphones. The first 10 minutes of each task was then transcribed. These transcripts served as the data base for Gass and Varonis' (1986) study.

The data for this study consists of 27 taped conversations of 9 NNS/NNS dyads. All subjects were native Japanese speakers living in Japan where the data was recorded, ranging in age from 21 to 24.

The level of their English was intermediate as measured by their score in TOEFL tests. Of the dyads, 3 were male/male pairs, 3 were male/female pairs, and 3 were female/female pairs. The subjects were university students or recent graduates. Each dyad completed the same task types that Gass and Varonis (1986) used in their research, but in this research, only the first 5 minutes of each task was transcribed, compared to the first ten minutes used by Gass and Varonis (1986). The conversation was transcribed according to the rules of Hatch (1992). These transcripts serve as the data base for this study. The analysis of the results is divided into three main areas, they are (1) negotiation of meaning, (2) dominance, and (3) topics.

As for the analysis of dominance, two elements were chosen to research, they were 'amount of talk' and 'leading'. And in terms of leading, the number of questions asked by the drawer of the picture was counted. At first, like the research of Gass and Varonis (1986), the questions did not include clarification requests, but after analysing the transcriptions in the same way as Gass and Varonis (1986), this research included the clarification requests. The adoption of clarification requests shows clearer results from this research.

(2) Results

Negotiation of meaning

To analyse negotiation of meaning, (1) mean indications, and (2) mean echoes were calculated, as these two means had clearly exhibited the gender differences in the study of Gass and Varonis (1986).

Indications

In the results of Gass and Varonis (1986: 330), female/female dyads showed the least amount of negotiation, and male/male dyads showed slightly more negotiation. Conversely, the dyads in which males gave indications to females (male-to-female) and the dyads in which females gave indications to males (female-to-male) showed

more negotiation, that is, among all the dyads, as shown below, males exhibit 4.42 mean negotiations with females, while females exhibit 8.25 mean negotiations with males.

<i>Total indications (comb. = combination)</i>			
Gass and Varonis (1986) Female/Female (18 comb.)	10 minutes Male/Male (18 comb.)	Male-to-Female (12 comb.)	Female-to-Male (12 comb.)
48	50	53	99
<i>Mean indications</i>			
Gass and Varonis (1986) Female/Female	10 minutes Male/Male	Male-to-Female	Female-to-Male
2.67	2.78	4.42	8.25

In their study, males show evidence of more negotiations with females than with males. Females show a greater amount of negotiation with males than they do with females.

<i>Total indications for this study (comb. = combination)</i>			
(1995) 5 minutes Female/Female (18 comb.)	Male/Male (18 comb.)	Male-to-Female (9 comb.)	Female-to-Male (9 comb.)
16	19	3	7
<i>Mean indications for this study</i>			
(1995) 5 minutes Female/Female	Male/Male	Male-to-Female	Female-to-Male
0.89	1.06	0.33	0.78

In this research, male-to-female dyads showed the least mean negotiation, while male/male dyads showed the highest mean negotiation. Female/female dyads rank as the second highest dyads. That is, it can be said that male speakers use less negotiations when they talk with female speakers, which differs from the results of Gass and Varonis (1986). It is better to be noted again that the transcripts of this study were transcribed only for the first 5 minutes of each task

and that the tasks were conducted in Japan, while Gass and Varonis (1986) transcribed 10 minutes of each task and the tasks were conducted in the U.S.A.

Echoes

With regard to gender difference in the use of echoes, the results of the data from Gass and Varonis (1986: 335-7) shows that echoing seems to be characteristic of male Japanese speakers in English conversation.

In their research, female/female pairs reveal the lowest mean echoes.

Total echoes (comb. = combination)

Gass and Varonis (1986) Female/Female (18 comb.)	10 minutes Male/Male (18 comb.)	Male-to-Female (12 comb.)	Female-to-Male (12 comb.)
73	109	82	51

Mean echoes

Gass and Varonis (1986) Female/Female	10 minutes Male/Male	Male-to-Female	Female-to-Male
4.06	6.06	6.83	4.25

Also female-to-male mean echoes are low. Males use more echoes than females, irrespective of whether the interlocutor is male or female. In this research, the results are shown below.

