Annotated Bibliography


The author hypothesized that there would be significant gender differences in body movement and gaze between men and women in mixed-sex conversation. Twenty mixed sexed dyads were composed from students aged 20 to 35. The behavior of each pair was videotaped and transcribed as the mixed-sex pairs conversed in fixed armchairs placed close to each other. A scale from 0-53 was used to measure nonverbal behaviors with 56 being extreme behavior and 0 being no activity. ANOVA testing was used to analyze the results. It was shown that men engage in more body movement and that women make a greater effort to maintain eye contact. Body movement could be interpreted as a signal of conversational dominance. Men’s lesser amount of eye contact could be indicative of dominance in that they feel less need to pay attention to women in conversation.


The author hypothesizes that marital type is more important in determining conflict style than sex. Forty married couples were tagged for relational types (i.e. sharing, autonomy, traditional, etc.). Their conversations were then recorded, transcribed and coded based on use of typical conflict-based speech acts such as conciliatory acts and confrontative acts. A linear analysis was used to interpret the data. The study showed no significant connection between a partner’s sex and the type of conflict-based speech acts used. Rather, relational type seemed to determine the men and women’s use of conflict based speech acts. This shows that, depending upon the type of relationship, men may not necessarily be more aggressive than women and women may not be more submissive than men.


The authors hypothesize that gender differences between men and women in the use of the conversational hedges “sort of” and “you know” in competitive conversations are not significant. A sample of 50 male and 54 female university students was divided into mixed-sex pairs and further assigned a non-competitive or a competitive conversational task. The frequency of the aforementioned hedges was recorded for each conversation. A three way T-test was used to determine the significance of the findings. No statistically significant difference between men and women was found with regards to the use of these hedges. However, both men and women tend to use hedges more often when talking to men. This study shows that hedging perhaps depends more upon the gender of the hearer than the gender of the speaker.


The author hypothesizes that women do more conversational work than men. In order to evaluate her hypothesis the author acquired 52 hours of recorded conversation from 3 couples between the ages of twenty-five and thirty five. Transcriptions from these recordings were analyzed for evidences of conversational work such as questions, attention beginnings and minimal responses. As the number of
couples was small, the author only observes general trends and employs no tests of statistical significance to her date. However, the author notes that conversational topics raised by women were more likely to be downplayed by men than vice-versa. She further notes that women ask more questions and use attention beginnings to introduce statements whereas men rely on simple statements to carry their topic forward. This study shows evidence of male domination in conversation in that they are more successful in carrying topics they have introduced with less effort.


The authors hypothesize that male dominance of conversation is not only due to gender differences but due to relational power imbalances. The study involved recording conversations between 100 couples of each sexual orientation (heterosexual, lesbian and homosexual) who were further designated as power-balanced or power-imbalanced through the use of a questionnaire. T-testing was used to analyze the author’s findings. The results showed that the use of interruptions and back channels are more associated with the more powerful partner rather than the male partner. This shows that cognitive gender differences may be less important in determining conversational dominance than the traditional gender hierarchy.


The author hypothesizes that men would use more controlling conversational techniques than women during negotiation. She divided 48 female and 48 male undergraduate students into same-sex and mixed-sex dyads. She recorded their conversations in role-play scenarios in which the participants bargained about the price of an appliance. Observers marked how frequently participants used various controlling conversational strategies such as topic change, support, confirmation, etc. T-tests were used to analyze the results of the study. This study shows evidence that, in certain situations, there are no differences between men and women with regards to controlling tactics.


The authors hypothesize that men interrupt women and that women are more silent in mixed-sex conversations. The authors recorded and transcribed casual conversations of 20 same-sex and 11 mixed-sex pairs of white, middle class university students. Most of these conversations were recorded discreetly in public but one quarter was recorded in participants’ homes. The transcriptions noted silences, speaker overlaps and interruptions. Due to the small sample size, simple analyses of the distribution of these conversational events were used to interpret the data. The authors found that in mixed-sex conversation females spent more conversational time remaining silent and that men interrupted and overlapped their counterparts more frequently. This shows evidence that men use controlling tactics in mixed-sex conversation to establish conversational dominance.