Total echoes for this study (comb. = combination)

(1995) 5 minutes Female/Female (18 comb.)	Male/Male (18 comb.)	Male-to-Female (9 comb.)	Female-to-Male (9 comb.)
44	47	39	15

Mean echoes for this study

(1995) 5 minutes Female/Female	Male/Male	Male-to-Female	Female-to-Male
2.44	2.61	4.33	1.67

In this research, like the results of Gass and Varonis, the male-to-female case revealed the highest mean echoes. Female/female and male/male dyads revealed about the same mean echoes. Female-to-male case showed the lowest mean echoes. This research shows that echoing seems to be a feature of male Japanese speakers when they talk with females in English.

Dominance

In this research, male speakers show more dominance than female speakers, which affirms the reports of Argyle et al. (1968 cited in Gass and Varonis 1986: 341) and Bernard (1972 cited in Gass and Varonis 1986: 341), but differs from the data of Hirschman (1974 cited in Gass and Varonis 1986: 341). Two measures were used in the investigation. They were 'amount of talk' and 'leading', as they show especially clearly the gender differences. And as the 'amount of talk' analyses the free conversation, and the 'leading' analyses the picture-describing tasks, combined these two measures were able to cover the whole transcripts when studying dominance.

Amount of talk

Dominance is analysed by counting the number of words in each transcription as Gass and Varonis (1986) did. Only the results of the free conversation task were considered. The results of the picture-description task were not considered because the free conversation presents, as Gass and Varonis (1986) claim, a less restricted environment and thus a more appropriate situation for a consideration of dominance. It can be said that the two participants have equal opportunities to participate.

Number of words of free conversation (10 minutes)
(percentages in parentheses) Gass and Varonis (1986: 341)

	Male-Male		Male-Female		Female-Female	
1.	617 (57.7)	453 (42.3)	904 (76.9)	271 (23.1)	364 (58.3)	260 (41.7)
2.	456 (52.4)	414 (47.6)	572 (60.3)	377 (39.7)	311 (50.0)	311 (50.0)
3.	417 (57.2)	312 (42.8)	459 (69.2)	204 (30.8)	403 (57.1)	303 (42.9)
4.			454 (42.4)	618 (57.7)		

Number of words in free conversation (5 minutes)
(percentages in parentheses) for this study (1995)

	Male-Male		Male-Female		Female-Female	
1.	131 (58.7)	92 (41.3)	89 (55.6)	71 (44.4)	128 (58.7)	90 (41.3)
2.	144 (63.2)	84 (36.8)	97 (63.4)	56 (36.6)	122 (64.2)	68 (35.8)
3.	103 (56.9)	78 (43.1)	97 (71.3)	39 (28.7)	61 (35.5)	118 (64.5)

These results are quite similar to those of Gass and Varonis (1986: 341). In the research of Gass and Varonis, men dominated the conversation in male/female dyads in terms of the amount of talk. In their research, in three of the four male/female conversations, the men dominated the conversation. On the other hand, within the same sex dyads the amount of talk was more or less equally dispersed between both members of the dyad. In this research, in all the three male/female conversations, the men dominated the conversation. Although in their research, within the same sex dyads, the amount of talk was almost equally divided into between the two subjects, this research showed a little difference. One of the male/male dyads, and two of the female/female dyads showed the dominance of one speaker of the pair.

Leading

To count the amount of 'leading' in conversations, the picture-

description task was used. In this task, one person describes a picture to the other so that the other person is able to draw the picture without seeing it. To measure the dominance in terms of 'leading', the number of questions that the 'drawer' asked were counted. At first, like the research of Gass and Varonis (1986), the questions did not include clarification requests. But after analysing the transcriptions in the same way as Gass and Varonis (1986), this research included the clarification requests, which revealed another clear perspective of leading questions as clarification requests are closely related to leading questions.

In the study of Gass and Varonis (1986: 343), in the male/female dyads, men tended to lead the conversation when women described the picture, that is, in three of their dyads, the male dominated the task as they used more leading questions even when the female was describing the picture. Conversely, the female did not take the same

The number of leading questions asked by drawer in picture-description task Gass and Varonis (1986: 343) (10 minutes)

Dyad No.	Male/Male		Female/Female		Male/Female	
1	1	1	0	1	14	3
2	1	4	4	4	1	1
3	2	2	7	7	11	1
4					13	4
Total	11		23		39	9

Males' total = 50 (61.0%)

Females' total = 32 (39.0%)

leading role when she was drawing. She waited for descriptions from the man. In other male/male and female/female dyads, there were no particular features compared to male/female dyads as shown in the list.

In the study of Gass and Varonis (1986), comparing the total percentage of leading questions, males accounted for 61.0%, and females only 39.0%, which clearly indicated male dominance in their study measured by leading questions.

The number of leading questions asked by drawer in picture-description task for this study (1995/ 5 minutes)

Dyad No.	Male/Male		Female/Female		Male/Female	
1	0	1	1	1	4	4
2	1	3	0	0	0	0
3	1	2	0	0	5	1
Total	8		2		9	5

Males' total = 17 (70.8%)

Females' total = 7 (29.2%)

In this study, in the male/female dyads, one male leads more in the conversation when the woman was describing the picture (dyad No. 1). In this study, as in the study of Gass and Varonis, no females used more leading questions than males in the conversation. Considering the total number of leading questions, men asked more leading questions than females did. And female/female dyads showed a lesser amount of leading questions. Comparing the total percentage of leading questions, males accounted for 70.8%, and females only 29.7%, which clearly indicated male dominance measured by leading questions, which is similar to the results of Gass and Varonis (1986).

This study, followed the methodology used by Gass and Varonis (1986), and did not include clarification requests at first, but counting

The number of leading questions asked by drawer in picture-description task for this study (including clarification requests) (1995/ 5 minutes)

Dyad No.	Male/Male		Female/Female		Male/Female	
1	2	5	7	3	10	8
2	15	5	0	1	4	0
3	5	6	0	1	12	1
Total	38		12		26	9

Males' total = 64 (75.3%)

Females' total = 21 (24.7%)

for clarification requests seems to have given us another clear result of dominance as clarification requests were very close to their defini-

tion of leading questions. Thus, it was decided that the clarification requests be included in the leading questions.

Including clarification questions as leading questions results in a more distinctive male dominance in this study. The percentage of males' total is 75.3%, while females' total is 24.7%, which shows male dominance more clearly than by counting only leading questions without clarification requests.

The characteristics of female speech should also be clarified to understand the male dominance. And when considering the dominance, one pair in this research should not be neglected. Swain (1985) claims the importance of 'comprehensible output'. Output is language produced by the learner. She states that pushed output is necessary for learners. Learners need to be forced to make output by speech or writing to improve their language. In a transcript from this study, the woman hardly responded to the man when she was drawing a picture. In the dyad, the woman was just drawing, and that means she did not give any comprehensible output. Her role was one of drawing a picture according to directions of the describer, a male who explained the picture. She might have thought that she did not need to say whether she understood his directions or not as she was able to understand them. She was not in a situation where she was required to give any pushed output, and in this case, from the theory of Swain (1985), her language ability would not improve very much. She might have been afraid of using incorrect English, but as Swain claims, without experiencing communicative failure, learners would not be pushed into making their output more appropriate. She lost the chances in this task.

Another reason for the male dominance comes from the research of Takahashi (1989). In her research, she found that more Japanese female EFL speakers than males revealed their strong reservations toward Japanese-Japanese conversations in English. This uncomfortable feeling toward speaking English with other Japanese might have

made them speak less than males, which might have resulted in the male dominance. As with some of Takahashi's subjects, the female speakers of this research might have felt the same way, considering that it was very unnatural to speak English with Japanese, or might have felt as if their English were being evaluated by their Japanese interlocutors. I remember, though it was not recorded, that some of my female subjects commented that "They were very tough tasks, I can't speak in English." when these tasks were completed. Having seen these results, though Gass and Varonis (1985) claimed the value of NNS/NNS interactions lies in the non-threatening situation, it does not appear to fit for Japanese female EFL speakers.

Topics

It has often been pointed out in the literature that cultural background is a crucial factor in the selection of conversational topics by such as Richards (1980), Scarcella (1983), and Tannen (1980). The topics discussed by the subjects of Gass and Varonis revealed interesting gender differences. Various topics were discussed in the 10 dyads of the study of Gass and Varonis (1986). In their research, the male/male conversation mainly focused on personal topics. One of the male/male pairs talked only about women, especially their experience with American women. Therefore, there seems to be more personal topics in the male/male dyads than in any of the other dyads. In both the female/female and the male/female groups, the topics of the conversation tend to be more objective, such as past and future university studies, job status, job description, and plan to return to Japan.

In the 9 dyads of my research, many topics were discussed. In the research of Gass and Varonis (1986), only male/male pairs talked about personal topics. In this research, not only the male/male pairs, but also the female/female pairs talked about personal topics, such as their boyfriends, money and their family, which might show that

Japanese women felt more comfortable in talking about personal topics in the mid 1990s' than they were in the research of Gass and Varonis (1986). Similar to the result of Gass and Varonis, the male/female pairs talked about objective topics such as job description, music, and health.

The number of topics raised by speakers in free conversation task for this study (1995)

Dyad No.	Male/Male		Female/Female		Male/Female	
1	5	1	4	3	6	0
2	8	1	5	1	3	0
3	3	2	1	1	2	1
Total	20		15		11	1

Males' total = 31 (66.0%)

Females' total = 16 (34.0%)

This study compares the number of topics raised by men and women, though Gass and Varonis (1986) did not analyse this in their research. The comparison reveals the gender difference more distinctively.

In this study, as for the total number raised by speakers, males' total shows 66.0%, and females' total shows 34.0%. It can be said that males raise more topics than females. And in male/female dyads, eleven out of twelve topics were raised by men, which revealed 91.7% of all the topics of the dyads were raised by men. This would suggest that Japanese males tend to introduce far more topics into the conversation when they are talking to females. When Japanese males are talking to each other, or when Japanese females are talking to each other, there is usually a dominant personality in the pair, who introduces far more topics than the other person. As the figures show, the disparity can be as much as 8 to 1 among male pairs, and 5 to 1 among female pairs. Among mixed pairs, the highest ratio was 6 to 0 in favour of the male participant.

Conclusion

Negotiation of meaning

In this study, in terms of the results of 'negotiation of meaning', male-to-female (echoes used by male to female) dyads used the most mean echoes, but the same dyads showed least mean indications. This suggests that in this study Japanese male EFL speakers do not use questioning forms when they do not have a clear idea of what the female interlocutor has said, but use echoes by repeating the previous sentence to clarify the message as a way of 'negotiation of meaning'.

Dominance

As for 'dominance', similar to the findings of the study of Gass and Varonis (1986), men tended to dominate the conversation in opposite-sex dyads in terms of the amount of talk. And also in terms of leading questions, both their and this study clearly showed the dominance of male speakers. Male speakers dominated the discourse, asking many leading questions when the female was explaining the picture. Tannen (1990) argues that the effect of dominance is not always the result of an intention to dominate. Furthermore, the shortage of comprehensible output could affect the result of dominance. It can be deduced that because of this deficit of comprehensible output, the number of leading questions would decrease, and the amount of talk would also decline.

The topics should also be considered to explain the male dominance of this research. Most topics (66.0%) of all the topics, and 91.3% of topics in the opposite-sex dyads were raised by men, which would have led to the result of male dominance. As Fishman (1983) says, women usually take a support role when talking with men, that would have let men speak more in the conversation.

'Female

0

0

1

1

Topics

Many topics were discussed in this research. In this research, both male/male pairs and female/female pairs talked about personal topics, such as their boyfriends, money and their family. But male/female pairs talked about more objective topics, such as job description, music and health. These results corroborate the ideas of Coates (1993). Coates claimed that topics are normally shared equally between speakers of the same gender, but when one speaker is male and one female, male speakers tend to dominate. Tannen (1990) stated that "when women and men got together, they tend to avoid topics that each group liked best and settle on topics of interest to both." That male/female dyads chose objective topics may be related to this comment. As for the raising of topics, 91.7% of all the topics were raised by men in male/female dyads. In this study, in the mixed-sex dyads, men did not refuse to pick up topics raised by women but women rarely raised topics.

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